



Newsletter of the
Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston
Including the Bond Astronomical Club
Established in 1934
In the Interest of Telescope Making & Using

Vol. 18, No. 2 February 2006

This Month's Meeting...

Thursday, February 9th, 2006 at 8:00 PM

**Phillips Auditorium
Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics**

Parking at CFA is allowed for duration of meeting

THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER will be David Latham from the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. Dave's talk is titled "The Search for Habitable Planets". We are marching towards the detection and characterization of earth-like planets orbiting in the habitable zone of sun-like stars. Dave will review the progress towards this goal from Doppler surveys, including the role of the Oak Ridge Observatory. Dave's main emphasis will be on the Kepler mission, scheduled for launch in June 2008.

Dave attended Roxbury Latin School, MIT, and Harvard. He has built telescopes and instruments, dabbled in observational cosmology, and studied binary stars in various stellar populations. Now he's concentrating on extrasolar planets.

Please join our speaker for a pre-meeting dinner at 5:45 PM (seating at 6:00 PM) at the Changsho Restaurant located at 1712 Mass Ave. in our fair city, Cambridge.

President's Message...

The Executive Board held a meeting on January 19th, at which all board members were present. There was a very long agenda and we didn't get to all of it. And I'm only highlighting a few of the actions - the complete minutes are available from Mike Hill. (As I write this I'm scuba diving in Cozumel, Mexico - there was a lot of devastation from Hurricane Wilma.)

The major topic of discussion was Dr. Fred Ward's donation of a C-14 and GT1100 mount (plus associated accessories) - whether to accept the donation and, if so, where to locate it. As reported in my message last month, the telescope, though not perfect, and mount are both in good shape. And, with a positive recommendation from the Clubhouse committee, the Board voted unanimously in favor of accepting the donation. Thank you Dr. Fred Ward!

The second issue of where to locate the mount and telescope was a longer and more complex debate with many options considered. The Board voted unanimously in favor of replacing the current Schupmann mount with the GT1100 and building mounting plates for the Schupmann and 8" Dall-Kirkham such that any one of the three telescopes could be used on the mount. This vote also gives the Clubhouse Committee the responsibility of developing a telescope swap out schedule. Each telescope will be available for a portion of the year. The telescopes will NOT be swapped out on an ad-hoc basis.

Bruce Berger and Mike Hill will be working on the mounting plates for the Schupmann and Dall-Kirkham.

In addition, Eric Johansson will be working on improving the Schupmann with help from several others.

Thanks to all of those that participated in this discussion and offered their help in implementing the plan!

Many other issues were discussed and approved, including:

1. The club is now the beneficiary of an Eagle Scout project to educate the town of Burlington, MA about light pollution.
2. The clubhouse will sign on for an annual maintenance agreement on the oil furnace with our oil supplier.
3. The club's obsidian (apparently 3 large crates worth) is likely to be put up for sale as a fund raiser (more in the near future).

The tabled items, such as looking at a revised 10-year plan for the clubhouse, will be picked up at the next Board meeting in the early Spring.

Bernie Volz, President -

January Meeting Minutes. . .

The January Meeting of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston was focused on the upcoming Total Solar Eclipse on March 29th. The first speaker was long time member and avid eclipse chaser Dennis DiCicco. Dennis gave us a brief synopsis of his many, many eclipse experiences beginning with his first eclipse in 1963 when he was a young boy and followed by so many others it was hard to keep up. He has been all over the world including South America, Africa, Europe, Australia and even one that took him over Antarctica in a chartered jet. He showed a picture from each trip and one thing I realized was that eclipse chasing is not only about the eclipse but also about the very unique places in the world to which you are drawn. Dennis concluded his presentation with a very stunning movie of the Antarctica eclipse from the cockpit of the plane he was flying in including the view of the earths shadow sweeping across the landscape below.

Edwin Aquirre followed Dennis with a talk on the techniques for doing film-based photography of solar eclipses. Edwin uses a 4" Meade F/10 Schmidt Cassegrain telescope with a Thousand Oaks solar filter. He emphasized that the filter must be secure for safety but at the same time easily removable because as soon as totality begins you will want to quickly remove the filter to continue taking pictures of the solar corona. He also recommends a finder scope to easily acquire the sun should the scope get bumped during totality. Other tips included a tape recorder to record exposure times and other pertinent information and a red flashlight to see since it can get fairly dark during totality. Following Edwin we heard Emelda Joson who spoke on eclipse videography. She uses a camcorder with at least 25X optical zoon and recommends either a digital 8 or mini DV format. She emphasized the need for manual focus and exposure control and an equatorial mount so that the image of the sun remains centered on the film. Other tips included extra batteries for both equatorial mount and camera, a means of easily centering the sun on the view screen and access to notes on daytime equatorial alignment of the mount. Following the speakers there was a question and answer session to follow up with what had been talked about and then a presentation by Bernie Volz and Mario Motta as to what to expect at this eclipse. Good luck to those that are going to Egypt in March. I'd say you're in for a real treat. The business meeting followed with the standard club committee reports. Dan Winchell informed us that the official membership count at the time of the meeting was 285. Paul Cicchetti announced the upcoming work party and Bernie Volz announced the upcoming board meeting. Eileen Myers thanked those that helped make last years New Years Eve party a success, especially Art Swedlow and Sai Vallabha who did most of the decorating. Virginia Renehan announced some upcoming star parties and gave thanks to Dave Snay for getting a bunch of free ATMob Business cards for distribution to star party attendees. Bruce Berger solicited donations for support of the Clear Sky Clock which appears on our web site. Last of all, Bruce Tinkler

let us know that he would be airing on the U-Mass Lowell radio station (91.5 FM) on Feb 9th at 8:30 AM talking about astronomy and upcoming celestial events.

- *Michael Hill* -

Membership Report...

This month we have 3 new members:

ANTHONY DAVIDS from Stow
PAUL FOUGERE from Bedford
ASGEIR NIELSEN from Belmont

- *Dan Winchell* -

Clubhouse Saturday Schedule

February 4	Richard Burrier	Herny Hopkinson
February 11	Closed for work Party	
February 18	David Siegrist	John Small
February 25	Art Swedlow	Sai Vallabha
March 4	Bruce Gerhard	Steve Clougherty

Job Descriptions

(Continued from last month)

Secretary/Newsletter Editor

The Secretary of the club is responsible for taking the minutes of the monthly meeting and the board meetings (3-4/year). These must be written up for inclusion in the newsletter and distribution to the board respectively. The other primary responsibility is the newsletter, which includes writing it, getting it printed, putting it together, and mailing it. The writing part is really more of a compilation of what others have written along with any additional material you as the editor wish to put in. This allows for a good deal of flexibility and creativity. You can either create articles yourself or solicit club members either as a group, or target particular individuals to write articles for you. The newsletter is created as a Word document then converted to PDF. It is bulk emailed to most members but there are about 100 or so members that request or can only get the newsletter in hardcopy format. For many years we have used Staples as a print source so having one of these nearby is helpful. The club participates in the Staples member rewards program and has a tax-free account with them. Putting together the newsletter requires additional time but normally is done up at the clubhouse with others helping out. This includes putting on the name labels and stamps. Anticipated time requirements are (per month) 5-6 hrs newsletter creation. 2-3 hours to put together newsletter. 1 or 2 trips to Staples and a trip to the post office. In addition you will have to verbally present the meeting minutes at each subsequent monthly meeting. It is an important position with a monthly commitment required but the time involved is not exorbitant. - *Michael Hill* - Secretary -

Membership Secretary

The membership secretary of ATMoB is responsible for managing the membership records for the club and is required to perform the following jobs:

- Notify members to renew their membership.
- Update membership database (Micro Soft Office, Access.)
- Process magazine subscriptions for club members.
- Deposit checks received from members at a Sovereign bank location.
- Update the membership database with changes requested by members throughout the year.
- Update atmob-announce, atmob-club and atmob-newsletter subscription information
- Respond to inquiries from people who wish to join the club.

- Send out membership lists on demand to whoever needs them. Typically, the star party coordinators.
- Generate a membership report every month for the newsletter. Present it at the club meeting.
- Provide labels for Star Fields every month.
- Occasionally update the membership database Micro Soft Office Access Forms to perform new functions.
- Attend board meetings.
- Organize new member orientation/activities. This is usually a joint effort by many people in the club.

The tasks of the Membership Secretary require a fair amount of time (about 10 hours a month on average.) Any knowledge of the Micro Soft Office Access program would be an asset.

- *Dan Winchell, ATMoB Membership Secretary* -

**February *Star Fields* deadline
Saturday, January 28th**

**Email articles to Mike Hill
at noatak@aol.com**

Upcoming Speakers

Just to keep you posted, here's the speaker line up for the next several meetings:

March - Jim & Rhoda Morris on building a set of museum quality replicas of Galileo's telescopes

April - Member's night and March 29th Total Solar Eclipse review

May - Scot Milligan & Mario Motta on building the 32" in Gloucester

June - Joshua Semeter (BU) on Aurora

POSTMASTER NOTE: First Class Postage Mailed February 3rd, 2006

Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, Inc.
c/o Dan Winchell, Membership Secretary
20 Howard St.
Cambridge, MA 02139-3720

FIRST CLASS

EXECUTIVE BOARD 2005-2006

PRESIDENT: Bernie Volz (603) 968-3062
president@atmob.org

VICE PRES: Virgina Renehan (978) 283-0862
SECRETARY: Michael Hill (508) 485-0230
MEMBERSHIP: Dan Winchell (617) 876-0110

TREASURER: Gary Jacobson (978) 692-4187
MEMBERS AT LARGE:
Bruce Tinkler (781) 862-8040
Dave Prowten (978) 369-1596

PAST PRESIDENTS:
2004-05 Bruce Berger (978) 256-9208
2002-04 Eileen Myers (978) 456-3937
2001-02 Bob Collara (781) 275 9482

COMMITTEES

CLUBHOUSE : Paul Cicchetti (978) 433-9215
John Reed (781) 861-8031
Steve Clougherty (781) 784-3024

HISTORIAN: Anna Hillier (781) 861-8338

OBSERVING: Virginia Renehan (978) 283-0862

How to Find Us...

Web Page www.atmob.org

MEETINGS: Held the second Thursday of each month (September to July) at 8:00PM in the Phillips Auditorium, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, 60 Garden St., Cambridge MA. For INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATION listen to WBZ (1030 AM)

CLUBHOUSE: Latitude 42° 36.5' N Longitude 71° 29.8' W

The Tom Britton Clubhouse is open every Saturday from 7 p.m. to late evening. It is the white farmhouse on the grounds of MIT's Haystack Observatory in Westford, MA. Take Rt. 3 North from Rt. 128 or Rt. 495 to Exit 33 and proceed West on Rt. 40 for five miles. Turn right at the MIT Lincoln Lab, Haystack Observatory at the Groton town line. Proceed to the farmhouse on left side of the road. Clubhouse attendance varies with the weather. It is wise to call in advance: (978) 692-8708.

Heads Up For The Month . . .

To calculate Eastern Daylight Time (EST) from Universal Time (UT) subtract 5 from UT.

February 5 First Quarter Moon
February 12 Full Moon
February 21 Last Quarter Moon
February 27 New Moon