



STAR FIELDS

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

Vol. 19, No. 4 April 2007

This Month's Meeting...

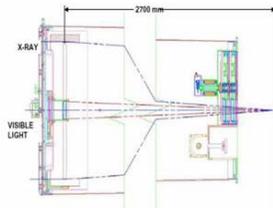
Thursday, April 12th, 2007 at 8:00 PM
Phillips Auditorium

Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

Parking at CfA is allowed for duration of meeting



Hinode "sunrise" (Solar-B) XRT



XRT Optics

This month we welcome Dr. Katharine Reeves, Astrophysicist in the Solar and Stellar X-ray Group at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. Dr. Reeves, whose research interests include modeling and observation of dynamic coronal phenomena, including solar flares and coronal mass ejections, has used a variety of instruments to inform her work, including imaging telescopes such as the Transition Region and Coronal Explorer (TRACE), the X-Ray Telescope on Hinode, the Soft X-Ray Telescope on Yohkoh, and spectroscopic instruments such as the Bragg Crystal Spectrometer on Yohkoh and RHESSI. In her talk, "Solar Flare Observations Using the X-ray Telescope (XRT) on Hinode," we'll hear about the XRT's unique features, the data collected since first light in October 2006, and how XRT's many X-ray filters can be used to glean temperature information about flares and eruptive events. Even though it was launched near solar minimum, XRT has already observed some interesting flaring regions.

The satellite Hinode (Solar-B), Japanese for *sunrise*, was launched in September 2006 on a mission to study the Sun, specifically, sunspots which give rise to powerful flares and solar storms. The origin of solar flares is a mystery scientists hope Hinode will help unravel. Hinode is in sun-synchronous orbit allowing it to observe the sun for uninterrupted periods lasting months at a time. Onboard are three advanced telescopes for observing different layers of the solar atmosphere: the Solar Observing Telescope (SOT), the X-ray Telescope (XRT) and EUV Imaging Spectrometer (EIS). With this group of telescopes scientists hope to answer key questions: Why is the Sun's corona so much hotter than the Sun's atmosphere? What drives solar flares and creates the Sun's magnetic fields? The XRT, which was designed and developed by an international consortium including the Harvard SAO, has broad temperature coverage, high time and spatial and temporal resolution, making it an ideal instrument for observing solar flares. It is able to see the million degree gas caught in the magnetic grip of sunspots and in the corona which may help solve many solar mysteries.

Please join us for a pre-meeting dinner with Katharine Reeves at 5:45PM at Chang Sho Restaurant located at 1712 Massachusetts Ave. in our fair city, Cambridge, MA.

~ Virginia Renahan ~

President's Message...

April marks National Astronomy Day, a public educational outreach event that occurs in mid April or early May near or before the first quarter Moon. This year Astronomy Day falls on Saturday, April 21st. What began as a grass-roots movement back in 1973, spearheaded by the Astronomical Association of Northern California to bring astronomy to urban locations, street corners, parks, etc., has grown to a nation wide event. Almost every amateur astronomy club in the country now recognizes the day as an opportunity to share the joy of astronomy with the general public, get them involved with astronomy or at least answer some of their questions concerning astronomical concepts. On Astronomy Day, thousands of people who have never looked through a telescope will have an opportunity to see first hand what amateurs are so passionate about.

This year the Club will celebrate Astronomy Day at a number of different venues. Beginning in Cambridge on Saturday evening, April 21st we will set up telescopes with the AAVSO at Danehy Park near their new headquarters. The evening star party begins with a lecture, "Our Changing Sky", by Dr Arne Henden. The following weekend, Saturday, April 28th, we will set up telescopes for both solar and evening observing at the Clay Center Observatory in Brookline, at Dexter-Southfield School. This is our fourth year at the Clay Center. The event has certainly grown and now includes planetarium shows, demonstrations, games, activities and more. The Clay star party will commence at 1:30pm and continue until early evening for viewing the bright planets Venus and Saturn. If you have a sun filter bring your scope for daytime observing, or come for the evening session. If you don't have a telescope, come anyway and help answer questions. Other club members will also set up for evening observing at Danehy on April

28th beginning with a lecture, “Planets Around Other Stars”. Check our website for all star party details and directions. All the events promise to be fun and members and their families are encouraged to attend.

We have not yet reached our goal of raising \$1000 in support of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO) building campaign. As mentioned in last month’s newsletter, the AAVSO has moved to new headquarters and plans to renovate the space. For those of you unfamiliar with AAVSO, visit their web site at www.aavso.org. This is a great organization and worthy of your support. If you do make a donation, remember to mention your ATMob status, since each club contribution will help qualify the club for recognition on a plaque that will be displayed in the new headquarters.

At the April monthly meeting the membership will elect a Nominating Committee. The committee will recommend a slate of club officers for the coming year.

I hope many of you have noticed the effort to improve our newsletter. Club Secretary, Al Takeda, has done an outstanding job of formatting Star Fields and proofing all the submissions. He has gone out of his way to include interesting content, pictures and graphics. I encourage members to contribute to newsletter content. Consider writing an article about an observing event, a new home telescope or observatory project; share your experiences with a new eyepiece or other piece of equipment; write a book review or a piece on club history. You need not contribute on a regular basis unless you choose to do so. We welcome your ideas. As always, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me at vrenehan@gis.net.

~ Virginia Renehan, President ~

Mar. Meeting Minutes . . .

The March meeting of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston began with a talk by Dr. Daniel W.E. Green, Astronomer of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Editor of the International Comet Quarterly and the Director of the Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams (CBAT). His lecture was titled “The History of the Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams.”

Dr. Green started with a short mention about Comet McNaught which became the brightest comet to grace our skies since Comet Ikeya-Seki visited us in 1965. Because of forward scattering of dust particles, the comet jumped 3 magnitudes in brightness when it was closest to the Sun. This brought the magnitude up to minus 5 and allowed the comet to be seen in broad daylight. His descriptions of the attributes of this comet allowed a good segue for his talk on CBAT and its history.

He first tapped the audience to get us to think about what information is required to file a discovery. Those included the position, brightness, location, time and the direction of motion. Green then brought up his “philosophy of discovery. You need to have an understanding of the night sky if you're going to go out and discover something. This information has to be useful so others can find these objects and make it available on a long term basis.”

In the 18th and 19th centuries discoveries were being made on a regular basis but the information was not being disseminated well. It was in 1882 that the first Bureau of Astronomical Telegrams was set up in Kiel, Germany. Dr. Green noted that “this became the central place to collect things, with the organization to get things standardized and to sort out discovery rights.”

The introduction of the telegram allowed announcements to be transmitted to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. by the new transatlantic cable from the Greenwich Observatory. There were still problems with transmission errors when the telegrams were redistributed inside the United States and North America. It was at this time that Pickering of the Harvard Observatory volunteered to take over the distribution of the telegrams. With Harvard established as the central distribution location for the U.S., a “neo-style, printed form” was established for announcements. Dr. Green showed many historical announcement telegrams throughout CBATs history.

Due to World War I, the Central Bureau was relocated to Copenhagen in 1914 until it was moved to Harvard in 1965.

In 1983, Comet IRAS-Araki-Alcock, which made one of the closest known approach to earth of any comet in 200 years “really changed our lives.” Green noted that it “really stretched our resources because we were the only source of the information and it was moving halfway across the sky in a single day at it’s closest approach. This was before the Web so Brian Marsden set up an on-line service where you can dial-in to get the circular.” Fortunately this method also proved valuable for releasing daily circulars on Supernova 1987A as well as introducing the first weekend circular.

The telegram circulars were discontinued in 1993 and posting are made on the Web which started in 1995. Today “e-mail has made both life easier and more difficult because at least you can sort of attend to it more at your leisure but then you don’t have much leisure because we get so much e-mail.”

Dr. Green also acknowledged the contributions that amateur astronomers have made and continue to make in reporting and observing new comets, novae, galactic nova and gamma ray bursts.



Dr. Daniel W.E. Green and Comet McNaught. Comet image taken on 20/1/2007, Lawlers Gold Mine, Western Australia (Image in the public domain).

The business report followed with the standard reports from the Secretary, Al Takeda, Membership, Dan Winchell, Clubhouse, Steve Clougherty. The Treasurers report was not given.

Virginia Renehan thanked ATMob members that attended the Butler Middle School Star Party. A special congratulation was made to John Blomquist and John Maher for their contribution to public education and outreach.

Ross Barros-Smith reported that the Natick star party "was a near disaster". There were a few hundred kids and only 3 club members and one non-member volunteer. Even though it was not the club's best showing they would love to have us there again.

Virginia reminded the membership about upcoming Star Parties at the Chenery Middle, Tobin and Acton. She requests that you check out the website and sign up.

Eileen Myers reported on an email from Anna Hillier summarizing the Club History Project. Fifteen hardbound copies were made and were sold for \$25 each. If someone wants a copy, please contact Eileen or Anna.

Eileen also announced that ATMob member and Astronomy Magazine columnist, Glenn Chaple will be putting on a workshop at the Clubhouse on how to visually measure variable stars. If anyone has an idea for other workshops please let Eileen or any one of the Executive Committee know.

Virginia mentioned the Building Fund Drive for the AAVSO and Gary Walker explained the fund raising campaign to replenish the endowment. The Executive Board has approved a measure that if the membership donates \$500 dollars then the club will match that amount for a total of \$1000. This will allow the club to have a plaque that says ATMob displayed in the lobby.

Virginia received an e-mail from an amateur astronomer from West Virginia regarding a telescope that was located on the Boston Common. He wanted to know if anybody in the club could help identify the manufacturer. Ken Launie will try to contact the person and gather some information.

Dick Koolish reported on the Model Engineering Society Show and he showed a few pictures from that event.

Virginia announced that this month Mario will be speaking to the Gloucester Council on light pollution.

Bruce Tinkler talked about his Astronomy Newsletter that he produces.

March 27 is the executive board meeting. The board is in process of reviewing the TAC committee's report.

Bruce Berger resigned from the Executive Board. The Board will be adding a Member at Large to the Executive Board as a replacement at the annual meeting.

Eileen reported on her images of the lunar eclipse taken with a point-and-shoot digital camera and a pair of binoculars. The image is in the Gallery on the club website.

Virginia is asking for volunteers with a solar scopes on April 7. The group, friends of Scouting, will be at Harvard University this Saturday.

The Lowell lecture series will be held at the Museum of Science on April 11 with three lectures concerning what happened to Pluto.

~ Al Takeda, Secretary ~

Membership Report . . .

Seven new members have joined the club this month:

Richard Cosma from Framingham
Karl Dean from Marlborough
Steve Jenner from Gloucester
William Lee from Bridgewater
John McHugh from Arlington
Patricia Merchant from Everett
James Roberge from Westford

~ Dan Winchell, Membership Secretary ~

Clubhouse Report . . .

Gary Walker donated a formica countertop, which David Prowten professionally installed in February. The countertop greatly improves the kitchen area, providing a cleaner, more modern appearance and adding more work and storage space.

The March 3rd work session #3 was made possible by John Blomquist, Paul Cicchetti, Steve Clougherty, Dick Koolish, John Maher, Dave Prowten, Al Takeda, Dave Wilbur, and Tom Wolf. This team pulled together and:

1) Installed additional wall insulation and ceiling strapping in the Near Barn after the area was cleaned and rearranged.

2) Reconnected the power to the telescope storage shed. Power was disconnected when the shed was moved to install the basement drain system several years ago.

3) It was noted that the barn loft is in much better shape after the many Thursday evening cleaning and sorting sessions by Mike Hill assisted by Bruce Berger. This was made possible by the four work sessions when Bruce Gerhard and John Maher installed the

electrical conduit system bringing power to the entire second story above the barns.

Older members will remember the rickety stairs that we once had to climb. New wider and stronger stairs were installed by Dave Prowten & Paul Cicchetti a few years ago. This shows what teamwork can do. Hats off to a job well done!

John Blomquist, Nina Cowan, John Maher, Eileen Myers, Dave Prowten, John Reed and Al Takeda carried out several tasks at a mini Work Session held on Sunday, March 11th, :

1) A new latch was installed on the rear Near-Barn door by Dave, followed by a progress inspection of the Near Barn to plan for the next step.

2) An outside site survey was accomplished to establish the parameters for the Home Dome installation; inside Eileen M. dusted everywhere!

3) This scenario was the setting for starting the April Star Fields production.

The March 15-16 snowstorm required a bit of snow removal on Saturday Mar 17. The driveway was cleared of drifts blown after MIT's plow had passed. 70% of the observing field was cleared; paths to the Knight Observatory, 17" hutch, storage sheds and entrances were cleared; and 7 pads were free for the Messier Marathon participants. The storm had dumped 12-15" of fresh snow in the area.

On Friday Mar 23 Brian Maerz again tackled the final chipping of past tree surgery debris.

Completed at Work Party #4 on Saturday, March 31st were:

1) The leveling of the Near Barn ceiling strapping and installation of insulation by Dave Prowten and Steve Clougherty.

2) The plowed stone was moved back onto the driveway by Serge Silmunovic, John Blomquist and Dave Siegrist;

3) Tree topping was continued, to retrieve the eastern viewing horizon, by John Maher and Bernie Kosicki;

4) The snow fence was removed and stored by Dave Siegrist and Al Takeda;

5) The office and library organization and cleanup were continued by Anna Hillier and Eileen Myers.

6) The telescope storage shed electrical work was completed, providing two outlets on the west wall exterior for the new observing pads, by John Blomquist and John Reed.

Note: All exterior outlets servicing the observing area are ground-fault protected through two reset outlets on the house's south wall: one at the side porch door and the second between the bulkhead and side porch.

It was too cool to start Spring painting. That task will be started during the full moon Saturday of the May 5 Work Session, #5. Please put that date on your calendar. We will look forward to Art Swedlow and Eileen Myers again putting on a culinary feast!

The Collimation (optical alignment) Workshop, by Phil Rounseville, which started on the afternoon of Work Party #4 and was successfully completed by utilizing various clear nights over the following weeks.



Phil Rounseville led the Schmidt-Cassegrain Collimation Workshop

The Variable Star Observing Workshop, led by Glen Chaple, was successfully held following Work Party #5. Observations were made through some high thin cirrus after a beautiful sunny day.



Glen Chaple (foreground) shows some of the Variable Star Observing Workshop participants how the data is entered at the AAVSO website.

Clubhouse Saturday Schedule

Apr. 7	Henry Hopkinson	Eric Johansson
Apr. 14	Chuck Evans	John Maher
Apr. 21	Tom Lumenello	Brian Maerz
Apr. 28	John Small	Sai Vallabha
May 5	Al Takeda + workshop leader	
May 12	Dave Siegrist	Art Swedlow

~ John Reed, Steve Clougherty, and Dave Prowten ~

Star Parties, Thank You! . . .

The last month was a busy time for star party volunteers. Many thanks to all those who volunteered for these events. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Judging by all the requests we continue to receive, as they look at the wonders of the night sky our star parties are a transforming experience for students and their families! Thank you to the following ATMob members who participated:

March 1st Wilson Middle School, Natick – Ross Barros-Smith, Bob Phinney, and George Roberts.

March 9th Chenery Middle School, Belmont – John Blomquist, Stefan Frank, John Maher, Tom McDonagh, Christine and Anthony Moulen, Petur Nielsen, Lee Siler and Al Takeda.

What a great Star Party we had at the Chenery Middle School in Belmont last Friday! The night was fairly clear and not too cold. The students enjoyed the Star Lab presentation in the gym and the astronomy software and hot chocolate in the cafeteria, but clearly the highlight for all was the magic of looking through the high powered telescopes and getting a glimpse of the heavens. Thank you to ATMob for inspiring our 6th grade students.

Although there were over 200 viewers (110 or more 6th grade students + their parents), there were plenty of telescopes for the students to peer through. The students arrived at timed intervals and merrily went from telescope to telescope. The clear view of Saturn was a real crowd pleaser!

Those astronomers who arrived early enjoyed the chili dinner I prepared. Hopefully all got enough sustenance! I really appreciate all your volunteers do to get there on a Friday night. 6th grade is such a great age to have this experience!

I did not meet Bruce Tinkler. Perhaps he was there, but we didn't cross paths. I would like to contact him regarding appropriate books to purchase for your school library in honor of ATMob. Thank you again Virginia for helping us organize such a successful night. Looking forward to our 3rd annual Star Party next year!

Warm regards,
Peggy Eysenbach
6th grade parent



Tom McDonagh (left) at the Chenery Middle School in Belmont. Image by Al Takeda.

March 9th Tobin Middle School, Cambridge – Tony Flanders, Dick Koolish.

March 12th Acton – Ross Barros-Smith, John Blomquist, Michael Brown, Valerie Coffey, Nina Craven, Steve Feinstein, Nancy Hicks, Bernie Kosicki, John Maher, Tom McDonagh, Eileen Myers, George Paquin, John Reed, Scott Romanowski, Phil Rounseville, and Al Takeda for the telescopes.

Thank you to ATMob members Bruce Tinkler, Paul Manning, David Siegrist, Bob Phinney, George Roberts, and Kelly Beatty for your indoor efforts.



Some Acton Star Party members (l-r) Joseph Horowitz, Nina Craven, Eileen Myers, John Reed, Bernie Kosicki, John Blomquist, Al Takeda and Phil Rounseville. Image courtesy of Michelle Blaquiére of Dunkin' Donuts®.

The following “Thank You” was submitted to the local Acton Papers.

4th Grade Star Party

Over 500 people showed up to attend the 5th Annual 4th Grade Star Party last Monday. Even though it was a bit cloudy, clear views of Venus and Saturn were enjoyed by all. Inside the Parker-Damon school building, there were also excellent demonstrations by Sky and Telescope editor and Globe columnist Alan MacRobert, Sky and Telescope editor Kelly Beatty, Bruce Tinkler, Galileo as portrayed by Paul Manning, David Siegrist, Bob Phinney, George Roberts, and Acton's own Gary Green who put on an wonderful multi-media astronomy slide show in the cafeteria.

This year 4th graders from Boxborough's Blanchard Elementary school also joined the fun. Their presence was felt the moment one walked into the building as all their fabulous star party artwork was on display in the windows.

Thank you to the fifteen-plus astronomers, a mix of Acton residents and others from the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston (www.atmob.org) who gave of their time, knowledge and enthusiasm to entertain and inform the star party attendees. Also, thank you to Michelle Blaquiére from the local Dunkin Donuts for keeping the astronomers warm with an endless supply of coffee and all the Scout volunteers who helped everywhere.

Thanks to members of several groups who support and co-sponsor the 4th Grade Star Party each year, Acton Public Schools, the Acton Parent Involvement Project, the Outdoor Lighting Education Committee, and the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston.

Finally, thank you to Deborah Bookis, Acton Schools, K-12 Curriculum Coordinator, Karen Herther, Charlie Krakoff, and Donna McGavick from Acton PIP, and Gary Shrager. Without the help of these folks, the Star Party would be an impossible event to run every year. (See you next year, Eileen!)

If the 4th Grade Star Party or the Acton Star Party last fall got you thinking that you want dust off that old telescope you have in the closet but you don't

know what to do next, I encourage you to join a local astronomy club. Members of an astronomy club can help you purchase a new telescope, teach you how to use it, and guide you throughout the night skies. A couple of choices for clubs include: the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston (www.atmob.org) and the Skylight Astronomical Society in Stow (www.sasobservatory.org). Whichever steps you take next, keep looking up – See you next year.

Clear skies,
Steven Feinstein
4th Grade Acton Star Party Coordinator
www.actonstarparty.com

March 16th Billerica cancelled

March 23rd Groton – Ross Barros-Smith, John Blomquist, Grace Cho, John Maher, George Paquin, John Reed, Al Takeda, Bruce Tinkler and Dave Wilber.

Good morning John,
You and your club provided an awesome experience, and I mean that in the truest sense of the word. My husband and I, and also the students and other visitors were treated to an evening of exploring a view of that night sky that we rarely if ever get.

Thank you!!! I will check out the podcast and appreciate you passing it on to me. Hopefully, I will be booking another star party next year and my advertising will come from kids who went this year.

Again thanks to you and all your colleagues for sharing your time, knowledge and telescopes with us.

Regards,
Mary Hamelin

March 24th Girl Scouts Cedar Hill – Nanette Benoit, Virginia Renehan

March 27th King-Amigo School, Cambridge – Mike Adams, John Blomquist, Nina Craven, Tony Flanders, Dick Koolish, John Maher, Haldun Menali, Christine and Anthony Moulen, Scott Romanowski, John Sheff, and Dan Winchell.

Dear Virginia, Please thank the ATMob'ers for me and for our school communities. The astronomers were able to show students, parents, and teachers alike Saturn, Titan, Venus, nebula, stars and the craters on the moon. We were truly all thrilled! We lucked out because the clouds blew away and we had clear skies and a fair temperature! Thanks so much, we will have another star party in two years' time. How far in advance should I book it? :)
With much respect, gratitude and awe!

Laurie Ferhani
Amigos School

March 28th Endicott College, Beverly - John Blomquist, John Maher, John Reed, Al Takeda

March 29th Harvard CfA - Nanette Benoit, Dick Koolish, John Sheff, Virginia Renehan

Virginia, Dick, John, and Nanette,

Thank you so much for all of your help last night - it was fabulous. I have already heard from many of the people who were here, and each and every one has sent along their expressions of gratitude. We have really been lucky this week with the weather, and last night was right up there.

Regards for now,
Bruce Ward
Science Education Department
Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

~ Virginia Renehan ~

Workshop Announcement ...

The Saturday, May 5th workshop, led by Al Takeda, will be "Getting Started in Astrophotography" and is intended for beginners needing basic knowledge of astrophotography skills. The formal announcement and sign up will be posted on the club website.

Executive Board Meeting...

There will be an Executive Board Meeting on Wednesday, April 25th, 7PM at the clubhouse in Westford. The meeting is open to the membership.

~ Virginia Renehan ~

Bruce Gerhard Remembrance...



Bruce Gerhard - In Memoriam

As told by Bruce's son Christopher Gerhard on April 4, 2007

F. Bruce Gerhard was born in Trenton, N.J. on March 24, 1930. He had an older half-sister Josephine from his father's first marriage. Josephine had two sons, who now live on the West Coast. Josephine died from polio while still fairly young. Bruce's father remarried after the death of his first wife, and Bruce was born.

Bruce began school in Trenton, N.J. but completed his secondary school education at Philips Academy in Andover, MA. He graduated from Harvard University where he studied geology. His schooling was interrupted in the early 1950's when he served in an Army artillery unit during the Korean War. After Korea he did

post-graduate work in chemistry at Harvard, and studies at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) where he earned a doctorate in crystallography.

Bruce met his wife, Sylvia, who had been hiking on a trail on Mt. Washington when a bizarre event occurred. Some people were being silly and built an igloo, somehow causing an avalanche that killed one member of that group. Sylvia was the one who came across the body. The following week she decided to overcome her fears and “get back on the horse”, hiking again on the same trail. Bruce met his future wife that day on that trail while hiking with some friends.

While dating his future wife, Bruce worked for a mining company in Sudbury, Ontario. During the week he did mineral surveys on the rocks in the mines, measuring the percentage of nickel. On weekends he would drive the 1,200 miles roundtrip (24 hrs) from Sudbury, Ontario to Schenectady, N.Y. to see Silvia. Bruce and his wife later moved from Canada to Troy, N.Y. where Chris was born.

The family moved to Acton, MA and Bruce put his earlier studies to use doing semiconductor design, building magnetic core memory and writing software in assembly language for Forsythe Dental. Their house was located next to a swamp, and one year the entire basement was flooded. Bruce spent hours working on the sump pump that year.

Bruce and his family moved to Canton, where he lived in the same house for 37 years. Bruce did all his own electrical and mechanical work. He had begun doing this as a teenager, repairing cars for a local garage.

Bruce designed semi-conductors for General Telephone and Electronics (GTE) and later Epson Electronics. For NEC he worked in engineering implementation, helping to figure out ways to use semiconductors. When NEC moved away from Massachusetts, Bruce decided to retire, at age 62.

Bruce had many hobbies, and as his son Chris puts it, “He was never standing still.” He enjoyed climbing mountains - rock climbing as well as hiking. He enjoyed canoeing, skiing and scuba diving. He went jogging every day, 100 miles/month for 40 years, stopping only once or twice for an illness. He continued to jog even a year and a half after he was diagnosed with cancer and was undergoing treatment.

Bruce was a long-time member of the South Shore Neptunes Scuba Club. He was a scuba instructor at many different schools, primarily at the Boston YMCA. He frequently assisted the Quincy Civil Defense when they needed help finding objects used in crimes, or searching for lost boats and people.

Bruce joined ATMob in 1998, and joined the South Shore Astronomical Society soon after. His particular

interests were in the history of science, the history of exploration, and the processes and politics of the work involved in any scientific endeavor. During his lifetime Bruce visited 6 of the 7 continents – all except Australia. He and his wife particularly enjoyed a cruise to Antarctica, and visiting the Galapagos Islands. Bruce and Chris participated in the 2006 Solar Eclipse Trip to Egypt.

From John Reed, Clubhouse Director

F. Bruce Gerhard, a 9-year member of ATMob, passed away on Tuesday, April 3, 2007 at the age of 77. Only one year after beginning his association with the club in Sept. 1998, Bruce became a prominent member of the Clubhouse Committee, eventually taking overall responsibility for electrical work. Bruce assisted in many activities: furnace installation; electrifying the observatories; rebuilding barn doors; pouring concrete for observing pads, maintenance shed, walkways, and barn floors; taking charge of the 3-phase electrical distribution; spearheading the continuing replacement of old wiring; donating floor jacks to hold up the first floor; building the new basement support structure for the roof project; wiring the barn loft; wiring heaters throughout the clubhouse.

Bruce enjoyed attending New England astronomy conventions and star parties with us. Observing with Bruce was highly recommended as his pipe was very effective against mosquitoes. A coffee with Bruce was an experience since you increased your knowledge about whatever new book he was currently reading. And he always took the last cup of coffee with him for the road. Bruce attended every club picnic and party: New Year’s Eve, club anniversary, dedication of the Milon observing field and Ed Knight observatory, and a few birthday parties. Bruce traveled one of the farthest distances of any member to attend a clubhouse function. From Canton, he was among the one-hour-plus drive-time members of our club.

Art Swedlow recalls that Bruce’s mother worked at the library in the American Museum of Natural History in New York, which was probably instrumental in his career decision. During their acquaintance, Bruce exhibited his wide and deep knowledge of many things. They would have lengthy discussions at clubhouse work sessions over history, paleontology, New Jersey, astronomy, physics... It was said that if you asked Bruce the time, he would also explain how the clock worked!

May Star Fields deadline

Sat., Apr. 28th

Email articles to Al Takeda at

secretary@atmob.org

POSTMASTER NOTE: First Class Postage Mailed April 11th, 2007

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

FIRST CLASS

EXECUTIVE BOARD 2006-2007

PRESIDENT: Virginia Renehan (978) 283-0862
president@atmob.org

VICE PRES: Stephen Beckwith (978) 779-5227
SECRETARY: Al Takeda (508) 494-7877
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:
2005-06 Bernie Volz (603) 968-3062
2002-04 Eileen Myers (978) 456-3937

COMMITTEES

CLUBHOUSE : John Reed (781) 861-8031
Steve Clougherty (781) 784-3024
David Prowten (978) 369-1596

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 (EDT) from Universal Time (UT) subtract 4 from UT.

- Apr. 2 Full Moon
- Apr. 10 Last Quarter Moon
- Apr. 11 Venus passes 2.9 deg. S. of the Pleiades (M-45, Taurus) evening.
- Apr. 17 New Moon
- Apr. 22 Lyrid meteor shower peaks (22 hrs. UT)
- Apr. 24 First Quarter Moon