

STAR PARTY REPORTS

There were so many good reports of star parties this month that it warranted a separate newsletter supplement. Please take a few minutes to read about some of the great times had by all at the most recent events this past month. And of course please consider taking part in upcoming events. As can be seen from the reports below much fun can be had at these events and the school children really do appreciate our efforts. - *Michael Hill, Secretary* -

Morey School Star Party

Over 100 school children, grades 1st thru 4th, enjoyed the the fifth annual Morey School Star Party on Tuesday, February 15th. It also provided an opportunity to thank Patricia Keegan, the Morey School Science Specialist, who is retiring in mid-march after 35 years in the Lowell school system. There was a full evening of activity, from constructing planispheres, listening to a slideshow on the planets, participating in a Q & A session with Jim Tinkler, and last but not least observing thru all the various telescopes that were on hand. Among the volunteers were Eileen Myers, Bruce Berger, Bernie Kosicki, Jim Suslowicz, Scott Romanowski, and Dave Ronnow. I apologize for overlooking a few of you, as I lost my notes. We were treated with cookies, cakes, soft drinks, and the perennial chili, thanks to Diane Drobot and several teachers. Everyone had a good time, and are looking forward to our sixth visit to the heavens in 2006!

Jack Drobot

Butler Middle School Star Party

We finally got a break with the weather to participate at the Butler Middle School Star Party on Wednesday, March 30th. We started out with March 2nd, and then rescheduled to March 9th, that went to March 23rd, and finally March 30th. Talk about perseverance !! We had a great time, from making planispheres, to being regaled by Paul Manning, who did three back-to-back sessions as Galileo; to a very comfortable night under the stars with John Blomquist, Eileen Myers, David Ronnow, Bernie Kosicki,, Ed Los, Kelly Beatty, Paul Wagoner, Alana Parkes, and John Reed. Everyone was treated to assorted cookies, soft drinks, and plenty of coffee and hot chocolate. Carol Sutton and Patti Adams of the Butler Middle School Staff did a fine job, organizing the students, and planning the events. Thanks again, to all of you for all your work.

Jack Drobot

Birch Meadow Elementary School, Reading, MA

Held on March 16th, this annual star party had an attendance of close to 350. Thanks go to ten ATMoB members and friends who made this event happen with only one weather-related postponement. Ted Carlman gave several lectures on constellations. Paul “Galileo” Manning, in full costume, educated and entertained multiple audiences. Telescopes were provided by ATMoB members Bob Cohen, Karen Funkenstein, Howard LeVaux (binoculars), Charlie McDonald, Eileen Myers, Rich Nugent, Scott Romanowski, and club friend Alan McRae. Planets visible were Mercury, Saturn and Jupiter, and the Moon. Several members talked about the life cycle of stars, showing views of stars in their various stages. As an additional feature, Scott Romanowski attached his electronic imaging eyepiece to his telescope and was able to offer spectacular real-time views of the Moon and Saturn on a television set. Attendees gathered around the television and there were many lively impromptu question and answer sessions. The students expressed appreciation to all of the ATMoB members who helped out. The school will be supplying ATMoB with the students’ comments. These will be available for review at the April club meeting. This was a great star party and all helpers were treated to pizza and salad afterwards. A reporter and photographer from the local newspaper, *The Reading Daily Times Chronicle*, covered the event. Pictures appeared on the front page of the March 29th issue. **-Charlie McDonald, Star Party Coordinator-**

Killam Elementary School, Reading, MA

Held on March 22nd, this annual event had an attendance of about 275 and was held after a record-breaking nine weather-related postponements. Eleven club members and three club friends helped out. Paul “Galileo” Manning, in full costume, brought Galileo and his contributions to astronomy to life for several audiences. *Sky & Telescope* Senior Editor Alan MacRobert gave multiple lectures on constellations and reading star maps. Club member Hung Pham set up his e-Planetarium, an inflatable dome theater with a state-of-the-art high-resolution digital planetarium inside. Read more about it at www.eplanetarium.com The e-Planetarium received rave reviews, and audiences commented on how much they enjoyed his digital descriptions of the universe. Telescopes were set up for night sky viewing by club members Steven Feinstein (binoculars), Howard LeVaux, Ed Los, Charlie McDonald, Eileen Myers, John Reed, Scott Romanowski (with a telescope/electronic eye-piece/television set-up), David Ronnow, Frank Yulling, and club friend Alan McRae. The new editor of the *Reading Advocate*, “Mac” McEntire, was invited and did attend the star party. His article appeared in the March 31st issue. Thank you to everyone who took the time to come to Reading and help this school. All helpers went off their diets to enjoy the after-starparty traditional feast hosted by Killam’s fifth-grade science teacher Karen Rickershouser. Students and club members thoroughly enjoyed the evening. **-Charlie McDonald, Star Party Coordinator-**

Star Party - Acton under the Stars

March 14, 2005

Acton Public Schools, Acton Parent Involvement Project,
Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston - Bond Astronomical Society.
Credit photos by Paul Valleli C2005

Approximately three hundred students and an equal number of parents came to the Parker Damon school to enjoy astronomy discussions and a chance to view celestial objects through the member telescopes of the ATM's of Boston. Bob Naeye of Sky and Tel talked about the Cassini-Huygens probes and the Mars Rovers. Alan MacRobert showed how to make a planisphere and showed groups how to find the constellations. Paul "Galileo" Manning described the events for the evening in costume. Someday, he would like to get his fingerbone back from the Museum of the History of Science, Florence, IT. Joe Caruso of the CFA's Oak Ridge Observatory described Lunar Phases and Gary Green gave a presentation of HST pictures. Hung Pham of RITI set up a large black, inflatable planetarium in the gymnasium and presented mini-Imax shows about Saturn. Bruce Tinkler exhibited many basic books on astronomy. Red LED flashlights were given to all participants, courtesy the Haartz Corp.

Hot chocolate for the kids was provided by Roche Bros. Market and Dunkin Donuts donated coffee for the adults. The parent group provided cookies and the traditional chili to warm up the telescope operators. Many thanks go to Steve Feinstein, the star party coordinator and his volunteer staff from Acton for this early Astronomy Night activity, and to the approximately eighteen ATM volunteers. Some were Eileen Myers, Al Takeda, Bruce Berger, John Small, Phil Rounseville, Steve Feinstein, David Siegrist, Bruce Tinkler, Bernie Kosicki, Paul Valleli. Many students asked to see the Sun. Were they mixed up with the Moon or did someone misinform them? Paul Valleli



Alan MacRobert and Bruce Tinkler



Dave Siegrist Demonstrating Mirror Grinding



Al Takeda at his telescope



Bruce Berger at his telescope