



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. 17, No. 9 October 2005

This Month's Meeting...

Thursday, October 13th, 2005 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 Aaron Price from the AAVSO – Aaron's talk is titled "Drinking From a Firehouse: Getting Astronomy News Online". Astronomy is among the most open of the professional sciences. With modern Internet tools such as blogs, podcasts and RSS the public has access to astronomy news direct from the source and outside of the limitations imposed by traditional media. The results are both good and bad, and are sometimes hard to distinguish. Aaron Price has worked for the American Association of Variable Star Observers since 1998 where he is responsible for technology interests. His research focus is on cataclysmic variables. He is also the creator and head writer for the Slacker Astronomy podcast. He has an MS in astronomy and is currently considering applications to a PhD program in the Boston area.

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...

An Executive Board meeting was held on September 14th. The Board:

- Voted to approve reimbursing Virginia Renehan for mailing costs (~\$200) of astronomy tapes to Sri Lanka, and to solicit donations from the membership to (partially) reimburse the club. Several people have already donated or agreed to donate to this cause.

- Discussed developing procedures for disposing of excess club assets. No actions were taken as we needed more representation from the Clubhouse chairs.

- Voted to approve \$250 for the November 3rd Haystack Picnic (see article in this issue -- *we need your assistance to make this a success!*).

- Voted to acknowledge Shawn Bryant (Newton Roofing), after they completed the clubhouse roof, by providing a thank you in the newsletter and poster at the clubhouse and 10 years free membership.

- Voted to re-appropriate \$100 for publication of the club history via the Internet Bookmobile.

- Reviewed new ATMoB logos produced by Bruce Berger and suggested several changes which will be reviewed at the next Board meeting.

- Voted to provide mirror grinding grit to the Turkish ATM^{'s} through Haldun Menali. Mike Hill will work with Haldun.

- Developed a refreshments schedule for the next several meetings. Board members are being asked to provide refreshments as we need someone to do this. *We thank Victor Anderson who had been handling the refreshments. We'll gladly accept volunteers from the membership! See me if you're willing to either purchase the required items and/or help set up the refreshments at a meeting.*

A few other issues were discussed, although no other actions were taken.

Thanks to the board members that attended the meeting either in person or via telephone from out-of-town. There was a quorum present. - **Bernie Volz, President** -

September Meeting Minutes

Bernie Volz opened the 773rd meeting of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston with a warm welcome to our speaker Eric Buehrens. Eric spoke to us about his new observatory that he has constructed out in the Taconic hills of the New York Hudson Valley. The observatory is a roll-off roof design with a 12x12 observing space and attached 8x12 heated control room. Eric contracted out the fabrication of the steel track and caster system which ride on inverted 1½” steel angle brackets. The completed steel assembly included brackets welded at equal intervals to tie in the roof supports. The biggest problem to overcome was the prevalent ledge in this area of the state which he had to spend much time cutting into to pour the concrete footings and dig trenches for power and data cables. The observatory was started last July and had the telescope, a 14” Celestron, installed this past June. There are still a few details to finish up one of which is the removal of trees immediately surrounding the structure. Once done however Eric will have a wonderful view not only of the dark skies but of the surrounding valley below him. Following our main speaker, Haldun Menali gave a short presentation on his trip in August to Turkey and an Astronomical Symposium held there for the first time. After that Charlie McDonald showed us a wonderful power point presentation on the planets put together by the 5th grade students at the Killam School in Reading. The numerous star parties he has arranged for them inspired this very creative endeavor. Charlie then spoke about the upcoming USPS release of an astronomical stamp series in October and informed us that he has obtained 15 copies of the video produced by Harvard on the work of Annie Jump Cannon. These will be made available to members who have a use for them at a star party or other astronomical presentation. Charlie has also been asked to be an advisor to Harvard as they make an IMAX movie about asteroids. He asks that we all be his advisor and make this a group effort.

The business meeting followed with the usual reports by members of the board. Dan Winchell reiterated that club dues are due in September and added that the cost of Astronomy magazine has gone up to \$34 dollars. John Reed indicated that the work in the basement is complete and the roofing is to begin shortly. Mosquitoes are still an issue at the clubhouse and work is progressing on cutting back all low-lying brush surrounding the observing field where mosquitoes typically reside. The following upcoming events were announced. Executive board meeting on September 14th. Star Party at Stellafane on September 24th. Peter Bealo’s star party in Plaistow, NH on October 14th. Club picnic/dinner for members of Haystack Observatory on November 3rd. Bernie asked for donations to help defray the cost (paid for so far by Virginia Renahan) of sending video tapes to the Sri Lanka astronomy club. This was done in response to the Tsunami damage late last year to the local astronomy club. Lastly Howard Leveaux reported on his trip to the Black Forest

Star Party and Eileen Myers reported on her trip to Arunah Hill and the Northfield Conjunction events. ATMoB Member Art Swedlow was one of the speakers at the conjunction. - *Michael Hill* -

Membership Report...

This month we have 4 new members:

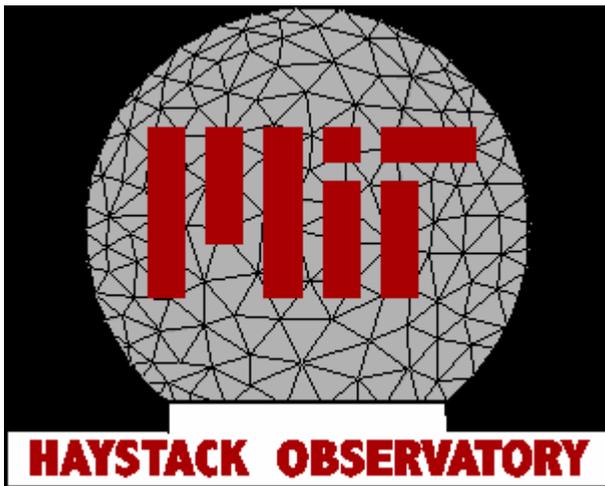
CARLOS HERNANDEZ from Cambridge
JOHN MAHER JR. from Hudson
ALAN SLISKI from Lincoln
RICHARD VISCO from Medford
DAVID WILBUR from Andover

The club is relying more on email as the primary form of communication. I have sent out renewal forms by mail only to those who do not have an email address listed with the club. The current renewal form is available on the ATMoB web site at <http://www.atmob.org/ATMoBRenewal2005.pdf>

Print the form, fill it out and mail it in to the address on the form with a check. Please double check your math. If you have an email address but do not receive email from [ATMoB-announce] then please sign up or I can put you on that list. The announce emails are few so it should not add much to your email clutter. If you need me to mail a renewal form to you I am happy to do that. My phone number is on the back page of this newsletter. I also bring renewal forms to the meetings. -*Dan Winchell, Membership Secretary* -

ATMoB Professional Astronomer Open House

On Thursday, November 3rd, right around the new moon and the 2005 Mars Opposition, ATMoB will host a thank you cookout and observing session for our generous friends from Haystack Observatory. We have also invited astronomers from Lincoln Labs, the ISC team from Draper Labs, and MIT Wallace Observatory.



**George R. Wallace,
Jr. Astrophysical
Observatory**



We're expecting 50 or more professional astronomers. This is a great opportunity for you to rub elbows with some important and exciting researchers, and share the work that we do with optical design and construction, photometry, comet and NEO discovery, and GRB and exoplanet validation. If you are involved with any of this we urge you to attend.

The open house starts at 4:30, sunset at 5:30. We need some folks to help with setup and to run the telescopes that night. Please give me a call or email if you'll be there to help.

Bruce Berger - 978-387-4189.

Clubhouse Report

Work at the clubhouse has continued from the efforts during the July and August work parties. The October session removed the construction debris pile from behind the barn; the dumpster rented from BFI for the roofing project is now 2/3 full. This was a tremendous effort by our member volunteers, and included a bbq lunch and solar viewing. This was possible because the Thursday evening mirror grinding crew took time to mow and trim the observing field and the area around the clubhouse, freeing the work party to continue with the major projects. Maintenance of the 17 inch dob continued and is now collimated. Work started by Bernie Volz in the glass room has been picked up by the Thursday night team. Roofing material has been spotted next to the house south porch, waiting for the roofing crew. The October work party will concentrate on three efforts:

1. Determine the sidewalk level from the current near-barn-front-door to the far barn front door; and from this determine the east door floor level. Then rebuild the far-barn-front-door.
2. Begin the removal of broken clapboards over the bulkhead doors(South side of house), adding single weight tar paper and new clapboards as necessary. Clapboards should be primed with the white solid stain used on the observatory prior to nailing in place.
3. The area around the clubhouse needs be mowed and trimmed again to make sure we can find all nails from the roofing project, before our tires find them thru the winter. Paul Cicchetti and Steve Clougherty will coordinate this work on Sat. October 15, 2005. A hearty thank you to all our members for a great effort this summer and fall.

Clubhouse Saturday Schedule

October 8	Phil Rounsville	Brian Leacu
October 15	Ed Budreau	Glen Meurer
October 22	Shilpa Lawande	Nitin Sonowane
October 29	David Richardson	Tom Wolf
November 5	Brian Maerz	John Small
November 12	Richard Burrier	Gary Walker

Upcoming Star Parties

Star Party Coordinator – Virginia Renehan (978) 283-0862
vrenehan@gis.net

October 26th (cloud date Oct 27th) – Squannacook Elementary School, Townsend.
100+ students and parents expected. Nice dark skies – we had a blast at this one last year Observing 6-8:30 pm Contact Mike Brown (978) 635-9600 wk, (978) 597-6743 hm.
brownesc@rcn.com

November 2nd (cloud date Nov 3rd) – Locke Middle School, 110 Allen Road, Billerica.
125+ students expected. Observing 6-8:00 pm . Contact 8th Grade Science Teacher Maureen Parker (978) 436-9420 School phone – (978) 436-9420
For school info go to
<http://www.billerica.mec.edu/locke/index.ohm>
For directions go to
<http://www.bostonbaseball.com/fields/locke.htm>

November 4th Astronomy Night - Tobin Middle School, 197 Vassal Lane, Cambridge.
200 students expected. Activities/demos on meteors, comets, and search for extraterrestrial life. NASA moon rocks on display. Contact Mary Rizzuto (617) 543-6708 cell, (617) 349-6600 Tobin School. Volunteer buffet 5-6pm, Observing 6-8:15 pm.
www.cpsd.us/tobin for directions.

November 4th (cloud date Nov 5th) Acton "Town-wide" star party. NARA Park, Acton. 800+ expected attendance. Contact Steve Feinstein (781) 515-5313 direct, (617) 835-0014 mobile or sjf@feinstein.net for further info www.actonstarparty.com
Observing 6-10 pm

AAVSO Fall Meeting

As part of its fall meeting, to be held October 14-15 at the Sheraton Newton Hotel in Newton, Massachusetts, the [American Association of Variable Star Observers](http://www.aavso.org/) will be conducting a two-day visual-observing workshop. Speakers include David Levy, AAVSO member and observer. For more information, please visit the following URL: <http://www.aavso.org/aavso/meetings/fall05.shtml>

Friday October 14th will be devoted to advanced techniques and tips for visual observers. Topics include using your eyes as a photometer, and observing faint variables in light-polluted skies. The **Saturday workshop**, which will be open to the public and free of charge, will concentrate on sessions for new observers and for the general astronomy public. Topics include binocular observing and observing tips, techniques, and tools for the beginning observer. AAVSO would like to use this workshop to encourage new observers from astronomy clubs, organizations and local schools, as well as to inform the general public about the exciting mission and fun involved in what AAVSO does. We look forward to seeing there. - *Gamze Menali, AAVSO* -

Request for Donations

In response the Tsunami damage late last year to the local Sri Lanka Astronomy club Virginia Renehan arranged to acquire a number of videotapes on astronomy and send them to these folks as a token of our support for the devastating ordeal that they had been through (from one astronomy club to another.) Virginia paid for the shipment of these with her own money but the executive board had agreed to first submit a request to the membership for donations to reimburse her costs, and to pay the remainder with club funds. Please consider donating to this effort at the next meeting. If you would like to do so then see Bernie Volz before or after the meeting.

Astronomical League Dues Structure

The Council decided to remove the requirement for all individual members of an astronomical society to belong to the Astronomical League for that society to join the League. This required a by laws change, which was put before the membership for a vote. It passed by a strong margin. As a result, the council will be developing a new standing resolution to offer more membership options. Our goal is to promote continued growth in the League and to improve services. This was in the REFLECTOR (Quarterly Publication of the Astronomical League) September 2005. -*Anna Hillier*-

**November *Star Fields* deadline
Saturday, October 29th**

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

POSTMASTER NOTE: First Class Postage Mailed October 7th , 2005

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

October 3 New Moon

October 10 First Quarter Moon

October 17 Full Moon

October 24 Last Quarter Moon

October 29 Mars is closest to Earth at 03:24 UT (43,137,342 Miles)