



# 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. 7 July 2005

## This Month's Meeting...

Thursday, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at 8:00 PM  
Phillips Auditorium

Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

*Parking at CfA is allowed for duration of meeting*

THIS MONTH'S MEETING is a members' night. The presentations by members' will be:

- Planetary Nebula's by David Aucoin
- Update on the 32" telescope project by Mario Motta
- Internet access from the clubhouse by Bruce Berger
- NEAF 2005, a visit to Vassar Observatory and Nantucket plate stacks by Paul Valleli
- Glass Room update by Mike Hill
- Counterbalanced tripod for a 6" scope by Joseph Rothchild
- The Night Sky Network by Virginia Renehan

Feel free to join together 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.

- Bernie

**Reminder:** There will be no monthly meeting in August. Meetings will resume September 8<sup>th</sup>.

## President's Message...

I'm back! As many of you probably remember, I was president for 2 years in 1993/94. Exactly what I signed up for is slowly coming back to me ... It really isn't that bad. And, I have a lot of excellent help!

I'm honored that the nominating committee put their trust in me and for all of you to have elected me. I want to again thank Bruce Berger for all his efforts in the past year as president. As he outlined in the June Star Fields, it was a very busy and active year. And, he brought a lot of energy, enthusiasm, new ideas, and devotion to the position. He's also been extremely helpful in the transition.

I also want to thank the other officers and committee chairs - outgoing, staying, and new - for their willingness to volunteer their time and effort. Thanks! Paul Cicchetti, John Reed, and Steve Clougherty and many others have been doing a fantastic job at the clubhouse - and a lot more is planned for the coming year, including a new roof, lots of work on the barn, painting, and much more.

I'm also amazed at the number of Star Parties the club has put on in the past several years and the level of participation! Thanks to all those that have been involved in one way or another. There's a lot of momentum in the club on various fronts, especially star parties and the clubhouse. And, I hope we can continue that momentum in the coming year!

It is membership renewal time and we'll soon post the renewal form on the ATMob web site ([www.atmob.org](http://www.atmob.org)) - watch for an email with the URL for the form. We'll mail forms a bit later to those that haven't renewed. So, please renew promptly so we can save the mailing costs! We're keeping the club dues the same as in the past several years. But, I urge all members to donate what they can! We ran a deficit this past year and this coming year is also looking to be the same, so donations can mitigate the need to raise dues next year.

- **Bernie Volz, President** -

## New Executive Board

At the Annual June Meeting, a new executive board was voted in by the membership present. Some of the past members have stayed on and a couple new members of the board have joined in leading the club forward for the next term.

President	Bernie Volz
Vice President	Virginia Renehan
Secretary	Michael Hill
Treasurer	Gary Jacobson
Membership Secretary	Daniel Winchell
Member at Large	Bruce Tinkler
Member at Large	Dave Prowten
Past President	Bruce Berger
Past President	Eileen Myers
Past President	Bob Collara

## June Meeting Minutes. . .

Bruce Berger opened the 771<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston with a warm welcome to our featured speaker, Todd Gross – Chief meteorologist at Boston's Channel 7 News Station. Todd spoke to us about determining ideal conditions for observing which include both transparency and seeing. In addition Todd spoke about what causes these conditions and why this part of the country has the conditions it does as opposed to a place like Florida. He used the active web service provided at Phillips Auditorium to take us via his web site, [www.weatherman.com](http://www.weatherman.com) to a weather modeling site that shows pressure gradients, and therefore air movement patterns at various levels of the atmosphere from ground level up to 18,000 feet where the jet stream exists. He showed us how one can look for areas of high pressure ridges at both low and high levels. Based on investigations he feels that the probability for excellent conditions are highest when these exist at both levels. Using the latest maps he showed the jet stream over us - a common condition and the large high pressure ridge over the southern portion of the country – another common condition. This, he said, explains why the seeing is often much better when one goes to Florida compared to New England views. In order to judge the current seeing Todd suggested a few indicators. With a 16" or greater aperture he suggested looking at M57 with two prominent stars just outside the ring at 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> mag, along with a dim double star and of course the central star. For medium sized scope he suggested the Trapezium cluster in M42. We often see four stars but on nights of excellent seeing we should easily see six. For smaller scopes in the 4" range he suggested looking for craterlets on the floor of the large crater Plato. One is easy, 6-7 indicates good seeing, 8-9 indicates great seeing. Todds main point: Once you know your conditions – choose your observing to match the conditions. Be it big nebula, tight nebula, double stars or planets and the moon pick your objects based on the seeing and transparency and you will never have a bad night of observing.

The business meeting followed the talk including standard reports by committee members and club officers. Bernie Volz presented the annual treasurers report for Gary Jacobson. John reed reported that for the last 3 months there had been 42 member days of work done up at the club house and thanked all those that have helped out. Bruce Berger announced two star parties in Chelmsford and Eileen Myers reminded us of the upcoming club picnic. Tonight was Bruce Berger's last night as President and for his last duty in that capacity for the club he presented certificates of appreciation to a number of persons he felt had put effort into the club above and beyond the normal call. Ten certificates were presented. Their names are listed later in the newsletter. Bruce then presented the slate of officers nominated for the next year. After verifying that no other nominations had been presented to the secretary, Paul Valleli motioned that we accept the slate of officers as is.

The membership present voted unanimously to accept. New executive board member and president of the club, Bernie Volz then took over the meeting. First order of business was to vote on a July meeting which was voted in favor. New business included the resignation of Paul Valleli as member of the club's historical committee which he has been part of for the past 35 years. Paul turned over a number of important documents that he had in his possession to Bernie for transfer to safe keeping. Lastly Mario spoke of the Dark Sky bill and of successful actions taken in Connecticut in that regard.

~ *Michael Hill* ~

## Membership Report...

We have five new members this month

HENRY HOUH from Lexington

RUSSELL A CHAPLIS from Rutland

QINGXIA TONG from Cambridge

KAPIL DEV SINGH from Brighton

BRUCE WILSON from Newton

~ *Daniel Winchell, Membership Secretary* ~

## Treasurer's Report...

As of June 27, 2005:

Checking account balance: \$4,699.57

Money market savings account balance: \$35,436.07

Revenues for June: \$ 128.23

Expenses: 2,554.82

Net outflow: \$2,426.59

General donation fund: \$1,524.15

Land fund: 3,093.61

Clubhouse fund: 1,118.80

Thanks to one member who applied for corporate matching of his donation. This month we received a \$25 check from The Polaroid Fund. If your company has a donation matching program, please be sure to use it to double your donation to the club.

~ *Gary Jacobson, Treasurer* ~

# Club Picnic Report

On June 11th 2005, the first joint picnic in ATMoB history took place with the South Shore Astronomical Society, and we had a blast! It was the first hot, sunny day of the season, but despite the heat the day was enjoyed by all. From his vantage point on the side porch, Paul Valleli estimated that there were some 80+ attendees. Also that day, thanks to an effort spearheaded by Anna Hillier, Paul received the ATMoB Club Service Award for his longevity of service to the club - over 50 years, wow! Thanks Paul! As for picnic fare, Eileen Myers brought her wonderful salmon dish, which complemented the many vittles brought by the rest of the attendees. The dessert venue was well worth more than one visit, and according to Dr. Swedlow, "one can be real bad every now and then without upsetting the system." Edible comet ice cream treats and comet fact sheets were available for junior members, in readiness for the July 4<sup>th</sup> Deep Impact. John Reed had acquired approximately 120 hamburgers and several packages of 'dogs', which he proceeded to move along atop the grill in his well-practiced, unique manner.

Bruce Gerhard and Berger set up the club tent awning. And before the arrival of guests, several members including Bruce G, Dave Siegrist, Karen and Art Swedlow, John Blomquist and Dick Koolish, moved tables and cleaned and ordered the rest of the accoutrements of the clubhouse (garbage bins, chairs, etc). Eileen arrived with a carload of picnic supplies, and with all the helpers unloading and setup went quickly.

When the proceedings were well under way, John B. and Bruce G. set up their scopes for solar viewing. In the morning there were heavy clouds, but by afternoon they had cleared enough to make it possible to view the sun. Three different types of solar filters were available: hydrogen alpha and Thousand Oaks glass, both on John Blomquist's G11 mount, and Bruce G's Baader mylar filter. This made it possible for people to compare the views through all three.

People congregated under the tent to schmooze in relative shade. Folks from the South Shore Club said they were impressed by our facility. It was good seeing Ted Poulos and Vlad Vudler, who seemed to be very much back in the swim of things. Victor Anderson was seen to dive bomb the food table for a second (or was it third) time: a sure sign of the success of the culinary portion of the afternoon's activities....it was, after all, a picnic. After the peak heat of the day, 24 stalwart astronomers, junior astronomers, and family members climbed the infamous Haystack Hill: viewing along the way the Westford Radio Telescope bubble, the Firepond Optical Facility, the Lincoln Laboratory Space Surveillance 25 meter radio telescope, and the Millstone Hill Observatory 46 meter, steerable antenna and 67 meter, zenith antenna. At the top, the huge Haystack bubble overshadowed the ground level twin parabolic reflector display; this display was especially enjoyed by the junior members, who whispered to each other via the separated parabolic reflectors.

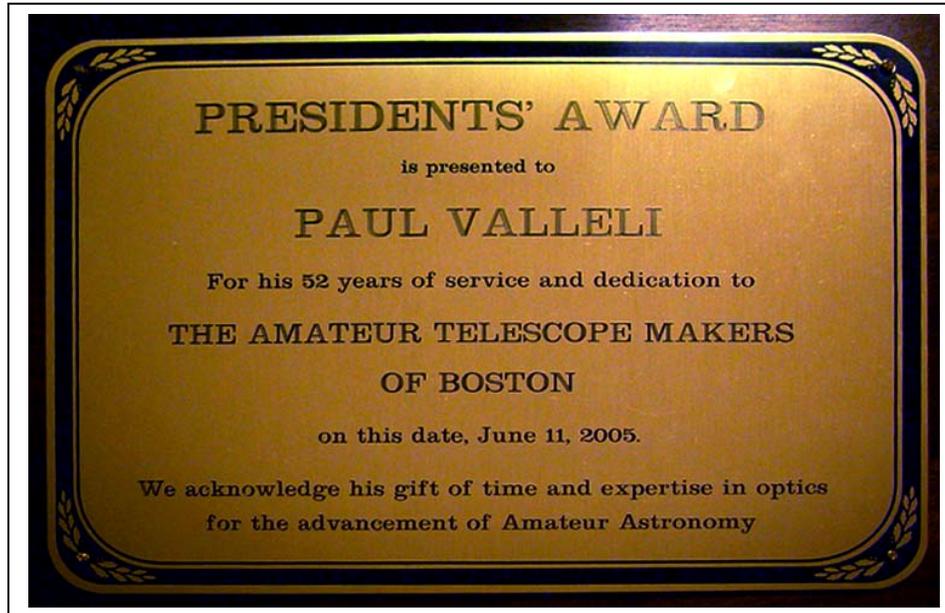
Along with Phil Rounseville and Brian Lecau who set up scopes, Ken Launie and his son Ian brought a recently acquired 4-inch Alvin Clark scope for a sort of "first light". It wasn't the 'first' in its 134 year life, of course, but it was the first time Ken got to look through it at anything astronomical, and he suspects it was the first time it had actually been used in a number of years. Despite hazy conditions we looked at Jupiter and the Moon. Ken was gratified (and relieved) to see a nice image with good contrast. It was great to see the clubhouse in such a fine, active state, and of course it is always fun to be among like-minded friends, and even more fun when it includes such good food.

*~Thanks to all those that contributed their recollections for this report~*



# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD is given with great gratitude to PAUL VALLELI

As mentioned in the picnic report one of the key events of the day was the presentation by Anna Hillier of an award to Paul Valleli in recognition for his time and service to the club over the last 52 years.



And then a few more . . .



## Paul had a few words to say after receiving this:

"I want to thank Anna and the club very much for this consideration. We have known each other since 1956 when we both joined the club's Project Moonwatch Observing Station. Also, I thank Bruce Berger very much for the Presidents' Award. It has been a great pleasure to serve the club for four terms as President and to see the MIT Haystack Farmhouse as our home for the past 28 years. I began as a Junior Member and I hope that our educational outreach programs lead to many more young amateur astronomers becoming active in our group as time goes on."

"I regard my greatest achievement as the result of Harvard Astronomers introducing me to the ATM's of Boston so that I could have a telescope of my own. (I was always pestering for telescope time). The training in telescope making I received lead to a productive career making optics for space telescopes and assisting in the fabrication of reconnaissance lenses for the Defense Department. The highlight was seeing the Voyager spacecraft cruise past the outer planets with telescopes I had polished, assembled, and tested. As I reduce my work commitments, I look forward to spending more time in astronomical learning and pursuits"

*Congratulations from the ATMoB !!*

## Club History publication

Both Eileen and I are working feverishly on adding appropriate items to the history. I was always in favor of trying to sell the history on our own to make a little income for the club. However, since no fairy godmother has appeared in the last 10 years. I have taken it upon my self with the help of Eileen (who has far too many projects to consume her time) Not to mention working full time these days.

So, I will try to get together what suggestions have been offered and just go with what we have that is relevant to the current history. Finding some black and white photos. These photos will be consistent with the text. Instead of just shoving pictures into the history for the sake of having pictures.

We will discuss a place and time with Eric Eldred of the Internet Bookmobile to publish our history. After August or the First of September he will probably work his way down the East Coast and over through the South and head back to California and his mission. The club history will be published for a next to nothing cost and will involve anyone interested in helping run the binding and folding machines. This involves the club history being on the Public Domain website. Besides, like Ed Los keeps saying "What better way to spread the club history" for people to read. So, The Internet Bookmobile has a website and Eric Eldred is more than happy to talk on the computer with anyone that wants more information about him. He is on Hiatus until the end of July and will be up and running after August 2005. Bye for now. *Anna Hillier /Eileen Myers (ATMoB Historical Committee)*

## Certificates of Appreciation

As mentioned in the minutes outgoing President Bruce Berger presented a number of certificates of appreciation to members he felt deserving of some extra recognition. The recipients of these certificates were:

- JOHN REED
- PAUL CICHETTI
- DAVE PROWTON
- JOHN BLOMQUIST
- ED LOS
- BRUCE GERHARD
- VIRGINIA RENEHAN
- MIKE HILL
- CHARLIE MCDONALD
- GARY WALKER

## Charlie McDonald Receives Award

In early June, ATMoB member and past star party coordinator Charlie McDonald received a very special award presented to him by the students at the Killam Elementary School in Reading, MA where he has done so much astronomical public outreach. The award was presented as part of their Pillars of Community celebrations in which they honor individuals that exhibit one or more pillars of character. Charlie received one of seven awards presented this year. The pillar of character that best described Charlie was "Caring". During a ceremony that included students singing songs and reading caring messages Charlie was presented with a certificate that read "You never tire of helping us in the Reading Schools whether with astronomy or diversity or getting along. You care for us, teach us and inspire us to learn. You set a great example by your words and your deeds. We thank you for being a true Pillar of Our Community. Together we can make a difference." The June 8<sup>th</sup> issue of the Reading Daily Times Chronicle ran a story about this event and it includes a very nice picture of Charlie receiving this most deserving award. Congratulations Charlie!!

## Clubhouse Saturday Schedule

July 9	Bruce Gerhard	??
July 16	Mike Hill	Bruce Berger
July 23	Steve Herzberg	Eileen Myers
July 30	Jack Drobot	Dave Siegrist
August 6	Closed for Stellafane	
August 13	Eric Johansson	Joseph Rothchild
August 20	Rich Nugent	Bill Toomey
August 27	Rick Burrier	Brian Maerz
September 3	Steve Herzberg	Dave Siegrist

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<<<< **No August Starfields** >>>>

**September *Star Fields* deadline**  
**Saturday, August 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Email articles to Mike Hill**  
**at [noatak@aol.com](mailto:noatak@aol.com)**

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**POSTMASTER NOTE:** First Class Postage Mailed July 8, 2005

Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, Inc.  
c/o Daniel 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](mailto:president@atmob.org)

VICE PRES: Virginia 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](http://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.*

July 6 New Moon  
July 8 Mercury reaches greatest eastern elongation (26°)  
July 14 First Quarter Moon  
July 21 Full Moon  
July 27 First Quarter Moon