



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

Vol. 16, No. 7 December 2004

This Month's Meeting...

Thursday, December 9th, 2004 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 Ed Ting, a well known writer on astronomy and telescopes & producer of ScopeReviews.Com. His topic will be "The Best and The Worst: A serious (and not so serious) look at equipment available today for the amateur astronomer." Ed Ting is a well known writer on astronomy and telescopes. His articles have appeared in Sky & Telescope and Night Sky, and his review web site is very popular among amateur astronomers. He has appeared on New Hampshire Public Radio and on the Manchester NH television show, Star Hop. 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...

Sometimes we take things for granted. When NHAAS member **Kevin Ackert** visited the clubhouse last week, I gave him a tour. He just kept wowing! You see NHAAS doesn't have a facility like ours. We are so fortunate that MIT & Lincoln Labs have been our benefactors these past years. So take advantage of your clubhouse, and appreciate that not every club enjoys what we have.

Anyone that's ever tried our clubhouse internet connection has been frustrated over the slow pace when browsing around or downloading information. I had a meeting with

our landlord recently and asked if we could tap into that fat internet pipeline that connects almost every building on the hill. And guess what? Installation has already begun on tying the clubhouse in with MIT's network. What this will mean is a super fast, always on connection. And our buddies at Draper Labs have provided two fast computers for us to use. Stay tuned for more information.

Gary Walker announced that the 20" is complete! Please contact Gary, Mike Hill or me for training before using the scope. The views and photos taken through it are stunning!

The club's other large scope, the 17½" Coulter, has just had an overhaul. **Steve Clougherty**, **Mike Hill** and I have completely revamped the mechanical systems, including a new mirror cell, new spider and dew-heated diagonal, cooling fans on the primary and a longer tube. Everything should be operational by the time you read this so if you've been checked out on the new procedures, go for it!

Best wishes to everyone for a safe and joyous holiday season, and wishing you a prosperous new year!

Clear skies,

- **Bruce Berger**, *President* -

You are invited to the ATMob New Year's Eve Party

The ATMob Clubhouse in Westford will be open **New Year's Eve**, Friday evening, December 31st at 6:30 PM for partying and observing. The party is on regardless of the weather.

Bring something tasty to share (entrée type dishes would be very welcome) since folks will be arriving and leaving all evening. Bring your family and friends too. Dress warmly, and join us to welcome in 2005 together with good food, good friends, and good observing. If you can, RSVP to Eileen at starleen@charter.net or 978-461-1454 (day) or 978-456-3937 (evening). Last minute partygoers and late arrivals are of course Welcome!

At 7pm we will celebrate the Greenwich New Year, and will celebrate New Year's arrival for each time zone!

Bring warm clothing for observing. We will also have indoor games, quizzes, songs, and PRIZES. Bring any easy group games or jokes to share too. Let us know if you know of a fun game we can all play.

We plan to be open past local midnight, when we will celebrate some more! See you there, and have a Happy New Year!

Co-Hosts, Clubhouse Committee Members Eileen Myers and Art Swedlow

November Meeting Minutes. . .

Our speaker for the evening was Dr. Kenneth Janes, professor of astronomy at Boston University. His topic for the evening was the history of astronomy at BU, and a view of what is in process now. Astronomy at BU has been going on for about 115 years. Early instruments included a 7" Saegemuller reflector which was housed first on Beacon Hill, and later at the school observatory at Copley Square. Another early scope was a 6.5" Warner and Swasey scope which arrived at the university in 1910. Over the years this scope gave excellent images and is still in use today. BU had a camp in Peterborough, NH where a 5" Alvin Clark refractor was the primary instrument.

BU had a rebirth of its astronomy program in the late 50's with the advent of the space race. Several of the faculty of BU had been involved in imaging from high altitude and space, and went on to found Itek, a local company at the forefront of space imaging. The Itek group was responsible for much of the success of the Corona imaging program. Building on that base, Dr. Gerald Hawkins moved to BU in 1960 and began building the program. He was an astronomer with a love of archeology, and was one of the first people to recognize the astronomical significance of Stonehenge. He attracted several faculty from nearby institutions and began working in the space and rocket sciences. That interest continues today in the program. Areas of research include: terrestrial and ionospheric magnetic field studies, tomography, airglow studies, millimeter wave studies and a partnership with Lowell observatory in developing an .5 kilometer optical interferometer

Dr. Janes talks and images were well received by the club, and there were a number of questions by interested members after.

Virginia continued with the business meeting. Highlights included:

- a very successful open house was held at the club house. All those involved were thanked for the effort.
- Mario will have the RASC handbooks available in December. Cost for members: \$18.
- A high speed internet connection is being setup at the clubhouse.
- Dr. Sarah Schencher of Harvard spoke to us about an exhibition in the Science Center concerning natural history, and in part how optics affected it. There was some discussion about having a club event at the exhibit. Dr. Schencher was also responsible for organizing the observations of the transit of Venus, and was thanked for her effort.
- Gary Walker reported of the great progress on the 20" scope in the roll off observatory. Several areas of need were identified:
 1. We need a cloth shroud for the scope
 2. We need a floor covering (carpet?)

3. Reorganize the red lights (distribute, vary intensity)

4. Cover for the primary

Members with energy and ideas are invited to contribute.

- Charlie M. spoke about astronomy videos, and star parties.
- Mario M. gave a report of how Tal is doing after his surgery. Progress is good, and we all look forward to seeing him at the December meeting.
- Paul V. reported on the Antique Telescope Society meeting on Nantucket
- Eileen M. announced the upcoming New Years party at the clubhouse. Keep that date open!

Virginia adjourned the meeting for a time of food and fellowship among the members. – *David Siegrist* -

Treasurer's Report...

As of November 23, 2004:

Checking account balance: \$ 6,099.76

Money market savings account balance: \$39,171.31

Monthly revenues: \$507.62

Monthly expenses: 236.33

Net gain: \$271.29

Land fund balance: \$ 3,067.61

Clubhouse donation fund balance: \$1,294.40

General donation account balance: \$1,380.65

Thanks to club members for \$16 given to the general donation account during November. Also in November, \$141 from the clubhouse donation fund was used for re-aluminizing the mirror and diagonal of the club's 17" telescope.

- *Gary Jacobson, Treasurer*-

Membership Report...

This month we would like to welcome the following new members :

RON MEDINA, Arlington MA

LAURIE SCHMITT, Brighton MA

JAMES DANAHER, Cambridge MA

W. CHARLES MCINERNEY, Lowell MA

For questions please email membership@atmob.org or call 603-891-2702. Thank you! - *Shilpa Lawande*-

Clubhouse Report

Despite being the Thanksgiving Day weekend, a few members showed to help with the last work party this calendar year. Door stiffeners were added to the new shed in order to add a hasp to it (the lock from the far barn is now being used on this hasp, with an old lock on the far barn). New shelving was installed in the far barn to accommodate some of the wood that was stacked on the floor. A large portion of the west barn was scraped and stained in preparation for winter. Measurements were taken for the building of a ramp for the shed. And red light stripping was installed in the Knight observatory. We also had a special guest show up to the clubhouse today. Monique Reed brought John's father, Roy, to visit us. He is 99 years young, with his next birthday coming up in Feb (100)! Many more years to you, Roy!

Thanks to: Dick Koolish, Bruce Gerhard, John Reed, Dave Prowten, Anna Hillier, John Blomquist, Sai Vallabha, Art Swedlow, Eileen Myers, Steve Clougherty, Virginia Renahan, and Karl Goedecke.

Clubhouse Saturday Schedule

December 11	Jack Drobot	Joseph Rothchild
December 18	David Richardson	Tom Wolf
December 25	Closed For Christmas	
January 8	Dave Siegrist	Jim Suslowicz

New Member Orientation

We had our second new member orientation on Saturday, Nov 6. It was extremely well attended with close to 30 old and new members. Dave Siegrist gave a tour of the mirror making equipment and a mirror grinding demo. Lew Gramer showed the new members around the night sky with his laser pointer and wonderful stories about the fall constellations. John Blomquist showed the new members the roll-off observatory and the Schuppman telescope. We would like to thank all those who helped out at the orientation and shared their telescopes with our new members. The next orientation will be in late January or early February (exact date to be announced). If you would like to help out with a talk, demo or any other activity for new members, please contact me or Virginia Renehan.

- *Shilpa Lawande* -

Lunar Star Party

The skies at the school were completely clouded over at 8 o'clock, but the clouds broke up rapidly for the Lunar Eclipse at 9:00 P.M. at the **Parker Middle School** Lunar Star Party on October 27th. There was a low turnout of students, the seventh game of the World Series kept most of them away, but about 45 students and their parents enjoyed the presentations by Jack Drobot, Scout Matt Arsenault, and Kelly Beatty coupled with Lunar observations and anything astronomically interesting by telescope volunteers John Blomquist, Ed Los, Tom Luminello, Eileen Myers, John Reed, Scott Romanowski, Paul Valleli, and Dave Wallace. Thanks to you all, and an especially big Thank You to Joan Kadaras, the Parker School Coordinator, who provided snacks and seemed to be anywhere she was needed! - *Jack Drobot* -

FOR SALE

Custom-built 12.5-inch f/4.8 truss-tube Dobsonian. Built in 1993. First owner (other than maker). Built like a tank. Smooth motions. Newly coated Galaxy Optics full-thickness primary. Tectron 2-inch/1.25-inch focuser. AstroSystems mirror cell and spider. Orion 8x50 finder with detachable bracket. No eyepieces included. Heavy, but fits into back seat of passenger car when broken down. \$1000. Buyer must pick up in Cambridge. Joshua Roth, ATMob member. (617) 864-7360 x160, jroth at SkyandTelescope dot com, or 49 Bay State Rd., Cambridge, MA 02138

January *Star Fields* deadline
Saturday, January 1st

Email articles to Mike Hill
at noatak@aol.com

POSTMASTER NOTE: First Class Postage Mailed December 3, 2004

Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, Inc.
c/o Shilpa Lawande, Membership Secretary
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FIRST CLASS

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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 Standard Time (EST) from Universal Time (UT) subtract 5 from UT.

December 4 Last Quarter Moon
December 7 Moon occults Jupiter in morning sky
December 11 New Moon
December 13 Geminid Meteor shower
December 18 First Quarter Moon
December 21 Winter Solstice
December 26 Full Moon