

Vol. 15, No. 1 January 2004

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

January 2004 Newsletter

President's Message...

HAPPY NEW YEAR, EVERYONE! I am pleased to report that we have just ended a successful year, full of star parties, lectures, mirror completions, and many observing opportunities. 2003 was the year that brought Mars and auroras to everyone's attention. 2004 may become known for comets. Comet 2002 T7 (LINEAR) may become a naked-eye object this spring at magnitude 1, but will be low in the morning sky in May, near Sirius on Thursday, May 6th. Comet C/2001 Q4 (NEAT), also possibly naked eye and also near Sirius on May 6th, will be moving through a slanted path from Canis Major through the Big Dipper from May through June.

Then of course on Tuesday, June 8th as the Sun rises the disk of Venus will already be transiting the disk of the Sun. It is being said that it will be discernible by the naked eye, but of course all precautions for solar observing must be taken. This should be a good time to equip those small telescopes with CCDs and video cameras.

Meanwhile, to get ready, try your hand on Ceres, the first asteroid to be discovered. Italian astronomer Giuseppe Piazzi found it on January 1st, 203 years ago. Ceres reaches opposition on Friday, January 9th, and so is in the middle of its period of best visibility. Now at its brightest at mag 6.8, it is in Gemini, conveniently located 2-degrees from Castor, and should be easily visible in good binoculars. Remember that the Dawn Mission, part of NASA's Discovery Program, will launch in May 2006, and will study the two largest asteroids (minor planets), Vesta beginning in July 2010, and Ceres beginning in August 2014.

-Eileen Myers-

December's Minutes...

The December meeting of the ATM's of Boston was called to order by our esteemed President Eileen Myers. This being our holiday meeting we continued our tradition of the reading of poetry and prose by our astronomer laureates. Tal Mental began with his rendition of "Twas the Night before Christmas" by Henry Livingston. He continued with the "Cremation of Sam Magee" by Robert Service. Bob Collara quoted the "Star Splitter" by Robert Frost. Finally, Charlie McDonald recited part of the "Pale Blue Dot" by Carl Sagan. All renditions were well received and appreciated by our gathered members.

Our main speaker, David Aguilar, was next introduced. David is the director of Public Relations at CfA. His talk was entitled (broadly) why do we bother to study astronomy. David began with a discussion of answers various professional astronomers within CfA gave to that question. The consensus seemed to be they loved solving the big puzzles. They loved working on big problems with no clear or easy answers. David continued with his own personal history, and how that has shaped his love for astronomy. David showed slides of 'zillions' of scopes he has made. The scopes ranged from small refractors and reflectors he has given away to various friends and neighbors, to 20+ inch reflectors he ground and then built the split ring scope around. The array of mirrors and scopes was truly impressive.

Why did he do it, and why does he continue? Those were the messages David was most concerned with communicating with us. His motivation was the desire to continue to stretch, to continue to learn. There were still puzzles about the universe that he desired to understand.

The scopes he has built were a tool to apply what he learned about math and science, as he sought to figure out those puzzles. David left us with a challenge to discover truth in its context. Not to seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge or its discovery, but rather to see it as a step in extending our vision, physical and otherwise.

The business meeting followed our speaker. Some highlights:

- Paul C. announced a club house committee meeting on the 20th.
- Tal will autograph the Caldwell object book donated to the club last month. Tal did significant work in its development being the editor and proof reader.
- A star party was announced for Jamaica Plain Jan 26.
- A star party in Acton (400+ visitors) was announced for January.
- Executive committee reported the clubhouse was over budget as a result of the work in improving drainage, and setting up the electric service to the observatory.
- March 26th is the 70th anniversary of the ATMob, and the 80th anniversary of the Bond Astronomical society. Eileen is interested in marking the anniversary with a special event. More news will follow.

The meeting was adjourned to a time of food and fellowship.

- *David Siegrist - (Standing in for Michael Hill)*

Membership Report...

This month we welcome new member, GARY SALES from Framingham, MA and past member DAVE AUCOIN from Waltham, MA. As of December 2003, the total ATMob membership count is 353.

- *Shilpa Lawande, Membership Secretary* –

Clubhouse Report...

The clubhouse schedule is [here](#).

-*John Reed, Clubhouse Director*-

New Astronomy Store for Southern New Hampshire

Greetings and Clear Skies, I would like to announce my store called the Astronomy-Shoppe, It will be opening in Plaistow NH in Jan 4, 2004. I will be the new east coast dealer for Coronado instruments and will be carrying the new P.S.T telescope (Sub angstrom Hydrogen Alpha) cemax eyepieces, and MaxScope 40. Also, I will be carrying a unique line of accesories, from Right-Stuff and Farr Industries that will include, mounts, cases and other badly needed accesories. I will also have used telescopes and accessories, and will take trades/and consignments. Please feel free to contact me for futher information 978 457 1963 or 603 382 0836 or vist my website at www.astronomy-shoppe.com

Thank you,

Tony Costanzo