



# STAR STUFF

The Newsletter of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club

Volume 18, Number 9

September 2009

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## Observing Anew!



*Renovated Lincoln Park High School Observatory re-opens through guidance of Tim Dey, others, with new paint, and a new Celestron C-14 telescope inside, after months of planning and work. (Jim Barnes photo)*

Tim Dey, FAAC Member

An **enormous** "Thank You" to all the many members of the FAAC, Lincoln Park Schools, the City of Lincoln Park, Joseph Griggs and Co., and all others who contributed to make the HJR Observatory celebration a hugely successful dedication ceremony. We had members of the press, L.P. Superintendents, Board Members, Principals, Teachers, the Mayor, Counsel members, general public and over 200 of L.P.'s schoolchildren present for the dedication. FAAC members added greatly to the atmosphere by giving generously of their time and money in helping to prepare for this day, by willingly setting up a great many telescopes that showed the folks in attendance the power of what we have to offer the public. Our welcoming smiles, willingness to teach, and general good cheer went a long way in impressing the school board, superintendents and others in charge of the purse strings. They now have a good idea of what we can do when we set our minds to something, and this will only help our club to grow in both membership and mission.

**See published articles** - [www.thenewsherald.com/articles/2009/09/20/news/doc4ab4fe8cc2ba5370847730.tx](http://www.thenewsherald.com/articles/2009/09/20/news/doc4ab4fe8cc2ba5370847730.tx) – and - [www.detnews.com/article/20090919/SCHOOLS/909190337/1410/METRO01/School-observatory-shines-again](http://www.detnews.com/article/20090919/SCHOOLS/909190337/1410/METRO01/School-observatory-shines-again)

# STAR STUFF

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*STAR STUFF* is published eleven times each year by:

**FORD AMATEUR ASTRONOMY CLUB**  
P.O. Box 7527  
Dearborn MI 48121-7527

PRESIDENT:	Doug Bauer
VICE PRESIDENT:	Chuck Jones
SECRETARY:	Lori Poremsky / Kevin Medon
TREASURER:	Steve Flessa
NEWSLETTER EDITOR:	Dale Ochalek

## Club Information:

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club (FAAC) meets on the fourth Thursday each month, except for the combined November/December meeting on the first Thursday of December – at Henry Ford Community College, Administrative Services and Conference Center in Dearborn. Refer to our website for a map and directions ([www.boonhill.net/faac](http://www.boonhill.net/faac)).

The FAAC observes at Spring Mill Pond within the Island Lake State Recreation Area near Brighton, Michigan. The club maintains an after-hours permit, and observes on Friday and Saturday nights, and nights before holidays, weather permitting. The FAAC also has use Richmond Airport, Unadilla, given prior permission, and Lake Erie MetroPark. See the FAAC Yahoo Group\* for more information.

Observing schedules and additional info are available on our website, or via the FAAC Yahoo Group.\* Or call the **FAAC Hotline**, for info, and leave a message, or ask questions: **248-207-2075**. Or send email inquiries to [fordastronomy@comcast.net](mailto:fordastronomy@comcast.net).

Membership in the FAAC is open to anyone with an interest in amateur astronomy. The FAAC is an affiliate of the Ford Employees Recreation Association (F.E.R.A.). Membership fees:

Annual – New Member:	\$30	(\$15 after July 1)
Annual – Renewal:	\$25	(\$30 after January 31)

Membership includes the *STAR STUFF* newsletter, discounts on magazines, discounts at selected area equipment retailers, and after-hours access to the Island Lake observing site.

## Astronomy or Sky & Telescope Magazine Discounts

Obtain the required form from the FAAC club treasurer for a \$10 discount. Send the completed form directly to the respective publisher with your subscription request and payment. Do not send any money directly to the FAAC for this.

## Star Stuff Newsletter Submissions

Your submissions to *STAR STUFF* are more than welcome! Send your story and/or images to the editor at [dake00k@yahoo.com](mailto:dake00k@yahoo.com). Email text or MS Word is fine. *STAR STUFF* will usually go to press the weekend prior to each general meeting. Submissions received prior to that weekend can be included in that issue.

\* FAAC Members are welcome to join our **FordAstronomyClub** Yahoo! Group. Messages, photos, files, online discussions, and more! URL: [groups.yahoo.com/group/FordAstronomyClub](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FordAstronomyClub).

## Multi-Club Picnic - Cloudy Fun

President's Corner

Doug Bauer, FAAC President

On August 29, the FAAC held its first Multi-club picnic at Island Lake Recreation Area at Spring Mill Pond. We invited our own members and families, Seven Ponds Astronomy Club, Warren Astronomical Society, University Lowbrows, and the Oakland Astronomy Club. We also invited Cranbrook and Detroit Science Center personnel who have worked with us on various functions.

As is often the case here in Michigan, the weather provided us with a mid-50s degree day and 15+ MPH winds. Oh, did I mention the constant Michigan nebula?

Although the weather and skies were not the best, it didn't rain (other than a brief shower, which could have been snow). The poor weather did have some advantages; we did not have to compete with any other people for the use of the pavilion, people stayed in the pavilion most of the time talking to each other, and we didn't have to worry about anyone drowning in the pond.

Photo by Greg Ozimek



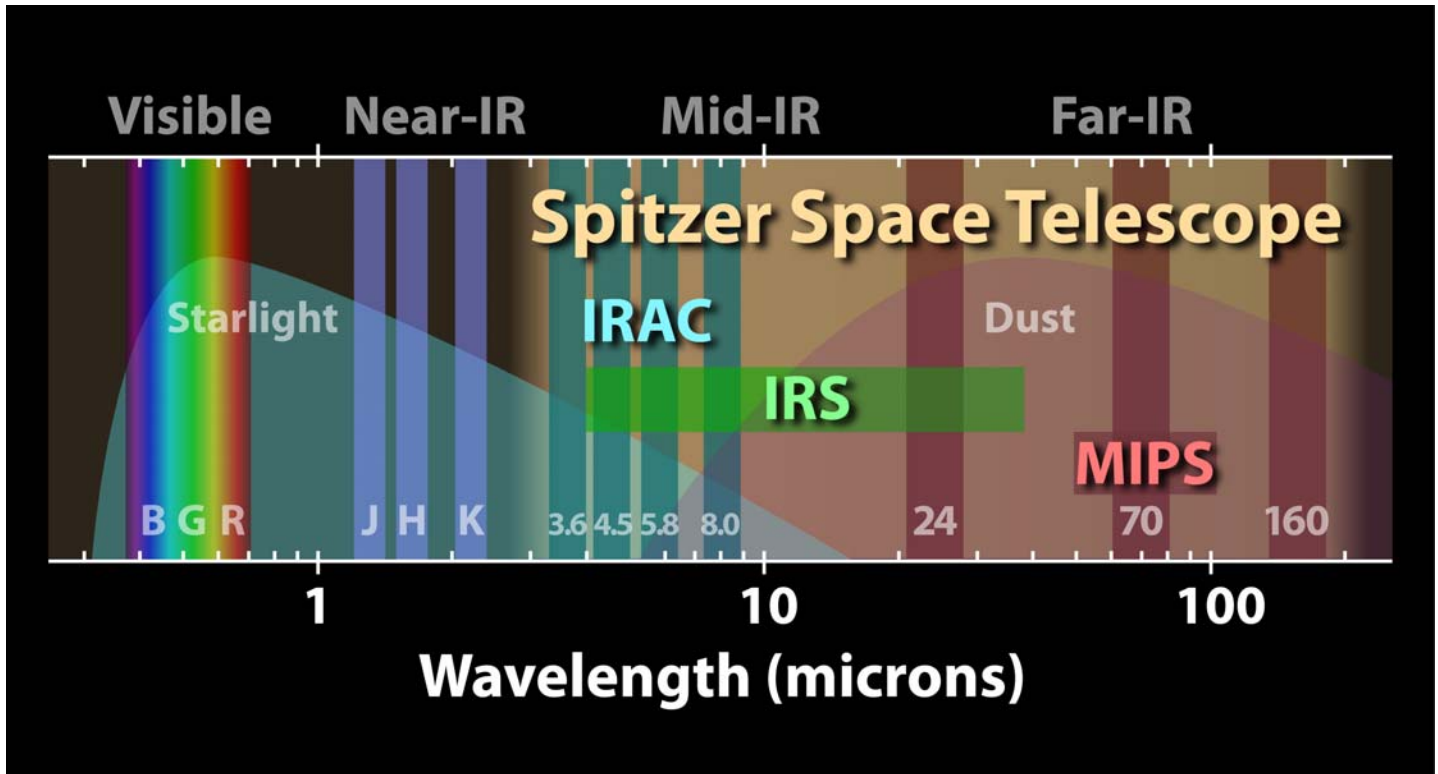
Over 50 people showed up for the event, including members from other astronomy clubs. Ken Anderson had prepared an observing challenge for the evening with a list of 30+ objects to find using three person/telescope teams. However, all of the objects Ken had chosen were on the wrong side of the clouds. I think next year we should include a few terrestrial objects as a backup. We decided to cancel the challenge around 8:30 pm.

FAAC provided hotdogs and hamburgers (which Jim Moscheck provided at wholesale from his butcher shop), veggie burgers, chips, plates, etc.

...continued on page 4



## Spitzer, the Sequel



The “warm mission” of the Spitzer Space Telescope will still be able to use two sensors in its Infrared Array Camera (IRAC) to continue its observations of the infrared universe.

The Spitzer Space Telescope is getting a second chance at life.

The liquid helium “lifeblood” that flows through the telescope has finally run out, bringing Spitzer’s primary mission to an end. But a new phase of this infrared telescope’s exploration of the universe is just beginning.

Even without liquid helium, which cooled the telescope to about 2 degrees above absolute zero ( $-271^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), Spitzer will continue to do important research—some of which couldn’t easily be done during its primary mission. For example, scientists will use Spitzer’s “second life” to explore the rate of expansion of the universe, study variable stars, and search for near-Earth asteroids that could pose a threat to our planet.

“We always knew that a ‘warm phase’ of the mission was a possibility, but it became ever more exciting scientifically as we started to plan for it seriously,” says JPL’s Michael Werner, Project Scientist for Spitzer. “Spitzer is just going on and on like the Energizer bunny.”

Launched in August 2003 as the last of NASA’s four Great Observatories, Spitzer specializes in observing infrared light, which is invisible to normal, optical telescopes.

That gives Spitzer the power to see relatively dark, cool objects such as planet-forming discs or nearby asteroids. These objects are too cold to emit light at visible wavelengths, but they’re still warm enough to emit infrared light.

In fact, all warm objects “glow” with infrared light—even telescopes. That’s why Spitzer had to be cooled with liquid helium to such a low temperature. Otherwise, it would be blinded by its own infrared glow.

As the helium expires, Spitzer will warm to about 30 degrees above absolute zero ( $-243^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). At that temperature, the telescope will begin emitting long-wavelength infrared light, but two of its short-wavelength sensors will still work perfectly.

And with more telescope time available for the remaining sensors, mission managers can more easily schedule new research proposals designed

...continued on page 4

## Sequel . . . *(continued from page 4)*

for those sensors. For example, scientists have recently realized how to use infrared observations to improve our measurements of the rate of expansion of the universe. And interest in tracking near-Earth objects has grown in recent years—a task for which Spitzer is well suited.

“Science has progressed, and people always have new ideas,” Werner says. In its second life, Spitzer will help turn those ideas into new discoveries.

For kids, The Space Place Web site has a fun typing game using Spitzer and infrared astronomy words. Check it out at [spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/spitzer/signs](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/spitzer/signs).

*This article was provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.*

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## President's Corner... *(continued from page 1)*

Everyone brought a dish to pass and we had a lot of food! Lori Poremsky brought an inflatable kids pool that we filled with ice to hold the salads in a cool bed of ice. It may have been my imagination, but it was so cold that none of the ice melted. This was a great idea and I would recommend it anyone having a big party in the summer.

I would also recommend that you bring a small pump to inflate the pool. Don Klaser and I made a great photo opportunity blowing up the pool using valves less than a foot apart. Luckily, Greg Ozimek and his camera were otherwise occupied.

Photo by Greg Ozimek



Despite the weather, everyone had a great time visiting and discussing astronomy. Even the

spouses stayed until the party broke up around 9:30 pm.

My wife, DeeAnn, drove her own escape vehicle in case it was clear and we broke out the scopes. She lured Rosie Blum into attending by promising a ride home the in the event of clear skies.

At about 9:45 pm most of the people were clearing out and I noticed a group of 6 or so folks sitting in the dark pavilion chatting away. Only a group of astronomers would be happy to sit in the dark and chat. In fact, I don't think they even noticed that there were no lights.

This is proof that we really don't need all of these lights that pollute our skies (or in this case, our clouds).

I reminded the group that the park gate at Island Lake is locked at 10:00 pm and they would need the code to get out. Tom Cokely jumped up and said, “I want to get out before they lock up!”. Someone reminded me that Tom had been locked in the park overnight a year or so ago when he discovered the gate was locked and he didn't have the code.

I think everyone got out safely!

I would like to thank everyone who helped with this event, Lori Poremsky for bringing the pool (and forgetting the pump), two grills, fresh veggies from her garden, and for slaving over the hot grill cooking hotdogs and veggie burgers, Greg Ozimek for bring the veggie burgers, picking up the hamburgers and hotdogs, bringing the canopy, and his bullhorn and for taking pictures. George and Pat Korody for the fresh raspberries, tomatoes, and corn from their garden.

Lori grilled the corn and it was so good it was like dessert. Ken Anderson for developing the observing challenge (we'll dust it off for next year). And everyone who brought dishes to pass.

The food was terrific!

Most of all I want to thank everyone for coming out even though the weather left something to be desired. It was really fun.

Postscript: My wife, DeeAnn, asked me if the astronomy clubs had ever thought of doing star parties in drought plagued areas. Surely, it would bring the rain.

Most of all I want to thank everyone for coming.

Thanks to all.

- Doug Bauer

## August Meeting Minutes

Don Klaser for Kevin Medon/Lori Poremsky

Attendance: 40+

The meeting was called to order by President Doug Bauer at 5:30 pm. Members introduced themselves and several talked about their most recent observing experiences.

The main presentation was given by Ken Bertin of the Warren Astronomical Society. The topic was the life and accomplishments of George Ellery Hale.

Tim Dey gave a quick update on progress at the Lincoln Park Observatory: the Losmandy mount and Celestron 14" SC scope are installed, and the computer is being hooked up. A 'First Light' ceremony is scheduled for Tuesday, September 15.

Greg Ozimek gave a report on his attempt to acquire some of the first issues of 'Star Stuff' newsletters for the club archives.

### Club Business

Secretary's Report – We have two new members this month. Please be reminded that minutes are posted to the Yahoo Group site for review & correction a week before they go to Dale for inclusion in the club newsletter. Motion & second to accept the minutes; approved.

Treasurer's Report – This month's report is published in Star Stuff. Steve has ordered 50 copies of the 2010 Astronomy Magazine Calendar.

Equipment Managers Report – Doug Bauer announced that Bob FitzGerald is resigning as Equipment Manager and he asked for a volunteer to assume the post; Diane Worth said she would accept the position.

### Open Discussion

FAAC Picnic and Beginner's Night at Island Lake – This Saturday, August 29, from 5:00 pm to Midnight (picnic from 5:00 to 7:00 pm). Members from several area clubs will also be in attendance. Ken Anderson is leading the 'Sky Tour Challenge'.

Astronomy at the Beach – September 25 and 26. Set up your scope on the beach and be eligible to enter the prize drawing.

Edison Boat Club Outreach Event – Saturday, October 3; Gordon Hansen is coordinating this event.

7th Annual FAAC Astronomy Expo & Swap – Saturday, March 6, 2010. Chuck Jones and John Schroer are chairing this event.

Club Mentor Program – new members can pair-up with established members to learn specific areas of amateur astronomy. Check the Yahoo site for more information.

Lake Erie Metro Park - We are waiting for final approval from Park management of our proposal to allow FAAC members after hours access to observe inside the Park.

IYA 2009 – Brother Guy Consolmagno, Vatican Astronomer, will be speaking at three Detroit area venues. On Friday, October 11, at Lowbrows in Ann Arbor. On Monday, October 12, will be at the University of Michigan Dearborn campus; and that evening at the Detroit Science Center's Dassault Systemes Planetarium. Details will be forthcoming.

Steve Uitti gave a report on our club Cable TV show.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

### Recurring Events

2009 is the International Year of Astronomy (IYA 2009) celebrating 400th year of the (Galileo's) telescope. American Astronomy Society (AAS) and Astronomical League are celebrating "International Year of the Telescope." All year long, expect speakers. We may get additional support for our Astronomy at the Beach (AATB).

DSC, Cranbrook, FAAC, and GLAAC plan to bring more astronomy to the general public. Set up telescopes in your local community or neighborhood. Eric Rasmussen will be planning events at University of Michigan (Dearborn and Ann Arbor) and HFCC.

U of M will have Saturday Morning Talks. John Schroer, the FAAC chairman, passed out several handouts at the board meeting to show national intentions. Plastic replicas of Galileo's telescope with real glass lenses will sell for \$16.50, and you will be able to see Saturn and Jupiter with it. Additional scope orders can be placed on the Galileo Scope website.

The SIG meetings are the second Thursday of each month (next one September 10) at 5:30 pm in the HFCC Berry Amphitheater Auditorium in the Administrative Services and Conference Center building Topic – TBD. Pizza will be provided.

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## Minutes . . . *(continued from page 5)*

FAAC General Meetings are the fourth Thursday of each month, 5:30 pm, with the next one August 27 in the HFCC Berry Amphitheater Auditorium.

The FAAC Board meetings are usually the first Thursday of each month, 5 pm (next one October 1) at Senate Coney Island, Rotunda at Greenfield Rd., Dearborn, (313) 441-1027.

Beginners nights continue in 2009 on first quarter moon Saturdays (August 29 and October 24), with the intent to help people use their equipment (not public outreach).

John Schroer is putting together the handouts for Beginners Night at Island Lake State Park (Spring Mill Pond) and also Lake Erie Metropark (Cove Point Picnic Area). Bring your telescope or binoculars, or look through others.

Events will be posted in the Park Bulletin board, Metropark Quarterly Newsletter, Ford World, and [astromichigan.org](http://astromichigan.org).

FAAC Club Wares with embroidered five color club logo can be ordered through Diane Worth (prices are estimates heard by the secretary, and there may be additional cost for shipping):

Ottoman "official" club short sleeve shirt (black or white), \$43; patch, \$9; flex-fit cap, black with silver, \$19; legacy jacket, black, \$58; casual club polo shirt, royal blue, \$41; star presenters shirt, French blue, \$52; hooded sweat shirt, black, \$46; hooded sweat shirt, full zip, black, \$49; star gazer blanket, reversible, royal blue or black, \$38; weekender duffel, new larger size, royal blue or black, \$38; expanded brief case, royal blue, \$28.

Diane Worth said she will bring filled orders to AATB. Contact Diane Worth at [dianewsky\\_night@yahoo.com](mailto:dianewsky_night@yahoo.com).

The FAAC Library and DVD collection is in HFCC Science Building Room 109. The list of 100+ books and brief descriptions is available at the FAAC Yahoo site; books can be signed out for one month, with extensions allowable. President Doug Bauer and VP Chuck Jones are backup key holders for returning and signing out books.

Seeking speakers for 30-60 minute Presentations, or the 15-20 min. Tech Talks. Contact Doug Bauer: [dougbauer@comcast.net](mailto:dougbauer@comcast.net) or call 313-828-7385.

## Meeting Agenda - Sept. 24

**5:30 pm – HFCC – Berry Amphitheater Auditorium - Admin. Services and Conference Center**

(Map can be found at:

[http://www.hfcc.edu/contact/campus\\_maps.pdf](http://www.hfcc.edu/contact/campus_maps.pdf))

**Opening/Introduction/Member Observing**

**Pick up and pay for Galileo 'scopes (\$16.50)**

**Presentation:** Asteroid Impact Threat – Robert Naeya – Editor in Chief Sky & Telescope

**Tech Talk:** Lincoln Park Observatory– Timothy Dey

**Club Business/Secretary/Treasurer/Equipment**

**Club Projects/Committees/Member Support**

- Astronomy at the Beach - Sept 25/26
- Edison Boat Club - Sat, Oct 3
- Astrophoto SIG – Gordon Hansen
- Dark Sky Committee– Frank Ancona
- International Year of Astronomy 200
- Open Discussion

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## Astro Imaging SIG

Gordon Hansen

All are invited to join us in the Astro Imaging SIG meetings, to share and discuss images, experiences, and techniques.

We always have a good time, with lively discussion, and sharing of valuable information.

Next meeting is October 8. Note the new meeting room location – HFCC Admin. Services and Conference Center (same building), Berry Amphitheater Auditorium.

Topics invited. Pizza served.

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## FAAC Events 2009

Kevin Medon and Lori Poremsky

**September TBD** – Astro-Imaging Workshop, Gladwin  
**25-26** – Astronomy on the Beach – Maple Beach in Kensington Park

**October 12** – Brother Guy Consolomagno, "Why does the Vatican need an Astronomer," Detroit Science Center, \$10, also speaking at U of Dearborn in the afternoon.

**24** – Beginner's Night - Island Lake

## Items for Sale

**Meade Lightbridge Deluxe 12"** – F/5, 1524mm focal length. Purchased new last year. Perfect condition mechanically, optically and cosmetically. Big, clear deep sky views. Built-in battery powered cooling fan, two-speed Crayford focuser (1.25 / 2-inch). Easy to transport, set up collimate and use - smooth as silk. Upgraded with Bob's knobs and heavier collimation springs. Includes shroud, cover, Telrad and secondary mirror heater. Over \$1000 invested, will sell for \$650.

Contact John Johnson at [jjohnsonpub@yahoo.com](mailto:jjohnsonpub@yahoo.com) or (248) 515-0014.

**Schmidt-Newtonian 10"** – F5.35, 1360 mm focal length with 2" focuser, 60 mm guide scope, Thousand Oaks Full aperture solar filter (Mylar). Cooling fan, extra set of "O" rings, Optron Corrector plate. Crestliner mount (on wheels) available. Scope made by Nelson Lewis of Detroit Astronomical Society in 1962. Purchased 1981. Selling telescope for \$325. Mount for \$200. Contact Harold Thomason 313-584-7465.

## Treasurer's Report

Steve Flessa

### 8/20/2009 Balance

#### Bank Accounts

Checking	\$1,244.87
Savings	\$549.90
<b>TOTAL Bank Accounts</b>	<b>\$1,794.77</b>

#### Cash Account

Cash	\$95.00
<b>TOTAL Cash Account</b>	<b>\$95.00</b>

#### Investment Accounts

CD 1	\$1,076.18
CD 2	\$1,043.01
<b>TOTAL Investment Accounts</b>	<b>\$2,119.19</b>

#### Asset Accounts

Equipment	\$1,284.46
Scholarship	\$541.05
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,825.51</b>

**TOTAL** **\$5834.47**

#### Memo:

GLAAC	\$2,727.40
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,561.87</b>

## Astronomy at the Beach

Don't forget the upcoming 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Astronomy at the Beach (AATB) on Friday and Saturday, September 25 and 26, 6 pm to midnight, rain or shine!

The event, held at the Kensington Metropark Maple Beach site, is free to all comers, except for park admission (Annual pass or \$4 daily car fee required).

For more information, also see the web site, [www-personal.umich.edu/~dgs/Kensington](http://www-personal.umich.edu/~dgs/Kensington).

There will be a special talk "Extrasolar Planets and the Amateur Astronomer" by Robert Naeye, Editor-in-Chief of Sky & Telescope Magazine. In addition, there will be astronomy talks on topics ranging from how to choose and use a telescope, introduction to astronomy, a comet making demonstration for the kids, how cold is outer space, why light pollution is making it harder to see stars and what you can do to help reverse the trend.

Using a portable planetarium, there will be night sky simulation tours of the constellations and other current objects. There will be a Children's Sky Tour Treasure Hunt for the kids to participate in.

Come early to view sun spots and/or stay and observe dozens of celestial objects until midnight through the many telescopes provided by the GLAAC members (weather permitting). Representatives from Rider's Hobby Shops will be on hand (there will be various astronomy products including telescopes, books, binoculars, eyepieces, software on display and for purchase).

## Star Stuff Editor Reign Ending

This will be my last edition as the Star Stuff Newsletter Editor. Jumping into the fray to take over the reins will be Sandra Macika.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you members and friends for all your support since I began this effort back in September 2005.

This is not a trivial task, this monthly newsletter, and I hope you will welcome Sandra and offer her the same great patience and support you have offered me.

Best wishes to Sandra on her new task, and thanks again to you all.

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club  
Star Stuff Newsletter  
P.O. Box 7527  
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**A full selection of Meade telescopes and accessories in stock and on display!**

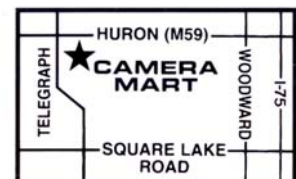
**Also visit us at [MichiganScopes.com](http://MichiganScopes.com)**

## September Specials

Meade 114EQ-ASTR Equatorial Reflector	Regular Price \$149	Your Price \$120.00
Meade 90AZ-ADR Refractor	Regular Price \$179	Your Price \$139.00
Meade ETX 60AT-TCRefractor	Regular Price \$179	Your Price \$139.00
Meade DS-2080AT Refractor	Regular Price \$299	Your Price \$219.00
Meade ETX 80AT-TC Refractor	Regular Price \$259	Your Price \$229.00
Meade 12 inch Lightbridge Dobsonian	Regular Price \$899	Your Price \$799.00
Meade ETX-LS 6 inch ACF New!	Regular Price \$1499	Your Price \$1399.00



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