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March 2010

In This Issue

Page One

Deadly Planets

Presidents Corner

Inside Stuff

6 Meeting Minutes

8 An Astronomer's Reflection

10 FAAC Events

10 Classifieds

10 Astro SIG

10 Observatory Report

11 Next Meeting Agenda

12 Treasurer's Report

13 FAAC Dinner Flyer

13 Member Profile

13 A Heavenly Body

14 StarMap Pro

15 PST First Light



Deadly Planets

By Patrick L. Barry and Dr. Tony Phillips

About 900 light years from here is a rocky planet not much bigger than Earth. It goes around its star once every hundred days, a trifle fast, but not too different from a standard Earth-year. At least two and possibly three other planets circle the same star, forming a complete solar system.

Interested? Don't be. Going there would be the last thing you ever do.

The star is a pulsar, PSR 1257+12, the seething-hot core of a supernova that exploded millions of years ago. Its planets are bathed not in gentle, life-giving sunshine but instead a blistering torrent of X-rays and high-energy particles.

"It would be like trying to live next to Chernobyl," says Charles Beichman, a scientist at JPL and director of the Michelson Science Center at Caltech.

Our own Sun emits small amounts of pulsar-like X-rays and

high energy particles, but the amount of such radiation coming from a pulsar is "orders of magnitude more," he says.

Continued On page 2

What A Great Club!

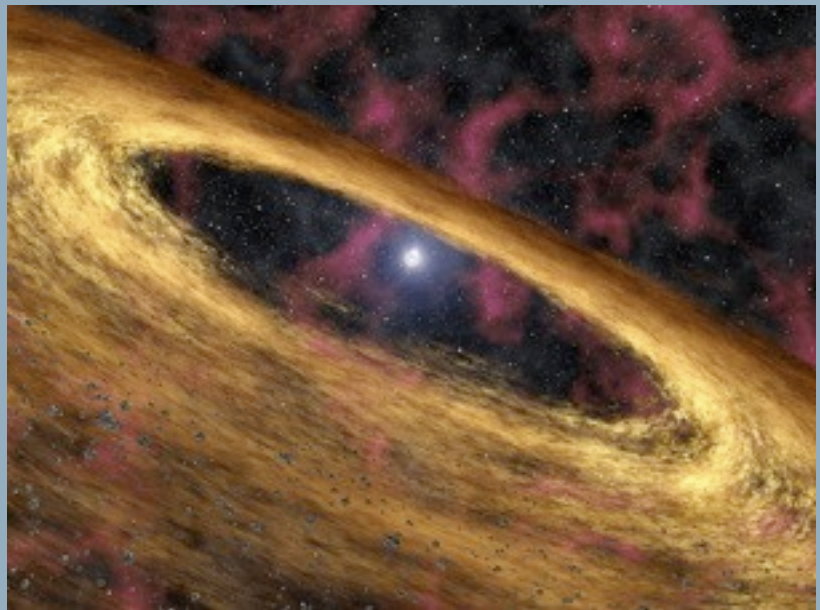
President's Corner

This month I am writing about the benefits of belonging to the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club and about the various programs that we offer to help members learn about various aspects of astronomy.

The club has several programs to help people learn. These include but are not limited to the Mentoring Program, Astro-Imaging Special Interest Group (SIG), Hector J Robinson Observatory SIG, Beginners' Nights, Club meetings, Club Library, Club Scopes, Club Observing Sites, Club Yahoo Group, Magazine discounts, and Outreach.

Continued On page 3

Artist's concept of a pulsar and surrounding disk of rubble called a "fallback" disk, out of which new planets could form.



Deadly Planets

(continued from Page 1)

Even for a planet orbiting as far out as the Earth, this radiation could blow away the planet's atmosphere, and even vaporize sand right off the planet's surface. will need this kind of data if they decide to go after the heat-trapping gas.

Astronomer Alex Wolszczan discovered planets around PSR 1257+12 in the 1990s using Puerto Rico's giant Arecibo radio telescope. At first, no one believed worlds could form around pulsars—it was too bizarre. Supernovas were supposed to destroy planets, not create them. Where did these worlds come from?

NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope may have found the solution. In 2005, a group of astronomers led by Deepto Chakrabarty of MIT pointed the infrared telescope toward pulsar 4U 0142+61. Data revealed a disk of gas and dust surrounding the central star, probably wreckage from the supernova. It was just the sort of disk that could coalesce to form planets!

As deadly as pulsar planets are, they might also be hauntingly beautiful. The vaporized matter rising from the planets' surfaces could be ionized by the incoming radiation, creating colorful auroras across the sky. And though the pulsar would only appear as a tiny dot in the sky (the pulsar itself is only 20-40 km across), it would be enshrouded in a hazy glow of light emitted by radiation particles as they curve in the pulsar's strong magnetic field.

Wasted beauty? Maybe. Beichman points out the positive: "It's an awful place to try and form planets, but if you can do it there, you can do it anywhere."

Find more news and images from Spitzer at <http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/>. In addition, The Space Place Web site features several games related to Spitzer and infrared astronomy, as well as a storybook about a girl who dreamed of finding another Earth. Go to <http://tiny.cc/lucy208>.

This article was provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contact with NASA.

STAR STUFF

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STAR STUFF is published eleven times each year by:

FORD AMATEUR ASTRONOMY CLUB
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VICE PRESIDENT: Chuck Jones
SECRETARY: Lori Poremsky / Kevin Medon
TREASURER: Gordon Hansen
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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 Administration Services and Conference Center in Dearborn. Refer to our website for a map and directions (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 a private observing site near Gregory Michigan and Lake Erie Metro Park. 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.

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 Members: \$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 subscriptions 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 pvideo@aol.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 Ford Astronomy Club Yahoo!Group. Messages photos, files, online discussions, and more! URL: groups.yahoo.com/group/FordAstronomyClub.

This month's background photos courtesy of John Kirchhoff. Jupiter photo page 7; and moon background strip on page 1. See more of John's photos at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/33926475@N06/with/4311533997/>

Presidents Corner *(continued from Page 1)*

I would like to touch on each of these programs briefly to give a short overview:

Mentoring Program – This program will pair up people who would like to learn about an area of astronomy with someone who is knowledgeable in that area. So far, we have 5 individuals who have requested a mentor and been assigned to one. If you would like to have a mentor or would like to be a mentor, please send me a note and I will add you to the list.

Astro-imaging SIG – This group meets every second Thursday of the month in the Berry Amphitheater Auditorium in the Administrative Services and Conference Center building at the Henry Ford Community College. They discuss all things related to Astro-photography. Contact Gordon Hansen if you are interested in participating.

Hector J Robinson Observatory – This group was formed to support the Lincoln Park schools' observatory after it was refurbished by a group led by FAAC member Timothy Dey. Its goal is to ensure that the observatory gets used and is not allowed to fall into disuse as it had in the past. The group works with Leo McMasters a science teacher at the Lincoln Park Middle school where the observatory is located. If you would like to join this group contact George Korody.

Beginners' Nights – FAAC holds several Beginners' Night events each year one Saturday per month starting at about 7:00 PM during the spring, summer and fall. This year they will be held at both the Island Lake Recreation Area and the Lake Erie Metro park.

The dates in 2010 are:

May 22
June 19
July 17
Aug 14
Oct 16

Continued On page 4

Presidents Corner

(continued from Page 3)

During the Beginners' Nights FAAC members are there to help people with telescope learn how to use them. They also do a little observing of their own.

FAAC Club Meetings - The Club holds a FAAC General Meeting once per month on the Fourth Thursday of each month, except in November and December when the two monthly meetings are combined into a single meeting on the First Thursday of December. The meetings are held in the Berry Amphitheater Auditorium in the Administrative Services and Conference Center building at the Henry Ford Community College and begin at 5:30 PM. Pizza and Pop are available during the meetings. The meeting agenda generally includes brief discussion of observing since the last meeting, a couple of presentations on various topics related to astronomy and club business.

FAAC Library - FAAC has a library of astronomy related books and DVDs that are available for members to check out. The library is stored in the Planetarium Building on the HFCC campus. In order to check out material contact the FAAC Librarian, Ben Cline who has a key to the cabinet. There is a list of the materials that are in the library on the FAAC Yahoo Site in the Library Files folder.

Club Scopes - The club has one club telescope, a 6 inch Dobsonian that can be checked out by going to the Database area on the Yahoo Group and filling in a request for the scope on the database, then contacting the person who currently has the scope to arrange to pick it up.

Club Observing Sites - The club has three observing sites available for club members: Island Lake Recreation Area, Lake Erie Metro park, and a private site near Gregory, MI. All of the sites and rules for their use are described on the FAAC Yahoo Site.

FAAC Yahoo Group - The Yahoo Group is a fantastic way to communicate with other club members and is used to store most club specific information. It is a great way to let other know when and where you may be observing if you are looking for company. The site is used for Astronomy related questions and discussions. It is a great way to find the answers to questions. To get into the group you must go to the site:

tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/FordAstronomyClub/

And select JOIN THIS GROUP. This will generate a request for membership to our Yahoo moderator who validates that you are a member in good standing before granting access to the site. New members who provide their email address should receive an invite to join the Group simplifying the process.

Magazine Discounts - membership in FAAC allows you to get discounts on Sky & Telescope Magazine and Astronomy Magazine. For details on how these programs work connect the Club Treasurer.

Outreach - FAAC organizes many outreach events for various groups including for example: Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, schools, civic groups, and other clubs.

Continued on page 4

Presidents Corner

(continued from Page 5)

These events provide an opportunity for club members to share their love of astronomy with others and perhaps encourage children to study science in school. It is a real upbeat feeling to participate in these events and hear the ooh's and aah's as well as the questions from inquiring young minds.

To underscore the value of some of these club programs, I have included the following note from a FAAC member, Jarrod Kudzia.

"I just wanted to write to the group to thank everyone for several things; First, this is a fantastic group and everyone has made me feel incredibly welcome over the past 6+ months since I joined. I really appreciated the mentor program and especially have to thank Doug Bauer and John C. for so much invaluable advice and assistance.

At this time last year I had an overwhelming interest in science, math and the cosmos, a 3" Jason Comet Chaser tabletop scope that a friend had given me and ABSOLUTELY no clue how to do anything other than find the moon and saturn. Today I have, not only a new scope, eyepieces, a red dot finder and other assorted blue-collar accessories, but the confidence to go out and explore in a way I never thought possible. As my astronomy budget over the past year has been roughly \$100 (it's rough out there!) my resources have been remarkably limited and this group has filled that void and then some.

Last night alone I found several Messier objects I had never seen before and, most importantly, I truly understood what I was

seeing. I know that with no real money to jump head-first in this hobby it can be a bit slow-going at times but it has also forced me to learn the theory behind what I'm doing to get the most out of my equipment and my evenings under the stars. Thank you FAAC, you've given me an outlet for my cosmic curiosity and given my wife a break from me for a few hours a week!!"

What a great Club!!!

Doug Bauer

DougBauer@Comcast.Net

Iphone Software Review

This month your Star Stuff Newsletter editor is writing a quick review about StarMap Pro Star Charting software for the iPhone 3GS.

There are more than a few good star chart programs for the iPhone and iPod Touch. Some future reviews on iPhone Charting software will include:

StarMap Pro	- This issue
Star Walk	- April 2010
Sky Voyager	- May 2010
Comparing the three	- June 2010

How would you like to ride on the Space Shuttle?

Of course all the seats are reserved, but some FAAC members joined the Warren Club in an outing to see an Imax Movie showing the repair of the Hubble Space telescope. 54 people attended the showing. This Imax movie complimented the PBS Nova show about the Hubble repair and had amazing 3d footage. You can still check that movie out at the Henry Ford Imax Theatre in Dearborn Mi. Tickets are \$10, the show is 45 minutes long.

February Meeting Minutes

Kevin Medon/Lori Poremsky

Attendance: 33+

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Chuck Jones at 5:30 p.m.

The first order of business was to congratulate Pat and George Korody on their 54th Wedding Anniversary.

New members were asked to introduce themselves as well as guests. Welcome James French and Matt Justice.

Bob Fitzgerald invited the FAAC club members to the annual memorial for his son, Sean. It will be held on Sunday, April 11, at the Gaelic League on 2062 Michigan Avenue in Detroit. Pizza, salad, dessert, pop and coffee will be provided. The night will be filled with tribute performances and open mic from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.. If interested please RSVP by March 27 to Bob via e-mail at stellatus_a_um@mac.com.

Several members of the group reported on their observing experiences during the last month. Gordon Hansen and Dennis Salliotte reported on the Star Party in Florida. Ken Anderson reported on observing in the panhandle of Florida with binoculars. Milton French visited Mackinaw City.

Today's main presentation was presented in the Planetarium. The pre-recorded Winter Sky show was given by Bob Clubb, followed by members pointing out objects in the night sky. Club business was covered first, before the field trip to the Planetarium.

Club Business

Secretary's Report – Lori Poremsky noted that we have two new members this month. As non-paying members dues come in, new membership cards are being mailed. E-mail notices have been sent to delinquent members, and all e-mails that bounced were sent reminder

notices via snail mail. The current membership is as follows:

88 Regular members – 36 which are currently unpaid

82 Lifetime members

7 Astronomical Clubs and Friends

177 Total

Motion & second to accept the January minutes; approved.

Treasurer's Report – Steve Flessa noted that he and Gordon Hansen, the newly elected Treasurer had tried to transfer the bank accounts to Gordon's name, however, without Doug Bauer being present it was not able to be done. They will complete this task when Doug returns from Florida. Steve noted that he is collecting money for the banquet as well tables at the swap meet. If you have an interest in either please contact either Steve or Gordon directly. Steve Flessa reviewed the balance of monies in the various club accounts. This months' report is published in Star Stuff.

Equipment Managers Report – None

Open Discussion

Chuck Jones reminded the group that we do have a mentoring program. New members, or existing, can be assigned a mentor based on the expertise requested such as imaging, telescope purchase, learning the night sky, etc. Any one interested should request what they want to know so an appropriate mentor can be assigned. It was noted that the Lincoln Park observatory may be used in the future for hosting mentoring sessions.

Gordon Hansen noted that the FAAC Annual Banquet is being held Saturday, March 27th at Karl's Cabin in Plymouth, Michigan at 6:00 p.m..

Continued on page 7

February Meeting Minutes

(continued from Page 6)

The cost is \$30 per person. For those interested in attending, a sign up sheet was being passed around the room. For those not at the General Meeting, please contact Gordon Hansen directly if interested in attending at ghhansen@comcast.net. Payment is not due immediately, but would be appreciated in a timely manner. At the time of reserving, please indicate your main entry choice: beef, chicken, or fish. A flyer with more detail can be found in this month's Star Stuff as well as on the Yahoo group site. Door prizes can be donated to Pat Korody. Everyone goes home with a prize. So far attendance is at 40 and we have room for at least 100.

John Schroer noted that the 7th Annual Astronomy Expo and Swap meeting will be held Saturday, March 6, between 9:00 am and 4:00 p.m. at the Holy Cross Church Gymnasium in Livonia, MI. Several local businesses and clubs will have tables featuring astronomy related equipment and gadgets. Private tables are also available for rent at \$15 each, or \$20 at the door. If you have extra astronomy equipment, this is a great place to sell it. We currently have 3 sponsors. Door prizes will be given away, several speakers will be providing talks in their areas of expertise and there will be planetarium lectures. Food will also be available. General admission is \$5.00. A full flyer on the event can be found in this month's Star Stuff as well as on the Yahoo group site. Gordon Hansen noted that we have advertised the event on Facebook. Steve noted that we had 100 paying attendees last year.

Several Outreach Events are being planned. Ann Arbor Hands On Museum for Junior Girl Scouts – Friday, March 19 – Doug Bauer

Multi-club Outreach at Metro Beach Metropark – Saturday, April 24 – Doug Bauer

Cub Scouts Pack at Memorial Elementary School in Garden City, – Doug Bauer

30001 Marquette, Garden City, MI 48135-2698. – Monday, April 26

Starry, Starry Night – Enjoy an evening of star gazing hosted by the – Doug Bauer

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club. Free star programs will be offered, and numerous telescopes will be set up to view planets, star clusters and galaxies. Time TBA. Location: Humbug Marsh Unit, Trenton, Michigan.

Saturday, August 14th (same as the Beginners Night, but it should reach 100- 150 people). It is a 5,400 acre site on the Detroit River.

If you're able to attend any of these events, please contact the person coordinating the event directly.

Gordon Hansen noted that SIG meetings are taking place the 2nd Thursday of every month in the Berry Auditorium of Henry Ford Community College, located in the Administrative Services and Conference Center.

Frank Ancona had nothing to report for the Dark Sky Committee.

Steve Flessa noted that unpaid 2010 FAAC dues if are now \$30.00 for those renewing after January 31. All calendars have been sold.

Steve Flessa mentioned that the FAAC has a discount subscription rate for Astronomy Technology Today, a good Astro Gadget magazine. The club discount is \$14 per year for 6 issues. If interested, sign up at their website using the code "FAAC".

Dennis Salliotte mentioned that Lake Eric Metro Park has offered a portion of the park outside the gates to be used for evening observing. In order to use this location, you must first register with the park. Dennis is putting that list together.

Continued on page 8

February Meeting Minutes

(continued from Page 7)

If you believe you are going to use or will ever use the property, please make sure you get your name on the list.

Dennis Salliotte noted that Beginners Nights will also be held at Lake Erie Metro Park this year at the Nature Center. The park will turn off the parking lights to accommodate observing.

The group was reminded that there will be a Multi-club Outreach at Metro Beach Metropark on Saturday, April 24 to celebrate Astronomy Day. Doug Bauer is assisting in coordinating the event.

John Schorer also noted that the Detroit Science Center will be celebrating Astronomy Day on Saturday, April 24 during the day.

Many club members encountered a parking issue this evening with the gates to the Conference Center being down. To park in the conference center lot, use the gate call button to call security and mention that you are there for the Ford Club FACC meeting. They will let you in.

Chuck Jones invited the club members to the HFCC Planetarium for the Winter Sky presentation.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

An Astronomer's Reflection

Harold Tomason

July 7, 2002

Well, Here I am again just looking around at everything passing the time of day; waving at some of the people letting them know I don't just see them, I notice them. The city employees, the bus drivers, the 18-wheelers,

the police and sheriff, state police, the county workers, state and federal people. Sometimes they wave back or honk. I know some of them wonder about me. I guess they think "Who is that man? I don't know him. Wonder why he is waving at me?" All those people that honk their horns at me even when I'm busy with someone. Are they somebody that has stopped before and looked through my telescope and appreciate what I do for all those years? This is my 20th year on Michigan Avenue.

I wonder sometimes if I have made a difference in some of their lives. The children that come with their parents and look, even all of the schools I've visited over all the years. Out of all these many thousands of children, did I make a difference in any of their lives? Even the adults that I've encountered and talked with, not just about astronomy but life in general. Did I help them with some of their problems? I've talked about religion, including God Himself, marriage, love, friendship, about politics, and relationships. They also want to know about me. What kind of a person does what I've done all these years?

Some think I'm a good person and some think I'm a special person and God must love me for what I do. Boy, have they been fooled. For I'm just me. I do appreciate their kind thoughts. But they give the money that I turn over to the charity that makes me look good. But I still wonder if I've really made a difference. How many, I want to know when I'm no longer on this earth, will it be a better place because I was here? I know some people care about me. Over the years I've had people bring me food of all kinds and things to drink.

Continued on page 9

An Astronomer's Reflection

(continued from Page 6)

One young couple brought a huge picnic basket filled with all kinds of fruits and cheeses, crackers and drinks. It was great. I've had them bring me McDonald's and Burger King burgers and chocolate shakes, Mountain Dew's. You name it . . . home cooked meals . . . I've been given books, t-shirts, lenses, telescopes in disrepair.

I've been asked about everything under the sun. I have enjoyed all these years. I tell them God has been good to me all of my life I don't know why. I say, "If I were Him I would have already worn out 3 feet kicking me for all the things I've done wrong." But I'm not Him. Maybe He's going to really "sock it to me" later.

But I still wonder how many lives I've made a difference in, if any. I wonder how many more years I'll be able to do this. Maybe there will be a person like Nick that will help. Someone able to do the setup that I will not be able to do. Or take over and be the next generation of Telescope Man. There's always room for one more giver in the world who will take my place, be the one that, perhaps, will make a difference in someone's life.

11:26AM July 7, 2002

I was just asked where Greenfield Village is. Over the years I have also become the information man to answer these things. Where is Greenfield Village or Ford Museum, the train station, Fairlane Mall, Hyatt Hotel, Ritz Carlton Hotel, Other hotels in the area, Outer Drive Library, TCP golf course, 19th District Court, King Boring Field, Civic Center, and some places quite far from here? I guess they were really lost . . .

July 12, 2002

My buddy Debby came and brought me a McLunch. How luck I am that she cares that much for me to go out of her way to spend her money and deliver it to me too. May our God bless her a million fold. . .

Some people have asked me, "How much of the money I keep?" I tell them, "I don't keep any of it." I've taken in over \$14,000. They ask, "Then what do you get out of it?" I say, "I get to stand in the hot sun all day." I answer their questions and maybe sound intelligent to some of them. I meet a lot of interesting folks, now money can't buy what I get.

Do I really need to say what I get?

I'm an Astronomer.

May your view reach out forever.
The Telescope Man, Harold.



Above: Chuck Jones and Harold Tomason discussing telescopes during at the re-dedication of the Hector J Robinson Observatory

Astro Imaging SIG

Gordon Hansen

The March meeting was held at Rider's hobby shop

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

Topics invited. Pizza served.

FAAC Events 2010

Kevin Medon and Lori Poremsky

March **27th 2010 Annual FAAC Banquet**
Karl's Cabin 6005 Gotfredson Rd,
Plymouth Michigan - \$30/person

April **23 Cub Scouts pack at Memorial**
Elementary School in Garden
City
24 Astronomy Day at DSC during
daytime

Background Jupiter - courtesy of John Kirchhoff

One FAAC members blog

<http://hjrobservatory.blogspot.com/>

A few updates on the observatory, quick articles and photos. I'll try to improve my writing on this blog. Also, I try to keep daily updates on this blog.

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

or (248) 515-0014.



Hector J Robinson Observatory

by Greg Knekleian

There were some really good nights for viewing earlier this month. So good in fact, the imagers in the Observatory SIG stayed home and I found myself alone. Had some great phone discussions and emails from core members. Still learning the mount, took photos of dents in the dome, took test photos through the C-14 and Meade. Clear cold conditions with great viewing. Saturn looked wonderful like visiting an old friend. I soaked up the experience of being in the old observatory again. Tested a cats perch prototype chair that I picked up from the FAAC swap meet. Other news: The Executive committee was given a draft of rules regarding the observatory, drafted by George Korody. George created a visitors log. We'll create a technical log soon. Likely both paper and scanned.

I visited the LP museum, but haven't moved of the old 12" scope out yet.

Started a blog - entries decreased as viewing conditions improved. The mount was too perfectly balanced (RA) for astrophotography. One balance workaround is simply having a heavy 2 inch eyepiece in the visual scope while camera is attached to the other one.

Took few stills in the Meade as well - fairly good results. More coma in the Meade photos and less in the C14 than I expected. I almost looked for the C-14's missing HD sticker.

Meeting Agenda - March 25th

**HFCC –Berry Auditorium - Admin.
Services & Conference Center**
For map see: [http://www.hfcc.edu/contact/
campus_maps.pdf](http://www.hfcc.edu/contact/campus_maps.pdf)

5:30 PM

Opening/Introduction/Member Observing

Main presentation:

The Winter Star Party
Gordon Hansen FAAC

Tech Talk

Battery Capacity
Jim Frisbie FAAC

Club Business/Secretary/Treasurer/ Equipment Reports

Club Projects/Committees/Member Support

- * Cub Scouts Pack at Memorial Elementary School in Garden City. 20001 Marquette, Garden City - Friday April 23
- * 2010 Annual FAAC Banquet Sat March 27 Karl's Cabin -2005 Gotfredson Road Plymouth, Mi - \$30/person
- * Astronomy Day at the DSC during the daytime – Sat, April 24
- * Multi-Club Outreach at Metropolitan Beach - Sat April 24
- * Astro Imaging SIG
- *Dark Sky Committee

Treasurer's Report March 15, 2010

Bank Accounts	
Checking	\$2211.92
Savings	\$1240.42
TOTAL Bank Accounts	\$3,452.34
Cash Account	
Cash	\$109.17
TOTAL Cash Account	\$109.17
Investment Accounts	
CD 1	\$1,046.91
CD 2	\$1,080.31
TOTAL Investment Accounts	\$2,127.22
Asset Accounts	
Equipment	\$1,530.42
Scholarship	\$641.30
TOTAL Asset Accounts	\$2172.72
OVERALL TOTAL	\$5688.73
Memos	
GLAAC	\$2596.64
Total	



2010 FAAC Dinner Banquet

Saturday, March 27, 2010
6 PM till 10 PM

Dinner Talk – Norbert Vance
Going Virtual: A Real Sky Astronomer's Story

Plus

Astro Picture Presentation – Door Prizes – Astro Jeopardy

Location: Karl's Cabin
Price: \$30 / person (checks payable to FAAC)

Dinner Selections:

- ❖ - **New York Strip Steak** – Char-grilled 10 oz. cut cooked medium
- ❖ - **Chicken Marsala** – Tender chicken breast topped with marsala wine mushroom sauce
- ❖ - **Herb Whitefish** – Fresh whitefish topped with herb olive oil and baked

Includes vegetable, potato garden salad with choice of two dressings, bread & butter

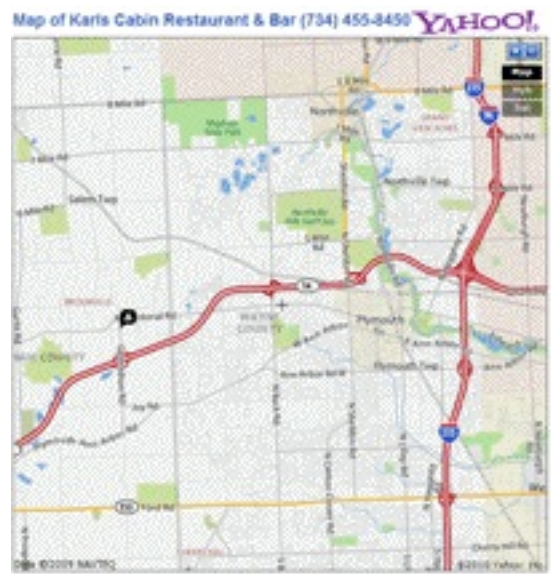
Coffee, hot tea, and soft drinks included

\$\$Cash Bar\$\$

Cocktails at 6 PM – Dinner at 7 PM

Reservations:
Gordon Hansen at
ghansen@comcast.net
or post a note on the Yahoo Group

Karl's Cabin is located at:
6005 Gotfredson Road
Plymouth, MI 48170
Phone 734-455-8450

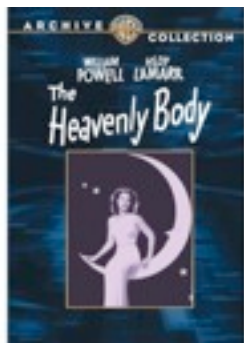


Name: Tony Licata
 Number of years in Astronomy: Since 6 years old
 Years in FAAC: 9
 What ignited your interest? When very young watching the moon rise and move across the sky
 Minutes Till Eyes Are Dark-Sky Dark-Adapted: <1 min
 Current Interest in Astronomy: Astrophotography especially w/DSLR
 Mirror or Lens? Both, more about focal length, NP-101 500mm for wider field, C-11 SCT for DSO's
 Fav cam: Canon 350D w/Heutech mod
 Longest Exposure: 8 hr stack at f/10 of IC 342 (SCT)
 Favorite eyepiece: TV 24mm Panoptic
 Star charts or computer: Computer – "The Sky"
 Best-Ever Observing Site: Camp Barakel in Fairview, MI
 Favorite Local Observing Site: Clay Kessler's house!
 Ever Seen/Heard a Bolide? As a 6 yo child. Rode around the neighborhood on my bike showing everyone – it lasted that long.
 Number of binoculars: 2
 Astro vacations: Every vacation is an astrophotography vacation, to my wife's dismay
 Favorite Pizza Toppings: Mushrooms, bacon
 Dream scope: One that I could conceivably buy someday! (NP-127 or an RC, or....)
 FAAC Benefits: Interfacing w/others who have knowledge and background in astronomy. Friendships. Talking before and after each meeting. Everyone is quick to offer comments on "How To".



Movie Review

by Greg Knekleian



Warning :
 Some scenes may cause
 aperture fever

Recently I've been running into movies that have a reference to Astronomy. When I started watching this movie I knew I was in for a real treat.

"The Heavenly Body" obviously isn't a modern movie and recently has been made available on DVD through the Warner Archive collection. A copy can be ordered easily off Amazon or Warner's online web site.

Perhaps someday this will be on Turner's cable network. This movie can also be rented from www.classicflix.com.

"The Heavenly Body" is about a fictitious astronomer William Whitney, (played by William Powell) who's married to his wife Vicky (played by Hedy Lamarr). His wife is his local heavenly body on earth. Being a dedicated astronomer, his mind is on his work most of the time.

When Vicky starts following the advice of a local astrologer, the couple's lives are turned upside down. It's a romantic comedy involving the conflict between lunacy and logic with nice situational gags.

The telescopes totally fit into the script and actually serve to move the story forward. "George Washington Observatory" is fictional but that large telescope looked real.

It's big yolk reminded me so much of "The Hale" telescope, I wondered if it could be an early use of the partially built Hale. I decided to call Palomar and find out. Their PR guy, took a look at a clip and replied the telescope in the film was only a prop.

A smaller "telescope" also fits well into the script (with a flaw, no zoom eyepiece).

I'd have to give it 4 out of 5 stars for an average classic movie fan, but 5 stars if you like astronomy and comedy.

Review Of StarMap Pro

by Greg Knekleian

A few members in the club have StarMap Pro on their iPhone or iPod Touch. StarMap Pro is a higher end charting program that runs on the Apple iPhone family of products. It performs best on the iPhone 3GS which has a digital compass and GPS in it. StarMap Pro has 2.5 million objects in it.

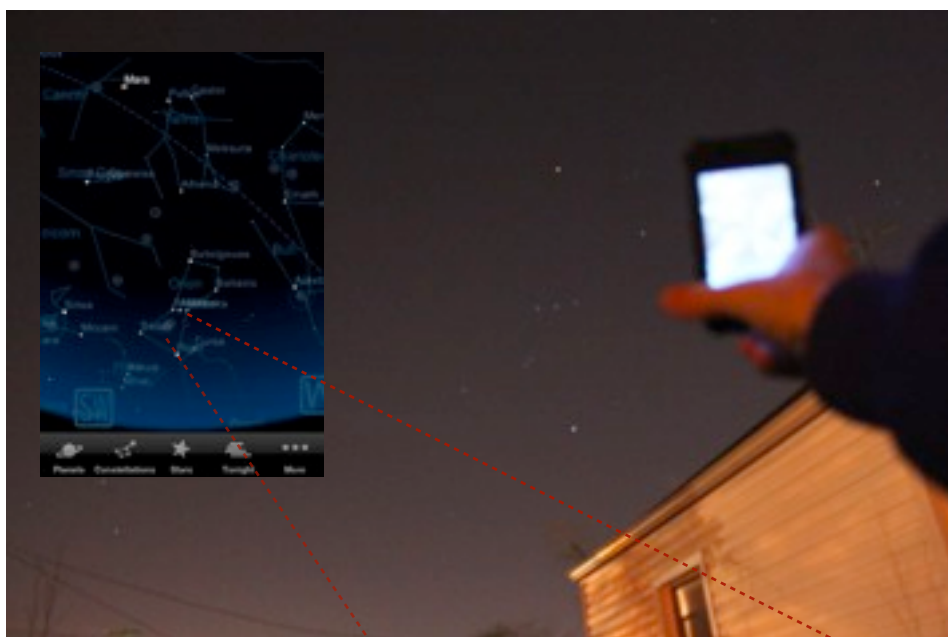
This review only covers a few of hundreds of features. StarMap uses the GPS and digital compass features on the 3GS to update the chart and match where the iPhone is pointing. You can look up objects and easily zoom in and out of a chart with touch screen control. When it's zoomed out to the widest chart setting the GPS may control and update the map automatically. You can easily change the dates and time and it will give you an accurate chart with all the objects in the correct locations.

Sample photos

One night (2-19-2009) I went outside and mounted my Canon EOS t1i on a tripod aiming it toward Orion. I took a 3200 ISO Aperture Priority shot holding my iPhone in the frame with StarMap Pro providing a chart. The iPhone was aimed at the same area of the sky. I didn't spend time taking many exposures to create a perfect composite photo. I just re-aimed the iPhone at the sky, and took a screen shot (displayed in the inset image). This shows a typical chart that lines up nicely with the night sky in real time. My phone is like a portable Planetarium.

A Controller without wires

StarMap Pro can link to Equinox 6, a Macintosh based program through a wireless wifi link. Charts between both programs can be in synchronized. When you move the StarMap chart, Equinox 6's chart will move in sync showing the same basic display.



If you have Equinox 6 hooked up to a goto mount, (using a RS232 cable) StarMap can control both Equinox 6 and the telescope. Imagine tapping on a one of 2.5 million objects and have your telescope goto that object.

Zooming in

To the right you can see I zoomed in a bit and tapped on the Orion Nebula on the map; StarMap identified it, with a small graphic photo of the nebula. It also accurately charts moons in relation to planets. For example I can zoom in on Jupiter and see it's moons accurately charted.

It can function as a button controller to control the telescope as well via Equinox links, controlling slew and tracking controls from a familiar layout.

You can also define all your telescopes inside StarMap Pro and have it show you the field of view and for different FOV/focal length eyepieces. The view is superimposed over the star chart. You can zoom in between different eyepieces definitions quickly. Or view a finder scope or telrad superimposed over a chart at any zoom level.

These are some of the features. Of course you can just turn on the map anytime of the day and have our own personal planetarium. It's a bargain. It would be nice to see it on an Apple iPad. The iPad will not have as accurate GPS (but a digital compass) and uses WIFI or 3G triangulation. StarMap is more accurate on the iPhone 3g than iPod Touch.

StarMap Pro for iPhone, iPod : **\$18.99**

Equinox 6 software for Macintosh : **\$59.95**



As we zoom in we see more details, stars, and objects.



60 mm over Andromeda: A 60 mm eyepiece should show a 2.26 degree field of view on my F5.35 10 inch Newtonian according to StarMap Pro

PST first light report

Brian Kutscher

Editors Note: The Astronomy Sig meeting was held at Rider's in Ypsilanti Michigan this month.

Brian Kutscher one of the newer FAAC club members, picked up a new solar scope right after the Astro SIG meeting. He sent this update along with a 3 photos, 2 included here:

Hi Gregory,

The Sun hasn't been visible through the clouds since I bought the Coronado PST on Thursday evening, so this afternoon's "break" in the weather was the first time I had a chance to see what it would do.

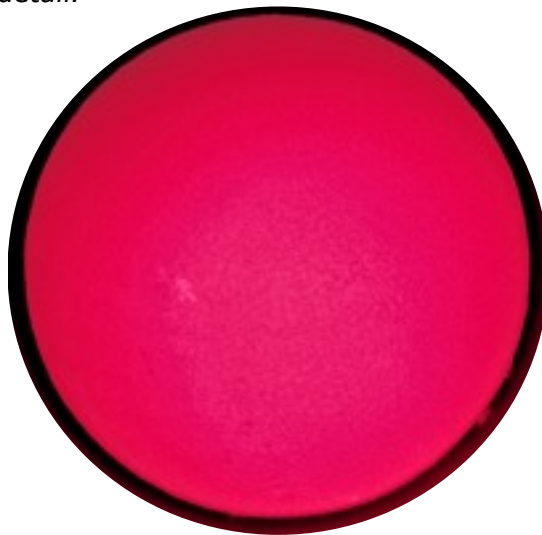
It cleared up a little this afternoon (March 15, 2010), when I had some time to go outside with the Coronado PST on a rickety tripod and my little Canon Elph digital camera. I just wanted to see what kind of a view it would give under the partly cloudy conditions that prevailed when I stepped outside with it

After a few minutes, the skies cleared a little more, and I took a few photos - lens to eyepiece (afocal) exposure, so they aren't too clear. I set the camera to "ASA" 80 to desensitize the sensor a bit. Otherwise, the image bloomed out. Besides, I was trying to hold the telescope steady and keep the Sun in the view while using some zoom on the camera to enlarge the image - and darken it a bit. I was really surprised how bright the Sun's disk is through the PST when the clouds completely dissipated and left the Sun alone in the sky. I wonder if I should put a #25 filter or a Neutral Density filter in front of the front element of the 'scope.... Just some musings for now. I'll try this sometime when I have it on a firmer support.

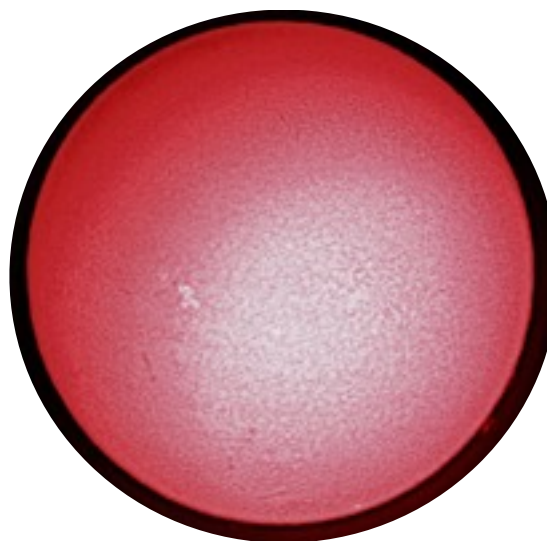
Photo 1276 shows the Sun just about as I saw it visually. The brighter "flare" area and a sunspot at its upper left corner, as well as the short filament to its lower left were easily visible. The other spots manifested themselves also after viewing for a few minutes. It was harder to see them, however. The photos were sharpened in Photoshop to bring out the details in all of these photos.

The real surprise on all of these photos is the prominences near the "4 o'clock" and "6 o'clock"

positions around the solar disc. A smaller one might be at the "3 o'clock" position as well. None of these were apparent when viewed with the eyepiece that came with the Coronado PST. I didn't take an additional eyepiece . . . but I will tomorrow, with which I hope to see more detail.



1275 shows the prominences better.



1274 emphasizes the surface granularity. I couldn't see nearly this kind of clarity of the spicules through the eyepiece, but sharpening of the image in Photoshop brings out the surface irregularities. The central part of the solar disc appears overexposed, but this is to be expected with so much processing of this kind. The prominences show up nicely also.

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