



STAR STUFF

The Newsletter of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club

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July 2011

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New GOES-R to Give More Tornado Warning Time

By Dauna Coulter and Dr. Tony Phillips

So far this spring, more than 1,400 tornadoes have struck the U.S. Some of them have cut jaw-dropping trails of destruction across the countryside and, tragically, across inhabited communities, too. Hundreds of lives have been lost in the onslaught.

Throughout the season, the National Weather Service has routinely issued tornado alerts. In the case of the Alabama tornadoes of April 27th, forecasters warned of severe weather five full days before the twisters struck. Because they couldn't say precisely where the twisters would strike, however, many of their warnings went unheeded.

"If people get a hurricane warning, they often evacuate the area," notes NOAA's Steve Goodman. "But we react differently to tornado warnings."

Perhaps it's because tornadoes are smaller than hurricanes, and the odds of a direct hit seem so remote. Recent pictures from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and Joplin, Missouri, however, show

the perils of playing those odds. Goodman believes that more precise warnings could save lives.

To fine-tune tornado warnings, NOAA will soon launch the first in a series of next-generation weather satellites - GOES-R (Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites-R series). The spacecraft is brimming with advanced sensors for measuring key ingredients of severe weather including winds, cloud growth, and lightning.

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President's Corner

Hooray! We finally had a Beginner's Night where we actually saw stars. The clear skies on July 9th brought out a good number of scopes and a group of students from Wayne State University.

It was good to have some young blood enthusiastic about astronomy. Club members frequently comment about the predominance of "gray hair" in our club.

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STAR STUFF

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STAR STUFF is published eleven times each year by:

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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 welcome! Send your story and/or images to the editor at jenzdanowski@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 the 15th 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 months background photos of the moon Page 1 courtesy of John Kirchhoff. See more of John's photos at:

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

Presidents Corner

(continued from Page 1)

Astronomy magazines columnists and letters sent in by readers echo the same sentiment. Our club members participate in a good many public outreach events where the focus is on young folk – there's no better way to get a kid enthused about the night sky than by showing it to him. If you haven't participated in one of these outreach programs I urge you to give it a try. All you need do is show up with your scope and point it at the moon, cluster, or any other object and let the kid's eyes do the talking. It's pretty rewarding to here there oohs and ahs. It's even more fun when you're accused of having a picture inside the telescope!

We have two events scheduled for August. Unfortunately, they're both on Friday, August 19th. One is at the Detroit Children's Museum and the second at Island Lake – "Exploring Nature." We're going to need some more volunteer to cover both. I'll have more details at the club meeting on the 28th.

Reminder: The club's Orion 8"Intelliscope is available to club members to take home for a month at a time. So far three members have taken it and it's reserved for the month of August. If you're interested see either John Schroer or myself and we'll get you on the list.

Also, do not forget the Annual Multi-club Picnic and Beginner's Night on Saturday, August 6th. We will be grilling hot dogs and hamburgers. If you can bring a dish to pass that would be greatly appreciated. Doug Bauer is once again spearheading the activities and I'm sure he's arranging for clear skies!!

Gordon Hansen
ghhansen@comcast.net



This GOES image shows the storms that spurred the intense April 27 tornado outbreak in the southern U.S. Animation showing the development of weather can be seen at

New GOES-R to Give More Tornado Warning Time

(continued from Page 1)

“GOES-R will be the first geostationary spacecraft to carry a lightning sensor,” says Goodman, the GOES-R Program Senior Scientist. “Studies show that sudden changes in the total lightning activity correlate with storm intensity—and with tornadoes.”

The lightning mapper will detect and map not only cloud-to-ground lightning, but also bolts within and between clouds. The kind of cloud-to-ground lightning we see from our front yards accounts for only 15–20 percent of total lightning. To get a clear idea of a storm's intensity, meteorologists need to know about all the lightning—a view GOES-R can provide.

All by itself, the lightning mapper will provide 7 minutes more lead time in tornado warnings, according to Goodman. GOES-R's state-of-the-art instruments will also improve long-range forecasts.

“The satellite's Advanced Baseline Imager (ABI), for instance, will provide a much clearer picture of clouds,” says NOAA research meteorologist Tim Schmit. Compared to lesser instruments already in orbit, ABI can better detect super-cold “overshooting tops,” evidence of enormous energy and upward

velocity that correlate with subsequent severe weather.

“Accurate advanced notice of high-risk tornadic conditions can cue officials to close schools and businesses even before tornadoes are actually detected,” says Schmit.

Forecasters doubt tornadoes can ever be predicted with 100% accuracy. The twisters are just too capricious. GOES-R, however, is a step in the right direction.

Find out more about GOES-R's unprecedented capabilities at <http://www.goes-r.gov>. Young people can learn more about tornadoes and all kinds of other weather at <http://scijinks.gov>.

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

Treasurer's Report

July 4, 2011

By Chuck Jones

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club Balance Sheet As of July 4, 2011

	Jul 4, 11
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
CD 200599272	1,053.14
CD 89265268	1,097.04
Checking	960.31
FAAC Savings	1,458.26
Petty Cash Account	87.09
Total Checking/Savings	4,655.84
Total Current Assets	4,655.84
Other Assets	
Equipment	1,514.97
GLAAC	3,054.58
Scholarship	219.80
Total Other Assets	4,789.35
TOTAL ASSETS	9,445.19
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	8,439.30
Retained Earnings	-276.33
Net Income	1,282.22
Total Equity	9,445.19
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	9,445.19

Club Wear

To our "New and Current Members" Our club has "FAAC" Official Club Wear with our Logo Embroidered.

Anyone with an interest or need in FAAC Club Wear, I will be placing an order in the next few months, for more information please call me - Diane at 248 980-7832. The FILES section in the Yahoo group has a form noting each ITEM with PRICES. The listing name - "FAAC Club Wear" - please do not hesitate to call me.

Diane Worth

Meeting Agenda - June 23

HFCC – Berry Auditorium -Admin. Services & Conference Center <http://www.boonhill.net/faac>
5:30

Opening/Introduction/Member Observing

Main presentation:

D-Bar-A Observatory

Bob Berta

Tech Talk:

Down The Rabbit Hole

Chuck Jones

Club Projects/Committees/Member Support

- August 6th – Multi-Club Picnic/Beginner's Night
- August 19th – Island Lake "Exploring Nature"
- August 19th – Detroit Children's Museum

Club Business/Secretary/Treasurer/Equipment Reports

Items For Sale

Celestron 6x30 finder scope-\$25

Starter scope (similar to the Celestron power seeker) D=60mm F=700mm with tripod, and 3 lenses-\$50

For more information on these two items, please contact Lynn Spielman at: lynnscats@wowway.com

Orion 100 mm Achromat refractor, F6, with older CG4 equatorial mount. Diagonal and finder included. Asking \$250

Miscellaneous eyepieces and filters for beginners also available. Ask for \$\$

Call Tom Blaszk at 313.585.3351.

key_string_guy@yahoo.com

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.

Astro Imaging SIG

Gordon Hansen

The April meeting was held at HFCC in the Berry Amphitheater in Dearborn

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 August 11th. The meeting room location – HFCC Admin. Services and Conference Center (same building), Berry Amphitheater Auditorium.

Topics invited. Pizza served.

FAAC Events 2011

August 6th – Multi-Club Picnic & Beginner's Night

August 19th – Detroit Children's Museum

August 19th – Island Lake "Exploring Nature"

Background Photo from Lunt Solar Scope Image taken at the Hector J Robinson Observatory, June 28, 2010

One FAAC members blog

<http://hjiobservatory.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. - Greg Knekleian, HJRO volunteer.

Items For Sale

(continued from page 4)

MEADE Telescope and Tripod 6 years old - in excellent shape **LXD 75** - Series Schmidt - Cassegrain 8" f/10 SC-8AT (Super Coated, Autostar Guided) - Focal Length 2000 mm Telescope weight = 24 lbs - with MEADE EMC Super Multi-Coatings and with optional Ultra-High Transmission Coating Tripod weight = 45 lbs - Die cast Aluminum German-Type Equatorial Mount with Variable-Height Field Adjustments Autostar Controller guides to 30,223 objects

Includes a Sun Filter, Overnight Protective Cover, Transportation Containers. Contact phone no. 248-851-5053, e-mail robertboswell@comcast.net

Bill Beers Spring Star Party

by Jon Blum

Bill Beers is member of the Warren Astronomical Society who hosts a star party in Cadillac, Michigan, every spring and fall. He invites all members of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club as well as Warren and other local club members. Each star party lasts a week, but most people attend on the 3-day weekend, and about 15 to 25 people usually come.

Benefits of going to this star party each May and October include dark skies far away from city light pollution, and wonderful socializing with friendly members of all of the local astronomy clubs. In addition to using your own telescope, you will enjoy marvelous views through the 22-inch Dob owned by the Warren club. For accommodations, you can camp out in the observing field or stay in a nearby motel. During the most recent event this May, FAAC members who attended were Bob MacFarland, Ellen Duncan, and Jon Blum.

If you'd like details of how you can attend future Bill Beers spring and fall star parties, email Jon Blum at vpfaac@hotmail.com.

FAAC General Meeting Minutes June 23th, 2011

By Doug Bauer, Secretary

Opening:

The meeting was called to order in the Berry Auditorium at 5:30 pm by Gordon Hansen., FAAC President.

All attendees introduced themselves. There were 36 members present.

Members contributed their observing experiences.

Bob MacFarland and Ken Anderson reported on the Girl Scout Outreach at Kensington on June 18th. Bob FitzGerald, Sandra Macika, John Schroer, John Lines, Bob MacFarland and Ken Anderson all attended.

Main Program:

Jon Blum gave a talk entitled "Why I belong to seven astronomy clubs". He described the seven clubs that he belongs to:

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club

Warren Astronomical Society

Seven Ponds Astronomy Club

Oakland Astronomy Club

Maui Astronomy Club

Haleakala Astronomy Club

Mahana Astronomy Club

He described:

Membership

Structure

Meetings

Social Activities

Newsletters

Observing sites

Apparel

His talk had many great pictures of the various clubs and he brought 20 pieces of club apparel from his personal collection.

A reminder that the Warren Astronomical Society is holding its annual club picnic which is open to FAAC Members too on July 9th at the Wolcott Mill Metropark and that the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club is holding its annual multi-club picnic on Aug 6th at 5:00 PM at

Island Lake Recreation Area - Spring Mill Pond.

Jon concluded his talk by responding to the question: Which Astronomy Club is the best? With the answer, "Whichever club I am at now"

Tech Talk:

Jim Frisbie's Tech Talk was postponed to a future meeting.

Business Meeting:

Secretary's Report as published in the June StarStuff was presented by Doug Bauer and approved.

Treasurer's Report published in the June StarStuff was presented by Chuck J. via Balance and Profit & Loss.

Projects and Events:

July 9th - FAAC Beginner's Night at Island Lake Recreation Area/Spring Mill Pond

July 14th - Astro Imaging SIG - HFCC Berry Amphitheater

July 15th - Detroit Children's Museum - opening until Mid-night - need volunteers to bring scopes to view the Sun and the night sky late at night

July 19th - HJ Robinson Observatory SIG

July 26th - Plymouth Astro Imaging SIG - 6:00 PM Plymouth Library

August 6th - FAAC Multi-Club Picnic and Beginner's Night at 5:00 PM at the Island Lake Recreation Area/Spring Mill Pond

August 19th - - Detroit Children's Museum - opening until 9:00 PM - need volunteers to bring scopes to view the Sun.

Sept 9/10 - GLAAC Astronomy At The Beach

The Club Scope is available for loan out to members. It is booked through July. Let Gordon Hansen know if you would like to reserve it.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Third Annual FAAC Multi-Club Picnic



Saturday August 6th, 2011

5pm-Midnight

Island Lake Recreation Area – Spring Mill Pond



Image above: Suat Eman / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Members of the
following
Astronomy Clubs
and their families:

Ford Amateur
Astronomy Club

University Lowbrows

Oakland Astronomy
Club

Seven Ponds
Astronomy Club

Warren Astronomical
Society

Henry Ford
Community College
Astronomy club

Bring your
scope or
binoculars



Image above: Jennifer Zdanowski

FAAC will provide hamburgers, hot dogs,
veggie burgers, soft drinks, plates & utensils

Please bring a dish to pass

salads, snacks, fruit, desserts.....



Hector J Robinson Update

by Greg Knekleian

We had more visitors this past month and many club members showed up. The core group of those who show up more often seemed to be out more. We had a short setback when I pulled on the OTA a bit to see if it would make a noise we had been hearing. That moved the C14 and we had a bit of a problem getting it to be accurately aligned for a few nights. Later when George Korody came to do a better drift alignment, the model and pointing accuracy of the mount seemed pretty good. We have a few mount adjustments to do before George works on a fresh T Point model, improving the mounts accuracy.

O-SIG - I missed the O-SIG as I had to go to Florida due to a health issue in the family. HJRO was used much more this month with better viewing conditions.

I removed Big Bertha, a 10 inch reflector that I had left inside the observatory. I took it out to my friends house in Dexter, where the skies are dark. I also took out my observing chair for now. I wanted to use that in Dexter while viewing. Family issues called me away, so the chair and extra telescope are out of the way for the members as they work and observe.

I took my binocular telescope to Florida and actually set it up three times. I looked at the sky showing my cousin a few objects Saturn, the moon, and even a very small Ring Nebula, due to the low power of the BT-80 binoculars.

A second viewing was late at night at a Hospice. I was taking a break while my aunt was sleeping and walked outside to see a pretty nice and dark sky. I grabbed the telescope out of the car and looked at a few objects, but focused mostly on the Double Cluster near Cassiopeia.

I was fairly exhausted in Florida due to all the late night hours mostly at bedside in a hospital or hospice. The nights were hot as well and one of the frustrations in viewing was there being so much moisture in the air, my glasses would fog up so I couldn't see the sky with my glasses. I feel contact lenses for naked eye observing are a must for Florida now.

Art Parent spent some time at the observatory. A couple of Lincoln Park police officers dropped by the observatory one night and it, thankfully, wasn't to ticket Tim Dey for parking. Rather they made their way to the observatory and Art showed them some objects through the C14.

During one observing session, a visitor came up and said she worked on the original 12 inch mirror back in the 1960s. I was away running errands when she arrived and Tim Dey called me to let me know about it. I grabbed my old telescope built in 1977 and an article that shows early members of the club working on a mirror (in 1977). I was able to talk with her and showed her some of the old equipment including the old 12 inch mirror she had worked on. Although she worked on that mirror she never looked through it. We were able to show her some objects through the C14.

Art told me via phone that one recent HJRO visitor showed a lot of interest and may become a future FAAC member.

Some FAAC members enjoyed looking at Pluto via the TV monitor and Stellacam. In theory, we might be able to make it out visually if we had dark enough skies. Although our eyes are not sensitive enough to pick it out visually, the Stellacam 3 easily was able to pick it out.



FAAC member Sean Switz visited NASA during STS135 return.

Hector J Robinson Update (continued)

by Greg Knekleian

Sean Switz called me up while I was in Florida and told me he was going to take a last minute flight to Florida and rent a car to witness the final landing of Space Shuttle Atlantis.

I was able to drive and meet Sean and we woke up in the early morning hours to go out on the Titusville bridge to watch the shuttle land. Sean had checked out Merrit Island on google maps previously and wanted to drive closer to the runway. I followed him and we found a location where many others were waiting with cameras ready. The skies were clear and the moon, Jupiter and M45 were easy to spot. I brought out my Vixen BT-80s to take a quick view of the sky before the shuttle landed. Some people nearby were able to look at M45 before Atlantis landed.

We heard the double sonic boom as the shuttle approached and flew by. Atlantis then banked, but we could not see the high banking maneuver.

From our position few could see the shuttle. I saw it quickly blur through a break in the trees. We also heard the sound of the parachutes opening with a loud pop. Atlantis had landed for it's final time. But we didn't capture it with our cameras and only a few nearby saw the 300 mile per hour blur.

One of the viewers remarked he had a telescope. He was visiting from France. He had been to Nasa and had a yearly pass.

We invited him to eat breakfast with us and the three of us decided to go to NASA as soon as it opened up. There is a tour bus ride called DISCOVERY KSC, which takes visitors by the launch pads and runway.

So began our whirlwind tour. We were fortunate to see the Space Shuttle Discovery as it was being moved off the runway. We had a great time and Sean made it to his return flight.



Above: Viewing ISS Flyover -Visitors Terry Henry, Bryan Henry and FAAC member Art Parent.

Below: Greg Knekleian viewing the Double Cluster near a Hospice.



View of Atlantis after it's last landing.

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