



STAR STUFF

The Newsletter of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club

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May 2011

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Milky Way Safari

By Dauna Coulter and Dr. Tony Phillips

Safari, anyone? Citizen scientists are invited to join a hunt through the galaxy. As a volunteer for Zooniverse's Milky Way Project, you'll track down exotic creatures like mysterious gas bubbles, twisted green knots of dust and gas, and the notorious "red fuzzies."

"The project began about four months ago," says astrophysicist Robert Simpson of Oxford University. "Already, more than 18,000 people are scouting the Milky Way for these quarry."

The volunteers have been scrutinizing infrared images of the Milky Way's inner regions gathered by NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope. Spitzer's high resolution in infrared helps it pierce the cloaking haze of interstellar gas and dust, revealing strange and beautiful structures invisible to conventional telescopes. The Milky Way Project is helping astronomers catalogue these intriguing features, map our galaxy, and plan future research.

"Participants use drawing tools to flag the objects,"

explains Simpson. "So far they've made over a million drawings and classified over 300,000 images."

Scientists are especially interested in bubble-like objects believed to represent areas of active star formation. "Every bubble signifies hundreds to thousands of young, hot stars. Our volunteers have circled almost 300,000 bubble candidates, and counting," he says.

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President's Corner

The BIG question is: Who bought the huge telescope with the super mount that cost a bi-zillion dollars? How else to explain the persistence of the Michigan nebula? SOMEONE must be blamed!! Susan Hansen.

We did an outreach program for the Girl Scouts on Saturday (May 14) – not only didn't we get to do any observing, but, while I presented Astro 101 to the 1st through 3rd grade girls, the lightning flashed and the thunder boomed. I don't think they were paying much attention to me!

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STAR STUFF is published eleven times each year by:

FORD AMATEUR ASTRONOMY CLUB
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VICE PRESIDENT: Jon Blum
SECRETARY: Doug Bauer
TREASURER: Chuck Jones
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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.

Presidents Corner

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Sandra Macika, Jim Barnes, and Bob FitzGerald helped out with Bob showing his binoculars while Sandra wowed the kids with samples of shooting stars she had in her pocket.

We did get a bit of sunshine on Astronomy Day (May 14). We had contingents at the Detroit Science Center and at Kensington MetroPark and managed to show off the sun to visitors at both locations, so the month is not a total loss. That evening was also our 2nd Beginner's Night for the year. Despite the clouds returning we had a decent showing of club members.

We also inaugurated the lending program our new club telescope. If you haven't heard, we purchased an Orion Skyquest XT8i IntelliScope Dob. The scope is available for all club members to borrow for one month at a time. The IntelliScope feature is a "push-to" system that will locate "14,000 celestial objects." The purpose of the lending program is to introduce beginners to a telescope before they invest in their own. We will be offering some basic training in its use at each of the Beginner's Nights. If you are interested in borrowing the scope you must attend one of the training programs. The scope is currently out and reserved for June and July. If you're interested please post a note on the Yahoo site.

Gordon Hansen

ghansen@comcast.net

This month's 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/>



Volunteers study infrared images of our galaxy from the Spitzer Space Telescope, identifying interesting features using the special tools of the Milky Way Project, part of the Citizen Science Alliance Zooniverse web site.

Milky Way Safari

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Humans are better at this than computers. Computer searches turn up only the objects precisely defined in a program, missing the ones that don't fit a specified mold. A computer would, for example, overlook partial bubbles and those that are skewed into unusual shapes.

"People are more flexible. They tend to pick out patterns computers don't pick up and find things that just look interesting. They're less precise, but very complementary to computer searches, making it less likely we'll miss structures that deserve a closer look. And just the sheer numbers of eyes on the prize mean more comprehensive coverage."

Along the way the project scientists distill the volunteers' data to eliminate repetitive finds (such as different people spotting the same bubbles) and other distortions.

The project's main site (<http://www.milkywayproject.org>) includes links to a blog and a site called Milky Way Talk. Here "hunters" can post comments, chat about images they've found, tag the ones they consider especially intriguing, vote for their favorite images (see the winners at <http://www.milkywayproject.org>)

talk.milkywayproject.org/collections/CMWS00002u), and more.

Zooniverse invites public participation in science missions both to garner interest in science and to help scientists achieve their goals. More than 400,000 volunteers are involved in their projects at the moment. If you want to help with the Milky Way Project, visit the site, take the tutorial, and ... happy hunting!

You can get a preview some of the bubbles at Spitzer's own web site, <http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/>. Kids will enjoy looking for bubbles in space pictures while playing the Spitzer concentration game at <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/spitzer-concentration/>.

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

May 6, 2011

By Chuck Jones

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club Balance Sheet As of May 6, 2011

	May 6, 11
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
CD 200599272	1,053.14
CD 89265268	1,097.04
Checking	1,530.31
FAAC Savings	1,458.26
Petty Cash Account	125.09
Total Checking/Savings	5,263.84
Total Current Assets	5,263.84
Other Assets	
Equipment	1,472.97
GLAAC	2,204.58
Scholarship	206.80
Total Other Assets	3,884.35
TOTAL ASSETS	9,148.19
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	8,439.30
Retained Earnings	-276.33
Net Income	985.22
Total Equity	9,148.19
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	9,148.19

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 - May 26

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

Opening/Introduction/Member Observing

2010 Club Recognition

- Sirius Award – George Korody
- Recognition Certificates

Main presentation:

The Sun Mike Forrester

Tech Talk:

Selling Used Equipment Jim Frisbie

Club Projects/Committees/Member Support

- June 4th – Allen Park Cub Scouts
- Open Discussion

Club Business/Secretary/Treasurer/Equipment Reports

Items For Sale

New Ad

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

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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 June 9th. The meeting room location – HFCC Admin. Services and Conference Center (same building), Berry Amphitheater Auditorium.

Topics invited. Pizza served.

FAAC Events 2011

Apr 28 - General Meeting

May 7 - Astronomy Day

May 7 - Beginner's Night - Island Lake

May 12 - Astrophotography SIG Meeting

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

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. - Greg Knekleian, HJRO volunteer.

Items For Sale

(continued from page 4)

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.

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

FAAC General Meeting Minutes

April 28th, 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 over 30 members present. Members contributed their observing experiences. Jon Blum welcomed new members & guests, discussed the Mentoring Program, and suggested interested individuals contact a Board Member. A new member, Leon Shaner, introduced himself. Al Bates talked about attending the NEAF conference in New York. Gordon Hansen mentioned that the club now has an 8 inch push-to Dobsonian telescope that may be borrowed by club members. He will bring it to the May 7th Beginner's Night at Island Lake where he will train anyone interested in borrowing the scope. Gordon Hansen will send out a note on the FAAC Yahoo Group explaining the process for checking out the scope. Gordon Hansen recapped the annual FAAC Banquet where George Korody was awarded the Club Sirius Award for his service in the club. Gordon handed out FAAC Recognition Certificates to members present at the meeting for their efforts on behalf of the club in 2010. Gordon also presented a commemorative gavel to Doug Bauer, in recognition of his past three years as FAAC president.

Business Meeting:

Secretary's Report as published in the April StarStuff was presented by Doug Bauer and approved. Treasurer's Report published in the April StarStuff was presented by Chuck J. via Balance and Profit & Loss.

Projects and Events:

GLAAC Astronomy At The Beach, planned September 9 and 10, 2011 is still searching for a Key Note Speaker. Bill Beers is having a Memorial Day weekend Star Party near Cadillac. The Plymouth Astro SIG Group has formed and is meeting in the Plymouth Public Library on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm. Please contact Mike R. or Jim F. for details. Howell Girl Scouts - Club Outreach,

Friday, May 13. The second Beginners Night is scheduled for Saturday, May 7th at Spring Mill Pond. Astronomy Day, May 7th, at the Detroit Science Center – be there between 9:00 and 10:00 am to setup at the corner of John R and Warren. Beginners Night at Island Lake follows at 7:00PM. Some club members plan to go to Kensington nature center around 1:00 PM. Mo Mroue is planning to do an astronomy program at Dearfield Elementary and will be looking for volunteers to set up solar scopes for the 50 or so students. June 4th. Allen Park Cub Scouts at the HJRO – Greg Knekleian.

Main Program:

Dave Lacko gave a presentation on the Deerlick Astronomy Village in Sharon, Georgia. Dave owes a 2 acre lot in the village of 96 acres. It is in a very dark area of Georgia about an hour and half from Atlanta. Each lot has power and internet access available. There are just 3 lots (1.5 – 1.75 acres each) left for sale. They have a pavilion, a bath house, and observing field. They offer annual memberships to use the field at \$35 for an individual and \$50 for a family. If you want to camp at the site there is a \$5 per night charge. They hold three star parties each year:

- Zombie Party in the spring
- Memorial Day picnic
- Peach State Star Party in the fall

If you would like more information, visit their Website at:

<http://www.deerlickgroup.com/>

Tech Talk:

Mo Mroue gave a presentation on three astronomy applications available on Android-based phones. He covered the following applications:

FlyBys - Shows what objects will be flying by your location

Google Sky map – Show a sky map for the area of the sky that you are holding your phone toward. It also will allow you to search for objects and guides you to the object.

SkEye - is a planetarium software that when the phone is fastened to a telescope allows it to function as a push-to scope.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

May Beginners Day and Night

By Greg Knekleian

Detroit Science Center

Arriving late, I saw some of the dozens of FAAC members at the Detroit Science Center. Outside scopes were setup for solar observing and some were looking at the moon which was out during the daytime.

Returning outside Sandra Macika showed me her Meteorite collection. The Macika's large Dobsonian telescope was aimed at the moon. A few visitors came up and looked through the scopes, but I missed the larger group of visitors who went out from the Science Center to the corner.

I didn't have time to run out to Kensington Metro Park and spent some of the time inside chatting with Art Parent and a few others.

Island Lake Beginners Night

Arriving at Beginner's night club members found the clouds stopped viewing opportunities. I was shocked how many astronomers were there considering the poor sky conditions, but everyone had a good time chatting anyway. Art Parent later told mentioned "it was a good change of pace, just chatting with other FAAC members" for a couple of hours. (The photo in the bottom corner was actually framed for a 3d effect, but you won't see that in the single newsletter photo from one of the camera lenses.)



(Above) Detroit Science Center Daylight Astronomers, Don Klaser, Gordon Hansen (Both seated), Dennis Salliotte and Doug Bauer are in the foreground.

(Below) Inside Art Parent and Jeff Hiline (Great Red Spot) chat near internal telescope displays.



(Above) Great Red Spot's merchandise table provided several buying diversions for an astronomer wanting to buy an eyepiece or other astronomy gear.

Beginner's night had a good turnout, with old and new FAAC members talking about astronomy. Below we can see only a part of the group.



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