



# STAR STUFF

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club Newsletter

## Star Stuff

This newsletter is published eleven times per year by:

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club  
P.O. Box 7527  
Dearborn, MI 48121-7527

## Officers

President:	Liam Finn
Vice President:	John McGill
Secretary:	Jessica Edwards
Treasurer:	Mike Bruno

## Departments

Webmaster:	Liam Finn
Newsletter:	Tim Campbell
Equipment:	Dennis Salliotte
Speakers:	Sandra Macika

## Club Information

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club meets on the fourth Thursday of each month, except for the combined November/December meeting which meets on the first Thursday of December – at Henry Ford College Administration Services and Conference Center in Dearborn.

## President's Corner

*by Liam Finn*

### Club Picnic

The club annual picnic was on August 11th. We had a great turnout from club members. Approximately 50 people turned up and there was lots of food to go around. It was an afternoon of fellowship, storytelling and fun for all. I especially want to thank Doug Bauer and Hayden Barrett. Doug for planning the event each year and Hayden for supplying the drinks and his giant grill which made cooking so much easier. Last but not least Tim Campbell for supplying the fresh corn.



Jessica Edwards produces monster-sized bubbles to the delight of many young beach-goers at the club picnic.

## Club Information

Refer to our website for a map and directions:

[www.fordastronomyclub.com](http://www.fordastronomyclub.com)

## Observing

The FAAC primary observing location is Spring Mill Pond located within the Island Lake State Recreation Area near Brighton, Michigan. The Club maintains an after-hours permit. Contact the club for information on how to enter or exit the park in the event that the main gate is locked.

The club also has use of a private observing site near Gregory Michigan. See the FAAC Yahoo Group for more information.

Inquiries can be directed to [info@fordastronomyclub.com](mailto:info@fordastronomyclub.com)

## Membership

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in amateur astronomy. The FAAC is an affiliate of the Ford Employees Recreation Association (FERA).

### Fees

Annual - New Members: \$30  
Annual - Renewals: \$25  
(\$30 if not renewed by Jan 31)

### Benefits

Membership includes the Star Stuff newsletter, discounts on

## Meteors and S'mores

The same night as the club Picnic we had our Meteor and S'mores event. This event is put on in conjunction with the Island Lake State Recreational Area. Last year we had 3500 people attend the event and we had four telescopes.

We hoped for a similar turnout for this year's event, boy we could not have been more wrong. The event started at 8pm. By 8:30 the park closed down Spring Mill Pond as people were already parking in the grass as there was no parking in the lot. The rangers were redirecting people to Kent Lake Beach as the backup.

The road into Island Lake was full of traffic, the offramp from I96 was full of traffic, there were backlogs on I96 to get onto the ramp to get into the park. By 9:30 all three parking lots in Kent Lake Beach were full. The overflow fields used for parking at Kent Lake were filling fast.

We had 32 telescopes at Spring Mill Pond and 5 telescopes at Kent Lake Beach. We had queues at all telescopes that were 30 feet long to see the planets before it got completely dark.



FAAC Club Members are setting up for a night at Meteors & S'mores.

I personally saw three meteors, a few who actually lay down to observe reported up to 12 were seen. Around 10:30 we saw flashes in the North which we thought may have been fireworks but it slowly came closer to us.



magazines, discounts at selected area equipment retailers, and after-hours access to the Island Lake observing site and private observing sites.

Astronomy or Sky & Telescope magazine discounts are available by contacting the FAAC club treasurer at [treasurer@fordastronomyclub.com](mailto:treasurer@fordastronomyclub.com) for the discount form. The form should be sent to the respective publisher with your subscription request and payment. Do not send money directly to FAAC.

The FAAC has a pool of equipment including telescopes, cameras, and other gear used for outreach. Much of the gear can be borrowed for personal use in the interest of furthering your knowledge and experience in astronomy.

Please see the equipment list for further information.

## Club Wear

Club logo-wear (embroidered with club logo) can be ordered directly through [LLBeanBusiness.com](http://LLBeanBusiness.com)

See the Yahoo Group for ordering information and instructions on how to request the correct logo.

## Communication

The FAAC uses Yahoo Groups for our email distribution list (both formal and informal discussion.)

Observing nights & locations (scheduled and unscheduled as weather permits), equipment

By 11pm we knew we had lightning and a rain cell heading our way so I wondered around the beach and warned people it was incoming. It started to rain by 11:30 and most people had left. As they left the traffic to leave the park was as far back as Spring Mill Pond so a few of us astronomers decided to wait until traffic died down.

A few of us hung around talking with the rangers and the few remaining members of the public in the pavilion. The park manager came by around 12:30 and reported the numbers. Six thousand (6,000). In one event we attracted 6,000 people. What an amazing turnout.

We already have started conversations with the park for the 2019 event. Once I have some things nailed down I will add it to the calendar and provide updates to you all.



An aerial view of Spring Mill Pond by Mike O'Dowd of the Warren Astronomical Society shows the parking lot completely filled as well as the grass fields in the distance.

## X3 Ion Drive Presentation

If you have not already heard, we will be having a special speaker at our August 23rd meeting. The meeting will not be in our usual place but across the hall in the larger Forfa auditorium.

Dr. Benjamin Jorns from UofM will be our keynote speaker. Dr. Jorns is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Aerospace Engineering and has been working on the X3 Ion drive with NASA. This is a Hall propulsion system that UofM in conjunction with NASA have been working on

questions, events, outreaches, etc. are normally discussed via this list.

Join by visiting [groups.yahoo.com/fordastronomyclub](https://groups.yahoo.com/fordastronomyclub) to request membership.

## Articles & Submissions

Your submissions to Star Stuff are welcome! Send your story and/or images to the editor at: [starstuff@fordastronomyclub.com](mailto:starstuff@fordastronomyclub.com)

## Observatory

The FAAC maintains and operates the Hector J Robinson Observatory (HJRO) at Lincoln Park Schools.

The observatory houses a 14" Celestron C14 Schmidt Cassegrain Telescope as well as other instruments and can be used by club members.

The observatory is adjacent to the athletic field situated between the Lincoln Park Middle School and High School buildings near

1701 Champaign Rd.  
Lincoln Park, MI 48146

The school system has designated four "key-holders" within the club who have the ability to open the observatory.

Call (313) 444-5850 to learn when the observatory is opening (or request an opening).

improving the designs and overall thrust output of this propulsion system for deep space exploration while saving fuel compared to the present rocket systems.

Spread the word on this as we have a much bigger room and it would be nice to fill it. Invite friends and family that have any interest in science or engineering as this will be highly informative and it is cutting edge technology being developed today.

## Astronomy at the Beach

As most of you know, each year in September the Great Lakes Association of Astronomy Clubs (GLAAC) puts on Astronomy At The Beach event. GLAAC is run by volunteers of the various astronomy clubs in SE Michigan, our very own Sandra Macika is the Vice Present of GLAAC.

This year's event is on Friday September 14th and Saturday September 15th at Kent Lake Beach in Island Lake State recreational area, starting at 6pm. We need as many telescopes as possible on the beach. Last year we had 50 telescopes.

On average the number of the public at this event is 4500 over the two nights. My guess is that seeing as the FAAC is having such success at Island Lake, the numbers for AATB may well exceed the average this year so we need your help.

Sandra Macika is still seeking volunteers at to help at the club table for the event. We will also need as many scopes on the beach as possible. Cars are not permitted on the beach so get there early and the rangers will assist with transporting your telescope to your setup location. I have sent out detailed instructions from GLAAC on the club forum.

## New Members

Over the last few weeks and months we have had a fair few new members join the club and many are new to astronomy and are climbing that learning curve with great enthusiasm. I would like to extend a greeting to our new members and I hope that each of our more seasoned members also seek out the new members and extend a hand of assistance and guidance to them so they see in our club what we, the more seasoned members, see which is a place of learning, friendship and a place where they can always turn to another member for assistance.

## Planetarium

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Several FAAC members are volunteer operators for the Hammond Planetarium at Henry Ford College.

Planetarium shows are free and open to the public.

Four seasonal planetarium shows are offered per year with the stars and constellations of the current season as well as a multi-media presentation featuring select planets.

Public planetarium shows are normally offered each Wednesday at 7:30pm and every 2nd Saturday at 3:00pm – however there are some exceptions. Please see the planetarium schedule for specific times. It is posted here:

[fordastronomyclub.com/hfc-planetarium](http://fordastronomyclub.com/hfc-planetarium)

## Social Media

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The FAAC has several social media accounts. Members are encouraged to join and follow them.

### Facebook

[facebook.com/FordAstronomyClub](https://facebook.com/FordAstronomyClub)

### Twitter

[twitter.com/Ford\\_Astro](https://twitter.com/Ford_Astro)

### MeetUp

[meetup.com/Ford-Amateur-Astronomy-Club](https://meetup.com/Ford-Amateur-Astronomy-Club)

Hope to see you all at our meetings and events. They are fun and the more we interact and be involved in club events, the more it builds a better stronger club and lifelong friendships.

## Secretary's Report

*by Jessica Edwards*

### 26 July General Meeting

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#### Member Observations and What's Up

Many planets are visible this month. Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn are visible in the evening. Mars rises later and makes its closest approach to the Earth this month. Unfortunately, a global dust storm makes seeing surface details near impossible. The Perseids also happen this month. Visibility should be good as there will be no moon.

#### Main Talk – The Star Code: How Spectroscopy Unlocked Heaven's Secrets – Jesse Mason

Our human eyes see only a small slice of the electromagnetic spectrum. Breaking up light with prisms allowed scientists to see how different elements behave when heated. The discovery of corresponding dark lines in the Sun's spectrum allowed for the composition of the Sun to be determined. There were lines that did not correspond to any known elements on the earth at the time. These belonged to helium, the lightest of the noble gases.

## Upcoming Club Meeting Topics & Speakers

Meeting	Speaker	Topic
August 23rd	Dr. Benjamin Jorns Dept. of Aerospace Engineering University of Michigan	The X3 Ion Drive - Hall-based propulsion system with NASA & University of Michigan
September 27th	Dr. Jerry Dunifer, Prof. Emeritus Dept. of Physics & Astronomy Wayne State University	The South Pole and Its Telescopes - Expedition to the South Pole with Antarctic Logistics & Expeditions (ALE)
October 25th	Dr. David Cinabro Dept. of Physics & Astronomy Wayne State University	The Zowada Observatory - Robotic observatory located in Southwest New Mexico.

## Notices

### Seven Ponds Website URL

The Seven Ponds Astronomy Club has moved to a new hosting provider. The new URL is:

<http://spncastronomy.wixsite.com/7-ponds-astro-club>

## Equipment

The FAAC maintain an equipment pool of telescopes, binoculars, cameras, and other equipment used for special events. Much of this equipment is available to members.

Each piece of equipment is either stored by a club volunteer who offers to be the caretaker of the item, or by the person who last borrowed the item.

Most equipment can be borrowed for one-month durations. At the end of the month, the borrower can extend the loan if no other members have requested it.

Some items are reserved for special events use and are not normally available to be borrowed.

If you are interested in borrowing an item, please contact either the current holder of the equipment, or contact the club equipment manager, Dennis Salliotte, at [equipment@fordastronomyclub.com](mailto:equipment@fordastronomyclub.com)

Item	Held by	Item	Held by
<b>Telescopes</b>		<b>Eye Pieces</b>	
4" Dobsonian (Harold's donation)	George Korody	EPK1 Eyepieces, Filters & Accessories	Liam Finn
TK1 Coronado Personal Solar Telescope (Doublestack) w/Meade Autostar Goto Mount	John McGill	<b>Binoculars</b>	
TK3 Celestron 130mm Newtonian w/goto mount	Liam Finn	BK3 15x70 Binoculars w/monopod mount	Bob MacFarland
TK4 Celestron 90mm Refractor w/manual mount	Liam Finn	BK4 20x80 Binoculars w/alt-az goto mount	Sandra Macika
TK5 4.5" Reflector on Fitz GEM mount	Bob MacFarland	BK5 25x70 Binoculars w/tripod adapter	Tim Dey
TK6 8" Orion XT8i Dobsonian	Jed & Jacob Datema	<b>Display Items</b>	
TK7 TPO 8" f/4 Newtownian Astrograph (OTA Only - no mount)	Jim Barnes	Astronomy Event Sign (3' x 6')	Gordon Hansen
<b>Presentation Tools</b>		Astronomy Event Signs 18x24" (x8)	Liam Finn
Projector (older)	Jim Frisbie	PVC Display Board - Folding	Sandra Macika
Projector (newer)	Mike Bruno	Banner - Small (24" x 32")	George Korody
Projection Screen 8'	John McGill	Banner - Medium (24" x 72")	Sandra Macika
Projection Screen 6'	Liam Finn	Banner - Large (32" x 16')	George Korody
Bullhorn	George Korody	Tri-Fold Presentation Boards	Don Klaser
Speaker System w/Wireless Mic	Liam Finn	<b>Other</b>	
DVD Player	Jim Frisbie	Canopy (10' x 10')	Liam Finn
<b>Demonstration Tools</b>		Pop Cooler	Hayden Barrett
Weigh on Planets Scale	George Korody	Equipment Etching Tool	Greg Ozimek
Lunar Phase Kit	Bob MacFarland	TA Sky Quality Meter	Liam Finn
100' Scale Model Solar System Kit	Bob MacFarland	TA Sky Atlas 2000.0	Tim Dey
		TA Orion Telescope Binoviewer	Liam Finn

Item	Held by
<b>Imaging Cameras</b>	
C1 Celestron NexImage Solar System Imager model #93712	Gordon Hansen
C2 Meade Deep Sky Imager Pro III w/Autostar Suite	Gordon Hansen
C3 Orion StarShoot Deep Space Video Camera NTSC #52185 w/video capture device #52178	Gordon Hansen
C4 Meade Electronic Eyepiece w/video cable for monitor or TV w/3.5" video monitor	Gordon Hansen
C5 Orion StarShoot Deep Space Video Camera II #52195 and Orion StarShoot iPhone Control for Deep Space Video Camera II #52195	Gordon Hansen
C6 Canon 60Da Astrophotography DSLR and accessories	Tim Dey
<b>Other Imaging Equipment</b>	
CA1 Rigel Systems Spectrascopes	Gordon Hansen
CA2 Celestron 1.25" to T-Adapter (male) #93625	Tim Dey
CA3 Canon EOS Deluxe Astrophoto kit for Canon EOS mount, T-thread adapter and variable 1.25" extender	Tim Dey
CA4 Orion StarShoot LCD-DVR #58125 2.5" LCD screen	Gordon Hansen
CA5 Celestron Canon EOS T-ring adapter #93419	Tim Dey
<b>Special Event Items - Not available for Loan Out</b>	
BK1 Orion BT-100 Binocular telescope w/hard case, Orion VersaGo h.d. manual Alt/Az mount w/ Vixen dovetail head and Vixen style binocular holder bracket	Ken Anderson
BK2 Zhumell 25x100 Binoculars, hard case, & Zhumell TRH-16 tripod w/soft fabric bag	Sandar Macika
TAK1 Night Vision Image Intensifier for telescopes (2" barrel size)	George Korody

## Scheduled Observing Nights

Month	Date	Sunset	Location
September	14th & 15th	7:43pm	Island Lake
	Astronomy at the Beach	7:41pm	Kent Lake Beach
October	13th	6:63pm	Mayberry State Park