



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:	Mike Bruno
Vice President:	John McGill
Secretary:	Cheri Grissom
Treasurer:	Arica Flores

Departments

Webmaster:	Liam Finn
Membership:	Doug Bauer
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 Mike Bruno

I hope everyone is staying safe and well as the quarantine continues . I am disappointed we missed out on all of the activities planned this past month, although suspended , we will be back and out together hopefully very soon. But that should not stop everyone from enjoying this hobby. Getting out under a dark sky is solitary pursuit more times than not. With that said, I hope everyone got outside to see Venus pass through the Pleiades on the Clear Nights we had the first few nights in April. Living in the city for me and not being able to get out observe as much as I would like, an occurrence like this is something we can all do just by stepping out our front door. Even though we all have observed Venus and the Pleiades many times, the unique circumstances of them coming together was nice to be able to see.

I would like to encourage everyone to post something small once in a while on the Clubs private Groups.io message board and let us know what kind of astronomy you have been. We would like to hear from all of you. If you are not a member of the Group, just send me an email and we will get an invitation to join sent out.

In closing I would like to announce a little teaser, the FAAC is creating its own observing award. The plan has been pulled together and the details will be posted on the Groups.io message board in the coming days. I hope it encourages everyone to get out and observe and that you have fun while completing the program.

I look forward to seeing everyone again in the not too distant future!

Club Information

Refer to our website for a map and directions:

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. Club members can contact any club officer for procedures to enter or exit the park when the main gate is locked.

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

Inquiries can be directed to 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 magazines, discounts at selected

Secretary's Report

by Cheri Grissom

FAAC General Meeting – March 26, 2020

Our first videoconference meeting, made necessary by the coronavirus pandemic, was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. by President Mike Bruno. All board members present except John McGill. The number of participants varied over the course of the meeting, but at one time we had as many as 23 members, if I counted correctly. Some participated by video, some by audio only.

What's Up:

We started with Gordon Hansen doing the "What's Up" segment. With a bit of much-needed humor, we learned about deep sky objects that can be found near the constellation Corona Borealis. Venus reaches maximum brilliance on April 27. Comet Atlas is brightening and could be a very welcome naked-eye comet. The Lyrid meteor shower will peak on April 22. Gordon listed the visible planets. He also advised that the Plymouth Astrophotography meeting on April 7 will be held via videoconference.

Member Observing Experiences:

Member Observing Experiences: Several participants gave reports and shared upcoming plans.

Other Topics:

We discussed the ongoing situation and the fact that it will probably be May or June, just a guess, before we can resume regular in-person meetings.

Dr. Tim Dey, long-time member and former vice president of the club, was kind enough to spend some time talking to us about the coronavirus and COVID-19, and answered some of our questions. Thanks, Tim!

Since we had no guest speaker, we spent the remainder of the meeting having an "Ask the Astronomer" session. Several participants asked questions on various astronomy-related topics, and others provided answers.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

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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 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

See the groups.io files section for ordering information and instructions on how to request the correct logo.

Communication

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

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

Secretary's Report (cont'd from page 2)

February Board Meeting Summary

(Please note that these summaries published each month are a condensed and abbreviated form of the full slate of topics and discussions that take place at our board meetings. Full board meeting minutes are taken each month and kept for club records.)

Our first videoconference board meeting was held on April 2, 2020. All board members were present, as well as seven additional members. Our next general meeting, again via videoconference, will be on April 23. We are going to confirm whether our scheduled speaker will be able to do her presentation via videoconference.

We have received three renewals and one new membership in the last month. All in-person events have been canceled or postponed. Liam Finn, our website and social media person, has been placing notices on all of our sites.

We talked about how to increase participation in our videoconference meetings. We need to let people know that it is easy to join, and there are several options if you don't have or don't want to use a webcam. We also talked about how we may be able to utilize videoconferencing in other ways going forward, as alternatives to in-person events.

The board has been discussing the implementation of a FAAC Observer's Award. Details are being worked out. We may discuss this at an upcoming general meeting.

Hubble at 30: Three Decades of Cosmic Discovery

by David Prosper

The Hubble Space Telescope celebrates its 30th birthday in orbit around Earth this month! It's hard to believe how much this telescope has changed the face of astronomy in just three decades. It had a rough start -- an 8-foot mirror just slightly out of focus in the most famous case of spherical aberration of all time. But subsequent repairs and upgrades by space shuttle astronauts made Hubble a symbol of the ingenuity of human spaceflight and one of the most important scientific instruments ever created. Beginning as a twinkle in the eye of the late Nancy Grace Roman,

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

Join by visiting <https://groups.io/g/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

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).

the Hubble Space Telescope's work over the past thirty years changed the way we view the universe, and more is yet to come!



Image Credit: NASA

as bright as the Space Station, which is much larger and whose orbit is closer to Earth (about 220 miles), but it's still very noticeable as a single steady dot of light, speeding across the sky. Hubble's orbit brings it directly overhead for observers located near tropical latitudes; observers further north and south can see it closer to the horizon. You can find sighting opportunities using satellite tracking apps for your smartphone or tablet, and dedicated satellite tracking websites. These resources can also help you identify other satellites that you may see passing overhead during your stargazing sessions.

NASA has a dedicated site for Hubble's 30th's anniversary at bit.ly/NASAHubble30. The Night Sky Network's "Why Do We Put Telescopes in Space?" activity can help you and your audiences discover why we launch telescopes into orbit, high above the interference of Earth's atmosphere, at bit.ly/TelescopesInSpace. Amateur astronomers may especially enjoy Hubble's images of the beautiful objects found in both the Caldwell and Messier catalogs, at bit.ly/HubbleCaldwell and bit.ly/HubbleMessier. As we celebrate Hubble's legacy, we look forward to the future, as there is another telescope ramping up that promises to further revolutionize our understanding of the early universe: the James Webb Space Telescope!

Planetarium

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

Social Media

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

Facebook

facebook.com/FordAstronomyClub

Twitter

twitter.com/Ford_Astro

MeetUp

meetup.com/Ford-Amateur-Astronomy-Club

Scheduled Club Events

Month	Date	Sunset	Location
May	2nd	8:34pm EDT	Island Lake
May	30th	9:02pm EDT	Island Lake
June	27th	9:13pm EDT	Island Lake
July	25th	8:59pm EDT	Island Lake
August	8th Club Picnic Meteors & S'mores	8:43pm EDT	Island Lake
August	22nd	8:22pm EDT	Island Lake
September	25th & 26th Astronomy at the Beach	7:24pm EDT 7:22pm EDT	Island Lake
October	24th	6:36pm EDT	Maybury State Park

Upcoming Club Meeting Topics & Speakers

Meeting	Speaker	Topic
April 23rd	Jenny Pon	Our Place in Space
May 28th	Don Klaser	Antikythera Mechanism
June 25th	Jim Shedkowsky	The LSST: Faster, Wider, Deeper

April Talk Details

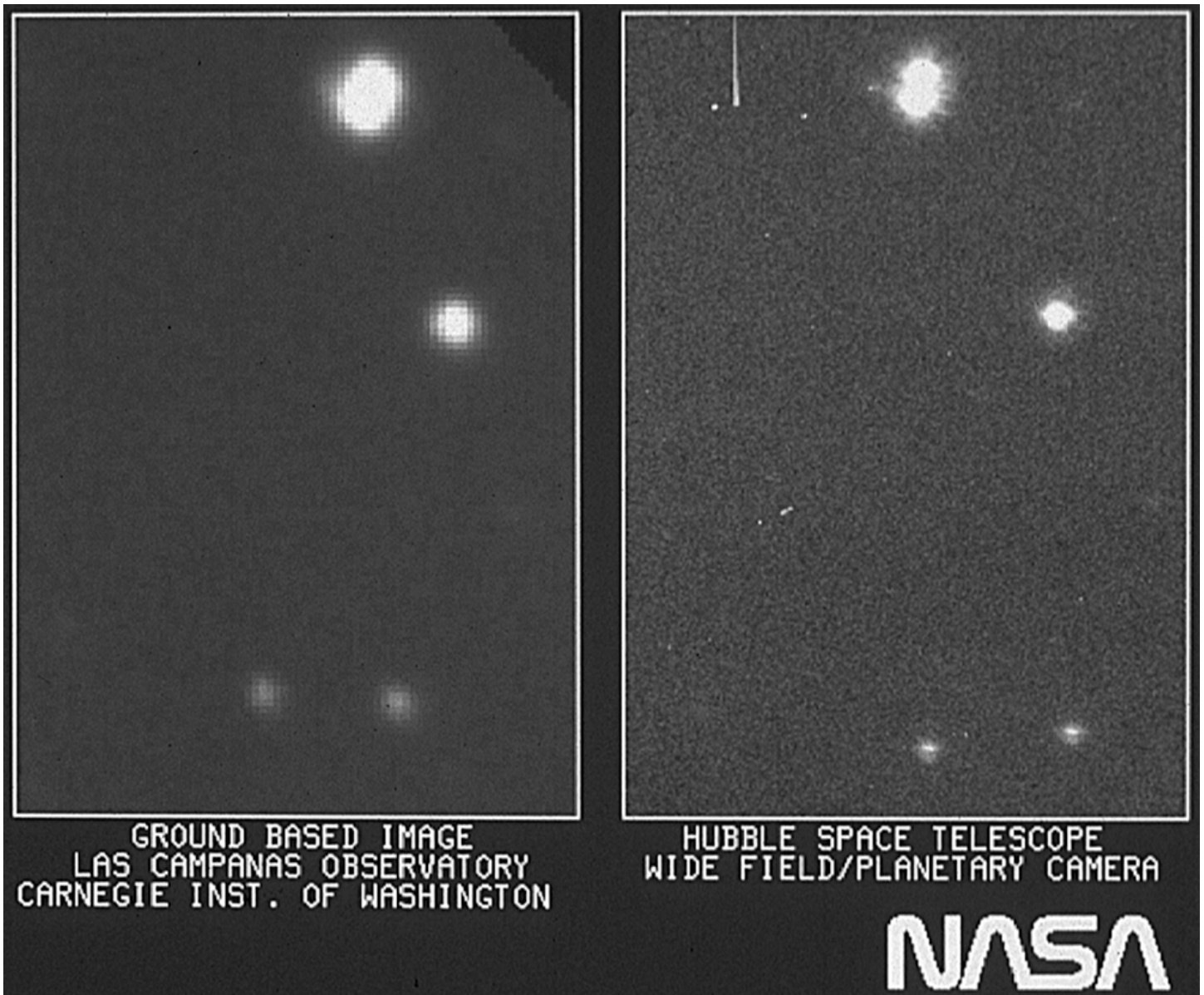
Our Place in Space

Jenny Pon

Fellow / Great Lakes Planetarium Association

Join experienced planetarium specialist Jenny Pon for a tour of the known universe using 3D visualization software. Earthlings in attendance will make stops at a number of sites, including Jupiter, Saturn, and a black hole at the center of our galaxy.

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Hubble's "first light" image. Even with the not-yet-corrected imperfections in its mirror, its images were generally sharper compared to photos taken by ground-based telescopes at the time. Image Credit: NASA

Discover more about the history and future of Hubble and space telescopes at nasa.gov.

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

Item	Held by	Item	Held by
Telescopes		Display Items	
TK1 Coronado Personal Solar Telescope (Doublestack) w/Meade Autostar Goto Mount	Jessica Edwards	Astronomy Event Sign (3' x 6')	Gordon Hansen
TK5 4.5" Reflector on Fitz GEM mount	Bob MacFarland	Astronomy Event Signs 18x24" (x8)	Liam Finn
TK6 8" Orion XT8i Dobsonian	Sean Pickard	PVC Display Board - Folding	Sandra Macika
TK7 TPO 8" f/4 Newtownian Astrograph (OTA Only - no mount)	Gary Gibson	Banner - Small (24" x 32")	George Korody
TK8 20" f/5 Obsession Dob, Ladder & EP Kit	Liam Finn	Banner - Medium (24" x 72")	Sandra Macika
Presentation Tools		Banner - Large (32" x 16')	George Korody
Projector (older)	Jim Frisbie	Tri-Fold Presentation Boards	George Korody
Projector (newer)	Gordon Hansen	Other	
Projection Screen 8'	John McGill	Canopy (10' x 10')	Liam Finn
Projection Screen 6'	Liam Finn	Pop Cooler	Sean Pickard
Bullhorn	George Korody	TA Sky Quality Meter	Liam Finn
Speaker System w/Wireless Mic	Liam Finn	Demonstration Tools	
DVD Player	Dennis Salliotte	Weigh on Planets Scale	George Korody
		Lunar Phase Kit	Bob MacFarland
		100' Scale Model Solar System Kit	Bob MacFarland
		NSN Meteorite (Outreach) kit	Sandra Macika

Item	Held by
Imaging Cameras	
C2 Meade Deep Sky Imager Pro III w/Autostar Suite	Gordon Hansen
C6 Canon 60Da Astrophotography DSLR and accessories	Tim Dey
Other Imaging Equipment	
CA1 Rigel Systems Spectrascope	Gordon Hansen
C7 Canon EOS EF 70-200mm f/1.4L IS USM lens & tripod mounting ring (for Canon EOS cameras)	Gordon Hansen
Rokinon 8mm f/3.5 Fish-Eye Lens (Canon EOS Mount)	John McGill
Special Event Items - Not available for Loan Out	
BK2 Zhumell 25x100 Binoculars, hard case, & Zhumell TRH-16 tripod w/soft fabric bag	Sandra Macika
TAK1 Night Vision Image Intensifier for telescopes (2" barrel size)	George Korody

Meeting Topics & Speakers (cont'd from page 5)

Bio:

Jenny has over 30 years of work experience in the planetarium field. She worked in planetariums with 50-foot domes in East Lansing, Pittsburgh and Detroit. She has earned professional recognition as a Fellow of the Great Lakes Planetarium Association. She continues her astronomy outreach with the Farmington Community Stargazers and at the Grand Canyon Star Party and Sierra Club - Michigan Chapter retreat.

Classifieds

StarStuff will run classified advertisements for club members. Each classified advertisement will be run in up to two consecutive editions of the StarStuff Newsletter. Submit your listing to starstuff@fordastronomyclub.com