



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:	Jeff Gorman
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 still safe and healthy as our quarantined Spring has somehow quickly moved to Summer. As businesses open back up and we leave our homes a little more, we are still canceling public events sponsored by the Club for the foreseeable future. Going forward the Board has discussed the possibility of holding a scaled down Club picnic sometime in August, we will be monitoring how the Summer progresses and make a final decision at a later time and will keep you informed.

There was a small gathering of social distanced Club members for a last minute observing session out at Lutz County Park in Deerfield Township on June 19th. Tim Campbell and Liam Finn have discussed this additional dark sky location at our last few video conference General Meetings and Liam has been working with the park to obtain the status as a Dark Sky Park. Knowing Liam I am sure his efforts will be rewarded sooner than later. I was able to attend the evening and although the conditions were just fair for observing I found the park to be very nice and has great potential for a place to observe with Dark skies just over an hour from Dearborn. If you are able to visit the park I highly suggest it, just don't forget your favorite mosquito repellant!

I would like to announce that the GLAAC Board has decided to hold this year's Astronomy at the Beach (AATB) online, still to be held on September 25th & 26th. GLAAC is asking for all participating clubs to provide a list of live or prerecorded presentations or broadcasts to be presented at their next meeting on July 9th. We will discuss this further at the upcoming General Meeting and Board Meeting. If you have thoughts or ideas or would like to participate, please let me know either directly or at one of these meetings. Stay tuned to Groups.io for further information. This wonderful event will be here before we know it.

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

I encourage everyone to continue to attend our online Board & General Meetings. If you have not attended one yet you are missing out on the same great meetings, just held virtually. Please contact me if you are unsure on how to attend or just look for the link to the Webex meeting sent out through Groups.io. We will notify you when we will begin to hold meetings in person again. I wish everyone a great Summer and that you are able to get out under the night sky, hopefully working on the FAAC Observer's Award and the FAAC Seasonal Target Area (FSTA) Challenge.

Secretary's Report

by Cheri Grissom

FAAC General Meeting – May 28, 2020

The videoconference meeting was called to order by President Mike Bruno at 7:05 p.m. All board members present. A total of approximately 26 people were listed as being in attendance at the peak. Mike started by thanking Liam Finn for putting together the videoconference meetings we have been relying on for these last few months. We have no idea at this point how much longer we will be doing things this way, but we are grateful that we are able to do so.

Member Observing Experiences:

Tim Campbell and Liam Finn recently went up to Lutz County Park to take photos for the purpose of trying to obtain a Dark Sky Association certification. Discussion followed. A couple members related their observations of Venus, the Moon, and Castor and Pollux in Gemini.

What's Up:

Gordon Hansen did our "What's Up" segment. A reminder that the Plymouth Astrophotography group is also conducting their monthly meetings via videoconference. The summer solstice will be June 20th. Our asterism of the month is sometimes referred to as "Mother Camels," and comprises the head of Draco. Gordon talked about how this interesting name came about. There are a few comets that may be well-positioned for observing this month. Gordon also discussed the visible planets this month and deep sky objects in the vicinity of Draco.

Treasurer's Report:

Arica reports that we currently have \$9,272.57. She is working on the FERA report we are required to submit annually.

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

Projects, Committees, & Events:

There is not much to discuss. At this time, there are no events scheduled. Our Meteors and S'mores picnic has been canceled. Astronomy at the Beach has been canceled. Liam is putting together an all-sky camera and gave us a report. John McGill is working on a video for our Astronomy For Everyone channel on YouTube about the John Glenn Astronomy Park in Ohio.

Mike talked about our new FAAC observer's award program, which he says is currently in stage one. This type of activity may be an extra incentive to some of us to get out and observe during this time when we can't get together at our club events.

Speaker:

Our guest speaker was long-time member and former officer of the club in several positions, as well as a producer and host of Astronomy For Everyone, Don Klaser, who gave a talk about the Antikythera Mechanism. Antikythera is a small, remote Greek Island, and in 1900, this unique artifact was recovered from a nearby shipwreck, a Roman vessel dating to 70 - 60 BCE. The device is considered to be an ancient mechanical analog computer, an amazing piece of technology for its time, estimated to have been built in the second century BCE. Its purpose was to show the locations and movements of the heavenly bodies. It has been the subject of intense scientific study for over a century now. It is currently housed at the Greek National Museum of Archaeology. Don gave a nice presentation with lots of slides and took questions afterward.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

June 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 June board meeting was held via video-conference. All board members were present, as well as nine additional members.

Jim Shedlowsky is scheduled to be our guest speaker at our June 25 general meeting, which will again be held via video-conference. Liam will get with Jim to make sure we can accommodate his audio/video needs.

Cont'd on page 8

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

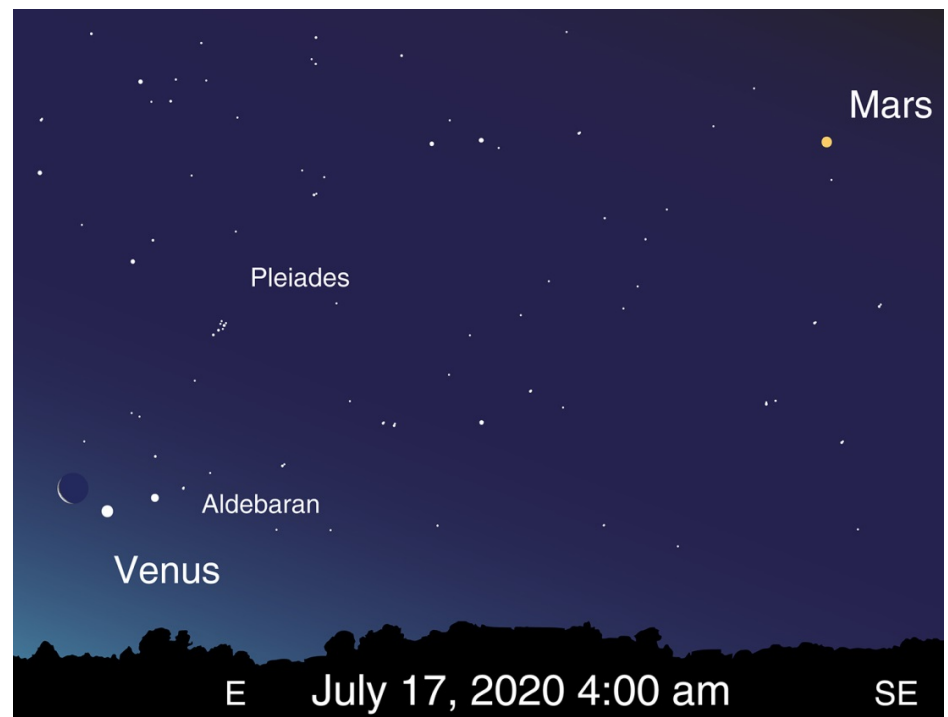
The school system has designated four "key-holders" within the club who have the ability to open the observatory.

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

Mars's Latest Visitor: NASA's Perseverance Rover

by David Prosper

NASA's latest Mars rover, Perseverance, is launching later this month! This amazing robot explorer will scout the surface of Mars for possible signs of ancient life and collect soil samples for return to Earth by future missions. It will even carry the first off-planet helicopter: Integrity. Not coincidentally, Perseverance will be on its way to the red planet just as Mars dramatically increases in brightness and visibility to eager stargazers as our planets race towards their closest approach in October of this year.



Caption: Observe Mars yourself over the next few months! Mars can be found in early morning skies throughout July, and by the end of the month will rise before midnight. Mars gradually brightens every night until the close approach of Mars in October. The pre-dawn skies of July 17 present an especially nice view, as the waning crescent Moon will appear near Venus and Aldebaran.

Cont'd on page 6

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
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
June 25th	Jim Shedkowsky	The LSST: Faster, Wider, Deeper
July 23rd	Edward Cackett	Mapping a Black Hole
August 27th	TBA	
September 24th	Arica Flores	Leap Year

June Talk Details

The LSST: Faster, Wider, Deeper

Jim Shedkowsky

WAS Club Member & Rockabilly Legend

Bio:

Jim Shedkowsky, long time member and former WAS treasurer and rockabilly legend, worked for 36 years as a Vehicle Development Engineer/Manager, specializing in Acoustics and Noise & Vibration, retiring in 1999. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1960 with a degree in Engineering Physics and spent two years as an officer in the U.S. Army in

Cont'd on page 8

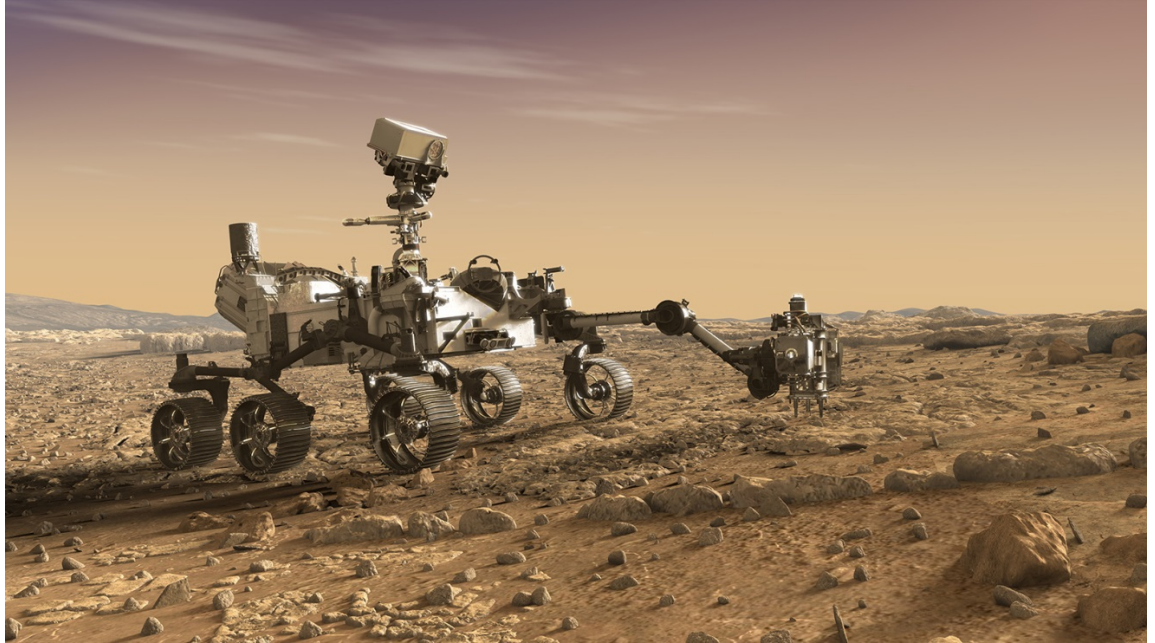
NASA Perseverance Rover (Cont'd from page 4)

Perseverance's engineers built upon the success of its engineering cousin, Curiosity, and its design features many unique upgrades for a new science mission! In February of 2021, Perseverance will land at the site of an ancient river delta inside of Jezero Crater and ready its suite of seven primary scientific instruments. The rover will search for traces of past life, including possible Martian fossils, with WATSON and SHERLOC, two advanced cameras capable of seeing tiny details. The rover also carries an amazing instrument, SuperCam, to blast rocks and soil outside of the rover's reach with

lasers to determine their chemical makeup with its onboard suite of cameras and spectrometers. Perseverance will also take core samples of some of the most promising rocks and soil, storing them for later study with its unique caching system. Future missions will retrieve these samples from the rover and return them for detailed study by scientists on Earth. Perseverance also carries two microphones so we can hear the sounds of Mars and the noises of its instruments at work. It will even launch a small helicopter - Ingenuity - into the Martian atmosphere as a trial for future aerial exploration!

Would you like to contribute to Mars mission science? You can help NASA's rover drivers safely navigate the Martian surface by contributing to the AI4Mars

project! Use this tool to label terrain features on photos taken of the Martian surface by NASA missions to help train an artificial intelligence algorithm to better read their surrounding landscape: bit.ly/AI4Mars



Perseverance inspects a cluster of interesting Martian rocks with its instruments in this artist rendering by NASA JPL/Caltech

The launch of Mars Perseverance is, as of this writing, scheduled for July 20, 2020 at 9:15am EDT. More details, updates, and livestreams of the event are available on NASA's official launch page: bit.ly/Mars2020Launch . Dig deep into the science of the Mars 2020 mission and the Perseverance rover at: mars.nasa.gov/mars2020/ . Find out even more about past, present, and future Mars missions 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, Jeff Gorman, 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 Spectroscope	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

Upcoming Speaker Details (Cont'd from page 5)

Germany. In his spare time, he wrote and recorded music for Epic and Roulette Records, as one of the "Skee Brothers" (they were on Dick Clark's "Bandstand" in 1958).

Jim's astronomical interests include observation and outreach (he owns several telescopes), but in recent years his passion for astronomical history and technology has become a major factor. He is a member of the McMath-Hulbert Astronomical Society, and has visited a number of major observatories. He thoroughly enjoys the WAS Discussion Group.

He and his wife winter in Mesa, Arizona (a great place for observing), and he participates in activities of the East Valley Astronomy Club. He took part in the "All Arizona Messier Marathon" in March of 2009, earning a certificate for observing 104 Messier Objects in one night.

Secretary's Report (Cont'd from page 3)

Arica Flores, our treasurer, has submitted the FERA report that is required annually. Liam Finn advises that there have been some behind-the-scenes updates to our website, but nothing that would be noticeable. Jeff Gorman is in the process of conducting an inventory of the club's equipment.

We had extensive discussion about when and how we might resume in-person meetings and events. It's too soon to know what is going to happen in that regard, but we will keep the membership informed.

The board approved our annual scholarship contribution in the amount of \$300 to HFCC.

FAAC member Ed Halash had proposed an idea for enhancing our monthly Member Observing Reports. After much discussion of Ed's idea, it was decided that the club would offer a seasonal (or quarterly) observing challenge that would focus on the attractions in one area of the sky. Members could report on their observations, and astrophotographers could share their images. More information will be provided through Groups.io and StarStuff.