



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: Arica Flores
Vice President: Sean Pickard
Secretary: Cheri Grissom
Treasurer: Jameson Sullivan

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 Arica Flores, President

Sirius Award Nominations

The board is still accepting nominations for the Sirius Award through February 28th.

Eligibility extends to any club member *except* current club officers and previous winners of the Sirius Award.

Please submit your nominations (you may submit more than one) to president@fordastronomyclub.com with a note including the name and reasons for selecting each of your nominees.

Annual Astronomy Conference & Swap Meet

The date has been set for the Annual Astronomy Conference & Swap Meet on Saturday, April 5th from 9am - 3pm at Henry Ford College. The event includes presentations on general astronomy, technical topics, planetarium shows, and of course the swap meet.

The club invites all astronomers and the general public.

The event flyer is attached to the back page of this edition of StarStuff.

Annual Banquet: Save the Date

The club's annual banquet will take place at:

Mama Mia
27770 Plymouth Road, Livonia MI
on Saturday, May 10th at 6pm

You can purchase tickets by scanning the code.



Banquet Ticket

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

Dinner tickets are \$40 per person and includes salad, entrée, coffee/tea or soft-drinks and desert. Alcoholic beverages are not included but are available (cash bar). Special entrées are available for those with dietary needs.

There will be a featured speaker and Gordon Hansen will host Astro Jeopardy (where there may or may not be cheating), and of course some fun prizes.

All club members as well as their spouses/significant others and/or bring a friend. You are encouraged to attend.

Secretary's Report

by Cheri Grissom, Secretary

FAAC General Meeting – January 23, 2025

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President Arica Flores. Vice President Sean Pickard and Secretary Cheri Grissom present in person. Treasurer Joe Bostic present online. Sixteen attendees all together, twelve in person and four online. Members introduced themselves. We had two guests.

Member Observing Reports

Both Gordon Hansen and Sean Pickard have been using their backyard observatories, not hampered by having to be out in the weather. Cheri Grissom and Dan Smith both commented on how clear and beautiful the night sky was on one of our recent zero-ish evenings. Arica Flores had the opportunity to share views of the evening planets with her sister and nephews, who had never looked through a telescope before. Gary Gibson and Jeff Gorman have been enjoying the winter constellations. Tim Campbell and Mike Bruno got in some observing of the so-called Parade of Planets in our night sky, with five viewable with naked eye (don't forget to look down to see a sixth one!) and an additional two with a telescope.

What's Up in the Night Sky

Sean started by going over our upcoming calendar of events. These dates can be found on our website. Sean then went over the location of various Solar System bodies for the upcoming month, as well as ISS transits viewable in our area, including at least a couple solar and/or lunar transits.

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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

February's Night Sky Notes: How Can You Help Curb Light Pollution

by Kat Troche



Light pollution has long troubled astronomers, who generally shy away from deep sky observing under full Moon skies. The natural light from a bright Moon floods the sky and hides views of the Milky Way, dim galaxies and nebula, and shooting stars. In recent years, human-made light pollution has dramatically surpassed the interference of even a bright full Moon, and its effects are now noticeable to a great many people outside of the astronomical community. Harsh, bright white LED streetlights, while often more efficient and long-lasting, often create unexpected problems for communities replacing their old street lamps. Some notable concerns are increased glare and light trespass, less restful sleep, and disturbed



Before and after pictures of replacement lighting at the 6th Street Bridge over the Los Angeles River. The second picture shows improvements in some aspects of light pollution, as light is not directed to the sides and upwards from the upgraded fixtures, reducing skyglow. However, it also shows the use of brighter, whiter LEDs, which is not generally ideal, along with increased light bounce back from the road. Credit: City of Los Angeles

nocturnal wildlife patterns. There is increasing awareness of just how much light is too much light at night. You don't need to give in to despair over encroaching light pollution; you can join efforts to measure it, educate others, and even help stop or reduce the effects of light pollution in your community.

Amateur astronomers and potential citizen scientists around the globe are invited to participate in the [Globe at Night \(GaN\)](http://Globe at Night (GaN) program) program to measure light pollution. Measurements are taken by volunteers on a few scheduled

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).

days every month and submitted to their database to help create a comprehensive map of light pollution and its change over time. GaN volunteers can take and submit measurements using multiple methods ranging from low-tech naked-eye observations to high-tech sensors and smartphone apps.



Light pollution has been visible from space for a long time, but new LED lights are bright enough that they stand out from older street lights, even from orbit. The above photo was taken by astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti from the ISS cupola in 2015. The newly installed white LED lights in the center of the city of Milan are noticeably brighter than the lights in the surrounding neighborhoods. Credit: NASA/ESA

Globe at Night citizen scientists can use the following methods to measure light pollution and submit their results:

- Their own smartphone camera and dedicated app
- Manually measure light pollution using their own eyes and detailed charts of the constellations
- A dedicated light pollution measurement device called a Sky Quality Meter (SQM).
- The free GaN [web app](#) from any internet-connected device (which can also be used to submit their measurements from an SQM or printed-out star charts)

Night Sky Network members joined a telecon with Connie Walker of Globe at Night in 2014 and had a lively discussion about the program's history and how they can participate. The audio of the telecon, transcript,

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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 the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm. 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

Discord

<https://discord.gg/RH6rhAPWb8>

Scheduled Club Events

Month	Date	Sunset	Location
April	5th	9:00am-3:00pm	Annual Conference & Swap HFCC
April	5th	8:03pm	Spring Mill Pond
May	3rd	8:35pm	Spring Mill Pond
May	10th	6:00pm	Club Banquet - Mama Mia
May	31st	9:02pm	Spring Mill Pond
June	28th	9:13pm	Spring Mill Pond
July	19th	9:11pm	Spring Mill Pond
August	2nd	8:50pm	Spring Mill Pond
August	30th	8:09pm	Spring Mill Pond

Hammond Planetarium

Date	Time	Topic
March 14th	7:30pm	How it's <i>really</i> made (Spectroscopy)
March 19th	7:30pm	Spring Planetarium Show

Club Meeting Topics & Speakers

Meeting	Speaker	Topic
February 27th	Dr. Brian Kloppenborg	Stellar Variability Across the HR Diagram
March 27th	Club Members	Open Forum
April 24th	Jeff Macleod	1962 Apollo Program Planning

February Meeting

Stellar Variability Across the HR Diagram

Dr. Brian Kloppenborg, AAVSO, Ph.D in Physics, Astrophysicist

Description:

A science-heavy talk typically presented at academic institutions that provides a high-level overview of the interiors of stars followed by a walk

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Secretary's Report (Con't from Page 2)

Comet C/2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS) is now past its prime for us and is primarily a southern hemisphere object.

Club Business

Secretary's Report is in "Star Stuff," nothing to add. Arica gave the treasurer's report tonight. The club is now using Quicken software. Social Media/Website, Liam absent, no report. Equipment, Jeff Gorman reminded us that he needs a list of all of the audio/visual equipment we are now using for our meetings, and who the caretakers are, so he can include that in the club's inventory.

A couple of notifications: Our annual Astronomy Conference and Swap Meet will be held on April 5, 2025, at the Henry Ford College, in the same building as our monthly meetings, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Yes, this is the same date as our first Beginners' Night of 2025, but it could not be helped as we had to go with what the college offered us.

Our annual FAAC Banquet is scheduled for May 10, at 6 p.m., at Mama Mia's, in Livonia. We are hoping this will be a go this year. It had to be canceled last year due to lack of ticket sales. A reminder to everyone that you may bring guests! They don't have to be FAAC members. Look for more information soon on ticket prices and reservations.

It's that time of year when we look to our membership for nominations for the 2025 Sirius Award. Our Sirius Award, named after the brightest star in our sky, is given out each year to honor a particular member who has been a bright shining star in their efforts to support our club and club events. Any member may nominate another member. Please send their name and a short paragraph or two explaining why you wish to nominate this person to President@fordastronomyclub.com. Your voices matter!

Club Elections

Tonight was our annual election night. We have a slate of nominees, one for each of our four board positions. Thanks again to Gordon Hansen, Dennis Salliotte, and Tim Campbell, our nominating committee! Gordon opened the elections by thanking the 2024 board, and proceeded to go through each office, asking if there were any further nominations from the floor. There were none. Congratulations to our 2025 officers:

President: Arica Flores
 Vice President: Sean Pickard
 Secretary: Cheri Grissom
 Treasurer: Jameson Sullivan

Club Elections

Gordon Hansen gave a short (30 minutes) talk about eyepieces. He started at the beginning of telescopic astronomy with a description of the eyepiece that Galileo used on his telescope. He then discussed different styles of EPs and how they have evolved over the years. Many tried-and-true simple designs (such as Plossl) have been around for a very long time, and of course there are newer designs with complicated arrangements of multiple lenses (such as Nagler).

Gordon talked about how to choose the best EPs for yourself, based on your needs, the design considerations, etc. Some of the basics include the size of the barrel. Many of us had telescopes when we first started that used 0.965". Nowadays, 1.25" and 2" are the most common. You also want to consider magnification, eye relief, apparent field of view, and true field of view.

When a set of EPs is called parfocal, it means that, while the set will have different focal lengths, they all should be pretty much interchangeable at the same focus position on your telescope.

Following our guest speaker, we had a session of "Ask the Astronomer." Tim Dey got us started on a lively

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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	Jerry Jamula	Astronomy Event Signs 18x24" (x8)	Liam Finn
TK6 8" Orion XT8i Dobsonian	Dan Smith	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
TKn Celestron 6" Refractor & AGT Mount		Banner - Large (32" x 16')	George Korody
TKn Meade 8" f/5 Newtonian & LX-70 Mount		Tri-Fold Presentation Boards	George Korody
Zhumell 20x80 Binoculars		Other	
Presentation Tools		Canopy (10' x 10')	Liam Finn
Projector (older)	Jim Frisbie	Pop Cooler	Sean Pickard
Projector (newer)	Gordon Hansen	TA Sky Quality Meter	Liam Finn
Projection Screen 8'	John McGill	Demonstration Tools	
Projection Screen 6'	Liam Finn	Weigh on Planets Scale	Liam Finn
Bullhorn	Liam Finn	Lunar Phase Kit	Bob MacFarland
Speaker System w/Wireless Mic	Liam Finn	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 Spectrscope	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)	Tim Dey
Lunt 100mm H-alpha Solar Telescope with Celestron CG-5 equatorial mount	Tim Campbell

Light Pollution (Con't from Page 4)

and links to additional resources can be found on their [dedicated resource page](#).

[DarkSky International](#) has long been a champion in the fight against light pollution and a proponent of smart lighting design and policy. Their website (at [darksky.org](#)) provides many resources for amateur astronomers and other like-minded people to help communities understand the negative impacts of light pollution and how smart lighting policies can not only help bring the stars back to their night skies but make their streets safer by using smarter lighting with less glare. Communities and individuals find that their nighttime lighting choices can help save considerable sums of money when they decide to light their streets and homes "smarter, not brighter" with shielded, directional lighting, motion detectors, timers, and even choosing the proper "temperature" of new LED light replacements to avoid the harsh "pure white" glare that many new street lamps possess. Their pages on [community advocacy](#) and

on [how to choose dark-sky-friendly lighting](#) are extremely helpful and full of great information. There are even [local chapters of the IDA](#) in many communities made up of passionate advocates of dark skies.

DarkSky International has notably helped usher in "[Dark Sky Places](#)", areas around the world that are protected from light pollution. "[Dark Sky Parks](#)", in particular, provide visitors with incredible views of the Milky Way and are perfect places to spot the wonders of a meteor shower. These parks also perform a very important function, showing the public the wonders of a truly dark sky to many people who may have never before even seen a handful of stars in the sky, let alone the full, glorious spread of the Milky Way.

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Secretary's Report (Con't from Page 6)

discussion of cosmology by asking whether our Milky Way Galaxy along with what we call the Local Group of nearby galaxies, are actually in a large relatively empty part of the universe called the KBC Void. This is being actively studied and researched, and of course brought up a lot of interesting conversation. With that ice-breaker, the subject matter turned to members naming an astronomy-related movie or TV show they had seen recently and telling us why they liked it or did not. These discussions easily filled the remaining time we had.

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

February 6, 2025 Board Meeting Summary

(Videoconference meeting.) Board members present: Arica Flores, Sean Pickard, Cheri Grissom. Treasurer Jameson Sullivan absent. Six other members present. We will have a virtual speaker for our February general meeting, Dr. Brian Kloppenborg, who will give a presentation on the topic of "Stellar Variability Across the HR Diagram." Although Dan Smith is the new caretaker for our audio/visual equipment used in our meetings, Gordon Hansen advised that he will continue setting up a test of Webex ahead of time with any speaker who will be coming to us online instead of in person, at least until the Webex subscription comes up for renewal in June.

Sean will do "What's Up" for the coming general meeting. We had a discussion about the audio quality for members attending our meetings online. Some attendees are having difficulty hearing everyone who is talking. At this time, it is believed the problem is most likely our microphone, and there are adjustments we can try making. But we will continue to monitor the issue to make sure all of those attending online can enjoy the meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Jameson was absent tonight, but Arica advised that she has met with him to arrange the transfer of treasurer duties to him. We have to switch the names on our account at the credit union, and this will happen as soon as it can be arranged. We will be removing Joe Bostic's name (old treasurer) and adding Jameson Sullivan's name (new treasurer). Arica Flores, as president, will remain on the account.

Membership: Doug Bauer is processing 2025 club renewals. We have 66 as of this date. Doug will be contacting members who have not renewed yet. The numbers are typical for this time of year.

Social Media/Website: Sean Pickard has been granted access to our club website and he has updated the Sirius Award winners page. A few people still need to have their photos included as soon as we can get them.

Club Equipment: Jeff Gorman has received a list of the audio/visual equipment from the new caretaker, Dan Smith. It is lengthy and will be published in Star Stuff in an abbreviated form. We still have some donated equipment that needs to be inventoried and included in the list. Also, we are still waiting to get certain items repaired. Kristie Whittington has finally been able to receive the filter needed for the solar scope, and the board approved reimbursing her \$101.20 for that item.

Our FAAC Conference and Swap Meet is April 5. Tables will go for \$20 if paid in advance, \$25 at the door. The donation request per individual will be \$7. We are planning on advertising this event as much as possible.

Our Banquet will be held on May 10, at Mama Mia's, in Livonia. Tickets will be \$40 (or \$42 if paying by Square). We need to have around 40 ticket sales in order to meet the minimum required by the venue. Gordon Hansen will do Astro-Jeopardy!, and we are still looking for a keynote speaker. Please reserve your tickets soon! Remember, the event is open to non-

FAAC members, if they are guests of a member. So bring family or friends who may enjoy an astronomy-themed dinner and presentation.

We are still looking to fill several speaker spots for our upcoming general meetings this year. We are happy to have suggestions from members for a particular speaker they would like to hear, or a particular topic they would like to see presented.

Monthly Speaker (Con't from Page 5)

across the HR diagram looking at some of the most important variable stars.

Bio:

Dr. Brian Kloppenborg is an astrophysicist and entrepreneur. He earned a Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Denver, and a B.A. in Physics from Hastings College. Brian is presently the Executive Director of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO). Prior to joining the AAVSO, Brian worked as a Research Scientist at Georgia Tech Research Institute where he served as a lead engineer and project director on a variety of governmental programs. Brian's research interests include photometry, spectroscopy, astrometry, and long-baseline optical interferometry of eclipsing binaries, novae, and young stellar objects. His work is published in Nature, ApJ, JAAVSO, and similar scholarly journals.

Light Pollution (Con't from Page 8)

More research into the negative effects of light pollution on the health of humans and the environment is being conducted than ever before. Watching the nighttime light slowly increase in your neighborhood, combined with reading so much bad news, can indeed be disheartening! However, as awareness of light pollution and its negative effects increases, more people are becoming aware of the problem and want to be part of the solution. There is even an episode of PBS Kid's SciGirls where the main characters help mitigate light pollution in their neighborhood!

Astronomy clubs are uniquely situated to help spread awareness of good lighting practices in their local communities in order to help mitigate light pollution. Take inspiration from Tucson, Arizona, and other dark sky-friendly communities that have adopted good lighting practices. Tucson even reduced its skyglow by 7% after its own citywide lighting conversion, proof that communities can bring the stars back with smart lighting choices.

Originally posted by Dave Prosper: November 2018
Last Updated by Kat Troche: January 2025



FAAC Astronomy Conference & Swap Meet

Saturday, April 5, 2025 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

General Astronomy

- 9:30 am: **Touching the Sun** – Liam Finn
10:45 am: **Astronomy: What Can Go Rong?** – Ed Halash
12 N: **Which Eyepiece?** – Gordon Hansen
1:30 pm: **Astronomy vs Pretty Pictures** – Adrian Bradley

Technical Talks

- 9:30 am: **Telescope Making** – Clay Kessler
10:45 am: **Nightscape Photography** – Jason Guensel
12 N: **Seestar S50 & S30** – Sean Pickard
1:30 pm: **Space-Time** – Tim Campbell

Planetarium Shows

10:45am, Noon & 1:30pm FAAC Members

Swap Meet

All Day...Earn Cash by Selling Those Items Sitting Around Collecting Dust!
Telescopes, Eyepieces, Cameras, Binoculars, Mounts, Software, Books, and Accessories, etc.

Admission: \$7.00 (children 15 and younger – Free / must be accompanied by an adult)

Sales Table: \$20 in advance, or \$25 at the door as available, (one admission ticket included).

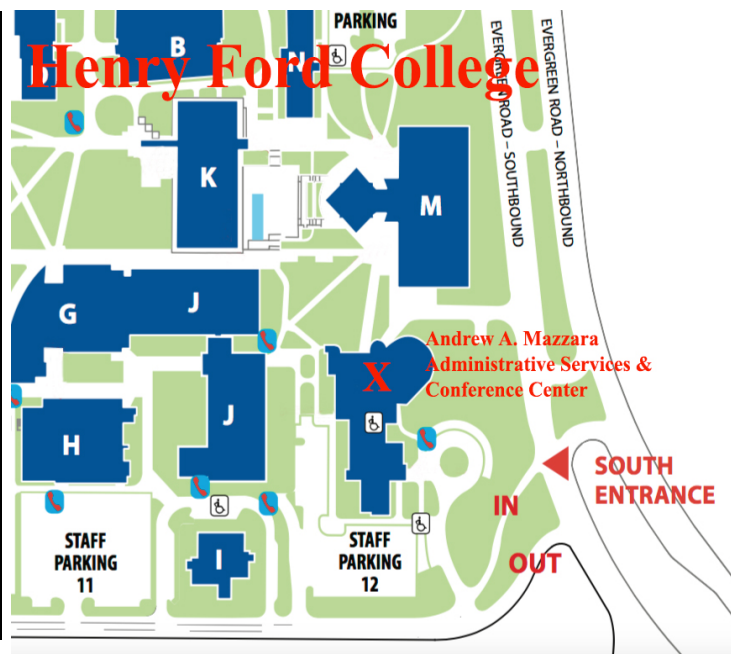
Advanced Table Registration ends Mar 15, 2025

Doors Open: 8:00am for setup.

Make Checks Payable: to **FAAC** for advance table registration.

Send payment to: Ford Amateur Astronomy Club, P.O. Box 7527, Dearborn, MI 48121-7527

Location: Henry Ford College, 5101 Evergreen Rd, Dearborn, MI 48128 (Andrew A. Mazzara Admin. & Conference Center... See X on map, Staff Parking Lots 11 & 12 will be open)



For More Information: Contact Jim via email: w8tu@comcast.net or call (734) 751-6280