



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:	Dan Smith
Vice President:	Sean Pickard
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 Dan Smith, President

Annual Club Picnic

This summer has felt a bit against us. Between the storms, crazy heat, and now tons of wildfire smoke crossing the country the viewing conditions have been fighting us at every turn. As Tim Allen once said: "Never give up. Never surrender!" (Galaxy Quest) and we shall march on into our next events and hopefully have something outside we don't have to even discuss moving or canceling.

I hope everyone has a wonderful time at our July meeting. I will unfortunately be absent, but I will see everyone at our picnic Sat August 15th at 5pm followed by our August observing. We've been unlucky so far so I believe this is the one!

Then once that is completed we will be just a month away from Astronomy At the Beach. So prep everything you're planning on bringing and setting up, make sure everything works, get spare batteries, whatever you need! But don't forget that we need help at our booth every year. The past few years we have not had enough support at the tent and so a small group has been mostly stuck the entire time. Let's make sure to share the burden. What's the saying, many hands make light work? If enough people are willing to donate some of their time, then shifts could easily be only an hour or even less. Give a little time and contribute to helping our club grow and share our passions.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the picnic!

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, Secretary

FAAC General Meeting – June 25, 2026

Meeting called to order at 7:10 p.m. by President Dan Smith. Vice President Sean Pickard, Secretary Cheri Grissom, and Treasurer Arica Flores present. We had a total of 19 in-person attendees and three online, for a total of 22 present. Dan asked for member and guest introductions.

Member Observing: Sean attended our observing night at Spring Mill Pond last Saturday and was working on setting up his Celestron Edge 9.25 telescope for imaging. Sounds like there was some friendly competition with Jameson, who had two telescopes set up for imaging before Sean had one! Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter were all easily seen naked eye. Jeff Gorman has been watching Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury. Milton French was also at Spring Mill Pond and enjoyed Jupiter and Venus. He also recently went camping in Brooklyn, Michigan, where there were very clear skies and he was able to observe M₄ and other DSOs. Jameson Sullivan attended the Cherry Springs Star Party in Pennsylvania. He was there for approximately a week and unfortunately only had two clear nights. The park was also hit with two tornadoes while they were there! No major injuries but it was a scramble to get the equipment put safely away. Doug Bauer attended an observing night put on by the Seven Ponds Astronomy Club, with about 30 people attending. Tim Campbell will be attending the observing event at U of M Dearborn tomorrow night, weather permitting. All are welcome. Don't bring a telescope, the school has plenty that they provide.

What's Up in the Night Sky: Sean went through our events calendar, which can also be found on our website, fordastronomyclub.com, as well as on our Groups.io site. The Lunar X and V will be visible on July 21, at 3:06 p.m. Sean gave a list of upcoming ISS lunar and solar transits visible in our area.

Club Business:

Secretary's Report: No report.

Social Media/Website: Liam absent. No report. Dan advises that Isha will be doing some Instagram posts for Astronomy at the Beach.

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

Scheduled Club Events

Month	Date	Sunset	Location
August	15th	5:00pm	Annual Club Picnic & Observing (Spring Mill Pond)
September	18 & 19th	4:00pm	Astronomy at the Beach at Island Lake (Kent Lake Beach)

Hammond Planetarium

Date	Time	Topic
On Break		Summer break: Shows resume in the fall.

Club Meeting Topics & Speakers

Meeting	Speaker	Topic
July 23rd	Club Members	Open Forum

July Meeting

Open Forum

FAAC Members

Description:

The club intentionally schedules a few meetings per year with no scheduled speaker to server as open-forum meetings. Members can discuss any topics of interest, ask astronomy questions (“Ask the Astronomer”) and socialize.

We will run through club business and a very short presentation (about 20 minutes).

This meeting includes pizza (vs. the usually snacks).

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).

Secretary's Report (Con't from Page 1)

Club Equipment: Jeff Gorman is just waiting for confirmation on a few minor items in order to complete this year's equipment inventory.

Treasurer's Report: Arica gave our current balance and also gave a brief report on the upcoming Astronomy at the Beach weekend. Expenses for tent, table, and chair rentals have really gone up in price. Arica will be sharing a GoFundMe page soon through Groups.io. Please consider a donation to support this very worthy event. We will also need a good number of volunteers to help staff our table both nights. Please consider volunteering your time. A sign-up sheet will be going around soon, and if you can donate even an hour or two of your time one or both nights, that would be very helpful.

Club Picnic: The date is August 15. Doug Bauer will be there about 2 p.m. to reserve a few tables for us. The official start time is 5 p.m., but any members who wish to get there early and keep Doug company are welcome! This date coincides with our monthly General Observing Night, which will begin at 8 p.m.

Dan told us he has received an email from Diane Hall of the Warren Astronomical Society letting us know about a Metropark event taking place on July 24, 25, and 26. The Oakwoods and Willow Metroparks are having an astronomy-themed camping weekend and are looking for local astronomers to bring telescopes. Look for more information on this as we get it.

Guest Speaker: Our speaker this month was Glen Swanson, the topic entitled: "The Making of an Enterprise: How Star Trek Helped NASA Dream Big and How NASA Helped Star Trek Stick Around." Though Glen is too young to have watched the original "Star Trek" on TV when it first aired, he was able to catch it several years later when it went into syndication and he became a huge fan. He realized he had an old copy of a book entitled "The Making of Star Trek," and reading this book got him very interested in learning more.

As an adult, he started working for NASA as a historian for the Johnson Space Center. During this time, Gene Roddenberry and others connected with the "Star Trek" TV show were invited to NASA to tour the facilities and see the spacecraft on display there. Gene Roddenberry was a pilot himself and had a strong interest in keeping his space stories

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>

authentic. NASA and the aerospace industry as a whole shared this interest.

At one point the Smithsonian asked the “Star Trek” producers for a copy of the show’s pilot for their collection. At that time, no other TV show had ever been asked. Some time later, the Smithsonian acquired other “Star Trek” items, including the 11-foot filming model of the Enterprise.

Glen shared many photos and stories of the NASA/”Star Trek” connection. Amazingly, the original “Star Trek,” as well as the many other spin-off series that followed are still inspiring young people to go into science-related careers.

Question-and-answer period followed. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Board Meeting Summary – July 2, 2026

(Videoconference meeting.) President Dan Smith, Vice President Sean Pickard, and Secretary Cheri Grissom present. Treasurer Arica Flores absent. Five other members present.

(Please note that the summaries printed in “Star Stuff” are just that, a brief summary of the board meeting minutes. Full minutes are in the club records.)

Club Business: Secretary, Treasurer, and Membership, no reports. Social Media: Liam was absent, but Dan advises that Isha is making sure we are advertising Astronomy at the Beach on all of our Social Media platforms. Club Equipment: Jeff Gorman is still trying to determine the whereabouts of our three banners. Tim Campbell also advised that we now have only seven “Astronomy Event” signs, not eight.

Dan reminded us that we will soon have to find another place to provide our annual Sirius Award plaques. We have some time, and it was felt that it shouldn’t be too much trouble to find a local trophy shop we would be able to use.

Gordon Hanson has renewed the WebEx subscription that is in his name and used for club meetings, for an annual cost of \$171.72. This amount was previously approved by the board, and Gordon will be reimbursed.

We are still trying to get the November and December meeting dates corrected on our calendars. It seems to be correct on Groups.io but is not correct on our website. Dan and Tim will both get in touch with Liam and see if he can help. For the record, there is no General

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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	Kristie Whittington	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	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")	Sandra Macika
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')	Sandra Macika
TKn Meade 8" f/5 Newtonian & LX-70 Mount		Tri-Fold Presentation Boards	Sandra Macika
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	36" Flat-Top Griddle	Gordon Hansen
Bullhorn	Liam Finn	Demonstration Tools	
Speaker System w/Wireless Mic	Liam Finn	Weigh on Planets Scale	Liam Finn
Logo Tablecloth (x2)	Gordon Hansen	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 Spectrascopes	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	Liam Finn

University of Michigan Dearborn Observatory

Month	Day	Time	Month	Day	Time
July	24	9:45pm - 11:45pm	September	11	8:30pm - 10:30pm
August	7	9:30pm - 11:30pm		25	8:00pm - 10:00pm
	14	9:15pm - 11:15pm	October	2	8:00pm - 10:00pm
	21	9:00pm - 11:00pm		9	7:45pm - 9:45pm
				16	7:30pm - 9:30pm

Secretary's Report (Con't from Page 5)

Meeting in either November or December, due to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Instead, we take what would normally be the December Board Meeting date and hold our annual Holiday Potluck meeting at that time.

Doug Bauer is handling the set-up of our annual Club Picnic to be held at Spring Mill Pond on August 15, which also happens to be our monthly observing

night. The picnic will start at 5 p.m., but Doug will be there at about 2 p.m. to reserve seating and welcomes anyone who wants to help with that.

Astronomy at the Beach: We had a discussion about the need for more club members to volunteer an hour or two sometime over the weekend to help out at our club table. The same few members do it every year and end up not being able to get out on the

telescope field at all themselves. No experience needed! Please consider volunteering just a little bit of your time for the benefit of our club.

Tim Campbell also reminded us that he is hoping for members willing to submit articles on various astronomy topics for publication in “Star Stuff” each month. We used to do this on a regular basis but have gotten away from it in recent years. Now that we no longer have access to the NASA articles Tim has been reprinting in our newsletter, we can use some more content each month, and submissions from members would be very welcome. If you have a submission you would like to make, or if you have any questions at all, please contact Tim, our “Star Stuff” editor, at starstuff@fordastronomyclub.com.

Tim also mentioned the the City of Milford has asked us for a new date for an astronomy event in their town, since the last one was canceled due to weather. The GM club has also been invited, so this would be a joint venture. Look for more news when the date has been set. They will be wanting us to bring out telescopes.

We had a discussion about the passing of long-time FAAC member Pat Korody. There will be visitation on July 9, and a community farewell on July 10, which had previously been sent out to the membership by Jim Frisbie. We had a motion, which passed unanimously, for the club to send a flower arrangement.