



# 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*

### Upcoming Events

While the weather has been teasing us not being able to decide between Spring and Winter it is technically already Spring! With that comes more opportunities to get out and set up our equipment.

It also means we have a busier club schedule! This week we have:

**Thursday:** Our meeting. This week will be a little different as we will be in the planetarium. There are a few full dome movies that we haven't had the opportunity to watch that all attending will be able to select from. These are generally 10 to 15 minutes. Only catch is that this meeting will be in person only, so please attend if possible so you don't miss out!

**Friday:** We have an outreach event "Astronomy Night & Lantern Walk" at the YMCA in Milford for the Milford Parks & Rec from 8 to 10pm. Carls Family YMCA, 300 Family Drive, Milford, MI. Outreach events are a great opportunity to get outside and socialize while sharing the night sky.

**Saturday:** The Swap meet from 9am to 3pm. The swap is always fun. We will have talks and there will be tables of equipment for sale. I've seen plenty of great deals be had so if you're looking for anything come down and take a look. If not, you can still get a cup of coffee and enjoy the talks! Admission is only \$7 per adult and anyone 15 and younger is free.

Starting next month we will start back up having our monthly observing nights. April 25th is currently slated to be the first of the year.

I look forward to seeing everyone as we begin meeting more often and getting our equipment out!

## 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. 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](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 magazines, discounts at selected

# Secretary's Report

*by Cheri Grissom, Secretary*

## FAAC General Meeting – February 26, 2026

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m. by President Dan Smith. Vice President Sean Pickard, Secretary Cheri Grissom, and Treasurer Arica Flores present (joined late). We had a total of nineteen in-person attendees, as well as an additional six joining online. Dan asked for member and guest introductions.

**Member Observing:** Not much to report. Jeremy Parkinson, through the Seestar Collective, has been observing and imaging M81 and M82. Cheri has been enjoying Jupiter and Sirius naked eye on clear nights. We are all hoping for nicer weather soon!

**What's Up in the Night Sky:** Sean went over our events calendar, which can also be found on our website ([fordastronomyclub.com](http://fordastronomyclub.com)), as well as in our monthly newsletter "Star Stuff." Our next General Meeting, on March 26, will be held in the Hammond Planetarium, in the building just to the west of where we regularly meet. The Berry Auditorium is unavailable that night. We will not be able to bring drinks or snacks inside the planetarium, but we will set up a table out in the hall. Our annual Swap Meet and Conference will be on March 28, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Lunar X and V (or Y) will be visible March 25, at 4:49 p.m. Sean gave us dates of upcoming ISS lunar and solar transits visible in our area.

**Club Business:** Secretary's Report is in "Star Stuff." Arica gave the treasurer's report. We will soon need to renew our Quicken software subscription. **Social Media:** Liam absent but it was noted that we need to update the calendar with our Swap Meet, Banquet, etc. **Membership:** No report. **Club Equipment:** Jeff absent but let us know there is nothing new to report.

Tim Campbell advised us that Milford Parks and Recreation is putting on a Lantern Hike on March 27 or 28. They contacted our club to see if we would like to bring telescopes for after the hike. Tim will get more information and let us know.

The Ford Employees Recreation Association (FERA), of which FAAC is a member club, will be putting on a Club Partner event sometime in

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](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 [groups.io](https://groups.io) files section for ordering information and instructions on how to request the correct logo.

## Communication

The FAAC uses [Groups.io](https://groups.io) for our email distribution list (both formal and informal discussion.)

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

June or July, and we are of course invited. This will be a daytime event. We don't know the details yet but will follow up on this and decide if there is any way we can participate.

Finally, GLAAC still needs volunteers to help put on Astronomy at the Beach. Their next meeting will be the second Tuesday of March, and anyone who wants to help is invited to attend. Even if you're not sure how you can contribute, please think about attending to get information and ask questions. Look for a message coming soon through [Groups.io](https://groups.io) with instructions on how to attend their meeting.

**Guest Speaker:** Our speaker this month was James Yoder, coming to us virtually from Arizona. James discovered astronomy in college and has been an amateur astronomer ever since, as well as an astronomy author and astronomy instructor. Since his retirement in 2022, he has been able to focus on his astronomy passion in many ways, notably by publishing free resources for amateur astronomers (especially visual astronomers), in conjunction with other authors.

Mr. Yoder's personal website is [artcentrics.com](http://artcentrics.com), where you can find a number of astronomy resources. In particular, he talked to us tonight about "Yoder's Constellation Guides," which he authored alongside James Mazur and Andrea Matthias. Also, "Star Hopper's Guide to the Universe," by James Mazur, James Yoder, and Andrea Matthias. Also, "A New Catalog of Stellar Rich Fields for Binoculars," by Bill Dellingas, with contributions by James Yoder and Andrea Matthias. All three of these offerings are available for free download!

(Secretary's Note: I was unable to find a way to get to all three of these free books from [artcentrics.com](http://artcentrics.com), but I did find the complete link through a search engine. It is: <https://artcentrics.com/artcentrics-astronomy-main-page/astronomy-resources/astronomy-education/books/>. It's long but well worth the effort of typing that in your search bar!)

James gave a nice presentation on how to utilize these free resources. He also suggested [skyledge.net](http://skyledge.net), Jim Mazur's astrophotography site that also includes star-hopping charts. Also,

[in-the-sky.org](http://in-the-sky.org), a site founded by Dominic Ford, which is a source of abundant night sky resources.

A question-and-answer period followed where James was asked and shared info and pics about his own observing and imaging equipment.

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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](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).

## Scheduled Club Events

Month	Date	Sunset	Location
April	25th	8:26pm	Observing (Spring Mill Pond)
May	23rd	8:55pm	Observing (Spring Mill Pond)
June	20th	9:13pm	Observing (Spring Mill Pond)
July	18th	9:05pm	Observing (Spring Mill Pond)

## Hammond Planetarium

Date	Time	Topic
April 17th	7:30pm	Spring Planetarium Show
April 22nd	7:30pm	Spring Planetarium Show

## Club Meeting Topics & Speakers

Meeting	Speaker	Topic
March 26th		Open Forum (Planetarium)
April 23rd	Bill Keel	Light Echos and Feeding Habits of Supermassive Black Holes

### March Meeting

#### Open Forum

*FAAC Club Members*

#### Description:

The club schedules a few open-forum meetings throughout the year in which we have no featured speaker. Club members can socialize, ask questions, and discuss any astronomy topics of interest.

This month's meeting is an open-forum meeting and it will take place in the Hammond Planetarium instead of our normal meeting room. The planetarium is located in the Science Building (Building J) — directly adjacent to the Administrative Services & Conference Center (Building L).

## 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](http://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](https://facebook.com/FordAstronomyClub)

### Twitter

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

### Discord

<https://discord.gg/RH6rhAPWb8>

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

## March 5, 2026 Board Meeting Summary

(Videoconference meeting.) All board members present. Six other members present.

We started with Sandra asking some questions about audio/video/presentation concerns with the speaker she has lined up for our October meeting. There was detailed discussion, and everything has been answered to her satisfaction.

Our upcoming March 26 general meeting will be an open forum, no guest speaker scheduled. Our usual meeting place, the Berry Auditorium, is unavailable, so the March meeting will take place at the Hammond Planetarium, which is in the building across the parking lot from our usual building. There is some concern as to whether the parking lot will be full and our members would have to find a different lot to park in. Dan will send out a notice via Groups.io before the meeting with a map and alternate parking options. Sean will not be present in person do do "What's Up," so Tim Campbell will fill in for him.

Treasurer: Arica reported our current balance. She has also renewed our Quicken subscription out of her own funds as it came due in the middle of switching our officers over from 2025 to 2026. The amount due was \$82.55. A motion was made by Dan, seconded by Cheri, to reimburse her for that amount. Passed unanimously.

Doug Bauer reports we currently have 70 regular paying members and 34 lifetime members for 2026.

Swap Meet and Conference, scheduled for March 28. We traditionally make a scholarship donation to the HFC at the time of this event. Last year we gave \$400. Arica made a motion, seconded by Dan, to again donate \$400 to the HFC for this purpose. Passed unanimously. We also would like to place ads on Facebook for this event. Arica made a motion that we approve up to \$100 for this purpose, seconded by Dan. Passed unanimously.

Banquet, scheduled for May 2, at the South Lyon Hotel. Sean showed us a menu with prices and suggested we charge \$40 per person for tickets (the same price as last year). Sean made a motion to approve the \$40 cost, and use the Combo Menu, seconded by Dan. Passed unanimously.

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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](mailto:equipment@fordastronomyclub.com)

Item	Held by	Item	Held by
<b>Telescopes</b>		<b>Display Items</b>	
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)	Scott Smith	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		<b>Other</b>	
<b>Presentation Tools</b>		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	<b>Demonstration Tools</b>	
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
<b>Imaging Cameras</b>	
C2 Meade Deep Sky Imager Pro III w/Autostar Suite	Gordon Hansen
C6 Canon 60Da Astrophotography DSLR and accessories	Tim Dey
<b>Other Imaging Equipment</b>	
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
<b>Special Event Items - Not available for Loan Out</b>	
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

### *Secretary's Report (Con't from Page 3)*

Sirius Award. We are still accepting nominations from the membership. Any member in good standing may nominate someone for this award. The Board makes the eventual decision and the winner is announced at the Banquet. Jim Frisbie typically orders the engraved plaques each year. Last year, the cost was \$76.07. We do not know how much it will be but it was suggested we approve up to \$100. Cheri made a motion to do this, seconded by Sean. Approved unanimously.

Gordon talked about Astronomy at the Beach coming up in September and the need for many club volunteers to work the tables both nights. We are hoping for a good response from our members for the event this year. Sign-up sheets will be coming out as the event gets closer.

The HJRO observatory at Lincoln Park High School is going to be out of commission until sometime in August. This is due to extensive electrical work being done at the school, so there is currently no power to the observatory or the athletic field.