



Star Stuff

Volume 7 Number 7



August 1998

Feature of the Month

Great Lakes Amateur Astronomy Clubs (GLAAC)

By Jack Kennedy

Last year when comet Hale Bopp was getting ready to make its closest approach, a star party was arranged with Kensington Metro Park. This was quite a hit with the park and with FAAC. The club realized that the event was too big for one club and notified all the area clubs. The results was a terrific star party, and satisfied Metro Park and GLAAC. This was the name given to all the area clubs that helped to make the Hale Bopp star party a success. This past spring we were back at Kensington as the highlight of their Spring Festival. Many of us had the pleasure of hear David Levy speak two nights. Another successful event even though the sky did not cooperate. But what is more interesting is the participation of many clubs in larger events than would normally be possible with one club.

We may be seeing the start of a new phase in amateur astronomy in Michigan. With the resources of the area clubs applied we may be able to sponsor a major star party, bring in well known speakers and best of all, get to know each other. Each of the area clubs has its own accomplishments. Some put on large star parties, others operate observatories, and others maintain close ties with area universities. Just

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NIGHTTIME AT LOWELL

by Paul Mrozek

Summer in Michigan is not hot enough for me, so I decided to spend my forced two weeks of vacation in the desert South West. Actually, the few days I spent in Flagstaff, Arizona was cooler in temperature due to the high elevation. My daytime schedule was filled with plenty of things to do (Grand Canyon, Sedona, etc.), but there wasn't too much to do at night. The skies were always dark, steady, and clear, but I couldn't really do much observing because of the waxing gibbous Moon. One night I decided to make a visit to the nearby Lowell Observatory. I went for the 9 PM "Sky Tonight" show, and to get a chance to look through their big telescope. Before the presentation began I spent some time in the exhibit hall, which was a little small but very interesting. One funny thing I noticed was that under the description of

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Monthly Publication of the:
Ford Amateur Astronomy Club.

Star Stuff Newsletter
P.O. Box 7527
Dearborn, Michigan 48121-7527

1998 Club Officers

President	Greg Burnett
Vice President	George Korody
Treasurer	Ray Fowler
Secretary	Dave Beard

General Meetings

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club (FAAC) holds regular general meetings open to the public on the fourth Thursday of the month at 5:00 PM. Meetings are held in conference room 1491 of the Ford Credit Building

Observing Site

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club has an established observing site, by permit, at the Spring Mill Pond area of Island Lake Recreation Area in Brighton, Michigan located near the intersections of I-96 and US-23. Members are responsible for opening and closing the gate after the parks 10:00 PM closing time. (Summer season only)

Observing Hot Line - (313) 390 5456

On Friday and Saturday nights, or nights before holidays, you can call the hot line number up to 2 hours before sunset to find out if we will be observing that night.

WWW Page

FAAC maintains a web page on the internet at URL:
<http://kode.net/~dougbock/faac/>
Ford Intranet at:
<http://be0084.be.ford.com/fhl/faac>

Membership and Dues

Membership to the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club is open to both Ford employees and the general public. The dues structure is as follows:

Annual Individual/Family	\$ 20.00
Lifetime Membership	\$100.00

Membership benefits include a subscription to the Star Stuff newsletter, discounts on subscriptions to Astronomy and/or Sky and Telescope magazines, after hours use of the observing site at Island Lake, and discounts at selected area astronomical equipment retailers.

Newsletter Editor:

Jack Kennedy	248-399-9403
e-mail	jkennedy1@voyager.net
home	248-399-9403

Editors Corner

By Jack Kennedy

We are well into our summer viewing season and I hope all of you are getting as much enjoyment from the night sky as possible. We just finished the SMURFS star party and will be highlighting it next month. This coming month is the Astrofest in Canada. If you have not been to a star party you may want to consider it.

Our light pollution bill stalled in the Senate sub committee but we are hoping to pry it loose as soon as the legislature gets back from its summer break. This is an election year and a good time to get the ear of your local representative or senator. Make your feelings known. The Michigan legislature maintains a web page with links to both the House of Representatives and the Senate. There is a locator for help identify your elected officials and an easy way to see what bills are before Lansing before they are voted on. Having some say in how Michigan is run has never been easier. If you are on the internet have a look. From you web browser go to the search utility Yahoo by typing **<http://yahoo.com>** and at the prompt type: Michigan Legislature.

Plans are underway for the September Island Lake Star Party so don't miss it.

Clear Skies.....

House Bill 4254

The light pollution bill is still in the Senate committee for Technology and Energy. Representatives from the area clubs are planning a trip to Lansing with Norbert Vance to testify before the committee. This has not been confirmed yet. If you would like more information on this bill or the trip to Lansing contact Jack Kennedy at 248-399-9403 or e-mail to jkennedy1@voyager.net

NOTHING BUT THE FAACs

By
George Korody

Newsletter error corrections: The meeting minutes article in the July Star Stuff Newsletter should have read 6-25-98 instead of 5-28-98. Also, our apologies go to recent new member Kyle B. Bindseil for listing his name as "B. Kyle" in last month's Noting But The FAACs column. Now, how could that have happened? Could it possibly have something to do with the low compensation paid by the Newsletter Editor to writers of these great articles?

We hope that everyone is having a lot of astro fun and taking advantage of the recent clear skies. Many of our Club members have been going to various star parties around the country, while others have been observing at local sites. We are looking forward to hearing about their adventures.

The NCO Summer Solstice Star Party was held at the residence of Doug and Robin Bock near Fenton, Michigan on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 26, 27, and 28. Friday night was an exceptionally clear and pleasant night and Saturday night - well, let's just say that the camaraderie was great. Many thanks go to Doug, Robin, and family for all their hard work and hospitality. Also, congratulations on the new travel trailer.

Anyone who may have dropped or accidentally misplaced any of the following items while at the NCO Star Party can reclaim them by calling Mickey at Brendel's Port-a-John Service. Brendel's claims that they cannot be held responsible for the condition of the items.

- 1) Flashlight with red lens cover
- 2) Non-prescription eyeglasses with an opaque patch over the left eye
- 3) Kellner eyepiece (This item must belong to someone from the Warren Club.)

- 4) A damaged weather radio apparently lost Saturday night
- 5) Keys on ring with medallion inscribed "astronomers do it in the dark"

Clay Kessler's skills in amateur astronomy and telescope making are becoming well known. Clay has recently taken delivery of a research grade 12.5" Pegasus mirror and diagonal set and he is in the process of designing and fabricating a split-ring equatorial truss tube mount to accept the mirror set. Clay is also a great cook, and he demonstrated his cooking skills at SMURFS by whipping up a fantastic shrimp and artichoke linguini that was served to over 20 of the star party participants. Clay; are you for hire for large parties?

Harry Kindt, and Rick Kovari (Warren Club) are great at navigating the nighttime sky, but their skills at navigating the roads of the northern lower peninsula need some work. What was to be a few minute ride into Hillman, Michigan and back to SMURFS turned into a pack-a-lunch trip as all their right turns were wrong turns and they ended up in Rogers City. However, they finally found their way back to SMURFS after a local Rogers City boy out riding his tricycle pointed them in the right direction.

MacFarland succeeds where experts have failed!

Park Management at the FAAC observing site at Island Lake State Recreation Area reported that on the morning of Saturday, July 18, 1998 one Robert W. MacFarland called, claiming to have been a past president of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club, and advised that he was responsible for the breakage earlier that morning of the combination lock on the gate leading from the observing site.

Park Management became suspicious of MacFarland's intentions when he reported that he opened the lock using the designated combi-

FAAC (Continued on page 5)

Lowell Continued from page 1)

different telescope types they had listed five advantages and 2 disadvantages for reflectors and only 1 advantage but 5 disadvantages for refractors.

The show was short and aimed at the general public. I probably would have been bored, but I was very impressed by the young man (he looked about 13 years old) who was running the whole thing by himself. He had the presentation memorized well, but he couldn't answer when someone asked what the brightest star in the sky was (okay, he said the Sun right away, but then the person qualified the question with what is the brightest nighttime star) and if we would be able to see it that night. If you recall from my "Astro Lingo" article in the May 1995 edition of the StarStuff newsletter, during the dog days of Summer the dog star Sirius accompanies (dogs) the Sun in the sky.

Viewing through the 24-inch Clark refractor was a little disappointing. As expected, they only had a few small red lights on in the old observatory, so I couldn't get a good look at the whole set-up. The celestial object they had selected for that evening (probably due to the Moon) was M5. I asked if they could point at something you couldn't see through binoculars, but they didn't have time due to the large holiday crowd. In fact, they kept stressing not to touch any part of the telescope so they would not have to spend time re-aligning. I only spent a few seconds looking because M5 looked like M5, and there was a long line of people waiting behind me. The only neat thing from this experience was the relatively large field of view and long eye relief for viewing at 300X.

On the way out of the observatory they had an 11" SCT for people to use and a nice pair of binoculars that everyone was ignoring (I wonder if M5 was selected so you could compare the image through each piece of equipment). The best view from on top of Mars Hill that night was

of downtown Flagstaff. I was amazed at how relatively bright it seemed without creating a lot of sky glow. There wasn't too much light shielding around town, so it was interesting to see just how much humidity, or lack thereof, has on light pollution.

GLAAC (Continued from page 1)

think what may be accomplished with the resources of all the area clubs applied to a specific project. From my experience I would say that the one thing that breathes life into a club is a project to apply itself to. This gives the more experienced members a challenge and the new or less experienced members a great learning environment. We are all here to enjoy the night sky and learn more about our hobby. I believe we have two tasks as amateur astronomers. The first is to practice our hobby and enjoy the company of other amateurs. The second is the sharing of this knowledge and experience with the public at large.

We can only imagine what may be accomplished with a new organization such as GLAAC. Just as our club is the sum of its members, so GLAAC is the sum of its clubs. We can make of it as we wish. These are my thoughts and your comments are welcome. If you would like to respond to this editorial please do. If you have some ideas for this new organization let me know and I will print them in the next issue. We would like to know what you think. Just send your comments to myself or any of the FAAC officers.

Jack Kennedy

Meeting Minutes for 7-23-98

by Don Klaser

The meeting was called to order by V.P. George Korody at 5:00pm. George reported that several members are attending various star parties and unable to attend. We had our pizza and pop dinner. Roundtable introductions and discussion followed. Ray Fowler gave the treasurers report.

The election of the new secretary was postponed until the August meeting. Bob MacFarland went over the preparations for the Island Lake star party on Sept. 26th. Bob discussed the meeting on August 2nd with Kensington Metro Park and GLAAC. Don Klaser spoke about the presentation we gave to the youth summer camp near Manchester on June 16th.

V.P. George Korody spoke about the upcoming star parties including Lake Hudson and SMURFS. Ray Fowler reported on Starfest near Toronto in August. We then saw a video called "Fire From the Sky"

Respectfully Submitted,
Don Klaser

FAAC (Continued from page 3)

nation and then placed the opened lock in the gate's lock rod hole. He further stated that upon releasing the gate it moved to the gate stop post whereupon "the lock simply shattered into pieces and fell to the ground". Park Management advised their bewilderment since the lock had previously survived attacks from hardened steel hacksaw blades and bolt cutters.

A park spokesperson stated that the investigation is continuing since efforts to obtain positive statements of MacFarland's integrity from other FAAC members have been unsuccessful. In addition, suspicions were further heightened when MacFarland apparently tried to quash the investigation by offering to pay for the lock.

When asked about the incident on the next observing night members of FAAC Security would only reply "no comment", as they casually munched from a bag of pretzel sticks.

Comments and suggestions on this column are welcomed. Anyone with items for possible inclusion in future columns is requested to contact the writer at (248) 349-1930, or send E-mail to gkorody@mediaone.net.

ASTRO LINGO

by Paul Mrozek

>

kamacite - A nickel-iron alloy that occurs in meteorites.

Kirkwood gap - Any of the narrow regions in the asteroid belt where very few bodies are found.

lacus - (lake) A term used in the names of certain dark, isolated features on the Moon.

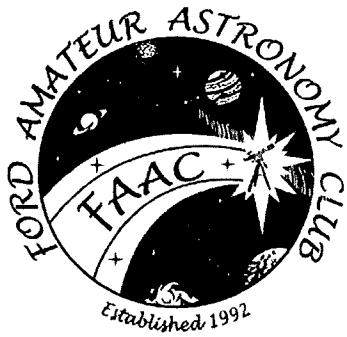
Lemaitre universe - A model of the universe beginning with a Big Bang, then a static phase, then expanding indefinitely.

lenticular galaxy - A type of galaxy in the Hubble classification that appears lens shaped.

lepton era - The period from one-millionth of a second to one second before the Big Bang.

linea - An elongated surface marking on a planet.

>lunation - A complete cycle of the phases on the Moon.



The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club
Presents:
THE SIXTH ANNUAL



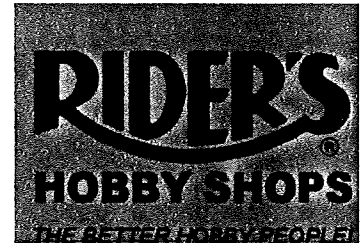
**Saturday,
September 26,
1998**

6 PM – ???

This event will be held rain
or
shine, cloudy or clear!!



Our Sponsors:



Event Listing:

- ♦ **A tour of the Solar System** – Follow the route in your vehicle from the park entrance to the observing site. The planet sizes and distances are to scale!
- ♦ **Free Hot Dog, Beverage and Chips** – for the first 100 registrants.
- ♦ **Telescopes of all kinds** – these are available to look at and look through . Have questions? Just ask!
- ♦ **Presentations and Demonstrations by local Technical Experts.** These are designed to answer your questions about equipment and observing techniques and help you to get the most from your telescope.
- ♦ **Astronomical Equipment** – educational material, books and star charts will be on display and made available by our sponsors.
- ♦ **PRIZES!!!** - There will be door prize drawings for telescopes and other items.
- ♦ **Observing Tour for Children** – Kids who register will be given an observing list. Marked telescopes will be on the field for the challenge. A certificate of achievement, and a gift from the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club, will be awarded to all who complete the observing list!

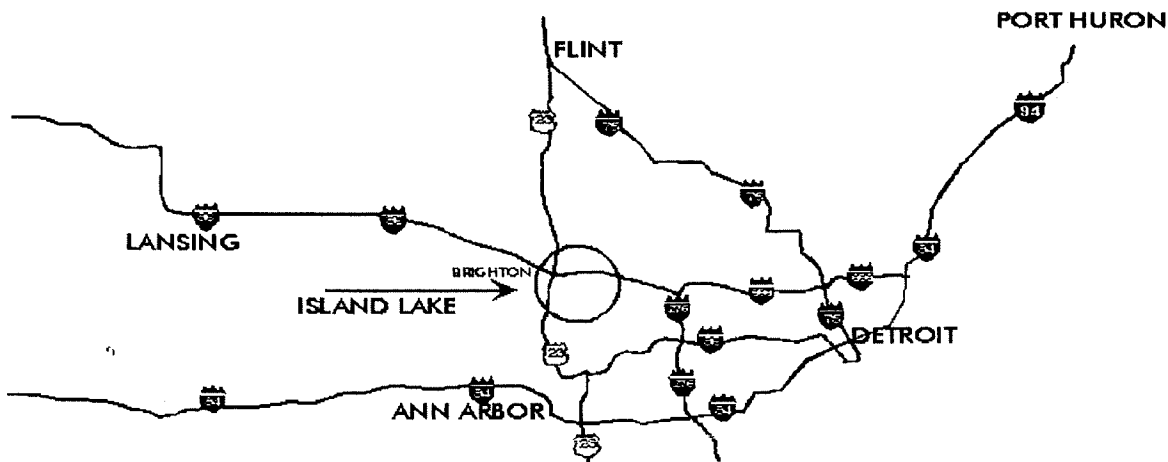
Your Telescope is Welcome!!

If you have questions about your equipment this is the perfect opportunity to get the helpful advice you need. Limited AC power and plenty of space is available. Please arrive before dark to allow for set-up time.

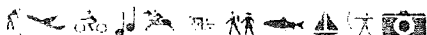
No telescope? No Problem! There will be lots to look through – just bring your curiosity!

Admission is Free* and Children are Welcome!

* You need a State Park Vehicle Permit if you don't have one – a daily permit is \$4.00



Ford Employees Recreation Association



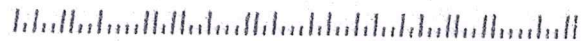
Island Lake State Recreation Area is located near I-96 just east of US-23. Exit I-96 at Kensington Road, exit 151 and go south about 1/2 mile to the park entrance. The star party is held at the Spring Mill Pond area within the park. Turn right at the toll booth and go 2 1/2 miles. Spring Mill pond has plenty of parking and clean modern facilities.



Ford Amateur Astronomy Club
Star Stuff Newsletter
P.O. Box 7527
Dearborn, MI 48121



48167-9555



August 1998						
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MS: 24:00	MS: None					
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Notice:

Anyone interested in submitting astro photos for a special astro photo issue of the Star Stuff please contact the editor. I am trying to determine if there is enough interest to publish an issue in color with members astro photos. The issue would be published this fall or winter. Now is the time to show off your stuff. Drop me a line at Jkennedy1@voyager.net