



# STAR STUFF

The Newsletter of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club

Volume 19, Number 10

October 2010

## In This Issue

### Page One

#### Close Encounters With Jupiter

#### Presidents Corner

### Inside Stuff

#### 5 Treasurers Report

#### 5 Meeting Agenda

#### 7 Astro-Imaging SIG

#### 7 Classifieds

#### 8 Observatory Report

#### 9 2011 RAAC Handbook

#### 11 The Joy Of Viewing at Island Lake

#### 12 The Haunted Observatory

## Close Encounters with Jupiter

By Carolyn Brinkworth

Jupiter and Earth just had a close encounter—and it was a good one. In late September 2010, the two worlds were 31 million km (about 19 million miles) closer than at any time in the past 11 years. Soaring high in the midnight sky, Jupiter shone six times brighter than Sirius and looked absolutely dynamite through a backyard telescope. Astronomers have been on the hunt for smaller and more Earth-like planets, and today we know of around 470 extrasolar planets, ranging from about 4 times to 8000 times the mass of Earth.

Planetary scientist Scott Bolton of the Southwest Research Institute isn't satisfied. "I'd like to get even closer," he says.

Bolton will get his wish in July 2016. That's when a NASA spacecraft named "Juno" arrives at Jupiter for a truly close-up look at the giant planet. Swooping as low as 5,000 km (about 3,000 miles) above the cloud tops, Juno will spend a full year orbiting nearer to Jupiter than any previous spacecraft.

The goal of the mission is to learn what lies inside the planet.

Astronomers have been studying Jupiter since the invention of the telescope 400 years ago, but in all that time the planet's vast interior has remained hidden from view. Even the Galileo probe, which dived into the clouds in 1995, penetrated no more than about 0.1% of Jupiter's radius.

*Continued On page 3*

## Great Lakes Star Gaze- Oct 7 - 10th

### President's Corner

*(Above: Doug Bauer, Astronomy at the beach )*

This year on October 7 – 10th, the 8th annual Great Lakes Star Gaze was held at River Valley RV Park in Gladwin, Michigan. The event features a large open field on a raised area, a hospitality tent with hot drinks and snacks throughout the evening, a large tent for presentations, a swap meet, and a great door prize drawing on Saturday evening.

Due to scheduling problems in September this year, the event was moved into October. This move caused some people who were worried about the nighttime temperatures to miss the event.

*Continued On page 2*

# STAR STUFF

October 2010 - Vol. 19 No 10

STAR STUFF is published eleven times each year by:

**FORD AMATEUR ASTRONOMY CLUB**  
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Dearborn MI 48121-7527

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VICE PRESIDENT: Chuck Jones  
SECRETARY: Lori Poremsky / Kevin Medon  
TREASURER: Gordon Hansen  
WEBMASTER: Greg Ozimek  
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Greg Knekleian

## Club Information:

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club (FAAC) meets on the fourth Thursday each month, except for the combined November/December meeting on the first Thursday of December - at Henry Ford Community College Administration Services and Conference Center in Dearborn. Refer to our website for a map and directions ([www.boonhill.net/faac](http://www.boonhill.net/faac)).

The FAAC observes at Spring Mill Pond within the Island Lake State Recreation Area near Brighton, Michigan. The club maintains an after-hours permit, and observes on Friday and Saturday nights, and nights before holidays, weather permitting. The FAAC also has use a private observing site near Gregory Michigan and Lake Erie Metro Park. See the FAAC Yahoo Group\* for more information.

Observing schedules and additional info are available on our website, or via the FAAC Yahoo Group.\* Or call the FAAC Hotline, for info and leave a message, or ask questions: 248-207-2075. or send email inquiries to [fordastronomy@comcast.net](mailto:fordastronomy@comcast.net).

Membership in the FAAC is open to anyone with an interest in amateur astronomy. The FAAC is an affiliate of the Ford Employees Recreation Association (F.E.R.A.). Membership fees:

Annual - New Members: \$30 (\$15 after July 1)  
Annual - Renewal: \$25 (\$30 after January 31)

Membership includes the STAR STUFF newsletter, discounts on magazines, discounts at selected area equipment retailers, and after-hours access to the Island Lake observing site.

## Astronomy or Sky & Telescope Magazine Discounts

Obtain the required form from the FAAC club treasurer for a \$10 discount. Send the completed form directly to the respective publisher with your subscriptions request and payment. Do not send any money directly to the FAAC for this.

## Star Stuff Newsletter Submissions

Your submissions to STAR STUFF are more than welcome! Send your story and/or images to the editor at [pvideo@aol.com](mailto:pvideo@aol.com). Email text or MS Word is fine. STAR STUFF will usually go to press the weekend prior to each general meeting. Submissions received prior to that weekend can be included in that issue.

\* FAAC Members are welcome to join our Ford Astronomy Club Yahoo!Group. Messages photos, files, online discussions, and more! URL: [groups.yahoo.com/group/FordAstronomyClub](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FordAstronomyClub).

*This months background photo on page 1, test photo of "Comet 103p Hartley and the double cluster" from Canon T1i image through the 80mm Meade refractor at Hector J Robinson Observatory.*

*Comet is a smudge above last "t" in "Observatory Report" title.*

## Presidents Corner *(continued from Page 1)*

They should not have been concerned! It was the best GLSG ever, in terms of weather and clear skies. Several FAAC members went up to the site on the Monday prior to the Thursday start and enjoyed 3 bonus nights of clear, but somewhat chilly evenings. Those of us that arrived on Thursday – Saturday, enjoyed daytime temperatures in the 70s and evening temperatures in the 50s and high 40s. The skies were clear the whole time.

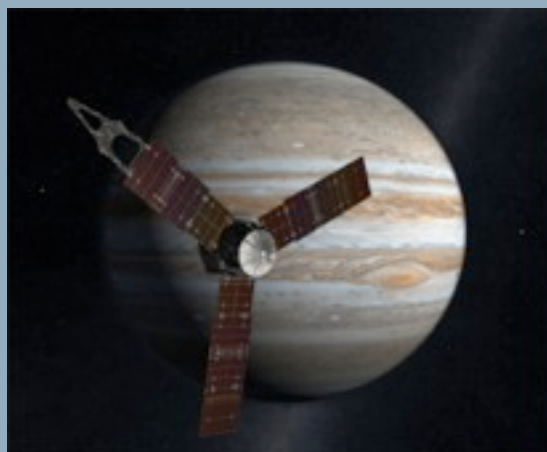
I would estimate about 20 FAAC members were there and several from the Warren Astronomical Society and Seven Ponds Astronomy Club. It was great to get a chance to chat with everyone and have the opportunity to look through the many telescopes that were there.

Several of the FAAC Astro-Imaging SIG members arrived on Monday and setup their camp in a wind sheltered area which they referred to as, "The Club Level". You needed the right credentials to be admitted – friendly or bearing cookies! Jim Frisbie was set up there and during the day helped numerous people with their battery or dew heater problems. I think I saw a 'The Battery Doctor Is In' sign.

*(continued Page 4)*



*The Juno mission, arriving at Jupiter in July 2016, will help to solve the mystery of what's inside the giant planet's core.*



## Close Encounters with Jupiter

*(continued from Page 1)*

"Our knowledge of Jupiter is truly skin deep," says Bolton, Juno's principal investigator. "There are many basic things we just don't know—like how far down does the Great Red Spot go? And does Jupiter have a heavy core?"

Juno will improve the situation without actually diving into the clouds. Bolton explains how. "Juno will spend a full year in close polar orbit around Jupiter, flying over all latitudes and longitudes. We will thus be able to fully map Jupiter's gravitational field and figure out how the interior is structured."

But that's not all. Researchers have good reason to believe that much of Jupiter's interior is filled with liquid metallic hydrogen, an exotic metal that could form only in the high-pressure, hydrogen-rich core of a giant planet. Jupiter's powerful magnetic field almost certainly springs from dynamo action inside this vast realm of electrically conducting metal.

"Juno's magnetometers will precisely map Jupiter's magnetic field," says Bolton. "This map will tell us a great deal about planet's inner magnetic dynamo—what it's made of and how it works."

Finally, Juno will probe Jupiter's atmosphere using a set of microwave radiometers. "Our

sensors can measure the temperature 50 times deeper than ever before," says Bolton. Researchers will use that information to figure out how much water is underneath Jupiter's clouds. "Microwave measurements of Jupiter's water content are particularly exciting because they will help discriminate among competing theories of the planet's origin."

Now that's a close encounter. Stay tuned for Juno.

Find out more about the Juno mission at [http://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/juno](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/juno). Play the new Solar System Explorer super game, which includes the Juno Recall mini-game at <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/solar-system>. It's not just for kids!

*This article was provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.*





## Presidents Corner (continued from page 2)

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The Seven Ponds Club set up away from the normal observing hill, down in the campground area. They made use of the pavilion near their site to setup their snacking area. Ron Shank made his truly excellent Chili and had deviled eggs fresh from his own chickens. The food, as always, was as G-R-E-A-T. A few of us made the trek down the steep path to their site to enjoy their great company, telescopes, and FOOD. There is a reason they call themselves a Gastronomy Club!

*(continued Page 5)*



## Presidents Corner (continued from page 2)

Jeff Hinline (Great Red Spot) had a booth and brought along a mock up of a 40 inch Dob. If you are interested, contact Jeff. We all want to have a friend with one of these monsters.

Norb Vance from EMU, launched four rockets on Saturday afternoon. A FAAC group went to dinner at several local restaurants.

The evenings were just fantastic. It was clear all night, every night, which also led to not getting much sleep. Normally, at these events you get a cloudy night or intermittent clouds that cause you to pack up early and get some sleep at least once. Not this year. Nothing but clear skies! And tired, but happy astronomers.

Ken Anderson got a new hands free binocular holder that he tried out for the first time. See if you can pick him out in the pictures.

I can't wait to see some of the images that were taken.

Mark your calendars for next year's Great Lake Star Gaze – September 22 – 25th.

Doug Bauer

[DougBauer@Comcast.Net](mailto:DougBauer@Comcast.Net)



## Treasurer's Report Sept 16, 2010

By Gordon Hansen

<b>Bank Accounts</b>	
Checking	\$155.06
Savings	\$961.76
<b>TOTAL Bank Accounts</b>	\$1,116.82
<b>Cash Account</b>	
Cash	\$103.42
<b>TOTAL Cash Account</b>	\$103.42
<b>Investment Accounts</b>	
CD 1	\$1,050.16
CD 2	\$1,085.98
<b>TOTAL Investment Accounts</b>	\$2,136.14
<b>Asset Accounts</b>	
Equipment	\$1,857.92
Scholarship	\$488.80
<b>TOTAL Asset Accounts</b>	\$2,346.72
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	\$5,703.10
Memo:	
GLAAC	\$2,652.46

## Treasurer's Report October 14, 2010

By Gordon Hansen

<b>Bank Accounts</b>	
Checking	\$136.12
Savings	\$818.82
<b>TOTAL Bank Accounts</b>	\$954.94
<b>Cash Account</b>	
Cash	\$37.72
<b>TOTAL Cash Account</b>	\$37.72
<b>Investment Accounts</b>	
CD 1	\$1,050.16
CD 2	\$1,085.98
<b>TOTAL Investment Accounts</b>	\$2,136.14
<b>Asset Accounts</b>	
Equipment	\$1,857.92
Scholarship	\$488.80
<b>TOTAL Asset Accounts</b>	\$2,346.72
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	\$5,475.52
Memo:	
GLAAC	\$2,452.90

## Astro Imaging SIG

Gordon Hansen

*The September meeting was held at HFCC*

All are invited to join us in the Astro Imaging SIG meetings, to share and discuss images, experiences, and techniques.

We always have a good time, with lively discussion, and sharing of valuable information.

Next meeting is November 11. The meeting room location - HFCC Admin. Services and Conference Center (same building), Berry Amphitheater Auditorium.

Topics invited. Pizza served.

## FAAC Events 2010

Kevin Medon and Lori Poremsky

**Oct 28 - General Meeting**

**Nov 11 - Astrophotography SIG**

**Dec 2 - General Meeting**

*Background Photo from Lunt Solar Scope Image taken at the Hector J Robinson Observatory, June 28, 2010*

## One FAAC members blog

<http://hjiobservatory.blogspot.com/>

A few updates on the observatory, quick articles and photos. I'll try to improve my writing on this blog. Also, I try to keep daily updates on this blog.

## Items For Sale

**Meade Lightbridge Deluxe 12"** - F/5, 1524mm focal length. Purchased new last year. Perfect condition mechanically, optically and cosmetically. Big, clear deep sky views. Built-in battery powered cooling fan, two-speed Crayford focuser (1.25 / 2-inch). Easy to transport, set up collimate and use - smooth as silk. Upgraded with Bob's knobs and heavier collimation springs. Includes shroud, cover, Telrad and secondary mirror heater. Over \$1000 invested, will sell for \$650.

Contact John Johnson at [jjohnsonpub@yahoo.com](mailto:jjohnsonpub@yahoo.com)

or (248) 515-0014.



**Meade Lightbridge 10"** Without eyepieces Used one time, includes transport boxes. \$400 Raising cash for new toys. The price is negotiable to some extent.

Tom Blaszk [key\\_string\\_guy@yahoo.com](mailto:key_string_guy@yahoo.com)

**Orion Atlas 10" reflector** telescope w/heavy duty Atlas EQ mount (non-goto)

Padded carry case for the scope

Metal case filled with over \$600 of accessories (lenses, barlow, filters, camera mounts)

Asking \$1200 (total cost new was \$2430 - Excellent Condition)



Tim Beck - [tbeck1@ford.com](mailto:tbeck1@ford.com), 313-805-3271

## 2011 calendars are now available



These calendars normally sell for \$12.95. Club members can purchase them for \$7.00 - a 45% discount!

Calendars will be available at club meetings. If you will not be attending, but, would still like to purchase one (or more!), you can send an email to:

[fordastronomy@comcast.net](mailto:fordastronomy@comcast.net)

Mailing charges of \$3 will be added.



(Editor takes the Observatory's old discarded OTA on a road trip. M42 above, Canon t1i photo.)

## Hector J Robinson Observatory

by Greg Knekleian

This month we had some more progress at the observatory. Some visitors just dropped by when they saw it open. Some kids received a tour during a game at the football field. Tim Dey was present with other members.

There were a few new members visiting the observatory. Jennifer Zdanowski Vice President of the HFCC student Astronomy Club visited and said the C-14's view of Jupiter brought tears to her eyes.

George Korody, Tim Dey and I were able to work a bit on polar alignment fine tuning. George showed us how to put in a T Point model in "The Sky" software. George was able to put in a 50 point star model.

The mount is very accurate now after the fine alignment of the mount (Thanks George). The software is showing surprising accuracy putting objects just where you would want them to appear. Tracking at times has been spot on although we've had some problem with longer exposures. We are suspecting a tracking error due to the worm gear.

A test exposure with some filters and using the Stellacam showed four stars two prominently inside the Ring Nebula. Some of these stars are fainter than 16th magnitude and looked spectacular in a 30 second stellacam "exposure". The wonderful detail was visible in the live monitor. The Stellacam showed it's worth even without filters at the HJRO observatory.

We took a few CCD SLR photos of comet 103P Hartley which looks much better in photos, than in an eyepiece with the naked eye. Fun stuff.



## 2011 RASC OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK

Greg Ozimek

Greetings astronomers!

It's time to pre-order the 2011 RASC OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK.

To buy 1 or more copies please click this link and add your name and info (ADD RECORD) to the Database:

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/FordAstronomyClub/database?method=reportRows&tbl=10>

PRE-ORDERS WILL CLOSE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29TH AT NOON at which time I will place our order to RASC. This is so a pre-order announcement can be made at the Thursday meeting, the night before.

OBSERVER'S HANDBOOKs should be available for pickup at our December 2 meeting...according to what the RASC tells me.

When the Handbooks arrive FAAC Treasurer Gordon Hansen will be selling them first to the names on the Database list. Please pay and receive your book (or make arrangements for someone to do so for you) from Gordon at the December 2 meeting so Gordon doesn't have to carry any books home from that meeting!

Another benefit of joining and supporting FAAC!

The FAAC bulk purchase price will be \$20.00 each (if we have 10+ to order) including shipping from RASC. This is your price. You must pickup your copy at a FAAC meeting. A single copy would cost \$34.00 each, w/shipping, if we each bought one ourselves directly from RASC.

### DISCLAIMER

*This book is a hot item in our FAAC but if in the unlikely event we don't have an order for 10+ books we will not be ordering.*

*This is the fourth year we are pre-ordering the RASC OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK and saving \$\$\$!*

Ref: <http://rasc.ca/handbook/>

### **Observer's Handbook 103rd Year of Publication First published in 1907**

*The Observer's Handbook is a 360-page guide published annually since 1907 by The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. Through its long tradition and the expertise of more than 50 contributors, the Observer's Handbook has come to be regarded as the standard North American reference for data on the sky. The material in the Handbook is of interest to professional and amateur astronomers, scientists, teachers at all levels, students, science writers, campers, Scout and Guide leaders, as well as interested general readers. The Observer's Handbook is an integral part of many astronomy courses at the secondary and university levels, and it should be on the reference shelf of every library.*

*The various sections in the Observer's Handbook are of two kinds:*

#### *Upcoming Astronomical Events*

*Sections dealing with astronomical events that occur during the current year. Information includes:*

- \* times of sunrise and sunset;*
- \* moonrise and moonset (for latitudes 20 to 62 degrees N);*
- \* Moon phases and other lunar phenomenon;*
- \* conjunctions, elongations, etc. of the planets;*
- \* eclipses and transits;*
- \* location of the planets and bright asteroids;*

*(continued on Page 10.)*

## 2011 Observers Handbook (continued)

By Greg Ozimek

- \* returns of periodic comets;
- \* times of meteor showers;
- \* predictions of occultations by the Moon and by asteroids;
- \* the orbital positions of the brighter satellites of both Jupiter and Saturn; and
- \* predictions of the cycles of many variable stars.

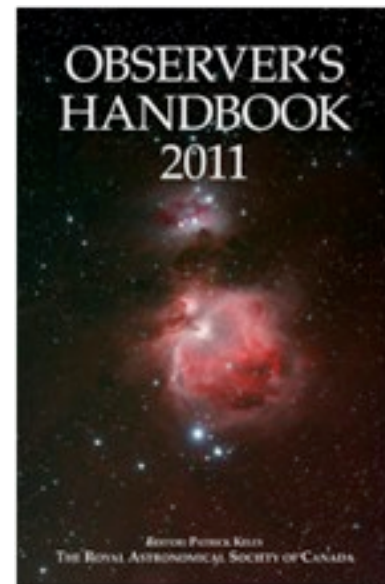
There is a 24-page section called "The Sky Month By Month," which gives an extensive listing of events for each month of the year.

### Astronomical Reference Information

Sections dealing with astronomical data and other information that does not vary much from year to year (although revisions are made annually to ensure that the information is the best available). Information includes:

- \* orbital and physical data on the planets and their satellites;
- \* astronomical and physical constants;
- \* some optical properties of telescopes and binoculars;
- \* a new section on the electromagnetic spectrum;
- \* information on filters for astronomical observing;
- \* light pollution and sky transparency;
- \* a description of the various systems of specifying time;
- \* information on the Sun including sunspots and aurorae;
- \* two new sections on solar and lunar observing;
- \* a list of meteorite craters in North and Central America;
- \* advice on using the Observer's Handbook for teaching astronomy;
- \* information on the Gegenschein and zodiacal

- \* information on the Gegenschein and zodiacal light;
- \* a new section on sky phenomena;
- \* 40 pages of authoritative tables dealing with stars, star clusters, nebulae, and galaxies; and
- \* maps of the Moon and of the entire stellar sky.



(Wendi Palumbo, took this handheld cell phone photo of the moon at Hector J Robinson Observatory through the C-14)

## What, no pictures? The joy of viewing at Island Lake.

by Greg Knekleian

**October 16, 2010:** I took the longer trip out to Island Lake rather than the closer Lake Erie site for the last beginner night of the year. (I'd like to observe at all the FAAC sites, but can't afford the helicopter I'd need to make the quick trip between sites.)

I had an invitation to meet Art Parent and his cousin Wendi Palumbo. Jennifer Zdanowski (VP of Student Astronomy Club) from HFCC was going to be at Island Lake as well. Jennifer's daughter Jessica was at the beginner's night as well. I missed meeting some of the other HFCC club members because I arrived late. Skies were not clear earlier, so I was lucky to arrive and see a clear dark sky.

David Baranski, John Shoroer, Art Parent, Bob Boswell, Wendy Palumbo, Diane Worth and John Blum were there with others.

I took only two small telescopes to the event. I knew others would bring larger telescopes.

When I arrived I felt like a kid in a telescope candy store. A C8, C14, 16 inch Lightbridge, Meade 10 inch SCT and other telescopes were setup and going through the observing paces. Both visitors and FAAC members had a great time. I immediately was greeted with a nice view of the Dumbbell Nebula, in Bob Boswell's C14. I basically started and ended my observing night looking through his C14. You can't go wrong with an observing night like that!

Everyone was great, the enthusiasm of each discussion was as exciting as the viewing. I spent some time looking through the 16 inch Lightbridge. Time seemed to fly by too quickly as we observed. John Schroer also greeted me beaming, his face lit up from the glow of a new gadget. He gave me a quick demo of some of the applications on his new EVO 4g phone; GPS applications, Google Sky, FM tuner, all kinds of nice apps. Many of the free apps he showed me, made my iPhone seem a bit dated.

EVO Astronomy apps - I mentioned to John it might make an interesting topic for a future tech talk gadget demo.

Jon Blum had his iPod touch running Carina's Sky Voyager software and the SkyFi box on his C8. He was finding objects quickly under Carina software control from the iPod touch. He found the comet 103P Hartley on the chart, then the C8 slewed to quickly for a nice view. What a blast !!!

The sky was wonderful and dark compared to the city, but not as dark as some dark sky sites. I looked at Comet 103P Hartley through the C8 and C14. The comet was not very appealing visually. It's small and only a mile across. Bob Boswell said, "it's easier to view with averted vision" while looking through his C14. I was used to watching the comet at HJRO. I could easily see the little blotch with direct vision at Island Lake. Moment's later, a bright multi-colored fireball lit up the northern sky. Some saw it and Wendi hollered out. I noticed it's flash; but by the time I turned to see it, it was gone.

One visitor had a portable 5 inch scope setup. They showed me the view of Andromeda through the little 5 inch telescope. The little goto could easily tour the sky with it's goto.

I pulled out my old (1977) homebuilt F4 4.25" wide field Newtonian and set it up on a "old shaky" mount. I aimed it toward M45 and had some visitors view the entire Pleiades cluster at low power.

The 16 inch Meade Lightbridge showed nice views of the Double Cluster and M42 later in the evening. To get a good view of M42 we had to stay up late. I setup my Vixen BT-80 "binos" as well. Bob, Wendi, Art and I were the last to leave the site around 2:30 AM.

Later Art, Wendi and I stopped at White Castle to snack. A great night and a lots of fun, but I forgot to take pictures. Also, Art Parent's Bader Planetarium eyepieces were amazing; different barrels can change each eyepiece's focal length, perhaps a good topic for a future review.

## The Haunted Observatory

By Greg “Mu Ha Ha” Ozimek.

(c) 2010 Greg Ozimek

### The COOP

A number of us share a community observatory which is why we call it The COOP – our Community Observatory Observers Place.

Rumors are whispered that some Community Observatories are well maintained by their members. That they can be entered any time and found well maintained, clean. If the mission were daytime solar observing sessions for a school district or nighttime comet hunting the observatories stand in ready-for-action condition. Something to do with the members' pride in their individual and group astronomy endeavors.

Not so with The Coop. It was not uncommon to find the outside and especially the inside contents of our observatory in a haphazard mess after observing sessions; the telescope not in the CWD (counter weight down) position but in the last used observing position and left uncovered, eyepieces strewn around, computer monitors left on, log books which looked like they were maintained by a fifth grader if at all...and et cetera.

You never knew what to expect at The Coop.

All true. Until October, 2010.

Our eyes were bleary, the yawns far too frequent, and a cloud front was crawling in from the Southwest like a one-year-old when we called it a night. However it happened, and it happened like someone excusing themselves to hit the restroom just before the meal check arrives... everyone was gone in an instant, and tired me, I was left alone to park the scope and make The Coop ship-shape.

Our atomic clock glowed it's red numbers on the wall. 2:35 AM. I could make it home, sink into my pillow for some Zzz's and be back in 5 hours to clean up. That was the plan. I've done it before. I know what it's like having The Coop RFA, I wished all the others would get with the RFA program.

Thick dew kept me cautious as I approached and unlocked The Coop. Stepping in, ready to disarm The Coop's alarm system, eyes wide open in a nanosecond of instant recognition, I gasped. Perfect order! Nothing out of place. The Losmandy Titan and OTA covered and parked in CWD, all equipment powered down – The Coop's carpet vacuumed. All was quiet. Only one set of footprints in the grass – mine.

"Who did this?" was the echo as I checked each 'Leaving for the Night' step in the SOP. Perfect. All perfect. That was Tuesday morning.

At 3:10 AM, the end of my Coop session on Thursday, I was alone as I had been alone with that enduring echo for hours that unnerving Tuesday morning. I put the equipment in CWD (just in case something-something), but left it all powered on, locked the door and headed out to my vehicle NEVER FOR ONE SECOND LEAVING THE COOP OUT OF MY DIRECT VISION.

I waited 20 minutes, eyes continually glued on The Coop.

I returned, unlocked the door and unarmed the security system.

"To - the - letter" The Coop, everything, was powered down, orderly, clean – RFA, Ready-For-Action.

This has since happened after all of our observing sessions.



## This Page was blank - Newsletter editor thoughts

By Greg Knekleian

One of the challenges in being the newsletter editor is finding material suitable for posting. Do I put in photos and many messages that others have posted already on the Yahoo group? Maybe it would be interesting to show some YAHOO threads/write ups to those who may not frequent the yahoo group, and give a samples of what is going on in the monthly postings. There are so many topics and things that are mentioned in the online group, it's really impossible to get a good sample and not just duplicate what most members already see in their email boxes.

I hear so many stories through the month and discuss astronomy projects with members and hear all kinds of interesting ideas. There's probably ten ideas for every one implemented. Blue sky and dark sky thinking. How many stories or thoughts should I add? I'm often left with some story that is just an update from the observatory or a story of an outing. (These are the majority of my contributions.)

At times the articles arrive thanks to members who are submitting them or who may even be helping me (in secret?) by asking others to submit an article.

I'd like to make this newsletter a lot more photo centric, almost like a news magazine, but that's impossible. The photos are printed in black and white. Color printing costs \$1 a page. There is no way we are going to spend \$12 to print a single copy and mail it out. The best version of the newsletter is a high resolution color online YAHOO group version. We try to make the newsletter efficient and small enough so it won't take up a lot of free web space. If you're reading this off the website and not the yahoo group you may find the photos don't look as sharp when you zoom in. There's a reason for this, the higher resolution version takes up twice the space.

If I had been working on the newsletter more and perhaps been observing less and working less at my day job, I may have had more photos and a more careful selection of photos for the newsletter. Doug's article this month had a lot of photos that he provided. Those articles are of course the easiest to add to the newsletter.

### THE MISSING MINUTES

This month we are missing the minutes from last months meeting. Our secretary(s) were absent from the meeting and they asked me to take minutes. Unfortunately my day job had some kind of production emergency. I missed the entire general meeting.

This has been a challenging month to edit the newsletter. I had some of it completed early which was good and relieves some of the pressure of a last minute deadline. I almost finished it and printed it a week early. But I often wait until the weekend before the meeting to print and mail the newsletter out.

I try to keep the newsletter fresh. I give more updates about the observatory because that's what I'm involved with.

During the past month I've been contemplating retirement. There's an early out option that is being offered to us, where I work. One of the FAAC members asked me if I would create a better newsletter if I retired? I didn't think about how many additional hours I'd add to editing the newsletter to make it better. Maybe that's a bad sign.

I'm mailing the newsletter in envelopes to avoid problems with staples in the post office. This means I can be a little more creative with the back cover. This month I added a comic book like panel with two photos to the back page. They were taken at the observatory in Lincoln Park.

I recently snatched the old OTA's that were about to be thrown out. I may restore one or both mirrors. The smaller F5 8 inch will be easier to restore. The larger one more expensive and probably not worth the effort due to the long focal length and heavy tube. I'm toying with that as a side project.

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



Clouds obscured our view of the moon, then a pattern emerged when I reviewed the photos.  
EOS t1i photo at Hector J Robinson Observatory. ("Wendi looks through the C14".)