



★ STAR STUFF ★

The Newsletter of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club

January 2004
Volume 13 Number 1



Editor: Jim Frisbie

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It's hard to believe it's 2004. It feels like it was just months ago that we entered the 21st century. Now, if I can only remember to write '04' on my personal checks I should be okay. I hope everyone had a good Christmas and received a little something under the Christmas tree toward their astronomical interests. This year I received one of my Christmas presents early, which was a deep sky, H-alpha filter. I learned about this filter through published and Internet pictures of emission nebulas, which are composed primarily of hydrogen. Such a filter enables one to image these faint objects in light-polluted areas with ease. But what really interested me was the affect you get from using the filter, which is of an Ansel Adams quality- high contrast and high definition. I consulted Jeff Thrush and George Korody on type and brand to purchase. They guided me toward an Astronomick 13nm band pass. After having it for a few weeks I found it to be one of the most valued accessories I own. I can now image the North American, Veil, California, and Rosette Nebula, to name a few, from my light polluted backyard!

Aside from filter stories, I would like to talk about the status of a few goals I took on last year for the club. These goals were 1) raising funds for a digital projector, 2) pursuing a more convenient location for our general meetings, and 3) increasing participation in club activities.

My first goal I feel is pretty straightforward and everyone is onboard with acquiring a digital projector. However, what most of you may not know is how far we have come. We presently have about \$800 in the coffer. This money was raised through our 25-25-50 raffle, personal donations by Chuck Jones from the sale of his tent and prize money for his design competition, along with personal donations by everyone else. Additional funds will be added from the sale of Entertainment books and auto show tickets. I thank you for your financial contributions. We still need to raise about \$300 more before we can start shopping. I believe this can be achieved this year.

The second goal was a little bit more of a challenge. The board has been sifting through ideas for potential venues that can lead to a more permanent home for the club. So far we have a few strong candidates. These candidates still have to be assessed for logistics, multi-media capability, security, and growth potential for such functions as a club library. The biggest drive for change are the problems I here, and have personally experienced, with getting to the building after 5 o'clock and having to wait several minutes before someone lets you in. The board continues to welcome more ideas for meeting locations. I feel confident that a new location will be identified early this year.

The last goal I set for myself was more of a personal challenge as President of FAAC. I know that each and every one of you has a story to tell, an experience to share, and an astronomical gadget to demonstrate. My goal was to motivate you to share this with your peers. And you did. For the past two years, we had a technical presentation and a main discussion at every meeting. A full audience, which never dipped below a count of thirty, always welcomed your presentations. There were times I had to turn down people who wanted to give a presentation but couldn't because the agenda was already full- trust me I kept their names for the following month's meeting. Star Stuff has grown not only in pages but also in digital bytes. The board meetings were always well attended not just by board members but also by regular members. Our Beginner Nights have grown from only a few instructors to over a dozen. And the list goes on. I think we all can see how we have grown more into the hobby and science of astronomy as a result of this progress. Keep up the great work it is definitely paying off!

I challenge each and everyone one of you to set a personal goal for growing the club. There have been many people who took on that challenge and are making a big difference. You have already seen that all ideas are welcomed and

people are willing to help you bring it to fruition. Before I end this letter, I have to let everyone know that it will be my last. In early March there will be a new astro-baby added to my family. This will be our first baby. So we have a lot of on-the-job training ahead of us. This will require more of my time at home and less with my extra-curricular activities. I will truly miss having an active role in the club. The responsibility has improved my human relation and leadership skills. These are skills you cannot get in a textbook. The position also afforded me the opportunity to get to know more of you on a more personal level. I appreciate everyone helping me in these past two years. These are years I will treasure forever.

Sincerely,

Don Nakic

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

<http://www.boonhill.net/faac>

Submissions to STAR STUFF are welcome Please write to the address above or contact the editor:

Jim Frisbie
 via tele #: 734-453-1422
 or email: w8tu@comcast.net

Dead line is the 15th of each month of publication.

Officers:

President	Don Nakic
Vice President	Dale Ochalek
Secretary	Don Klaser
Treasurer	Gordon Hansen

General Meetings:

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club holds regular general meeting on the fourth Thursday of each month (except the combined November/December meeting held the first Thursday of December) at 5:00 PM at the Ford Motor Credit Building off Mercury Drive near Michigan Ave. in Dearborn.

Observing:

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club observes at Spring Mill Pond within the Island Lake State Recreation Area near Brighton, Michigan. The club maintains a permit for after-hours access. Weather permitting, the club observes on Friday nights, Saturday nights, and nights before holidays.

Club Information:

Observing schedules and additional Club information is available by calling the Observing Hotline at: (313) 390-5456 or via the Ford Intranet: www.be.ford.com/astro/faac.html or the public Internet: www.boonhill.net/faac.

Club Membership:

Membership in the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club is open

to Ford employees and non-employees. Write or call for an application.

Annual - New Member: \$30; Renewal: \$ 25 (before Jan 31 of each year); \$15 for new members after July 1.

Lifetime - \$ 150

Membership includes:

A subscription to the STAR STUFF newsletter and the quarterly newsletter the REFLECTOR published by the Astronomical League. Discounts on ASTRONOMY and SKY & TELESCOPE magazines, after-hours access to the observing site and discounts at selected area equipment retailers.

Magazine Discounts:

Do not send money to FAAC for SKY & TELESCOPE or ASTRONOMY magazine subscriptions. We have a form that you send in with your subscription directly to the publisher to receive a \$10 discount. Pick up a form at the next meeting, or contact a club officer.

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FOR SALE: Meade ETX 125 Spotting Scope, RA finder, Dew Shield, 26mm plossl. Like new. \$575 OBO; GOTO Computer. JMI Micromax computer with encoders and with cables. \$375 OBO; Astele Lomo 60mm Spotting Scope. Dew shield, case, 25mm plossl. Eyepiece interchangeable. 1/4 X 20 Thread. \$175 OBO People interested may either send an e-Mail to TBLASZAK@Ford.com or call 313.323.9842.

Ensign Planetarium Presents

Submitted by Bob Fitzgerald

- **Mars Rovers Update – Spirit Has Landed** Jan 21, 7 pm
- **Volcano in the sky:the story of Eta Carina** Feb 18, 7 pm

1501 Beach – Daly, Dearborn Heights, MI 48217, (313)274-3711

**MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 5, 2003
FAAC GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

By Don Klaser

The meeting was called to order by V-Pres. Dale at 5:00 p.m. Several pieces of mail were passed around as the members introduced themselves. A number of people talked about their observing experiences over the past month as pizza and pop were enjoyed.

Gordon Hansen gave the treasurer's report and Don Klaser gave the secretary's report. Gordon also reminded everyone about their membership renewal for 2004.

The telescope mount design competition was discussed. George Korody gave an update on the Astro-Imaging SIG; there will be no December meeting, and the next meeting will be held in mid to late January. Jim Frisbie gave an update on the club swap meet being held in January; advance reservations end on January 10. V-Pres. Dale announced a last call on Entertainment and Gold C books, and Bob MacFarland informed the membership about selling tickets for the upcoming North American International Auto Show at Cobo Convention Center from January 10 through the 19; they are a good fund raising mechanism for the club.

V-Pres. Dale asked for photos and drawings on the Saturn opposition occurring on December 31. Also, election of officers will be held at the January meeting; please think about who you would like to nominate for office to run the club in 2004.

Upcoming events include Ice Daze at Lake Erie Metro Park on January 17; FAAC swapmeet in Livonia on January 25; Lyon Oaks Co. Park on February 14; FAAC dinner party at a location to be determined on March 6, and the GLAAC star party at Kensington Metro Park on May 21 & 22. Don Klaser also mentioned the upcoming science day program at Forest Elementary school at a date and time to be determined.

Gary Strumolo gave the technical discussion a " Can a 4" APO beat an 8" SCT ". John Kirchoff presented the main program on Christmas gift ideas for the amateur astronomer.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

TREASURERS REPORT DECEMBER 4, 2003

By Gordon Hansen

Bank Accounts

Checking	\$306.18
Savings	\$800.32

TOTAL Bank Accounts \$1,106.50

Cash Accounts

Cash Account	\$131.63

TOTAL Cash Accounts \$131.63

Asset Accounts

Astronomical League Dues	\$360.00
Books	\$0.00
GLAAC	\$345.00
Projector	\$723.70
Scholarship	\$232.13

TOTAL Asset Accounts \$1,660.83

OVERALL TOTAL \$2,898.96

**ADVENTURES IN ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY
(CHECK YOUR BATTERIES)**

By John Kirchoff

I certainly was looking forward to the lunar eclipse November 8th. After being clouded out from seeing the last one I was really hoping to add some eclipse pictures to my portfolio of astro photos. I had decided to use a new piece of equipment to shoot the photos as my tried and true Celestron C-5 had too long a focal length to frame the entire lunar disc. The Orion 80ED would be a perfect choice.

Thursday Nov. 6th gave me an excellent opportunity to try the system. We finished our star party at the shop by 10:30 or so and the moon was in it's glory high to the south over the store. I set up the equipment in the parking lot and knocked off a couple of hundred images in no time at all. I felt rather smug that all of the practice in imaging over the summer would leave me in good shape for Saturday night.

Saturday night was beautiful! NO CLOUDS IN THE FORECAST! It was cold but I was layered up and not worried in the least. I set my equipment up in the back yard and waited for the rising moon to clear the trees on the east side of the back yard. LESSON #1 When you invest in a planetarium program to tell you where things are in the sky believe it! I knew where I had to set up to clear the trees but when I saw the moon rise I changed my position. As a result I had to drag my equipment around at the onset of totality to clear the tree that was in the way. I put it exactly where the program determined I should. Lesson #2 Check the batteries on the laptop! I have an old laptop that I use to run the camera, it works great as long as the batteries are charged up. Mine were not and it only functioned as a paperweight in this condition. Cut my yield of photos by ¾ Lesson #3 Check the batteries on the camera! I had a backup set in the charger but it is really inconvenient and does not help the focusing when the set in the camera dump just as the total part of the eclipse is underway. Had to stop what I was doing change batteries and hope that the focus was OK (it wasn't). Lesson #4 Check the batteries in the motor drive! Hey they worked great the night before! Yep, you guessed it, they dumped during totality! Kind of hard to take a two second time exposure through a scope without a drive!

The photo results were not as planned or as hoped for BUT I did manage to get one keeper out of the 100 or so pictures taken. Just before totality started and before I screwed up the focus on the

camera I managed a good shot of the moon in eclipse. I sent the shot in to space weather .com and it made their gallery. I also sent the shot to Paul Gross at WDIV and he even put it on channel 4 Monday night!

I guess the moral of the story is even if you have a bad night with the camera one shot can make the night, and I will make SURE I check the batteries next time!



Congratulations John! on your Eclipse picture being published in the latest Orion Catalogue.



SO LITTLE TIME, SO MANY GALAXIES

By Dr. Tony Phillips

Fourteen billion years ago, just after the Big Bang, the universe was an expanding fireball, white hot and nearly uniform. All of space was filled with elementary particles and radiation. "Soupy" is how some cosmologists describe it.

Today the universe is completely different. It's still expanding-even accelerating-but there the resemblance ends. The universe we live in now is "lumpy." Great cold voids are sprinkled with glowing galaxies. In galaxies, there are stars. Around stars, there are planets. On one planet, at least, there is life.

How we got from there to here is a mystery.

Finding out is the goal the Galaxy Evolution Explorer, "GALEX" for short, a small NASA spacecraft launched into Earth orbit April 28, 2003. GALEX carries an ultraviolet (UV) telescope for studying galaxies as far away as 10 billion light-years.

"GALEX is a time machine," says astronomer Peter

Friedman of Caltech. Because light takes time to travel from place to place, pictures of distant galaxies reveal them as they were in the past. "GALEX is investigating the evolution of galaxies over 80% of the history of our universe."

The Hubble Space Telescope can see faraway galaxies, too, but GALEX has an advantage: While Hubble looks in great detail at very small regions of the sky, GALEX is surveying the entire sky, cataloging millions of galaxies during its 2-year mission.

GALEX is a UV mission for a reason. Friedman explains: "UV radiation is a telltale sign of star birth." Stars are born when knots of gas condense in interstellar clouds. The ones we see best are the big ones-massive stars that burn hot and emit lots of UV radiation. "These stars are short-lived, so they trace recent star formation."

Understanding star formation is crucial to studies of galaxy evolution. When galaxies collide, star formation surges. When galaxies run out of interstellar gas, star formation wanes. In galaxies like the Milky Way, spiral arms are outlined by star-forming clouds. The shapes of galaxies, their history and fate & they're all connected by star formation.

Even life hinges on star formation, because stars make heavy elements for planets and organic molecules.

"Our measurements of UV radiation will tell us both the rate at which stars are forming in galaxies and the distances of the galaxies," says Friedman.

How did we get here? GALEX will show the way.

Find out more about GALEX at www.galex.caltech.edu. For children, visit The Space Place at spaceplace.nasa.gov/galex_make1.htm and make a beautiful galactic mobile while learning about some of the different shapes galaxies can take.

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



This image of Messier 101 (M101), aka the "Pinwheel Galaxy," was taken in two orbits of GALEX on June 20, 2003. M101 is 20 million light years away.

LAKE ERIE METROPARK ICE DAZE EVENT, JANUARY 17TH

by Bob MacFarland

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club Members, Families and Friends, It is again time to get out of hibernation and go to the Lake Erie Metropark Ice Daze Star Watch event on Saturday, January 17th. Here's a chance to get out and share the hobby with others. If you are new to astronomy, come on down to the presentation to learn. If you are more experienced, it's time to set up and show the skies to someone else. Sure, it might get chilly. However, you can dress for it and go inside the museum to warm up every now and again. This is not a dark sky event. However, everyone needs to get out, have some fun, catch up with their old astronomy friends and make some new ones.

This is the plan: Directions: The park is located at the mouth of the Detroit River on Lake Erie at 32481 W. Jefferson, in Brownstown, MI (734-379-5020). From I-75 go east on Gibraltar Road about two miles to Jefferson and turn right (South). Go about two miles south to the park entrance on the left. A Huron-Clinton Metropark vehicle permit may be required at the gate (\$4 weekend or \$20 for the annual or \$12 annual fee for seniors). Follow the signs to the Marshlands Museum. Check their web site out at:

http://www.metroparks.com/parks/pk_lake_erie.php

Before you leave: Contact the Lake Erie Metropark to find out about the many Ice Daze activities besides astronomy. Ice Sculpturing, snow snake > racing, dog sledding, ice fishing, wood carving, dulcimer band and winter camping are some of their typical activities. You may want to come earlier to check them out. Call the park for specific times for these activities. Some FAAC members will be there early to display their equipment and answer questions.

4:00 PM - The formal FAAC presentation starts inside the heated Marshlands Museum classroom.

5:00 PM - Optional (Observing conditions or not): Presenters, club members and friends pack up and go 1/2 mile south of the park to 33019 W Jefferson Ave. for dinner at the Three Hermano's Mexican restaurant (734) 379-9600. (they serve American style food too).

Est. 6:45 PM - Return to Lake Erie Metropark Marshlands Museum. Set up and start observing until: ??? Warm up at the bonfire or in the museum as required. Restrooms are inside. Bringing out your equipment is optional. However, we'll need to get enough optics to accommodate the public viewers. Besides, if you might be getting rusty at your setup like me, this will give you a chance for some practice or to try out those new astro-widgets Santa may have dropped off.

Call at 248-879-7018 or e-mail me if you have any questions. We're looking forward to seeing you there.

LYON OAKS ROMANTIC STAR PARTY

By Tom Blaszk

When: February 14, 7:30 PM until 9:30 PM for the general public's presentation and show. We will have the opportunity to be there from about 6 pm until 11 pm. I explained that we would probably start arriving for scope set up before sunset.

Where: 52251 Pontiac Trail, (between Old Plank and Wixom Roads) Lyon Township. The area for observing will be on the east end of the park near the nature center. We will probably have the opportunity to set up in one of several graveled parking lots, which would facilitate moving the equipment not very far from vehicles.

What: FAAC will be responsible for the Astronomy 101 talk to be done by Greg Burnett. We will need to show up and enjoy the hot cocoa, which will be provided in the "fully-heated" nature center. All we need are some clear skies.

I am going to try and go out there to the park before the 14th to work on set up location and signage.

This event will go on regardless of sky conditions. The building is heated and accommodations are pretty nice for about 50 to 60 people. Of course, we cannot predict the turnout of the general public.

A CHRISTMAS CARD!

Submitted by Gordon Hansen



Karen Kudelko was an FAAC 2003 Scholarship Recipient.

ASTRONOMICAL IMAGING S.I.G.

By George Korody

At this writing, room usage at the Ford Family Service & Learning Center in Dearborn has not been determined for the first quarter of 2004. Therefore, the date for the first meeting of the FAAC Astronomical Imaging S.I.G. of the year is not yet available. Available dates should be known in the next week or so and the selected date for the first meeting will be provided to members of the group via E-mail. It is expected that meeting times will continue to be available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00 PM to 7:00

PM. Jim Frisbie will lead the first topic of discussion of the year, which will be "Image Processing Using Registax Software". All FAAC members are welcome to attend and participate in the meetings.

NEW MEMBER WELCOME !

FAAC Welcomes:

Gerard Tomilenko
Gregg Updike

A REMINDER! Election of FAAC officers for 2004 will be held at the **NEXT** meeting on the January 22, 2004. Please think about who you would like to nominate for office next year.

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR FAAC MEMBERSHIP!

By **Gordon Hansen**

Avoid the rush and send your check in today to:

FAAC
P.O. Box 7527
Dearborn, Michigan 48121-7527

Renewal fees for 2004 are only \$25 or sign up for a Life Membership for \$150 and never have to worry about paying dues again.

Please include any updates to your address (snail mail or email), phone numbers, etc.

**January 22, 2004
General Membership Meeting
5:00 pm to 6:55 pm
Agenda**

- Introductions	Don Nakic	25 min
- Reports: Treasurer's	Gordon Hansen	10 min
Secretary's	Don Klaser	
- Old/New Business	Don Nakic	25 min
- Elections	All	10 min
- Upcoming Events	Don Nakic	10 min
- Technical Discussion	Greg Burnett	15 min
- Mars Update	John Schorer	30 min

2004 ASTRONOMY CALENDARS

Club Price: \$10 (Retail Price: \$11.95)
There are a limited number of these calendars available. First come -- first served!

Place your order by emailing to ghansen@comcast.net



FAAC CALENDAR

Activity	Date	Time
- General Meeting	Dec 4	5 pm
- FAAC Board Mtg	Jan 8	5 pm
- Lake Erie Ice Daze	Jan 17	4 pm
- General Meeting	Jan 22	5 pm
- FAAC Swap Meet	Jan 25	8 am
- FAAC Board Mtg	Feb 12	5 pm
- Lyon Oaks	Feb 14	6 pm
- General Meeting	Feb 26	5 pm
- FAAC Banquet	Mar 6	
- GLACC Star Party	May 21,22	

T-SHIRT INVENTORY REDUCTION!

The Club has a large supply of T-Shirts from this year's and previous Island Lake Star Parties. Now is your chance to get yours at special prices!



2003 Shirts – Now only \$10
Sizes Available: XXL, XL, L, S

Past Year's Shirts - \$5.00 !!

Sizes: XXL, XL, L, M, S

For pickup at the next Club Meeting: email you order to ghansen@comcast.net

or mail your order including a check for payment to: FAAC, P.O.Box 7527, Dearborn, MI 48183



First Annual FAAC

ASTRONOMY SWAP MEET

**Co-Hosted by the
Ford Amateur Astronomy Club
& Rider's Hobby – Livonia**

Sunday, January 25th, 2004 - 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

EARN CASH BY SELLING YOUR OLD:

- Telescopes - Eyepieces - Cameras - Binoculars - Mounts
- Tripods - Software - Publications & Accessories, etc.

You may even find something you want to buy!

Admission: \$4.00 in advance or \$5.00 at the door.

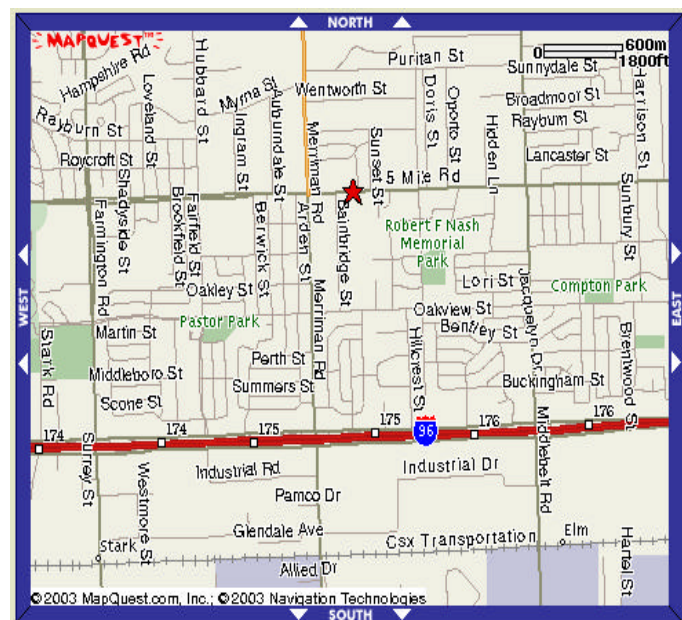
Tables: \$12.00 in advance or as available at the door \$15.00 (one admission ticket included).

Advanced Registration Ends January 10, 2004.

Doors Open: at 7:00am for setup. Complimentary Coffee & Donuts provided by Rider's Hobby.

Make Checks Payable: to FAAC for advance registration and table reservations. Send payment to Ford Amateur Astronomy Club, P.O. Box 7527, Dearborn, MI 48121-7527

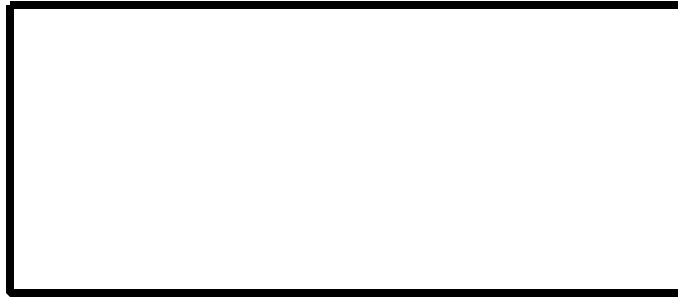
Location: The Swap Meet will be held at 30943 Five Mile Road, Livonia, Michigan, in the Livonia Plaza (Kroger) Shopping Center, on the south side of Five Mile, just east of Merriman, near Rider's Hobby. See **STAR** on map.



For More Information: Contact Jim via email: w8tu@comcast.net or call (734) 453-1422,

After Jan. 11, 2004 contact John Kirchhoff via email: riderslivonia@aol.com or call (734) 425-9720

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



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January is TeleVue Month!

- Save \$50 on Ranger, Pronto and 76 APO's.
- Save \$20 on all Panoptic and Nagler eyepieces.
- Save \$10 on all Powermates and Plossl eyepieces.
- Remember we sell TeleVue at MAP pricing everyday!
- Use your Rider's RED card for an additional 5% credit.

Good at Livonia store ONLY!