



# STAR STUFF

The Newsletter of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club

Volume 18, Number 7

June 2009

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## SARSAT to the Rescue

If a plane crashes in the woods and nobody hears it, does it make a sound?

Never mind contemplating this scenario as a philosophical riddle. This can be a real life or death question. And the answer most of the time is that, even if no people are nearby, something is indeed listening high above.

*...continued on page 3*

## Club Picnics, Web Site Announcements

### President's Corner

Doug Bauer, FAAC President

Bob Berta, Warren Astronomical Society, has invited members of FAAC and the Seven Ponds Club to join them for a picnic on Saturday, July 25, at noon.

Quoting Bob's note to the FAAC:

"The Warren Club is inviting the Ford, Seven Ponds, Oakland and of course our own WAS members to a combination picnic and observing date on Saturday, July 25. We will put more info out but are planning on starting it around noon with the picnic, socializing and solar observing and continue into the night for night time observing. WAS will provide lots of sodas, chips and a few other goodies (but no alcohol due to park rules). Due to the number of people expected we won't be able to provide food for everyone...or even a place to cook it if you bring your own (food).

"We do have a VERY small gas barbecue others can use but recommend they bring their own box lunches, personal BBQs, etc. There is a very good deli and pizza store on Romeo Plank at 27 Mile Road in Ray Township that we frequent all the time. It is not that far from Stargate. Rotary Park is a large park and there is plenty of parking space and room to set-up your telescopes. All club members and their families are invited to attend. The event will not be advertised to the public, but there may be some scouts camping there that would enjoy a look through our telescopes.

"The club observatory is located in Rotary Park, 1.8 Miles East of Romeo Plank and that is part of the Wolcott Mill/Metro Park system. Besides the

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# STAR STUFF

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**STAR STUFF** is published eleven times each year by:

**FORD AMATEUR ASTRONOMY CLUB**  
P.O. Box 7527  
Dearborn MI 48121-7527

PRESIDENT:	Doug Bauer
VICE PRESIDENT:	Chuck Jones
SECRETARY:	Lori Poremsky / Kevin Medon
TREASURER:	Steve Flessa
NEWSLETTER EDITOR:	Dale Ochalek

## 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, Administrative 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 Richmond Airport, Unadilla, given prior permission, and Lake Erie MetroPark. 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 Member:	\$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 subscription 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 [dake00k@yahoo.com](mailto:dake00k@yahoo.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 **FordAstronomyClub** Yahoo! Group. Messages, photos, files, online discussions, and more! URL: [groups.yahoo.com/group/FordAstronomyClub](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FordAstronomyClub).

## President's Corner... (continued from page 1)

observatory there are free tours of the historic Wolcott Mill (grain mill), hikes along the North Fork of the Clinton River which passes through the park and the possibility of catching a fish or two in the parks dam near the observatory. We will have walking tours for those interested in seeing the parks attractions."

Our FAAC/Multi-Club Picnic -- August 29

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club is planning to make our August 29th Beginner's Night at Island Lake Recreation Area (Spring Mill Pond site) into a multi-club picnic and observing session. We have invited the Warren, Seven Ponds, and Oakland Club members to attend with us. We will provide hamburgers and hotdogs and anyone attending can bring their own drinks and a dish to pass. The Beginner's Nights normally begin at 7 pm, so we want to start the picnic around 5 pm, since we may have people coming by after 7 pm who want some help with their telescopes.

If you could give me some rough idea a week before of how many might be attending that would be helpful in buying the hamburger and hotdogs.

Here is a link to a map for Island Lake: <http://www.boonhill.net/faac/other/observe.html>

And a link to Google maps:

<http://maps.google.com/?ie=UTF8&ll=42.504819,-83.713074&spn=0.042522,0.076818&z=14>

Take I-96 to Kensington Road south to the park entrance. There is some construction on I-96 that has had some of the exits closed around the park, so people may have to take some detours to get there. Also, it is a state park so a state park permit will be needed.

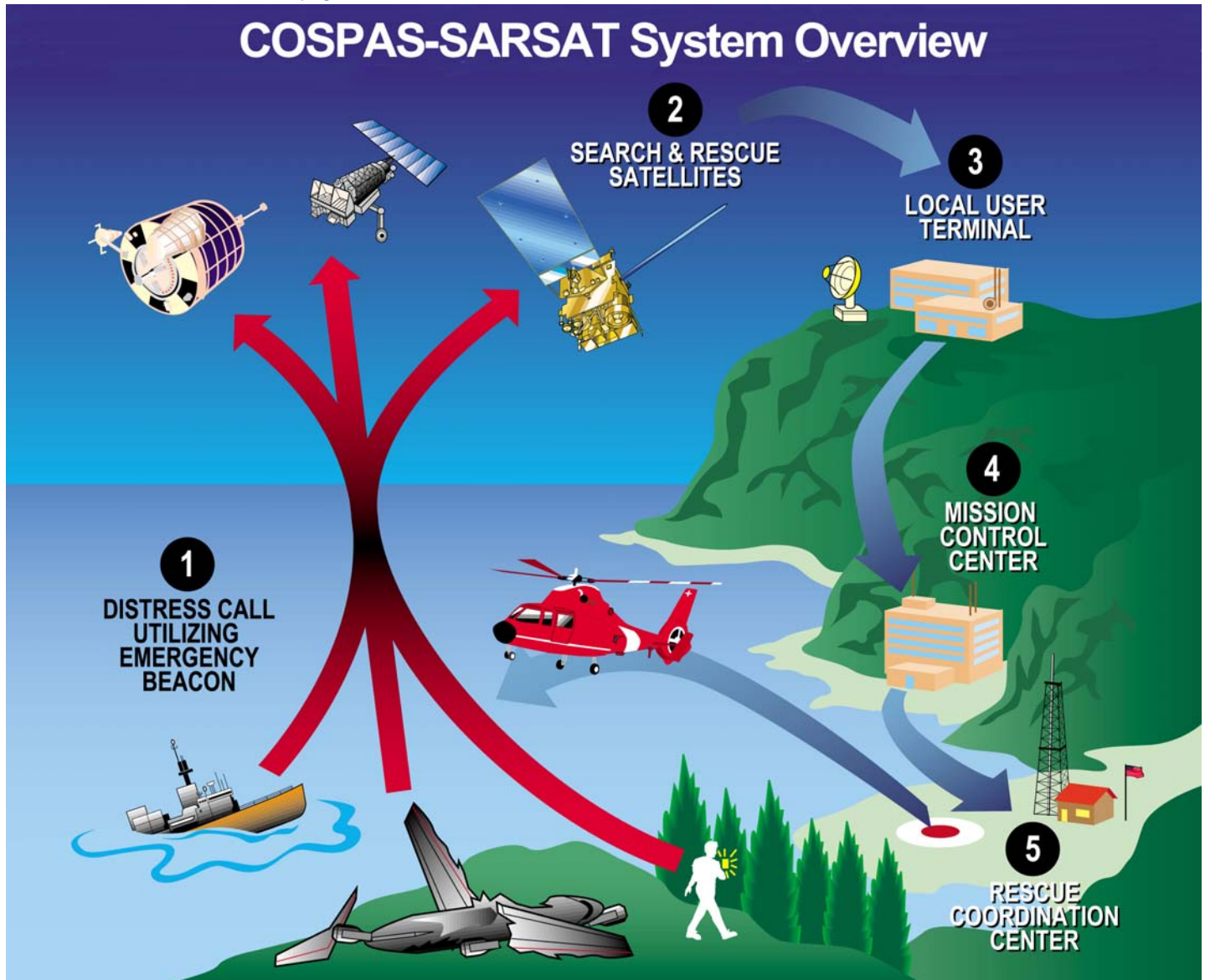
The Boonhill.net/FAAC Website

With special thanks to FAAC member Doug Bock, webmaster emeritus of the FAAC website and host of [www.boonhill.net](http://www.boonhill.net), Greg Ozimek has been updating the website and hopes to make it more proactive and vital to our astronomy community.

Greg plans to keep the website current and include pictures from club events as well as easy to navigate. It's a very big job and I'd like to ask for everyone's help when Greg puts out a call for it.

- Doug

## Rescue ... (continued from page 1)



NOAA's polar-orbiting and geostationary satellites, along with Russia's Cospas spacecraft, are part of the sophisticated, international Search and Rescue Satellite-Aided Tracking System.

That something is a network of satellites orbiting about 450 miles overhead. The "sound" they hear isn't the crash itself, but a distress signal from a radio beacon carried by many modern ships, aircraft, and even individual people venturing into remote wildernesses.

In the last 25 years, more than 25,000 lives have been saved using the satellite response system called Search and Rescue Satellite-aided Tracking (SARSAT). So what are these life-saving superhero satellites?

Why they are mild-mannered weather satellites:

"These satellites do double duty," says Mickey Fitzmaurice, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin. (NOAA) systems engineer for SARSAT.

"Their primary purpose is to gather continuous weather data, of course. But while they're up there, they might as well be listening for distress signals too."

In February, NASA launched the newest of these Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellites (or POES) into orbit. This new satellite, called N-Prime at launch and now dubbed NOAA-19, prevents a gap in this satellite network as another, aging NOAA satellite reached the end of its operational life.

"The launch of N-Prime was a big deal for us," Fitzmaurice says. With N-Prime/NOAA-19 in place,

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## Rescue ... *(continued from page 3)*

there are now six satellites in this network. Amongst them, they pass over every place on Earth, on average, about once an hour.

To pinpoint the location of an injured explorer, a sinking ship, or a downed plane, POES use the same Doppler effect that causes a car horn to sound higher-pitched when the car is moving toward you than it sounds after it passes by.

In a similar way, POES "hear" a higher frequency when they're moving toward the source of the distress signal, and a lower frequency when they've already passed overhead. It takes only three distress-signal bursts — each about 50 seconds apart — to determine the source's location.

Complementing the POES are the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites (GOES), which, besides providing weather data, continuously monitor the Western Hemisphere for distress signals. Since their geostationary orbit leaves them motionless with respect to Earth below, there is no Doppler effect to pinpoint location. However, they do provide near instantaneous notification of distress signals.

In the future, the network will be expanded by putting receivers on new Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites, Fitzmaurice says. "We want to be able to locate you after just one burst." With GPS, GOES will also be able to provide the location of the transmitter.

Philosophers beware: SARSAT is making "silent crashes" a thing of the past. Download a two-page summary of NOAA-19 at [www.osd.noaa.gov/POES/NOAA-NP\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.osd.noaa.gov/POES/NOAA-NP_Fact_Sheet.pdf). The Space Place gives kids a chance to rescue stranded skiers using their emergency rescue beacons. The Wild Weather Adventure game awaits them at [spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/goes/wwa](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/goes/wwa).

*This article was provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contract with NASA.*

## June Meeting Minutes

Kevin Medon/Lori Poremsky

Attendance: 32+

President Doug Bauer called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the HFCC Berry Amphitheater Auditorium in the Administrative Services &

Conference Center building with introductions, while pizza and pop were enjoyed.

Doug Bauer noted that all general meetings will take place in the HFCC Berry Amphitheater Auditorium in the Administrative Services & Conference Center building at least through June 2010.

Several members shared observing experiences.

Tim Dey of FAAC updated the group regarding the progress of the Lincoln Park Observatory. Behr Paint has donated the paint for the dome and walls. A volunteer has agreed to help replace the electrical. Concrete will be donated to create a walk around the dome, and assistance with the ADA wheelchair ramp. The Lincoln Park Preservation Society donated money for landscaping. First light ceremony is planned for September. Tim thanked the FAAC for donating \$500 dollars for miscellaneous items needed which were not donated.

Sandra Macika was not able to join us this evening to give the Star Hopping presentation which was originally scheduled. Doug Bauer, instead, shared with the group a video entitled "Secrets of the Sun."

Stephen Uitti shared observation planning capabilities with free software that is available. He referenced [Heavens.above.com](http://Heavens.above.com), the Astronomy A Go Go web site, and [skymaps.com](http://skymaps.com). He also referenced the software KStars, Stellarium, Celestice, and CalSky. Stephen has shared this information in written format as well on the Yahoo Group site.

Lori Poremsky reported that there were no updates to the secretary's report. She did note that all inactive members have been removed from the Yahoo Group Site.

The April minutes were approved as written as motioned by Larry Hoffman.

Steve Flessa noted that details of the Treasurers report were printed in last month's newsletter. He also shared that as a result of a decision at last month's board meeting, FAAC will be sponsoring two sites on the Clear Sky Chart: Spring Mill Pont and Richmond Field. The FAAC liability insurance has been renewed, and the FAAC club has made a \$550 dollar contribution toward GLAAC. Steve asked about the reordering of Deep Sky Calendars since all have been sold or accounted for. Doug Bauer agreed that we should order 50 more.

*...continued on page 5*

## Minutes ... *(continued from page 4)*

There was no Equipment Manager's report this evening. Doug Bauer did note, however, that all equipment is accounted for.

### Project/Committees/Events

Gordon Hansen noted that the SIG meetings will be taking place on the second Thursday of the month. The next is one is scheduled for July 9th. The meeting will take place in the HFCC Berry Amphitheater Auditorium in the Administrative Services & Conference Center building.

Greg Ozimek reported that Larry Hoffman has been kind enough to donate a power supply for the mount at the Lincoln Park Observatory.

Doug Bauer noted that there was nothing to report from the Dark Sky Committee.

John Schroer reported on events for the International Year of Astronomy 2009. The CEO of IYA has been notified regarding the delay in delivery of the Galileo scopes and noted that we should receive by the end of July. John also noted that they are extending production line of the scopes in China and that they can still be ordered. If you are interested please contact John Schroer for more information or visit the website.

John Schroer reported that the Society of Black Physicists are planning to host Urban Star Parties in Detroit during the September timeframe. More news will come at a later date.

Astronomical League dues are \$7.50 per person. These are due next month. Dues can be paid directly to Steve Flessa. Please contact John Schroer for more information regarding the Astronomical League.

The Detroit Science Center is sponsoring a Blood Drive on July 14th from 11 am to 5 pm as part of the Star Trek Experience. You are welcome to come dressed in Star Trek attire. We need support! Pre-registration is appreciated. The Red Cross is unwilling to set-up if the Science Center does not have enough pre-registrations. For more information contact John Schroer at ka8grh@yahoo.com, jschroer@sciencedetroit.org.

Lori Poremsky indicated that the second cable show has been taped and is in the final copies are available if anyone is willing to pitch to their local cable stations. The show is already being played on Wyandotte Cable and Huron Township/Charter. If you are interested in having a copy, please contact Stephen Uitti or Kevin Medon. The next

pre-production meeting will be held on Thursday, July 9th. The next show will be taped on Monday, July 20th. If you are interested in participating, either on camera or behind the scenes (running camera, audio or other technical aspects – all can be taught in one night) please let a member of the production team know. Currently our team consists of Stephen Uitti, Don Klaser, John Schroer, Lori Poremsky, Kevin Medon and Ken Anderson.

### Open Discussion

Doug Bauer noted that the Warren Club Picnic will be held on July 25th. It is a multi-group picnic and will be held at Stargate. More information will be posted on the Yahoo group.

Doug Bauer also noted that the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club is planning on hosting a multi-club picnic during our regularly scheduled Beginner's Night, August 29 at Island Lake. Doug will extend invites to other clubs. FAAC will provide hamburgers and hotdogs and the invitation will ask that a dish is brought to pass. Beginner's Night starts around 7 pm for the public. We'll begin around 5 pm.

Bob McFarland noted the progress of retaining Lake Erie Metro Park access. Meetings with park management are taking place; nothing has yet been decided. Pre-arranged special events can still take place, just as Beginner's nights. It is unlikely that park access would be allowed at will.

Greg Ozimek asked that if anyone had a picture of Bob Fitzgerald receiving the Ceres Award from our club this year, as well as a close up of the award, he would like to get a copy to place on the website. It would even be better if someone could contact Bob and take the picture as Greg has some from awards night, but they are not good enough to put on the web site.

An update on the Wares program was requested. Steve Flessa noted that we have a small inventory left of shirts; no additional shirts have been ordered for club resale. Diane Worth takes custom orders directly and places them as needed for individual club members.

The meeting was called to a close by Doug Bauer at 7:40 pm.

### Recurring Events

2009 is the International Year of Astronomy (IYA 2009) celebrating 400th year of the (Galileo's) telescope. American Astronomy Society (AAS) and

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## Minutes ... *(continued from page 5)*

Astronomical League are celebrating "International Year of the Telescope." All year long, expect speakers. Astronomy Day will be advertised greater, and we may get additional support for our AATB. DSC, Cranbrook, FAAC, and GLAC plan to bring more astronomy to the general public. Set up telescopes in your local community/neighborhood. Eric Rasmussen will be planning events at University of Michigan (Dearborn and Ann Arbor) and HFCC. U of M will have Saturday Morning Talks. John Schroer, the FAAC chairman, passed out several handouts at the board meeting to show national intentions. Plastic replicas of Galileo's telescope with real glass lenses will sell for \$10-\$11, and you will be able to see Saturn and Jupiter with it. John is pre-ordering 100 of these telescopes for November, and they can be mounted on a camera tripod (making it more stable than Galileo).

### 2009 IYA Activities:

The SIG meetings are the second Thursday of each month (next one August 13) at 5:30 pm in the HFCC Berry Amphitheater Auditorium in the Administrative Services and Conference Center building. Topic – TBD.

FAAC General Meetings are every fourth Thursday of each month, with the next one July 23 in the HFCC Berry Amphitheater Auditorium.

The FAAC Board meetings are usually the first Thursday of each month, 5 pm (next one on August 6) at Senate Coney Island 3345 Greenfield Rd., Dearborn, (313) 441-1027.

Beginner's nights continue in 2009 on first quarter moon Saturdays (July 25, August 29, and October 24), with the intent to help people use their equipment (not public outreach). John Schroer is putting together the handouts for Beginner's Night at Island Lake State Park (Spring Mill Pond) and also Lake Erie Metropark (Cove Point Picnic Area). Bring your telescope/binoculars, or look through others. Events will be posted in the Park Bulletin board, Metropark Quarterly Newsletter, Ford World, and [astromichigan.org](http://astromichigan.org).

FAAC Club Wears with embroidered five color club logo can be ordered through Diane Worth (prices are estimates heard by the secretary, and there may be additional cost for shipping): Ottoman "Official" Club Short Sleeve Shirt (black or white) \$37, Bill Blass Long Sleeve Dress Shirt (blue) \$42, Casual Club (blue) \$35, Hat \$19, patch \$9, Blanket nylon & fleece \$33, Duffle Bag (blue) \$20, Expandable Brief (blue) \$20, Chart Bag (black)

\$16; Port Authority Hooded Sweatshirt (black) \$32 no longer avail, XL additional \$3; Hoodless Sweat Shirt not-embroidered (grey) \$20, and T-shirt not-embroidered (white, grey, blue) \$8. Diane Worth said she will bring filled orders to AATB. Contact Diane Worth at [dianewsky\\_night@yahoo.com](mailto:dianewsky_night@yahoo.com).

The FAAC Library and DVD collection is in HFCC Science Building Room 109. The list of 100+ books and brief descriptions is available at the FAAC Yahoo site; books can be signed out for one month, with extensions allowable. President Doug Bauer and V.P. Chuck Jones are backup key holders for returning and signing out books.

Seeking speakers for 30-60 minute Presentations, or the 15-20 min. Tech Talks. Doug Bauer: [dougbauer@comcast.net](mailto:dougbauer@comcast.net) or call 313-828-7385.

## Meeting Agenda - July 23

**5:30 pm – HFCC – Berry Amphitheater Auditorium - Admin. Services and Conference Center**

(Map can be found at:

[http://www.hfcc.edu/contact/campus\\_maps.pdf](http://www.hfcc.edu/contact/campus_maps.pdf))

**Opening/Introduction/Member Observing**

**Pick up & pay for Galileo 'scopes (\$16.50)**

**Presentation:** Dark Sky – Frank Ancona

**Tech Talk:** Calculating Comet Paths – Milton French

**Club Business/Secretary/Treasurer/Equipment**

**Club Projects/Committees/Member Support**

- Astrophoto SIG – Gordon Hansen
- Dark Sky Committee– Frank Ancona
- Astronomical League Dues! – John Schroer
- Open Discussion

## Astro Imaging SIG

Gordon Hansen

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 August 13. Note the new meeting room location – HFCC Admin. Services and Conference Center (same building), Berry Amphitheater Auditorium.

Topics invited.

## FAAC Events 2009

Kevin Medon and Lori Poremsky

<b>July</b>	<b>25</b> – Multi-club Picnic and observing night at the WAS observing site in Rotary Park, 12 noon, 1.8 Miles East of Romeo Plank (Wolcott Mill MetroPark system).  <b>25</b> – Beginners' Night, Island Lake Recreation Area, Lake Erie Metropark  <b>29</b> – Detroit Science Center kids events. Requesting volunteers for half hour sessions. Contact Don Klaser.
<b>August</b>	<b>29</b> – Beginners' Night, AND Multi-club Picnic, Island Lake Recreation Area, 5 pm. Contact Doug Bauer.
<b>September</b>	<b>TBD</b> – Astro-Imaging Workshop, Gladwin <b>17-20</b> – Great Lakes Star Gaze, Gladwin <b>25-26</b> – Astronomy on the Beach – Maple Beach in Kensington Park
<b>October</b>	<b>24</b> – Beginner's Night - Island Lake

## 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 or (248) 515-0014.

**Schmidt-Newtonian 10"** – F5.35, 1360 mm focal length with 2" focuser, 60 mm guide scope, Thousand Oaks Full aperture solar filter (Mylar). Cooling fan, extra set of "O" rings, Optron Corrector plate. Crestliner mount (on wheels) available. Scope made by Nelson Lewis of Detroit Astronomical Society in 1962. Purchased 1981. Selling telescope for \$325. Mount for \$200.

Contact Harold Thomason 313-584-7465.

## Treasurer's Report

Steve Flessa

### 6/18/2009 Balance

<b>Bank Accounts</b>	
Checking	\$1,701.69
Savings	\$170.80
<b>TOTAL Bank Accounts</b>	<b>\$1,872.49</b>
<b>Cash Account</b>	
Cash	\$28.50
<b>TOTAL Cash Account</b>	<b>\$28.50</b>
<b>Investment Accounts</b>	
CD 1	\$1,073.78
CD 2	\$1,042.54
<b>TOTAL Investment Accounts</b>	<b>\$2,116.32</b>
<b>Asset Accounts</b>	
Equipment	\$1,159.46
Scholarship	\$499.05
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,658.51</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,675.82</b>
<b>Memo:</b>	
GLAAC	\$2,571.60
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,247.42</b>

## Don't Forget the Club Picnics!

The next couple Beginner's Night dates, July 25 and August 29. will have some extra added pizzazz, as noted in the President's Corner.

The Warren Astronomical Social (WAS) has kindly invited several of the local astronomy clubs, including the FAAC, to join them for a picnic, starting at noon, on July 25, at their observing site at Rotary Park, 1.8 miles east of Romeo Plank (north of 27 Mile Rd., part of the Wolcott Mill Metropark). Bring your own food and grill.

For August 29. the FAAC has invited several clubs to join us in a picnic at our Island Lake Recreation Area, Spring Mill Pond observing site, beginning at 5 pm. Please contact Doug if you intend to go (dougbauer@comcast.net or call 313-828-7385), to help us gauge hamburger and hotdog needs.

For more details on food, etc., please refer to the President's Corner in this issue.

So bring the family, bring your telescopes and gear, etc., and enjoy!

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



**July 25, August 29, October 24**

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club *presents*

*Beginners Nights 2009*

with: New Detroit Science Center and Rider's Hobby

Do you have a new telescope that you are learning to use? Do you want to see samples of what the night sky has to offer? Consider coming out to **Island Lake State Recreation Area** on **Beginner's Night**. These Saturday nights are dedicated to providing equipment and observing assistance to new astronomers (**weather permitting**). The events will take place regardless of sky conditions, cloudy or clear. **If it is raining, the event will be cancelled.**

The Island Lake site is at the "Spring Mill Pond" parking lot/picnic area, at the Island Lake State Recreation Area, on Kensington Road, south of I-96 between South Lyon and Brighton.

For more information, contact Gordon Hansen, 734-675-6137 or email Gordon at [fordastronomy@comcast.net](mailto:fordastronomy@comcast.net)