



STAR STUFF

The Newsletter of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club

Volume 18, Number 3

March 2009

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MEMBERSHIP ALERT!

Please submit 2009 dues, \$30, if you have not done so.

Send your check in today to FAAC, P.O. Box 7527, Dearborn, MI 48121-7527.

Please include any updates to your contact information.

Fun, Games, Prizes, Awards at Annual Banquet

Photos by Jim Dolfi



Doug Bauer presents FAAC's first annual Sirius award to Bob FitzGerald.

President's Corner

Doug Bauer, FAAC President

On Saturday, March 14th, the annual FAAC Banquet was held at Ernesto's in Plymouth. There were 45 members and guests in attendance and as usual, everyone had a great time.

The fun started out around 6:00 pm with a casual "get-acquainted" time. It was great to chat and meet friends, those "better halves," and new acquaintances. We were treated to a continuous photo slide show produced by Al Bates, highlighting 2008 club activities, and excellent club astrophotos.

At around 7:00 pm we sat down for a dinner with choice of fish, beef, or chicken entrées. After dinner, Gary Strumolo entertained and informed with a

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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).

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.

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.

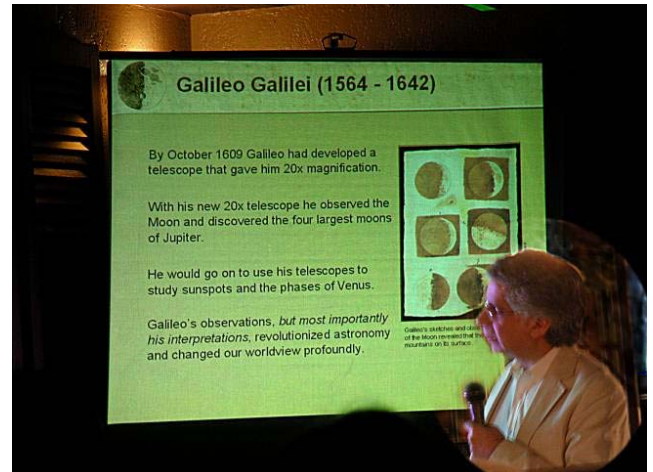
Star Stuff Newsletter Submissions

Your submissions to *STAR STUFF* are more than welcome! Send your story and/or images to the editor at dake00k@yahoo.com. 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.

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

presentation "Who Invented the Astronomical Telescope." Gary did an excellent job, as usual; even the non-astronomy-oriented folks thoroughly enjoyed it.



Gary Strumolo presents...

After Gary's talk, I presented the recognition certificates to members who have given their efforts in organizing and supporting the many activities that go on within our club. For those who were unable to attend the banquet, I will present those certificates at future club meetings.

Again, I would like to personally thank those who were able to get involved in these activities!

This year, we presented our first annual "Sirius Award" – to a bright star in our club. The board took the nominations submitted and selected one individual to be honored with this award. The award was presented to Bob FitzGerald. Bob has been a steady supporter of the club for many years, attending Board Meetings, offering parliamentary support, volunteering for many outreach events, making copies of Sky Charts for events, handling the FAAC Hotline, ordering the 2009 RASC Observers Handbooks, and numerous other services. Bob is very interested in educating others about astronomy and is always a pleasure to work with at outreach events.

Join me in congratulating Bob!

(As a reminder, the Sirius is an annual award, so if you have someone you want to nominate for next year, do send me their name, and your reasons for the honor.)

The next part of the banquet was the annual Astro-Jeopardy game, put together and emceed by our own Dale (Alex Trebek) Ochalek. It was a

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President's Corner... (continued from page 2)

stiff table-against-table competition, but everyone had a fun time.

The last segment of the program was the raffle for door prizes. Pat Korody spends all year looking for special astronomy items to include in this drawing. She and George also get donations from various individuals, including some very beautiful flower arrangements from Chuck and Barb Jones (Rose Cellar Florist in New Haven). Pat and George do a great job of putting this together every year. Everyone went away with a prize to remember the night. Thanks, Pat and George!!

If you were unable to attend this year, I hope you are able to attend next year. You'll have a great time.

A special thank you to Gordon Hansen for his efforts in organizing the 2009 FAAC Banquet!

- Doug Bauer

February Meeting Minutes

Kevin Medon and Lori Poremsky

Attendees: 29+

Vice President, Chuck Jones called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm in the HFCC Rosenau conference room with introductions, while pizza and pop were enjoyed.

Members reported sightings of the comet Lulin 6 out of 7 nights, and noted that it can easily be seen using 10x50 binoculars.

Chuck Jones asked if any one had attempted a drift alignment and sought additional information regarding the topic.

Chuck Bailey of the Warren Astronomical Society provided the main presentation – "How Average is Our Own Star, the Sun?" The presentation compared the sun to several other stars in terms of luminosity, mass, diameter and life span.

John Schroer of the FAAC presented the tech talk on "Better Bearings for Cheap Dobsonians." John noted that Astronomy Technology Today posted an article on correcting Dobsonian bearings in their October 2008 issue. Kits can be purchased between \$42-\$54. Kits contain the materials necessary to correct the traveling nature of the telescope on its base. These kits contain a piece of ebony star Formica, the necessary Teflon pieces and counter sunk stainless steel screws and installation instructions.

Lori Poremsky gave the Secretary's report indicating that at the Board Meeting of February 5 it was decided that phone calls would be made to delinquent dues payment members as of March 1. Calls will be made with friendly reminders that dues have not been paid and that loss of club privileges may result. These privileges would include access to the Yahoo Group and club viewing sites. Ken Anderson motioned for the FAAC General Meeting Minutes of January 20th be approved. Chuck Jones seconded the motion. Meeting Minutes were approved as written.

The Treasurer's report was given by Steve Flessa. Steve indicated that he had some additional payments which would need to be logged before phone calls were placed to delinquent members. He also noted that payment may include table reservations for the Swap meet on March 7th. Steve is also taking money for the FAAC Banquet to be held at Ernesto's in Plymouth on Saturday, March 14th. Additional information on both of these events can be found in the latest issue of Star Stuff. Steve also indicated that he had a couple of 2009 calendars left for sale at \$7 each and a 2009 Observation book.

Chuck Jones noted that there are two new positions opened and we are looking for volunteers for these positions, an Equipment Manager and the second, a Librarian. The equipment manager would be responsible for knowing where club equipment is and to make sure that it is checked out. They will not be required to store or deliver the equipment. Equipment includes a sound system, a projector, several telescopes and eyepieces.

FAAC has a large collection of reference materials including books and video tapes. It has been requested that it be more accessible. The current collection takes up the better part of a book case. If you are interested in taking either the Librarian or Equipment Manager position, please contact Doug Bauer or Chuck Jones.

Bob MacFarland noted that we have an Outreach program for the Troy Scouts coming up on Thursday, March 5th. So far we have 12 volunteers and Bob is hunting down a restaurant at which to meet for dinner before the program.

The question of Outreach programs was raised by Chuck Jones. He inquired as to what they were and what was required to participate. Bob MacFarland indicated that Outreach Programs consist of presentations and sharing of knowledge

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Minutes ... (from page 3)

with local church groups, Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups. Typically an Astronomy 101 presentation is given and several members will show up with their telescopes and we allow the groups to look through them. Any FAAC member is encouraged to participate in the Outreach programs. We simplify presentations for younger children and try to target the presentations for the audience. Astronomy on the Beach is also considered an Outreach program. If you're interested in participating, a list of upcoming Outreach programs is always available as part of the general meeting minutes.

Don Klaser noted that the 2009 Expo/Swap Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 7th from 9 am to 4 pm. Tom Blaszk is looking for volunteers to help with setup on Friday afternoon. Tom is also taking verbal registrations for tables. If interested, contact Tom Blaszk and bring the \$20 table fee with you. There are a total of 27 tables available; the actual count as to those that have been reserved was not available. Table set up will be at 8:00 am Saturday morning. This year food will be available for purchase, door prizes will be awarded and children 15 and younger are free with adult paid admission. Feel free to bring your friends and neighbors as it is a good way to get started in Astronomy. The event has received some good ink in the Livonia area. Steve Flessa will be manning the ticket table and would welcome some help during breaks and sessions he may want to attend.

Chuck Jones reminded that the FAAC Banquet is being held on Saturday, March 14th at Ernesto's in Plymouth. Tickets are \$35/person. A slide show presentation will be given and Astro Jeopardy will be played. Pat Korody is looking for astronomy related door prizes. If you have anything you would like to donate, please contact Pat. Everyone will get a prize. Chuck Jones' wife is preparing some arrangements for donations – thank you! There will be lots of room this year, please join us. Gordon Hansen is logging main entrée selections. Please contact Gordon with your selections before March 2nd. Selection options are lists on the flyer in Star Stuff or on the Yahoo Group.

Gordon Hansen will be taking over the SIG group as Tony Licata will be stepping down from that position. The meetings will continue in the same format. If interested in imagery, meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of every month in the HFCC conference room.

Greg Ozimek reported that all of the equipment is in for the Lincoln Park Observatory project. This includes a 14" Celestron mount and eyepieces. Tim Dey is gathering opinions as to how high the wooden viewing deck needs to be. The project is still progressing.

John Schroer reported on events for the International Year of Astronomy 2009. The club is taking orders for the Galileo scopes. The plan is to combine the FAAC order with the Detroit Science Center and the Warren club in order to receive a reduced rate. Each scope is priced at \$15. For 100 or more, the price drops to \$12.50. It is a 50mm refractor kit.

John also noted a couple of events that are being planned for IYA. On March 16-28 there is a Globe at Night event, Count Stars in Orion from wherever you are, and report to Detroit Science Center. This is an effort to see how artificial light impacts local environments. To learn more and to download the Activity Book, see the www.globe.gov/GAN website.

Also March 28th is World at Night. Cities and businesses around the world are shutting off their lights between 8:30 pm and 9:30 pm local time. Berlin, Paris, London, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Las Vegas have agreed to participate.

April 2-5 – 100 Hours of Astronomy. Share the love of astronomy with as many people as possible. John Schroer proposes setting up scopes in the neighborhood and inviting neighbors to view the skies. He will put something together to put in Star Stuff to advertise.

FAAC has an opportunity to put together some programming for local public TV. If interested, please contact Lori Poremsky at lporemsky@charter.net. Ideas for program titles and scripts are being compiled. All ideas are welcome. Once created these programs can be distributed to other local cable stations as well as used in Outreach programs.

Chuck Jones noted that the Island Lake gate code will change as of March 31st. Contact club officers for the new code. Please be reminded that the code must be kept within the club and is not to be distributed to others. If it gets out, the club could lose the privilege of using the site.

In open discussion, John Schroer asked if anyone is interested in getting a booth at the Trenton Art Fair or possibly at other large summer festivals.

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Minutes ... (from page 4)

The booths would be manned by FAAC members and used as an Outreach to promote astronomy and membership in the FAAC club. Festivals are generally held on Friday, Saturday and Sundays. The Trenton Art Fair is generally held during the month of July. John will check the exact dates.

Bob MacFarland noted that an Outreach program will be held at Innisfree Girl Scout Camp on Friday, March 27th. If interested in participating, please contact Bob MacFarland.

The meeting was called to a close by Chuck Jones at 7:30 pm.

Summary of Recurring Events

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

The 2009 IYA Activities:

HFCC planetarium "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening" Winter Sky show occurs every Tuesday evening at 7:30 pm from January 20 to March 17, 2009. FAAC's Dennis Salliotte and Bob Clubb will present in the HFCC Science Building Planetarium (room S-126). Shows are free and first come first serve. Doors open around 7:15 pm and close promptly at 7:30 pm. Bob Clubb has created a FAAC/HFCC Planetarium webpage. Dr. Jacobs and Mike Lapresto have created a Tour of the Solar System on the campus of HFCC. HFCC campus maps can be found at www.hfcc.edu/contact/locations.asp.

The SIG meetings are the second Thursday of each month (next one March 12) at 5:30 pm in

the normal HFCC's Admin. Building, Rosenau conference room. Topic – TBD.

FAAC meetings are every fourth Thursday of each month, with the next one March 26 in the usual place, the HFCC Rosenau conference room. Main Presentations are "Bruce Sidell, Pre-eminent Galaxy Observer ..." and "... Galactic Catalogs 18th century until 1989" by G.M. Ross from the Grand Rapids Astronomical Association. Due to two main presentations, we will not have a Tech Talk. The FAAC Board meetings are usually the first Thursday of each month at Dimitri's Restaurant in Dearborn.

Beginner's nights will resume in Spring 2009 on 1st quarter moon Saturdays (May 2, May 30, June 27, 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 (Marshlands Museum). 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.

FAAC Club wares 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.

The FAAC Library and DVD collection is in HFCC Science Building Room 109. We are looking for a new librarian. 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 2009 speakers for both FAAC 30-60 minute Main Presentations, and 15-20 minute Tech Talks.

Contact Doug Bauer at doughbauer@comcast.net or call 313-828-7385.



Apollo Upgrade

The flight computer onboard the Lunar Excursion Module, which landed on the Moon during the Apollo program, had a whopping 4 kilobytes of RAM and a 74-kilobyte "hard drive." In places, the craft's outer skin was as thin as two sheets of aluminum foil.

It worked well enough for Apollo. Back then, astronauts needed to stay on the Moon for only a few days at a time. But when NASA once again sends people to the Moon starting around 2020, the plan will be much more ambitious—and the hardware is going to need a major upgrade.

"Doing all the things we want to do using systems from Apollo would be very risky and perhaps not even possible," says Frank Peri, director of NASA's Exploration Technology Development Program.

So the program is designing new, more capable hardware and software to meet the demands of NASA's plan to return humans to the moon. Instead of staying for just a few days, astronauts will be living on the Moon's surface for months on end. Protecting astronauts from harsh radiation at the Moon's surface for such a long time will require much better radiation shielding than just a few layers of foil. And rather than relying on food and water brought from Earth and jettisoning urine and other wastes, new life support systems will be needed that can recycle as much water as possible, scrub carbon dioxide from the air without depending on disposable filters, and perhaps grow a steady supply of food—far more than Apollo life-support systems could handle.

Next-generation lunar explorers will perform a much wider variety of scientific research, so they'll need vehicles that can carry them farther across the lunar surface. ETPD is building a new lunar rover that outclasses the Apollo-era moon buggy by carrying two astronauts in a pressurized cabin. "This vehicle is like our SUV for the Moon," Peri says.

The Exploration Technology Development Program is also designing robots to help astronauts maintain their lunar outpost and perform science reconnaissance. Making the robots smart enough to take simple verbal orders from the astronauts and carry out their tasks semi-autonomously requires vastly more powerful computer brains than those on Apollo; four kilobytes of RAM just won't cut it.

The list goes on: New rockets to carry a larger lunar lander, spacesuits that can cope with abrasive moon dust, techniques for converting lunar soil into building materials or breathable oxygen. NASA's ambitions for the Moon have been upgraded. By tapping into 21st century technology, this program will ensure that astronauts have the tools they need to turn those ambitions into reality.



The Chariot Lunar Truck is one idea for a vehicle equal to the lunar terrain. Each of the six wheels pivot in any direction, and two turrets allow the astronauts to rotate 360°.

Learn more about the Exploration Technology Development Program at www.nasa.gov/directorates/esmd/aboutesmd/cd/technology_dev.html. Kids can build their own Moon habitat at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/exploration/habitat.

NEW at NASA SPACEPLACE: Blistering hot molten rock bursts through weak places in Earth's crust. So what is down there and why is it so hot?

Earth's core may seem as mysterious and remote as outer space, but scientists actually have learned a great deal about it.

Listen to a scientist explain. Visit spaceplace.jpl.nasa.gov/en/educators/podcast to subscribe to these podcasts. Or listen now to this and the previous podcasts on your computer or read the transcripts.

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

Meeting Agenda - March 26

5:30 pm HFCC - Rosenau CR - Admin. Services and Conference Center *

(For map see:

http://www.hfcc.edu/contact/campus_maps.pdf)

Opening/Introduction/Member Observing

Presentation: Greenwich Observatory Sandra Macika

Tech Talk: Discuss possible topics for future presentations – Doug Bauer

Club Business/Secretary/Treasurer/Equipment

Club Projects/Committees/Member Support

- Astrophoto SIG – Tony Licata
- Dark Sky Committee– Frank Ancona
- International Year of Astronomy 2009
- Innisfree Girl Scouts, Howell, March 27 – Bob MacFarland
- Seven Ponds All Club event, March 28
- Cranbrook Lecture: Exoplanet Exploration: Expanding Geography Outside Our Solar System featuring Stephen J. Edberg, NASA/JPL – 7:30 pm Friday, May 15
- Ypsilanti Cub Scout Outreach – Friday, May 15

Treasurer's Report

Steve Flessa

Account	3/21/2009 Balance
Bank Accounts	
Checking	\$3,382.93
Savings	\$1,271.98
TOTAL Bank Accounts	\$4,654.91
Cash Account	
Cash	\$108.50
TOTAL Cash Account	\$108.50
Investment Accounts	
CD 1	\$1,073.46
CD 2	\$1,033.30
TOTAL Investment Accounts	\$2,106.76
Asset Accounts	
Equipment	\$1,037.46
Scholarship	\$422.05
TOTAL	\$1,459.51
OVERALL TOTAL	\$8,329.68
Memo:	
GLAAC	\$1,666.60

Items for Sale

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

Celestron 6-inch Schmidt-Cass with XLT coatings. The package has a diagonal and a finder. There are no eyepieces. The telescope has been used 3/4 times. Asking \$400 or OBO. Contact Tom Blaszk, key_string_guy@yahoo.com

Coulter 10" Dobsonian telescope. \$400. Contact Bob Stonik, 313-361-4954

Astro Imaging SIG

Tony Licata

Gallery Submissions Requested! If you have any interesting photos, astronomy related or not, please send them to tglicata@aol.com as JPG attachments. The SIG gallery of images will be viewed during each SIG meeting. A reminder is posted on our Yahoo site periodically for submissions. All are invited to join us, share and discuss their images. We always have a good time, with lively discussion.

Next meeting is April 9. Topics invited.

Lock Code Change March 31

The Island Lake gate lock code will be changed. The new code has been picked (and is taking effect March 31, 2009). You must be a member in good standing and contact any Board Member to obtain the new code. Do not contact the Hotline for the code. The lock code will only be given to FAAC Members.

Do not give the code to anyone else. Giving the code to non-members violates our agreement with Island Lake and Richmond Airfield and could jeopardize our future use of these sites.

FAAC Events 2009

Kevin Medon and Lori Poremsky

- March** **16-28** – Count Stars in Orion - see www.globe.gov/GAN
- 27** – Innisfree Girl Scout Camp Outreach (Bob MacFarland)
- 29** – 8:30-9:30 pm Lights off World at Night
- 31** – Island Lake gate code change
- April** **2-5** — 100 Hours of Astronomy! – Island Lake (8-11 pm), Lake Erie Metropark (8-11 pm), Detroit Science Center (9 am-3pm), Cranbrook (TBD) – contact John Schroer
- 4** — Metro Beach – FAAC, other clubs, TBD - contact Doug Bauer
- May** **2** – International Astronomy Day – Detroit Science Center FAAC telescopes displays and public viewing. Activity guides for the first 6 months (see kasonline.org) – contact John Schroer
- 2** – Beginners' Night, Island Lake Recreation Area, Lake Erie Metropark
- 15** – Cranbrook Astronomy Talk - Exoplanet Exploration: Expanding Geography Outside Our Solar System, Stephen J. Edberg
- 30** – Beginners' Night, Island Lake Recreation Area, Lake Erie Metropark
- June** **27** – Beginners' Night, Island Lake Recreation Area, Lake Erie Metropark
- July** **25** – Beginners' Night, Island Lake Recreation Area, Lake Erie Metropark
- August** **29** – Beginners' Night, Island Lake Recreation Area, Lake Erie Metropark
- September** **TBD** – Astro-Imaging Workshop, Gladwin
- 17-20** – Great Lakes Star Gaze, Gladwin
- 25-26** – Astronomy on the Beach – Maple Beach in Kensington Park
- October** **24** – Beginner's Night - Island Lake

Cranbrook Lecture

Doug Bauer

Cranbrook Institute of Science is hosting a lecture on exoplanets by Dr. Stephen Edberg of JPL/Space Interferometry Mission on Friday, May 15. You can register at: www.astromichigan.org.

The cost is \$8 for FAAC members. We are

encouraging members to attend the lecture, as success will lead to more lectures.

Michael Narlock is also setting up an astronomy event email bulletin, simply a weekly or monthly digest of all prominent astronomy events, using Constant Contact. See:

<http://www.astromichigan.org/contactus.html>

With all the regional events going on between clubs, museums, and universities, I think it would be immensely helpful to subscribers.

The <http://www.astromichigan.org> site created by Cranbrook, is a very useful site, with information on local astronomy clubs, planetariums, events, and an astronomy blog. Bookmark the site and try it out. I think you'll like it.

Our Big Winner at the WSP

Greg Ozimek

Every year six to ten FAAC members journey to the Winter Star Party (WSP) in the Florida Keys. Every year, it seems, at least one of the group wins something. This year only one FAAC member won. George Korody was a "Grand, Grand Prize" winner at the 25th Anniversary WSP. He won a FLI Microline ML8300 2" imaging camera.

George showed off his new camera at the March 12 SIG meeting.

This camera offers a whopping 1-2 punch in terms of image quality.

George said, "A more expensive camera has better sensitivity and this camera also has three-stage cooling system which lowers the noise level (tremendously)."



Photo courtesy WSP

"For every 5.8° C an imaging sensor is cooled the (image) (pixel dark current) noise level is cut in half," George added.

Gregory Terrance, owner of Finger Lakes Instrumentation (FLI), was at the WSP, and told me, "The 25th WSP only comes around once, and we wanted to make the event even more special, by donating an up-and-comer camera in our popular camera line..."

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Winner ... (from page 8)

"The ML8300 has very high performance, small pixels, is ideal for short focal lengths, and gives outstanding performance (attaining a) 60°C cooling differential (from ambient within 5 minutes).

"The very low noise, very smooth images captured with a short focal length telescope can be compared with the results of large telescopes using (older) larger pixel cams."

The Microline ML8300 has an 8.3 Megapixel sensor with 5.4 micron sized pixels, according to FLI.



Photo courtesy FLI

Gregory Terrance may be familiar, as he wrote for Astronomy Magazine for years. He has a penchant for lunar and planetary imaging.

Not only is the FLI ML8300 a very special imaging camera, George's is also the only one of it's kind on Earth. FLI engraved a name plate to honor the 2009 WSP based on a design created by the WSP folks (see photo below). The snowman is using a Dob at the WSP. Note the palm tree, ocean, and the Southern Cross constellation in the sky.



Photo by George Korody

After the March SIG meeting a number of us wanted George to buy our next Lotto tickets...

100 Hours of Astronomy

The 100 Hours of Astronomy cornerstone project (100HA) is a round-the-clock, worldwide event with 100 continuous hours of a wide range of public outreach activities including live webcasts, observing events and more.

The 100HA will take place from April 2-5, 2009, when the Moon goes from first quarter to gibbous, good phases for early evening observing. One of the key goals of 100HA is to have as many people as possible look through a telescope as Galileo did for the first time 400 years ago. Saturn will be the other highlight of early evening observing events.

100HA consists of five main events:

1. An opening event featuring the telescope that Galileo used to make his groundbreaking observations.
2. Activities at science centers, planetariums and science museums including live webcasts, live observations by visitors using remotely-operated telescopes, and enhanced outreach programs including public observing sessions held by amateur astronomy groups.
3. Observing sessions and other educational activities in schools groups held by astronomy clubs and others.
4. 24 hours of live webcasts from research observatories around the world, along with observing events and other outreach activities at participating observatories.
5. 24 hours of sidewalk astronomy – public observing sessions in population centers to bring the opportunity to view the Moon, Saturn and other objects to as many people as possible. The annual International Sidewalk Astronomy Night will be held during this event.

These primary activities will be scheduled so that each supports the other, leading in order from one to the next and culminating in the world's greatest public observing event.

A wrap-up will be held at the IAU General Assembly in 2009 to recognize all participants' contributions to this unique global event.

For more information:

<http://www.100hoursofastronomy.org/>

-- submitted by John Schroer

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