



STAR STUFF

The Newsletter of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club

May 2000
Volume 9 Number 4



Please send articles to westpark@mediaworld.net by May 29th for June Newsletter

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FAAC Beginner's Night By Dan Kmiecik

The club will be holding an observing session especially for beginning astronomers. Our host for this event is John Ford. John joined the club recently and is very enthusiastic about helping newcomers to astronomy.

Some of the planned topics are: Rough polar alignment, Use of slow-motion controls, Dob pushing and eyepiece selection. John will also have a handout for those who wish to try out their new found skills. The handout will start you on your way to view and logging the 110 Messier Objects.

The FAAC Beginner's Night will be held on July 8, 2000 cloudy or clear. Only rain will cancel this event. Please plan on getting to Island Lake early, around 7 PM, and staying as late as you like. If you are a more advanced astronomer and would like to volunteer to help John please contact the FAAC at faac1992@hotmail.com or 313-390-5456.

Island Lake Gate Entry Status By George Korody

Due to some problems, Park Rangers at our Island Lake State Recreation Area observing site have started to lock the entry gate at the 10:00 PM closing time. Any member desiring to enter or leave after that time may find the gate locked.

Our combination lock and key system has been reactivated so club members can enter and leave after hours. The procedures are the same as last year. Please leave the gate as you find it - open if open and locked if locked. If you have to open the gate for entry don't forget to lock it and return the key and lock the box so other members can enter and leave. Any member needing further information should contact a fellow member or Board member. After hours entry is via permit only with the park and is not available to non-club members except in accompaniment of a member.

Bates Saves the Day - Loses the Night By George Korody

Club member Al Bates recently saved the day for about 120 Melvindale High School students attending their senior prom, when with only a few hours notice he arranged to fill in for a no-show DJ for the students' special evening. Al is an experienced disc jockey who has spun tunes for many senior proms and other occasions. Al's wife Sally, who is a Trustee on the Melvindale Board of Education, immediately thought of husband Al when the entertainment

shortage became known. Al quickly solicited his son Steven and Steven's friend Tom Newton to work the gig with him. As reported in the local Heritage Newspaper, the evening turned out to be a fabulous success. The students will surely remember their shining star who came through for them on such short notice.

However, the evening was not a total success because Al had to cancel a previously planned night of observing with fellow Club members, so he could do the gig. Al certainly put his priorities in the right light (no pun intended), when he realized that he could always observe the stars on another night, but the students' senior prom only occurs once in a lifetime.

FAAC Meeting Minutes for 4/27/2000 By Mike Kruskie

The meeting was called to order at 5:03PM and we had 24 people in attendance at the start of the meeting. Everyone enjoyed pizza and pop during the roundtable introductions and discussions of latest observing experiences.

Announcements

On July 8th we will be hosting a FAAC Beginner's Day Event at Island Lake. The goal of this event is to help out beginners in astronomy with equipment usage and observing techniques. A flyer or pamphlet will be put together for the event. If this event is successful we will consider scheduling similar recurring events

STAR STUFF is a monthly publication of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club, an affiliate club of the Ford Employee Recreation Association.

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

Your submissions to STAR STUFF are welcome. Please write to the address above or contact the editor...

John Kmiecik
westpark@mediaone.net

Officers:

President	Dan Kmiecik
Vice President	Don Thompson
Secretary	Mike Kruskie
Treasurer	Mike Bruno

General Meetings:

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club holds regular general meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month (except the combined November/December meeting held the first Thursday of December) at 5:00 PM in conference room 1491 in the Ford Credit building in Dearborn, Michigan.

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.

Hotline:

Observing schedules and additional club information is available by calling the Observing Hotline at (313) 390-5456.

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: \$ 25 - Renewal: \$ 20
Lifetime -- \$ 100

Membership includes a subscription to the STAR STUFF newsletter, discounts on ASTRONOMY and SKY & TELESCOPE magazines, after-hours access to the observing site, and discounts at selected area equipment retailers.

The lockbox at Island Lake has been instituted a few months early this year due to vandalize in the park. I believe this is on weekends only. If you are a club member and would like the combination to the lockbox, contact one of the board members.

Business Items:

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported the following account balances,

- > Savings \$1819.55
- > Checking \$2096.94

Also, The scholarship fund balance is \$956.83, which is included in the account balances above.

Today we received \$53.00 and we have (3) new members bringing the club membership to 107.

ILSP (Island Lake Star Party)

The Eighth Annual ILSP is set for Saturday, October 7th. A planning committee will be forming soon.

Secretary Commentary:

The Club Secretary has decided to take the liberty at this time to call for everyone to assist anyway they can with the ILSP. Now is your chance to become involved. As many of us know from previous ILSP's there is plenty of work to do, there are many tasks that need to be done, most of them are not complicated. We can easily assign or tailor the work tasks to the level of commitment that you can give. PLEASE -- just ask what you can do if you would like to be involved. If you are not able to help out in the planning process, but are planning to attend the star party and would like to help, there will be sign up sheets to, work the registration table, assist with parking, help with prizes, presentations, etc. Any and all assistance will be greatly appreciated.

GLAAC Report

The Kensington Star Party has been scheduled for July 21/22 at Martindale Beach. On Saturday, July 22, Jack Lousma, a former astronaut, will be the key speaker. We still need and are looking for a speaker for Friday the 21st. The agenda items include, sunspot viewing, comet making, Basic Astronomy Talk, The Disappearing Night Sky.

We will also be hosting a sky tour for the children: There will be certificates and token gifts. There will be open observing and the concession stand will be open. The park will also have there science trailer and will be showing a comet video.

Volunteers will be needed to help with the sky tour. Currently a press release is being worked on and will be distributed when available.

The next GLAAC meeting is scheduled for May 7th at the Nature Center in Kensington at 1PM.

Old Business

We have two scholarship applications that are being reviewed for approval.

It was brought up that there are many non-members showing up at Island Lake for observing and if this should be of concern to the club.

To summarize the discussion,

Any club member observing at Island Lake should inquire whether others present are FAAC members. The presence of non-members is not a big concern however, the last FAAC club member to leave should notify the non-members that the gate will be locked behind you on the way out and they should leave with you to avoid being locked in for the night.

New Business

We were given a demonstration of the ORION 20x125 binoculars. What monsters!

John, ... Thanks. By the way, in case no one has mentioned it, thanks for your extra effort in bringing in the demo's.

NOTE: For people that haven't been to any recent club meetings, we have been fortunate to have some nice equipment demo's, complements of John and Ryder's Hobbies.

Main Program

For the Main Program tonight we held an impromptu "Ask the Astronomer" session.

Amateur Participation Needed

The GLAAC needs your help for "Astronomy on the Beach" held on July 21 & 22, 2000 at the Kensington Metro Park. As with our Hale-Bopp event, we expect

large crowds. The press release will see wide distribution and will note our featured astronaut keynote speaker, comet Linear and some discussion on our regular attractions. To support the anticipated crowd, we expect that we would like to get out an estimated 150 - 200 optics if possible. Sharing the skies with newcomers is one of the fun parts of our hobby.

The park asked that Greeters and Welcomers be stationed at the main entrance to the pavilion during the early evening (estimated until 10:00pm) to give directions to those attending, as there were a number of people who attended last year who didn't know where to go or what to do. Volunteers from each club are requested for this and the Sky Tour exercise. We already

have some people signed up for the Sky Tour exercise. Like everything else, the more people who volunteer, the easier it will be for everyone.

If you would like to volunteer for this event please contact Bob MacFarland at farland@ix.netcom.com, send email to faac1992@hotmail.com or get in touch with one of our board members.

2000 Ford Amateur Astronomy Club Calendar

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

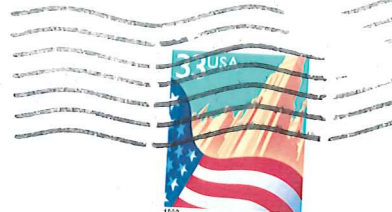
(upcoming events are underlined)

<u>May 25</u>	<u>FAAC General Membership Meeting</u>
<u>Jun 3</u>	<u>Lake Hudson Dark Sky Stargaze</u>
<u>Jun 2 thru 5</u>	<u>NCO Boon Hill Star Party - Boon, West of Cadillac - BYO Everything</u>
Jun 22	FAAC General Membership Meeting
Jun 23-24	17 th Annual NCO Summer Solstice Star Party
Jun 30 thru Jul 5	NCO Boon Hill Star Party - Boon, West of Cadillac - BYO Everything
Jul 1	Lake Hudson Dark Sky Stargaze
Jul 27	FAAC General Membership Meeting
Jul 29	Lake Hudson Dark Sky Stargaze
Aug 24	FAAC General Membership Meeting
Aug 26	Lake Hudson Dark Sky Stargaze
Sep 23 thru Oct 1	NCO Boon Hill Fall Star Party - Boon, West of Cadillac - BYO Everything
Sep 28	FAAC General Membership Meeting
Sep 30	Lake Hudson Dark Sky Stargaze
Oct 7	Eighth Annual Island Lake Star Party
Oct 26	FAAC General Membership Meeting
Oct 27 thru 30	NCO Boon Hill Star Party - Boon, West of Cadillac - BYO Everything
Oct 28	Lake Hudson Dark Sky Stargaze
Nov 25	Lake Hudson Dark Sky Stargaze
Dec 7	FAAC Joint November/December General Membership Meeting
Dec 23	Lake Hudson Dark Sky Stargaze

Check for updates on the FAAC hotline: 313-390-5456

Ford Intranet: <http://www.be.ford.com/astro/faac.html> or the External Internet: <http://kode.net/~dougbock/faac/>

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