



Star Stuff



Volume 7 Number 10

November 1998

Feature Article:

Boon - No Moon!

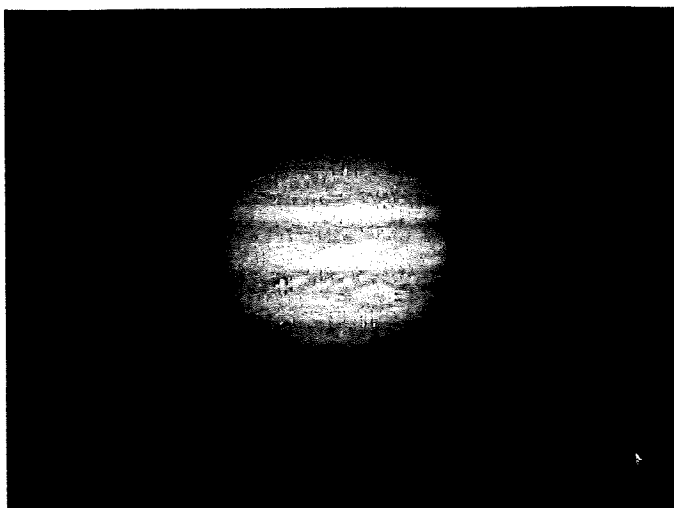
(No Stars Either!)

By Clay Kessler

If this is the October new moon it must be the NCO Fall Wilderness Star Party in Boon Michigan. This year the extravaganza was held October 15th through the 18th. Several club members attended as well as representatives from the WAS, Harry and Larry from Ohio and, of course, Rich Brenz from Cadillac. The weather looked very promising on the drive up. Clear sunny skies and mild temperatures made the fall colors a spectacular treat. Everything went great until it started to get dark. That's when the pesky clouds started to move overhead. We did get some observing on Friday night but it was between the clouds. After midnight the sky clouded up completely preventing even "photometric reductions of Jupiter" ☺.

Well, Saturday is a new day and the intrepid astronomers met the dawn with renewed optimism. Unfortunately, no one told the clouds which stayed around all day. I did get the roll of film I took (OK - four exposures) Friday night up to the photo shop in town for developing. After our photo trip, and breakfast, we went to work.

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NCO Goes Digital

The Northern Cross Observatory has now gone digital with the acquisition of an ST5 CCD Camera. Doug has been trying out the camera on his 12.5" scope in the observatory and the above is an example of his work.

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Star Stuff
Monthly Publication of the:
Ford Amateur Astronomy Club.

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

1998 Club Officers

President	Greg Burnett
Vice President	George Korody
Treasurer	Ray Fowler
Secretary	Dave Beard

General Meetings

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club (FAAC) holds regular general meetings open to the public on the fourth Thursday of the month at 5:00 PM. Meetings are held in conference room 1491 of the Ford Credit Building

Observing Site

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club has an established observing site, by permit, at the Spring Mill Pond area of Island Lake Recreation Area in Brighton, Michigan located near the intersections of I-96 and US-23. Members are responsible for opening and closing the gate after the parks 10:00 PM closing time. (Summer season only)

Observing Hot Line - (313) 390 5456

On Friday and Saturday nights, or nights before holidays, you can call the hot line number up to 2 hours before sunset to find out if we will be observing that night.

WWW Page

FAAC maintains a web page on the internet at URL:
<http://kode.net/~dougbock/faac/>
Ford Intranet at:
<http://be0084.be.ford.com/fhl/faac>

Membership and Dues

Membership to the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club is open to both Ford employees and the general public. The dues structure is as follows:

Annual Individual/Family	\$ 20.00
Lifetime Membership	\$100.00

Membership benefits include a subscription to the Star Stuff newsletter, discounts on subscriptions to Astronomy and/or Sky and Telescope magazines, after hours use of the observing site at Island Lake, and discounts at selected area astronomical equipment retailers.

Newsletter Editor:

Jack Kennedy	248-399-9403
e-mail	jkennedy1@voyager.net
home	248-399-9403

Editors Corner

By Jack Kennedy

The seasons are changing and we are beginning to see the winter constellations in the night sky. Last Friday night I had a chance to look at Orion. What a great view, just like an old friend has returned. It seems like our hobby is ever changing.

The First North West Ohio Star Party will be held at Harry Kindt's house the weekend of November 13th to the 15th. If you have not received information on this event you can contact Harry at hkindt@bright.net. Or contact any FAAC officer.

This time of year also brings club elections. There are a number of offices open and waiting for volunteers. We have a very active club and usually have a good turnout to help with the different club activities. Keep this in mind when you think about offering your time as an officer, you are not in it alone.

Just after the new year we will be putting together a special issue of Star Stuff that will be made up of pictures/images taken by club members. If you have anything to offer let me know and I will let you know when to send them.



House Bill 4254

The light pollution bill is still in the Senate committee for Technology and Energy. It doesn't look like we will get any action on this bill until after elections. Looks like our Michigan Legislature at its best. We need to keep the pressure on our Senators or this bill may die of neglect. If you would like more information on this bill contact:

Jack Kennedy at 248-399-9403 or e-mail to jjkenn@ibm.net

NOTHING BUT THE FAACs

By George Korody

Welcome to recent new club members Robert N. Lambeck, Mary Lee Mather, Robert Nudell, Robert A. Peterson, Robert L. Salhaney, and Daron Underwood. We hope all of you have many pleasurable experiences while participating in FAAC activities.

Good news Club members; the third annual FAAC dinner party is tentatively scheduled for Saturday evening January 30, 1999. The location and other details are being worked on and will be provided as soon as possible. Previous dinners have been huge successes. They included presentations, unexpected surprises and gab, followed by a buffet dinner and more surprises and gab! So, mark your calendars.

Notice: If any FAAC member is not receiving a monthly newsletter, please contact Al Bates, Jack Kennedy, or any board member.

FAAC members have mentioned many alternate uses for their observing equipment. Most of these were discovered by accident during idle moments while waiting for clouds to clear or because of some unexpected need. Following are a few of those that come to mind.

Telescopes on Dobsonian mounts, especially the larger Dobs, make excellent wind vanes. Did anyone notice which direction most of the Dobs were pointing during the windy afternoon and evening of the Sixth Annual Island Lake Star Party? Also; these Dobs, as well as open tube scopes in general, become leaf collection devices in the fall.

Refractors are the perfect saviors if one forgets to bring matches to start their campfire. When pointed to the sun with the back end near combustible materials ignition is almost instantaneous. Smaller refractors can be used as Hallow-

een equipment when one wants to go as Galileo Galilee, Blackbeard, or a ship's captain.

Telescopes mounted on German equatorial mounts can serve to keep one in good physical shape. The large counterweights make good weight lifting devices, and just getting to the ever-changing eyepiece location forces one into unusual physical contortions.

The following equipment can be used as time-pieces. When dew starts to collect on the front glass surface of your SCT it is two hours past sunset; on a Telrad it is one hour past sunset; and on binoculars it is a half-hour past sunset! Right, Bob?

Comments and suggestions about this column are welcomed. Anyone with items for possible inclusion in future columns is requested to contact the writer at (248) 349-1930, or send E-mail to gkorody@mediaone.net.



FOR SALE

Televue 27mm Panoptic eyepiece

Perfect condition, in box

Purchased new this year at TSP for \$313

Asking \$275

Greg Burnett

gburnett@ford.com

(313)845-3586

ATTENTION!!

If you have an email address, but are not receiving FAAC meeting notices, etc. Send your current email address to gburnett@ford.com to get on the distribution list.

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Doug scheduled a work party to run an electrical cable from the power pole near the road up to the summit of "Boon Hill". This was a straightforward task with the #10 direct burial cable being fairly easy to handle. 150 feet, 2 splices and 2 connectors later we plugged in the motor home and the trailed sited on the hill. This will make future Boon star parties easier with plenty of power for scopes and dew removal equipment. Thanks Doug!

Well - the weather stayed smoozy all weekend finally clearing at around 4AM Monday morning. But I think we all had a good time anyway. Boon is always a nice place to camp, especially from the comfort of motor homes and trailers. The clouds kept the weather very mild and there was very little rain. We did have some wind which blew over two scopes on Saturday night - fortunately with no damage. The last holdouts left on Monday, driving away in bright sunshine! Oh well - that's Michigan weather!

October was still a good month. I got first light on my ATM built scope, "Old Ironsides", at Doug's the weekend before Boon. The Jackson club had a Stargaze on Friday the 23rd at Lake Hudson that was very nice. The weather was clear all night with very little dew. I managed to take about 15 astrophotos that evening. Harry and Anne had a great fall star party / party party at their place south west of Ann Arbor on Saturday the 24th. Harry has a very nice site in his front yard. Other than some glow from Ann Arbor in the northeast his sky is very dark with a nice south horizon. Harry and Anne

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Pretty nice results. There are lots of new images on the NCO web page. should contact FAAC member Doug Bock.



Book Review:

"First Light" – by Richard Preston

by Clay Kessler

"First Light – The Search for the Edge of the Universe", by Richard Preston. This tome is copyright 1987, 1996 by Urania Inc. and was originally published by Atlantic monthly Press in 1987. The revised edition that I read was published by Random House Inc. in 1996.

I love to read but the majority of what I read is fiction, spy novels, shoot-em-ups, war stories and science fiction. I did not expect a non-fiction book, about a telescope, to be such an exciting and entertaining story. "First Light" is the history of the 200 inch Hale telescope at Palomar Observatory. Mr. Preston goes far beyond dry facts and statistics and gets at the very heart of the men involved with the Hale Telescope. A great deal of personnel information is given on men like George Hale, who was the driving force behind the Yerkes Telescope, the 60 inch at Mount Wilson and the 100 inch Hooker Telescope as well as the 200 inch Hale.

Mr. Preston actually spent a good deal of time at Palomar Observatory observing and working with people like Gene and Carolyn Shoemaker, Maarten Schmidt, Jim Gunn and Juan Carrasco, the "Telescope Operator". These experiences translate into some exciting stories of Schmidt's search for quasars at the beginning of time and the Shoemakers comet and asteroid searches.

I have to admit that I was reluctant to read this book, not because I wasn't interested in the subject but because of the author! I had attempted to read another book by the author and it did not hold my interest. This counts as an important lesson learned for me, I have read this book twice and am considering a third go at

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Meeting Minutes for 10-22-98

by Dave Beard

The meeting was called to order by President Greg Burnett at 6:01pm Thursday October 22nd. There were 25 members present. Members started right away on the Pizza and pop provided by George Korody and Ray Fowler. Greg informed the membership of some of the latest news from the Ford Employees Recreation Association (FERA), such as that there are problems right now with the club websites linked to the FERA sight, and other issues. New member Al Turner passed around an article that stated another planet has been found orbiting 55 Cancr, with an estimated mass of 1.9 Jupiters(.....man, it's getting crowded out there!). Al is also a new member, along with Mary Lee Mather. Thank you for joining the club and welcome to our extended family!

Members began discussing their latest experiences. Mike Adamson told the group of his success in finding comet Giacobini- Zimmer, and offered a map to anyone at the meeting interested. Also mentioned was the "Great Meteor Shower" or in other words, the Leonids, coming up on the 17th and 18th of November. Plan to see if this turns out to be a bang or a bust! There is a web site you can access; <http://www-space.arc.nasa.gov/~leonid/index.html> for more information.

Ray Fowler gave the Treasurer's report, and we still have some change in our piggy bank! Bob Macfarland gave a brief report on the Island Lake Star Party and 317 people registered, however, DNR officials counted 500 cars, and an average of 3 per car, making this a HUGE party! Bob thanked all of the volunteers that helped out, and read several of the comment cards, all were very positive.

President Greg Burnett solicited to the club that the Executive committee proposes to curb late dues payments: If the member's dues are not paid by January 31st of the dues year, then the next day, the dues shall be increased \$5.00 to \$25.00. The motion was seconded, thirded, whatever, and voted on. The count was unanimously positive, with no nay votes.

Greg asked members to turn in their keys to the Island Lake gate (if they have any) to Bob Fitzgerald.

Greg also reminded members that the elections are coming up in January, for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Also mentioned was the fact that FERA has relaxed the requirement that the president be an active Ford employee, now only the Treasurer has to be.

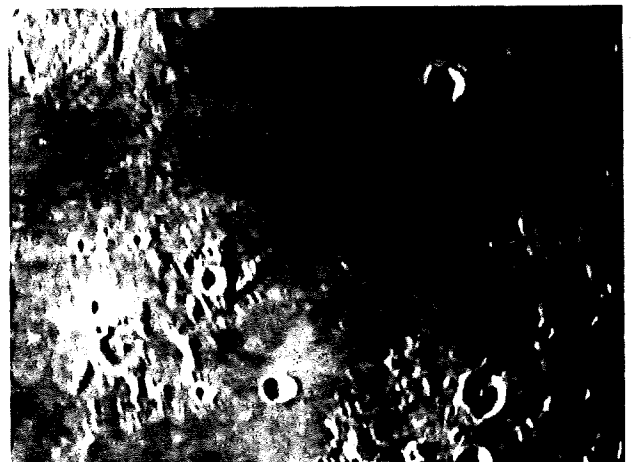
George Korody mentioned that the Annual Ford Amateur Astronomy Club Dinner Party (AFAACDP) will be held on the 30th of January. Location as yet to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned, and members watched a video tape on the latest Hubble images.



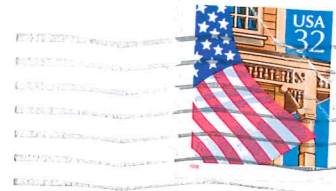
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it! The first time through I could hardly put it down. If you have not yet read this book I suggest that you do so at the first opportunity, it will change the way you think about large observatories and modern astronomers!



Another NCO image of the moon.

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



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ASTRO PHOTOS WANTED

We are planning a special issue of Star Stuff with astro photos by club members. If you have photos and would like to submit let me know. Ed.