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# STAR STUFF

The Newsletter of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club

## First (Annual?) Cheboygan Star Party

by Gordon Hansen

The trip to Cheboygan State park over the weekend of November 12-15 was a resounding success. Only 2 astronomers, Jim Wright and I, braved Michigan's north country. Denny and his son, Mike, joined us for some R&R and to savor Jim's cuisine.

The skies Friday night and Saturday night were near perfect, with unobstructed views to the North, East, and West over Lake Huron. The South was limited by the tree line to about 30 degrees and up. We observed from the beach right outside the cabin. After 2 ½ nights of clear skies, clouds started rolling in around 9 PM Sunday allowing only a couple of hours of good observing.

You had to dress for this event – cold weather gear not black tie! Temperatures dropped to about 17°F Saturday morning, terminating the evening around 2 AM due to a layer of ice over eye pieces and the secondary mirror on my Dob. Saturday was a bit warmer, dropping only to the low twenties. Then the temperature started to rise! That's the good news. By the time temperatures rose to 29°F, the air temperature was now warmer than my primary mirror and you guessed it, it fogged up. You can't have everything.

Continued on page 3

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### ANNOUNCEMENT to all PAST EDITORS of STAR STUFF

The first issue of STAR STUFF was published in July 1992.

Since that time there have been ten different Editors.

We are re-publishing the first ten years of STAR STUFF newsletters on a CD, and would like for past editors to let us know if they have any original, machine-readable STAR STUFF layout files.

See "STAR STUFF Retrospective" on page 4 for details.

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## Time of the Season...

by Dale Ochalek, President, FAAC

Unbelievably, pre-December snow arrives, even as winter threatens. Another year comes to a close, and the holidays come to pass. The coming weekends will no doubt involve the putting up of lights, bulbs, and wreaths – and the decking of halls... dreams of digital imaging dancing in my head...

Along with the shared warmth of holiday celebrations, it's a reflective time as well. Time to rejoice in our friendships, give thanks for our families, review our year - what we might have hoped for, what we accomplished, what we might do better in the future....

And, it's also time to humbly express gratitude! Any club is only as good as its people! And this has been another great year in the FAAC, owing to the support of the FAAC

members, including all you wonderful people who have volunteered to support FAAC activities, come to the meetings, made presentations, submitted articles and photos to the newsletter, served on the officer's board, edited the newsletter, headed up groups and on and on . . .

It takes a lot of work and planning to do all we do. Starting right off in January, with the Ice Days, and continuing on to coordinating the Beginner's Nights, FAAC Dinner Party, Astronomy Day, Educational Outreaches, special observing events, Eclipse Nights, GLAAC and FAAC Star Parties, not to mention organizing the monthly meeting, conducting the club business, putting out a club newsletter, supporting a club website and hotline, conducting SIG meetings, finding a new meeting place...it is amazing, when you think about it.

It has truly been a pleasure to see the hard work and dedication that our members continually put forth, and some more than others, at times. It's quite a task to give all credit,

where credit is due. Nonetheless – a list of some of our special club contributors for 2004 includes, in alphabetical order - Al Bates, Tom Blaszak, Doug Bock, Greg Burnett, Vicki Burnett, Bob FitzGerald, Jim Frisbie, Ed Halash, Gorden Hansen, Harry Juday, Tony Licata, Clay Kessler, John Kirchhoff, Don Klaser, George and Pat Korody, Bob MacFarland, Mike Rosseau, Dennis Salliotte, John Schroer, Gary Strumolo, Jeff Thrush, and Diane Worth.

Special mention must be made to those outside the club who have helped this year, including Dr. Charles Jacobs, our HFCC liaison, along with HFCC planetarium staffers Mike Lopresto, and Steve Murrell, and Eric Rasmussen from U-M Dearborn. Also include Mike Foerster of JPL, and those intrepid showmen, Jack Szymanski, and G. M. Ross, from the DOAA. And thanks to all those that I should have mentioned, but somehow forgot...

Time to start thinking again, about those goals for next year. Maybe start by setting up the camera as December 21 nears, for my analemma pictures I never quite get around to trying. I must resolve to do better... hmmm – what are your goals for the New Year?

The Winter Solstice, by the way, is actually December 22, this year - our shortest day, our longest night (in the northern hemisphere), and the beginning of winter. Around here, the sun will rise at 8:00 am, and set at 5:05 pm. The sun appears naught for 24 hours north of the Arctic Circle, and beams continually for 24 hours south of the Antarctic Circle. At noon, the sun appears directly overhead, at the Tropic of Capricorn - so named for the sun sign beginning at this juncture - at latitude 23.5 degrees south. The sun in the north remains near its lowest noon elevation for the few days surrounding the solstice, the angle neither increasing or decreasing appreciably - thus the term, solstice, which comes from the Latin words "sol" or sun, and stitium, or "stoppage."

Thanks again to all, for helping make this club so special, and may you all have a great holiday season, and a happy and blessed New Year.

--Dale Ochalek

## Astronomy 101 Retirement

by Greg Burnett

For the past ten years or so, almost since the formation of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club, the *Astronomy 101* slide show has been a mainstay of our club's outreach activities. *Astronomy 101* has been presented at least 50 times, maybe more. It has been shown at every Island Lake Star Party except the very first in 1993. It has been a feature at each Kensington *Astronomy on the Beach* event. It has been shown each January at the *Erie Ice Daze* event for the past several years. And it has been presented to numerous scout troops, school and church groups, and various other public forums.

Recently *Astronomy 101* was totally revamped for digital presentation using the club's newly acquired video projector. It now includes many new images created since it was first produced in 1994. In this new format, the show can be easily and quickly updated to include the latest images from current space missions like the *Spirit* and *Opportunity* Mars rovers and the *Cassini* mission to Saturn. It can also be easily



## STAR STUFF

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STAR STUFF is published eleven times each year by the

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

PRESIDENT:	Dale Ochalek
VICE PRESIDENT:	Don Klaser
SECRETARY:	Bob MacFarland
TREASURER:	Gordon Hansen

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:	Greg Burnett
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### CLUB INFORMATION

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club holds regular general meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month, except for the combined November/December meeting held on the first Thursday of December. Meetings are held in the Administrative Services and Conference Center building at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn. Refer to our website for a map and directions.

The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club 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.

Observing schedules and additional information are available by calling the FAAC Observing Hotline at 313-390-5456, on the Ford Intranet at [www.be.ford.com/astro/faac.html](http://www.be.ford.com/astro/faac.html), and on the public internet at [www.boonhil.net/faac](http://www.boonhil.net/faac)

Membership in the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club is open to anyone with an interest in amateur astronomy.

Membership fees are as follows:

Annual – New Member:	\$30	(\$15 after July 1)
Annual – Renewal:	\$25	(\$30 after January 31)
Life Membership:	\$150	

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

### MAGAZINE DISCOUNTS

Do not send money to the FAAC for ASTRONOMY or SKY & TELESCOPE magazine subscriptions. Obtain a discount form from the club secretary and send the form directly to the publisher with your subscription to receive a \$10 discount.

### STAR STUFF NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Your submissions to STAR STUFF are more than welcome! Send all items to the editor at [skyfog@comcast.net](mailto:skyfog@comcast.net) preferably in MS-Word format, but in-line email text is fine too. STAR STUFF will usually go to press the weekend prior to the week of each general meeting. Submissions received prior to that weekend will be included in that issue.

adapted to different time allotments, and separate versions maintained. This makes *Astronomy 101* even more valuable as an educational outreach tool.

Over the years I have enjoyed great personal satisfaction from presenting *Astronomy 101*. Now the time has come for someone with new energy and fresh ideas to take over *Astronomy 101* and carry it forward into the 21st century. Because I am taking on several new challenges (not the least of which is STAR STUFF) I feel I can no longer devote the time that *Astronomy 101* deserves to keep it updated and thriving. Effective immediately, I am officially retiring from *Astronomy 101*. Therefore, the club needs a new presenter who will maintain *Astronomy 101* and carry forward the long tradition of educational outreach that our club has established. This person should have an interest in bringing astronomy to the public and should especially enjoy cultivating the amazement of children (and adults) as they learn about the astronomical wonders of our universe. I'm sure we have such a person in our club, perhaps several. Please think seriously about this opportunity...it will be discussed at the upcoming meeting, or contact me at [skyfog@comcast.net](mailto:skyfog@comcast.net) if you are interested.

## ASTRONOMICAL IMAGING S.I.G.

by Jim Frisbie

The Astronomical Imaging S.I.G. will take place at the Henry Ford Community College (HFCC) on Thursday, January 13, 2005 starting at 5:30 PM. Please mark your calendar. We will have a time slot that extends to 8:00 PM as needed. The program will be announced later.

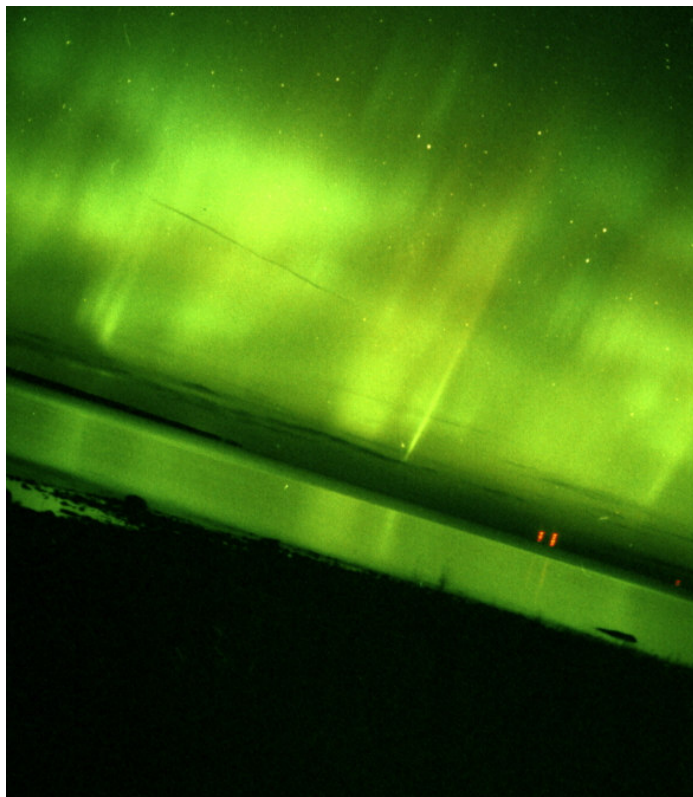
We will meet in Roseneau Conference Rooms A & B, which are the same rooms where the regular FAAC General Membership meetings are held. The Roseneau Conference Rooms are in the Administrative Services and Conference Center (ASCC) building. Parking can be in Lot J or in the Staff Parking lot next to the ASCC building if Security is present there. Security will be there to permit parking for us only.

A layout of the college area can be found in the July newsletter, which is on-line at our WEB site at <http://www.boonhill.net/faac/> If anyone has questions, they can contact the writer.

## ... Cheboygan Star Party

...continued from Page 1

The highlight of the weekend was the Aurora that lit up the northern sky Saturday evening. At first I thought a cloud bank was heading in and figured I'd better get what ever observing I was going to do in quick. The next we knew the sky was aglow with sheets and vertical rays of green light. The light show moved in from the Northwest and ended due North of us over the lake. This was the first time I'd seen an aurora, so I was thrilled. The show lasted about 90 minutes and then faded, remaining a glow to the North and Northwest (allowing deep sky observing to begin again!)



Gordon Hansen

Accommodations for the weekend were at the Poe Reef Cabin in Lake Cheboygan State Park. These are no frills digs! The one room cabin sleeps 8 (4 bunk beds) on 2 inch mattresses over plywood – you supply the sleeping bag. Running water is a hand pump outside the front door. The outhouse is a mere 20 yards away and is never occupied for long (remember the temperature!) Light is supplied by Coleman lanterns, candles, and flashlights – again supplied by you. As mentioned earlier, good eats were prepared by chef Jim – pasta, venison chili, venison stew (Jim also hunts) were the evening fare, omelettes and pancakes for breakfast. Who could ask for more?



Gordon Hansen

We started discussing plans for next year's 2<sup>nd</sup> Cheboygan outing. Who knows maybe we'll be able to entice a few more of you to join us.

## Great Lake Stargaze 2

by Doug Bock

Great Lakes Star Gaze 2 was held up north east of Clare. This event is sponsored by the Sunset Astronomical Society.



Photographer Unknown

This is a 10" f/4.7 Orion Newtonian on a Meade LX200 fork mount. This was first light in this configuration, and it worked well. We had several clear nights to work with.

One of the attendees dubbed this the FrankenScope.

## STAR STUFF Retrospective

by Greg Burnett

The first issue of STAR STUFF (although it had not yet been named) was published in July 1992. Since that time, STAR STUFF has chronicled not only the many activities of the club, starting with the First Annual Island Lake Star Party in 1993 and continuing up to our most recent events, but it has also recorded the unfolding of the Universe itself, including eclipses, transits, comets (and comet impacts!), and many other spectacular events.

For the few of us who have kept our STAR STUFFs all this time, it can be very enjoyable to flip back thru the pages and reminisce about those days gone by. In order that everyone might share in this entertaining exploration of times past, we are planning to publish the first ten years of STAR STUFF on CD.

If possible we would like to locate as many of the original machine readable layout files as we can, knowing that some, possibly many, may no longer exist.

Since 1992 there have been ten editors of STAR STUFF.

1992,93,94	Brian Gossiaux Joe Sprys Dave Garrett
1995,96,97	Paul Mrozek
1998	Jack Kennedy
1999	Greg Burnett
2000	John Kmiecik
2001	Mike Bruno Chuck Boren
2001,02,03	Jim Frisbie

We are calling upon these past editors to search their backup files for any machine-readable layout files that they may have. I will be emailing each of them individually, although I do not have a contact for Joe Sprys or Paul Mrozek. If you know of their whereabouts please let me know at [skyfog@comcast.net](mailto:skyfog@comcast.net)

At present we are looking for machine-readable layout files only. After we see what still exists, we will solicit for missing issues on paper...watch for further announcements, and by all means hang on to any copies of STAR STUFF that you may have.

## Minutes of the FAAC General Meeting

by Bob MacFarland

October 28, 2004

Dale Ochalek opened the meeting at 5:30 pm by welcoming and then asking for a round of introductions from the 37 attendees in the room. This included new member John Spieker and visitors Francette Fey and Jerry Dunifer. The member body shared their experiences with the prior night's lunar eclipse. Dale thanked all of the organizers of the Lake Erie Metropark and HFCC/U of M Dearborn events for their efforts.

The September general membership meeting minutes were accepted as written. However, Bob MacFarland clarified that the October 14th board meeting minutes should have stated that the board meetings would be held on the first Thursday of the month starting in January. Gordon Hansen detailed the status of the club treasury (found elsewhere in this issue).

George Korody announced that the next meeting for the Astrophotography SIG group is planned for 5:30 pm on November 11th in Administrative Services and Conference Center building on the campus of the HFCC. (This is the same conference room where the General Membership meetings are held). Jim Frisbie will present on the subject of "Image Amplifiers for Astro-imaging".

Dale Ochalek announced that HFCC was looking to train FAAC members on how to use their planetarium such that they would become guides. Mike Bruno, Tim Baleski, Dennis

Salliotte and Vic Singh have volunteered so far. Contact Dale or Ed Halash if you are interested.

Don Klaser is leading a public outreach event for the St. Michaels Church in Canton on November 8th. John Schroer plans to bring the DSC portable planetarium. Other volunteers were requested to support.

HFCC's Dr. Jacobs has approved secure space in the Science building for a FAAC locker to store a library of media. Garry Stahl has volunteered to be the librarian. A lockable cabinet is being sought out for that purpose. Estimates run about \$150. Donations of books and other media are being sought out (after the locker is put into service). Thank you, Garry.

The Swap Meet Committee has had limited success in lining up a location. Best situation is at the Livonia Public Library for \$300 for 8 hours. Best timing now looks like Late January or February.

The Alternative Observing Site Committee has not yet set a date for a meeting. Once they convene, the committee will first establish the criteria for such a location. Ed Halash is soliciting location ideas from the general membership.

Bob MacFarland announced that the Lake Erie Ice Daze public awareness event will be tentatively held on January 15th next year.

Having completed the business portion of the meeting, Dale introduced Jon Blum who gave a very interesting narrative and visual account of his experience on a Sky & Telescope organized tour in October to New Mexico's astronomy related sites. Some of the features included the Clyde Tombaugh Observatory, the Very Large Array observatory, Las Alamos National Laboratory, the Institute of Meteorite museum, the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, the Robert Goddard Collection and visit to Roswell.

Following Jon, was Tony Licata who gave a personal summary of his astrophotography learning experiences in a talk entitled "The First Three Years". Using samples of his work, Tony covered such facets of the hobby as film photography, deep space vs. planetary subjects, the importance of good polar alignment, astro-guiding, vignetting, and eyepiece projection.

Reminder: Due to the holiday season, the next general membership meeting will be held on December 2nd. This time it will be in the HFCC Planetarium which is on the second floor of the HFCC Science building.

## The Boardroom Corner

by Bob MacFarland

*Dale Ochalek is standing in this month for Bob.*

**November 18, 2004**

FAAC officers met November 18. In attendance were Gordon Hansen, George and Pat Korody, Bob FitzGerald, Don Klaser, Diane Worth, and Dale Ochalek. Bob MacFarland, who normally takes minutes, was absent due to another pressing meeting.

The board reviewed the previous meeting, and noted the concentric room seating arrangement seemed to work to good

effect. It was determined Dale Ochalek would contact Dr. Jacobs at HFCC to confirm the availability of the adjacent parking lot for the next meeting. Also, we need to verify the HFCC planetarium presentation will indeed be offered to the club for the next meeting. Mike Bruno is currently in charge of coordinating the planetarium trainees for the club; they are to meet after the planetarium show, which is scheduled to conclude the next general meeting.

The board reviewed the meeting agenda for the next general meeting. It was suggested that a reminder be announced that the club elections were to be conducted in January, and that nominees for the new slate of officers be considered by members. Also, a means of cutting the cost of newsletter mailings was discussed - this item to be mentioned at the next meeting as well. For now, it is hoped that more members will opt out of hard copy mailing and get access to the newsletter online. Greg Burnett had earlier submitted his report, having investigated another email alternative, which proved to be interesting, but not a solution to the costs issue.

The board considered the prior suggestion of periodically having a late start time, such as 7:30 pm, for general meetings. Some ramifications were discussed, and the item was tabled until further research might be conducted.

Jim Frisbie had been contacted earlier for updates to the Swap Meet and FAAC Dinner progress, and reported he would have further to offer information at the next general meeting. The board briefly discussed suggestions for the dinner, for subsequent submittal to Jim Frisbie for consideration (it has turned out the Dinner Party will probably be scheduled for late March, at Station 885, pending availability).

The next Lake Erie Ice Daze date was put forth - January 15, 2005. Also, another Forest Elementary event will be forthcoming on January 20, per Don Klaser - more information to come. In addition, Don Klaser reported responding to yet another inquiry for the FAAC's outreach capabilities which will be pursued.

The purchase of a back-up bulb for our club projector is still pending; Al Bates and/or Mike Rousseau, who helped immensely with the original projector purchase, were to be asked again for help here.

The FAAC finances were reviewed and discussed; the finances are in great shape. A suggestion was offered that a marked effort could be made to more robustly consider future club expenditure items.

We are still hoping to find a cabinet for the club library, though we now have the room available at HFCC to house this. We will need a secure cabinet before we can collect and store materials. We also need to draft library rules and policy, and perhaps an assistant or two to back up our volunteer librarian, Gary Stall.

Lastly, an issue was raised regarding the usage of the FAAC web site's list service, with the hopes of cutting down on unnecessary email traffic, the point to be raised at the next meeting.

-- Dale Ochalek

## The Second Annual FAAC Swap Meet Needs a Home!

by Jim Frisbie

We are all set to go but have no place to hold the Swap Meet. We could use your help! Tom Blaszak, John Kirchhoff, and I have been searching for a facility to rent that we can afford. We have investigated several but for one reason or another, we haven't found the right one. Our budget is less than \$300 for renting a room with tables and chairs that will house our activities. If anyone knows of a place that we can rent that will let us charge for admission, please let me know ASAP by telephone: 734-453-1422 or via email: [w8tu@comcast.net](mailto:w8tu@comcast.net)

## Astronomical Calendar

by Jim Frisbie

*All times are Eastern Standard Time or Eastern Daylight Saving Time, whichever applies*

### December

- 4 Sa Last Quarter Moon
- 5 Su Venus near Mars
- 7 Tu Moon occults Jupiter
- 9 Th Moon near Mars  
Moon near Venus
- 11 Sa New Moon
- 18 Sa First Quarter Moon
- 21 Tu Solstice - 7:42 AM
- 26 Su Full Moon
- 28 Tu Moon near Saturn  
Mercury near Venus
- 29 We Mercury at Greatest Elongation West

### January

- 1 Sa Earth at Perihelion
- 3 Mo Last Quarter Moon (12:41 pm)  
Quadrantid Meteor Shower  
Jupiter near Moon
- 4 Tu Moon near Spica
- 7 Fr Mars near Moon
- 8 Sa Mercury near Moon
- 9 Su Venus near Moon
- 10 Mo New Moon (7:02 am)
- 13 Th Saturn at Opposition  
Mercury near Venus
- 17 Mo First Quarter Moon (1:58 am)
- 25 Tu Full Moon (5:31 am)
- 31 Mo Jupiter near Moon

This information was obtained from the Henry J. Buhl, Jr. Planetarium in Pittsburgh, PA.

## STAR STUFF Submissions

by Greg Burnett

The STAR STUFF newsletter is the print and online journal of the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club, recording and documenting the activities and accomplishments of the FAAC membership. STAR STUFF readers want to know what you've been up to! Share your articles, stories, book reviews, equipment reviews, poetry, event photographs, astrophotographs, or anything of interest by publishing them in STAR STUFF. These make the newsletter \*yours\* and a true reflection of the activities of our club.

**IMPORTANT:** Your contributions are welcome any time...please do not feel you are working to a deadline if you'd like to submit something. However, if you are aiming at a particular issue, you normally need to get your material to the editor sometime during the third week of the month, the week prior to the meeting week. **Send submissions to [skyfog@comcast.net](mailto:skyfog@comcast.net)** You can email in-line text, or MSWord, or whatever is convenient for you...the editor will coerce it into the proper format for the newsletter.

**ALSO IMPORTANT:** Do not think you must be a Pulitzer Prize contender to write something for your newsletter. The membership is interested in hearing your ideas, experiences, and opinions. Please share them freely.

Thanks for your continued support.

## Treasurer's Report

by Gordon Hansen

### Bank Accounts

Checking	\$	166.75
Savings	\$	653.45
<b>TOTAL Bank Accounts</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>820.20</b>

### Cash Accounts

Cash Account	\$	91.75
<b>TOTAL Cash Accounts</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>91.75</b>

### Asset Accounts

FERA Ticket Sales	\$	-
GLAAC	\$	795.00
Projector	\$	660.70
Scholarship	\$	91.00
Swap Meet	\$	-
<b>TOTAL Asset Accounts</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,546.70</b>

<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,458.65</b>
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# Eclipse and Aurora Photos

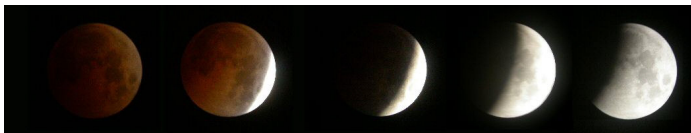
There were lots of photos flying around on the net this month. Here are a few of the best ones... -Ed.



John Kirchhoff



John Kirchhoff



Dale Ochalek



Matt Gasperoni



Tony Licata

Ford Amateur Astronomy Club  
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