The W.A.S.P. newsletter

December 2007

The Warren Astronomical Society Paper

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The WASP (Warren Astronomical Society Paper) is the official monthly publication of the Society. Each new issue of the WASP is e-mailed to each member and/or available online www.warrenastronomicalsociety.org. Requests by other Astronomy clubs to receive the WASP, and all other correspondence should be addressed to the editor, Cliff Jones, email: cliffordj@ameritech.net

Articles for inclusion in the WASP are strongly encouraged and should be submitted to the editor on or before the first of each month. Any format of submission is accepted, however the easiest forms for this editor to use are plain text files. Most popular graphics formats are acceptable. Materials can be submitted either in printed form in person or via US Mail, or preferably, electronically via direct modem connection or email to the editor.

Disclaimer: The articles presented herein represent the opinions of the authors and are not necessarily the opinions of the WAS or the editor. The WASP reserves the right to deny publication of any submission.

Astro Chatter

by Larry Kalinowski

Here it is again, the month that everyone loves. Why? It's our banquet month! Everyone has a chance to win prizes, eat hearty, absorb intellectual fare, mingle with the haves and havenots and take a little swill from the open bar. If you haven't signed up for it yet, the December Cranbrook meeting is the last time you'll get a chance to bump into our Treasurer, Phil Martin, to get you and yours signed up for the gala affair. The banquet is on December 20, the third Thursday, so there won't be any meeting that night at MCCC. You can mail your $25.00 per person to Phil but don't wait very long, because there's a time limit (don't forget to mention your name and your partner's name so the name tags can be done before you arrive), It's at DeCarlo's banquet hall, just east of Mound Rd., on Ten Mile Rd. Our main speaker will be Mike Simonsen, the renowned variable star observer. Meals will be served at 8:00 PM, refreshments at 6:30 PM. Don't forget to wear your award badges. This is an award banquet! I'll see you there!

It looks as though a new kind of white dwarf has been discovered. Until now, all white dwarf stars were identified with atmospheres rich in hydrogen or helium. This new dwarf has a carbon rich atmosphere. There are only eight known carbon dwarfs. All discovered at Apache Point Observatory in New Mexico. These dwarf stars burn up nearly all of their hydrogen and helium to the point that only carbon is left, which is basically the burned up core. Understanding why so few of these stars exist could explain a new direction in stellar evolution theory.

It's Swap time again! Rider's Hobby Shop and The Ford Amateur Astronomy Club are planning another Swap Shop and lecture series on February 16, 2008, at The Holy Cross Church gymnasium, 30650 Six Mile, in Livonia. There will be more details in upcoming issues. If you can't wait for specific information, contact Rider's or the FAAC by phone or website. You

can set up a table for $15, if you pre-register before January 21, 2008.

During the hustle and bustle of preparing for my talk during the last MCCC meeting, I failed to mention that five more members and past members have received award badges for their efforts to witness and record total Solar eclipses in the past. The awardees are Dave and Glenna Harrington, Paul and Judy Strong and Tim Skonieczny. The badges were awarded by mail. At the meeting, Mark Kedzior received his award badge for grinding, polishing and testing an eight inch telescope mirror. Congratulations to all. Please don't forget to wear those badges at our award banquet, if you attend.

Mark Kedzior, took the time to give us a short talk about his efforts to reach new individuals for astronomical purposes. He's starting a class, along with Bob Watt, to introduce Lincoln High School members in Warren, to astronomy and telescope building (LHS is where our club started back in 1961). He's going to start kit packages for ten Dobsonian telescopes, which will be assembled by students, at the school, after hours. The four and a quarter inch 'scopes will include a Dobsonian mount, finished mirror, telescope tube, mirror holder, diagonal mirror holder with diagonal mirror, eyepiece holder, one eyepiece and a red dot finder, for $75.00. The telescope features a rotating tube and a sliding feature that makes carrying the entire package, in one hand. Partial payments can be made by the students if they can't afford to pay all at once. If you are interested in helping Mark and Bob with their efforts or are willing to make a presentation about astronomy to the new student astronomers, contact Mark Kedzior or Bob Watt at 586-758-1339 or 586-757-4741 respectively. If you have any telescope parts to donate to the cause, they can sure use them. Eyepieces, simple eyepiece holders and finders are most wanted because they are the main items raising the cost of the telescopes. Old hockey pucks make a great set of feet for Dobsonians.

Some old timers, from our club, met at Michell's restaurant on November 23rd. My wife (Joann) and I were part of the getogether along with Jerry and Margaret Alyea, Dave and Glenna Harrington, Ken and Betty Wilson and Tim Skonieczny. We took up a lot of space and time talking about past eclipse expeditions and the comet Holmes. Jerry was presented with an award badge for making four telescope mirrors. Ken received a copy of When A Man Looks Upward, an astronomical presentation on DVD that was created in 1970, by The Detroit Observational and Astrophotographic Association. It's about amateurs in the Detroit area and the Astronomical League's conventions back then.

Some of you may remember Roger Civic, an active member and past editor of the WASP, a few years ago. I found out just today that he has suffered three strokes over the past year. He has some short term memory loss but is doing well at the present time. If you wish to contact him and give some moral support, you can reach him at 989-473-3677.

Comet Holmes is still going strong as of this writing. Much has happened since last month. It has developed a small tail, which shows up as blue in some pictures. Blue is usually an indication of an ion tail (charged particles) which always points directly away from the Sun. The tail has also become detached in the last few days. Internet pictures show the broken tail. It's rated as magnitude 3.4 now and has grown in apparent size, larger than the Moon.

The Cranbrook Science Museum is looking for additional help with their observatory and planetarium programs. If you feel knowledgeable in astronomy and like giving presentations, this might be your chance to really shine in a professional atmosphere. Contact Marty Kunz at solarmarty@sbcglobal.net for more information.

On the last night of the year, New Year's Eve, take a look at the brightest, lasting ember glowing in the southern sky during the fireworks. If the sky is clear, you'll see the brightest star in the sky, directly south, on the Meridian. It's Sirius, declaring our entry into the New Year.

The November Discussion Group meeting, at Jon Blum's house, turned out to be one of, or perhaps, the best meeting we have had, so far. If you weren't there, You missed out on a wide variety of beverages, cookies, chips and large shrimp for appetizers. So much was discussed that I couldn't keep up with all the subjects we hit upon. Ten people were present that night and all were awake for the entire evening. I even

had the pleasure of seeing Ken Bertin split his side open, laughing at one of Gary Gathen's profound jokes. It was a meeting to remember.

December's discussion group meeting will be on the fourth Thursday, the 27th, at Gary Gathen's home in Pleasant Ridge. He lives at 21 Elm Park Blvd., three blocks south of I-696 and about a half block west of Woodward Ave. Meeting will start at 8:00 PM. You can reach Gary at 248-543-3366, or me, at 586-776-9720 for any further information.

All space photos are courtesy of SPACE.COM and SPACEWEATHER.COM, unless otherwise noted.

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THE SWAPSHOP

This column is for those who are interested in buying, trading or selling items. Call 586-776-9720 (cometman@mybluelight.com) if you want to put an item for sale or trade in this section of the WASP. The ad will run for six months. The month and year, the ad will be removed, is also shown.

WANTED. Telescope parts for the Lincoln High School, 4 ¼ in. Dobsonian project, in Warren, Michigan. We are looking mainly for eyepieces, eyepiece holders, finders and spiders. The parts that are usually made of metal. All 'scopes will be sold at cost to students from the school, in hopes of starting an astronomy club there. Contact Mark Kedzior (586-758-1339) or Bob Watt (586-757-4741) if you have something to offer. (6-08).

FOR SALE. Three sets (A,B&C) of 3X5 AstroCards with illuminated, red light viewer. Great for star hoping, if you don't have a GO-TO or electronic setting circles. $25. 586-776-9720 (cometman@mybluelight.com). (3-08).

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A TRIVIAL WEB SITE

Play "New and Improved" Space Place Trivia!

Covering everything from *asteroids* to *zodiac*, the Space Place Trivia game tests your acquaintance with just about every part of the extensive NASA kids website, The Space Place. Read the term in big red letters (with pronunciation guide), then pick the one sentence out of three in which the word makes sense (instead of nonsense). Recently updated to include newly added topics and activities on the site, the game links each term to the page or activity that explains or demonstrates it. So those "Oop-sies" can quickly be converted to "Right-o's!" Go to http://spaceplace.nasa.gov and click on "Games." – Nancy Leon, Education and Public Outreach Lead, NASA New Millennium Program/Space Place

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WAS SUB-GROUPS

Want to delve more deeply into a specific field of interest in astronomy? Joining a sub-group just may be the answer. Please contact the chairperson listed by the subgroup of interest for more information, meeting times and location. Current sub-groups are:

Discussion/Computer Group - Larry Kalinowski
Lunar/Planetary/Double Stars - Alan Rothenberg
Deep Sky Group - Phil Martin
Solar Group - Marty Kunz
Hands on Group - Riyad Matti

WAS Meetings scheduled for 2007

Cranbrook Meetings – Every 1st Monday

Dec. 3

Macomb Meetings – Every 3rd Thursday

Dec. 20 (Banquet Date)

Warren Astronomical Society

2007 presentations

Date	Day	Presenter	Subject
3-Dec	Mon	Neb Duric	Radio Astronomy-Origin of Cosmic Rays (Imaging program Leader at WSU)
20-Dec	Thurs	Mike Simonsen	(Banquet) Astronomy Hobby or Obsession?

Warren Astronomical Society

2008 presentations

Date	Day	Presenter	Subject
7-Jan	Mon	PBS DVD	Seeing in the Dark
17-Jan	Thurs	Justin Nomura	Philosophy of the Universe
4-Feb	Mon	Gary Ross	K's Folly
21-Feb	Thurs	Larry Phipps	TBD
3-Mar	Mon	Mike Simonsen	Variable Star observing (TBD)
20-Mar	Thurs	Stephen Uitti	TBD
7-Apr	Mon	Ken Bertin	E. E. Barnard
17-Apr	Thurs	Norm Dillard	The largest Stars

Please contact the 1st V.P. (program chairperson) to:

1 : Schedule new presentation.
2 : Alter scheduled presentations.
3 : Add a subject title to your presentation.
4 : Change the subject title of your presentation.

Thank you for your support,
Riyad I. Matti
W.A.S. 1st V.P. (program chairperson) 2006/2007

December, 2007 Calendar

Saturday, Dec 1 • 7:44 a.m.: Last Quarter Moon; 8:00 a.m.: The Moon passes to 2° south of Saturn
Wednesday, Dec 5 • 8:00 p.m.: The Moon passes 7° south of Venus
Thursday, Dec 6 • 11:53 a.m.: The Moon is at apogee (252,423 miles from Earth)
Sunday, Dec 9 • 12:45 p.m.: New Moon
Friday, Dec 14 • Geminid meteor shower peaks
Monday, Dec 17 • 5:18 a.m.: First Quarter Moon
Tuesday, Dec 18 • 7:00 p.m.: *Mars is 54,783,000 miles from earth, its closest approach until 2016*
Thursday, Dec 20 • 7:00 p.m.: Pluto is in conjunction with the Sun.
Saturday, Dec 22 • 1:08 a.m.: Winter solstice; 5:14 a.m. The Moon is at perigee (224,200 miles from Earth)
Sunday, Dec 23 • 1:00 a.m.: Jupiter is in conjunction with the Sun; 8:16 p.m.: Full Moon; 10:00 p.m.: The Moon passes 0.9° north of Mars
Monday, Dec 24 • 3:00 p.m. *Mars is at opposition*
Thursday, Dec 27 • Midnight: The Moon passes 0.6° south of Regulus
Friday, Dec 28 • 5:00 p.m.: The Moon passes 3° south of Saturn
Monday, Dec 31 • 2:51 a.m.: Last Quarter Moon

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2007 Stargate Observatory Open House Schedule

NOTE: Pending open house date is: Dec 8th. Dependent on weather.

1. Normal closing time will depend on events, weather, and other variables.
2. The observatory may be closed one hour after opening time if no members arrive within the first hour.
3. Contact me for other arrangements, such as late arrival time.
4. An alternative person will be appointed to open the observatory if I cannot attend a scheduled date or opening time.
5. Members may arrive before or stay after the scheduled open house time.
6. Dates are subject to change or cancellation depending on weather or staffing availability.
7. An e-mail will be posted no later than 2 hours before starting time incase of date change or cancellation.
8. It is best to email me up to 2 hours before the posted opening with any questions you may have. I will not be able to receive e-mail after 2 hours before open time.

Generally only strong rain or snow would prevent the open house...even if it is clouded over I plan on being there. Often the weather is cloudy but clears up as the evening progresses.

Bob Berta
W.A.S. 2nd V.P. (2007)

Meeting Minutes

Warren Astronomical Society
Minutes of BOARD/Club Meeting
November 5th, 2007
Cranbrook

The meeting was called to order at 6:39 pm.

Attendance:
Norman Dillard, Phil Martin, Stephen Uitti, Riyad Matti, Marty Kunz, Dale Partin

The minutes from the October meetings were approved.

The treasurer's report of $5253.30 was approved.

Nominations for awards to be given at the December banquet were discussed.

Dale said that he mailed out requests for donations to astronomy-related organizations on October 22. Any donated items are for prizes at the December banquet.

Marty said that he is working on Stargate Observatory.

Norman is looking into the club's 501c3 status.

The next open house will be on November 10th.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dale Partin

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Warren Astronomical Society
Minutes of club meeting
November 5th, 2007
Cranbrook

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm.

The officer reports were given.

The next open houses will be on November 10 and December 1. Other items from the board meeting were summarized for the club.

Marty Kunz said that Cranbrook is looking for a part time staff member to hire with an astronomy background.

Larry Kalinowski announced the following awards:

Stephen Uitti: Award for observing 110 Messier Objects.

Doug Bock: Award for making two telescope mirrors. Award for observing 10 comets.

Gary Ross: Award for observing 4 solar eclipses. Award for observing over 3000 variable stars.

John Lines gave a presentation entitled, "Overview of the Seven Ponds Nature Center and Seven Ponds Astronomy Club". He gave a second presentation entitled, "Observing with a 36 inch Telescope in Arizona ". Dick Gala and Dave D'Onofrio both then showed pictures they had taken of Comet Holmes.

43 people attended the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dale Partin

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Warren Astronomical Society
Minutes of club meeting
November 15th, 2007
Macomb

The meeting was called to order at 7:42 pm.

The officer reports were given. The treasurer reported a balance of $5590.05.

Norman Dillard said that things are on track to maintain the club's 501c3 tax status.

An award was given to Mark Kedzior for making his first telescope.

Mark Kedzior discussed a program that is being set up at Lincoln High School in Warren , MI to help students each make a 4.5 inch aperture Dobsonian telescope for $75.00.

The next open house will be on December 1.

Larry Kalinowski gave a presentation entitled, "Let me demonstrate".

25 people attended the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dale Partin

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IMPORTANTE NOTICE:

PLEASE NOTE: The people at Sky and Telescope have changed their policy. They no longer want the WAS treasurer to renew subscriptions. You just send in your renewal at the club rate ($32.95), being sure to indicate that you are a member of WAS. Once a year they send the treasurer a list of people who have subscribed to Sky & Telescope for verification. This takes effect Immediately.

Dr. Phil Martin – Treasurer

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Member's Astro Pics

Well, thanks to Phil Martins imaging expertise at the Cadillac star party last weekend (Oct. 10 – 14, 2007), we now know that the Witch head nebula really does exist!!!

It will be a great addition to my wall up there, Phil.

Great job,

Bill Beers

Witch Head Diffuse Nebula
NGC 1909, IC 2118

by Dr. Phil Martin

The Red (Hot?) Planet

by Diane K. Fisher

Not many endeavors require that you plan the mode of transportation before you even know what it is you are transporting. But weighing the physics and economics of getting any sort of cargo to space is a major part of designing a space mission.

It's one of the first issues that NASA's New Millennium Program (NMP) considers when planning a new mission. NMP has the forward-looking job to identify promising new technologies for space exploration. It then helps to mature the technology so it will be available to space missions of the future. If the technology cannot be tested adequately on Earth, the last part of this process is to actually send the technology into space. With carefully documented test results, future mission planners can confidently incorporate the new technology into their designs.

But where to begin? On call from the start, Linda Herrell is the New Millennium Program Architect. Given a list of proposed technologies, she has the job of figuring out the feasibility of wrapping a mission around them.

"We might be considering six or more technologies, anything from solar panels to imagers to masts for solar sails to more intelligent software. Of those, we may choose four. My job is to answer the question—can the selected technology be transported to and operated in space within the constraints of a low-cost technology validation project?"

Along with the list of possible mission payloads (the technologies), Linda also has a list of spacecraft to put them on, as well as a list of launch vehicle parameters. *All* she has to do is try them out in every possible combination (of which there are thousands) and see what might work.

"Fortunately, we have a software tool to help with this analysis," says Linda. When it comes down to it, her job is primarily to figure out how to get the technologies into space.

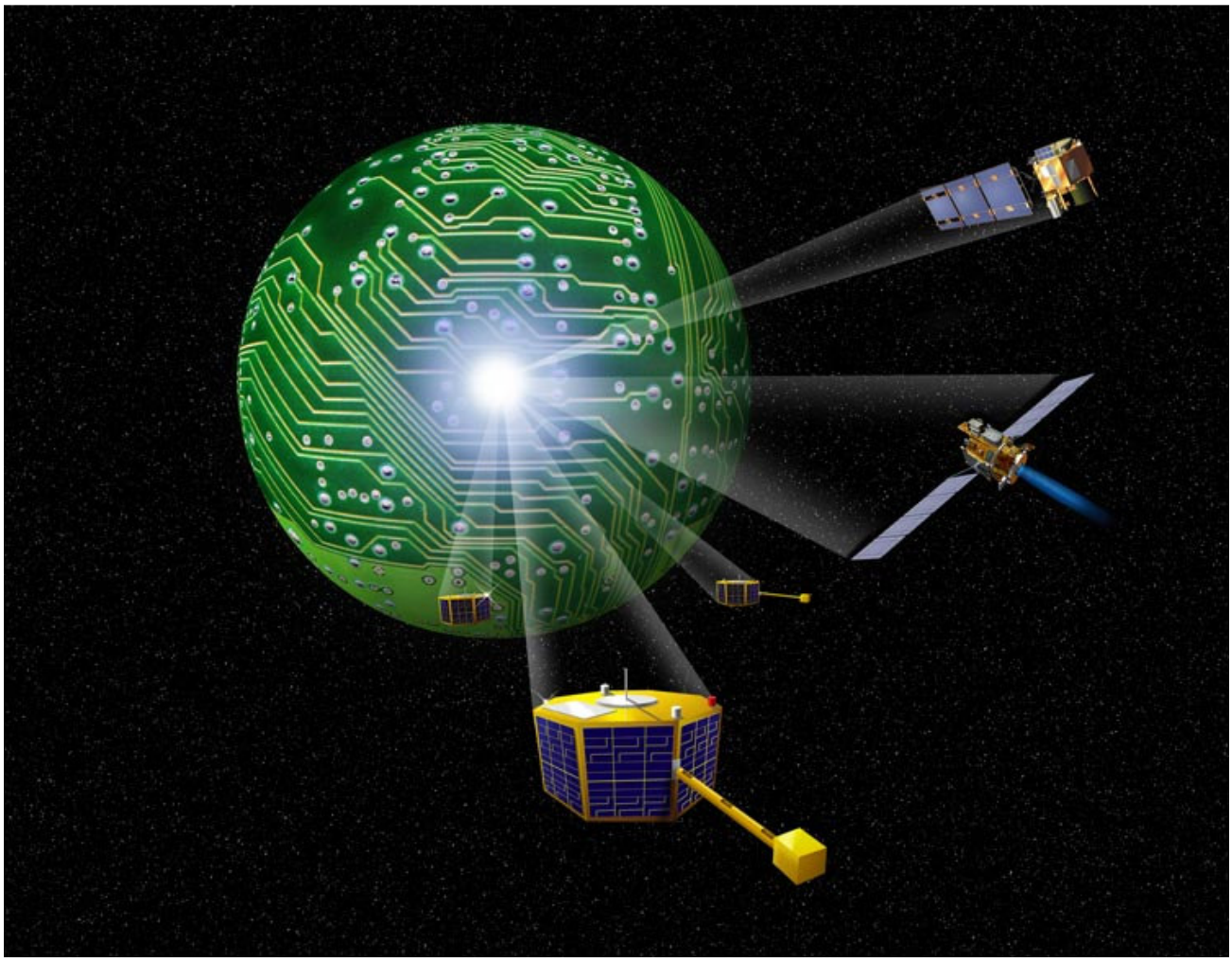
"Sometimes, it's like figuring out how to get across town when you don't have your own car. You have to get creative."

She keeps a database of all possible options, including riding piggyback on another spacecraft, hitching a ride on a launch vehicle as a secondary payload, or sharing a launch vehicle with other NASA, Department of Defense, or even commercial payloads.

Her assessment is but one of a gazillion factors to be considered in planning a mission, but it is indeed one of the very first "details" that forms the foundation for the rest of the mission.

Find out some of the technologies that NMP has already validated or is considering at nmp.nasa.gov/TECHNOLOGY/innovative-tech.html. Kids will enjoy watching Linda's cartoon alter-ego talk about her job at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/live.

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



NASA's New Millennium Program selects breakthrough technologies that will be of the greatest use to future space and Earth science missions and that are perceived to be risky to the first user.