

The Warren Astronomical Society Paper

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\\ January, 2008

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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



The best meeting of the year occurred at DeCarlo's last month. It was the scene of our banquet and if you missed it, I don't think there will ever be one better. Thanks to Mike Simonsen and his talk about

Hobbies and Obsessions, he primed the membership with bouts of laughter. Even my wife said it was the first astronomical talk she fully understood. It couldn't have been a better December evening for an astronomical lecture. When Ken Bertin laughs, everybody laughs.

Special awards for outstanding dedication went to Dick Gala and Patricia Gathen. Gala was awarded for his effort to spread the latest news and events about the club as quickly as possible, over the Internet. He will read about his award from this newsletter as he soaks up the Sun and sand in his favorite winter haven, Florida. Pat Gathen was given her award for tirelessly providing her home and hospitality to the Computer and Discussion sub-group for almost ten years. Gary, her husband, has been taking credit for the same effort but we know who really did the running around for all those

goodies provided and the warm hellos, as we entered the Gathen library.

More award badges were given out to members at the banquet. Mike Simonsen got his badge for a lifetime 56,000 observations of variable stars. Stephen Greene received a Messier award badge for 70 objects observed and Fredrick Gupholpo earned his badge in general astrophotography.

Ken Bertin has won The Armchair Observer's award for 2007! That most coveted award, which is hotly obsessed for, which makes every amateur astronomer drool with envy, was captured by our ex-president Ken. That award, conceived many years ago, and revived for old times sake, was meant to humiliate and otherwise degrade the winner, for not using his or her telescope more often. Over the years it became a symbol of a knowledgeable guru in amateur astronomy. If you weren't observing, you were absorbing knowledge in a comfortable rocking armchair because it was cold and cloudy outside (or whatever). Today, those armchair wonders are teaching our members all about the universe. That symbol of degradation has become the pinnacle of prizes. Ken pressed it to his heart when I presented it to him and exclaimed "It's my most prized possession"!

Now that the award has been resurrected, will YOU be the winner of the 2008 Armchair Observer Award?

Gus Povirk provided some brilliant piano playing during the evening, both this year and last, and was given a certificate of appreciation for his effort. The following members also received certificates of appreciation: Bob Berta, Dale Partin, Dave Bailey, Dave D'Onofrio, David Smith, John Blum, Phil Martin, Rich Gala, Gary Ross, Guy Maxim, Jerry Kuchera, Jim Shedlowski, John Schroer, Larry Phipps, Steve Uitti, Marty Kunz, Mike Simonsen, Norman Dillard, and John Lyons.

Raffle winners are given here in order of their appearance. Dennis Schmalzel, Bob Rinke, Bill Beers, Allan Rothenberg, Gus Povirk, Bill Beers, Ken Bertin, Larry Phipps, Joann Kalinowski, Bill Beers, Tim Skonieczny, Bob Watt and Steve Uitti. Looks like Bill Beers ran away with the mother lode, this year.

That marvelous program you received during the banquet was graphically created by Jerry Kuchera. Jerry jumped on the bandwagon after hearing a call from Norman Dillard, our president, to come up with an idea for a banquet program. They both worked together to produce your 2007 award banquet souvenir.

Here's a bit of news that NASA just recently provided the astronomical community. According to Steve Chesley, an astronomer with the Near Earth Object Program, at The Jet Propulsion Lab, says the asteroid 2007 WD5, discovered in late November, has the possibility of impacting the planet Mars on January 30. There's a 1 in 75 chance but that was upgraded from a 1 in 375 chance just recently. The odds are constantly being upgraded and they indicate that chances are increasing for a collision. Speeding at 8 miles per second, it could carve a hole as big as Meteor Crater, in Arizona. You can bet this story will be followed closely by many amateur astronomers.

Is it possible to simulate the beginning of the universe in a lab? A group of physicists at Lancaster University in the UK think so. They used liquid helium-3 and a magnetic field to produce a fingertip representation of the early universe. The theory among string theorists is that two branes collided to produce the expansion of the universe. Richard Haley and

his team produced a superfluid of helium-3 and contrived a lab experiment that separated two walls of helium-3 by a third dissimilar wall. When the third wall was eliminated to bring the two separate walls together at 150 microkelvin above absolute zero, the crashing superfluids produced evidence of defects, predicted by brane 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.

Mike Simonsen says you can help the American Association Of Variable Star Observers by shopping through the AAVSO website before you go to Amazon.com. Just click on the bottom of the main page where it says donate and your purchases will automatically send five percent of its price to the association. You can buy anything you wish, it doesn't even have to be astronomical, and the AAVSO will get a cut. Great idea Mike!

Another astronomy magazine has grown in strength over the last year or so. It's called "Astronomy Technology Today". The subscription rate is \$18.00 per year and it's published monthly. If you'd like to keep up with the latest technology available for amateur astronomers and how amateurs have used it to their benefit, this is the magazine for you. Read about it at:

www.astronomytechnologytoday.com.

A sample article can be downloaded. You can subscribe by mail, with their printable form, or by credit card.

Eleven people attended the Discussion Subgroup in December, the last official meeting of the WAS in 2007. Topics covered were Yerkes observatory, a possible asteroid collision with the planet Mars on January 30, a 72 inch reflecting amateur telescope by Group 12, two stars spotted in the Trapezium in Orion and the lengths of Civil daylight on the 2007 winter solstice in Florida, Alaska and Michigan.

60 people are now signed up for the club banquet, which will occur on Dec. 20th.

Marty said that he is working on Stargate Observatory.

Norman is working on renewing the club's 501c3 status.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dale Partin

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Warren Astronomical Society
Minutes of club meeting
December 3, 2007
Cranbrook

The meeting was called to order at 7:41 pm.

The officer reports were given.

The next open house will be on December 8. Other items from the board meeting were summarized for the club.

Bob Berta said that there will be a Heritage Festival at Wolcott Mill from 6 to 8 pm on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 7, 8, 14 and 15. While this is not an astronomy event, he invited a small number of people to attend with him to try to boost interest in astronomy.

Marty said that there will be a telescope user's workshop at Cranbrook to show students how to use telescopes on Monday, January 7th. They need about 5 to 7 people to serve as teachers from 7 to 9 pm, and possibly at 10 pm. Note that this will occur at the same time as the club's regular Cranbrook meeting.

Professor Neb Duric of Wayne State University gave a presentation entitled, "Radio Astronomy and the Origin of Cosmic Rays".

38 people attended the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dale Partin

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Warren Astronomical Society
Minutes of club meeting
December 20, 2007
Annual Banquet

The event began at 6:30 pm with an open bar.

Norman Dillard gave a welcome and introduced the outgoing and incoming officers. There was then an award ceremony where the following Distinguished Service awards were given: Dr. Richard Gala, for club communications, Patricia Gathen for opening her home

for the Computer Sub-Group and Larry Kalinowski for creating the Award Badges for Observing.

Gus Povirk received a Certificate of Appreciation for playing the piano, and Ken Bertin received an Armchair Observer's Award.

The following Observer's Awards were given. Fred Gupholpo – General Astrophotography category (5). Stephan Greene – Observing 70 Messier Objects. Mike Simonsen – 56,000 Variable Stars. Mrs. Simonsen - Variable Star Observer's Lonely Wife Award.

The keynote speaker was Mike Simonsen with the topic, "Astronomy, Hobby or Obsession?"

About 70 people attended the banquet.

The meeting adjourned at about 10:15 pm, and a good time was had by all!

Respectfully submitted,
Dale Partin

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IMPORTANT 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.

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Member's Astro Pics

Below (next page) is a photo I took at Bill Beer's Fall Cadillac Star Party. It is of NGC-6888, the Crescent Nebula. It is in Cygnus and is about 1/4 degree wide (1/2 size of moon). This is a wide FOV (1.3 x .8 degree) that shows the area around it. There were several shots through each filter over the 6 hours of exposure time. The later ones were a bit mushy as the object was setting over a mountain. I left a couple of those in the shot and the result is the brighter stars will show their colors around the star...it is a neat effect. This is similar to the effect that a famous Japanese astro imager gets by shooting a couple of subs with a soft focus filter to give the same effect. In addition, This is most noticeable in the two stars above and to the right of the object...the contrast between the hot (blue) and colder (red) star are evident.

In addition...while I don't know if the reduced resolution image I sent to you will show it....on my monitor and the

“The Galaxy Evolution Explorer produces so much data that, beyond basic quality control, we just don't have time to look at it all,” says Mark Seibert, an astronomy postdoc at the Observatories of the Carnegie Institution of Washington in Pasadena, California.

This fresh view of the sky has already revealed striking and unexpected features of familiar celestial objects. Mira is a good example. Occasionally visible to the naked eye, Mira is a pulsating star monitored carefully by astronomers for more than 400 years. Yet until Galaxy Evolution Explorer recently examined Mira, no one would have guessed its secret: Mira possesses a comet-like tail 13 light-years long.

“Mira shows us that even well-observed stars can surprise us if we look at them in a different way and at different frequencies,” Seibert says.

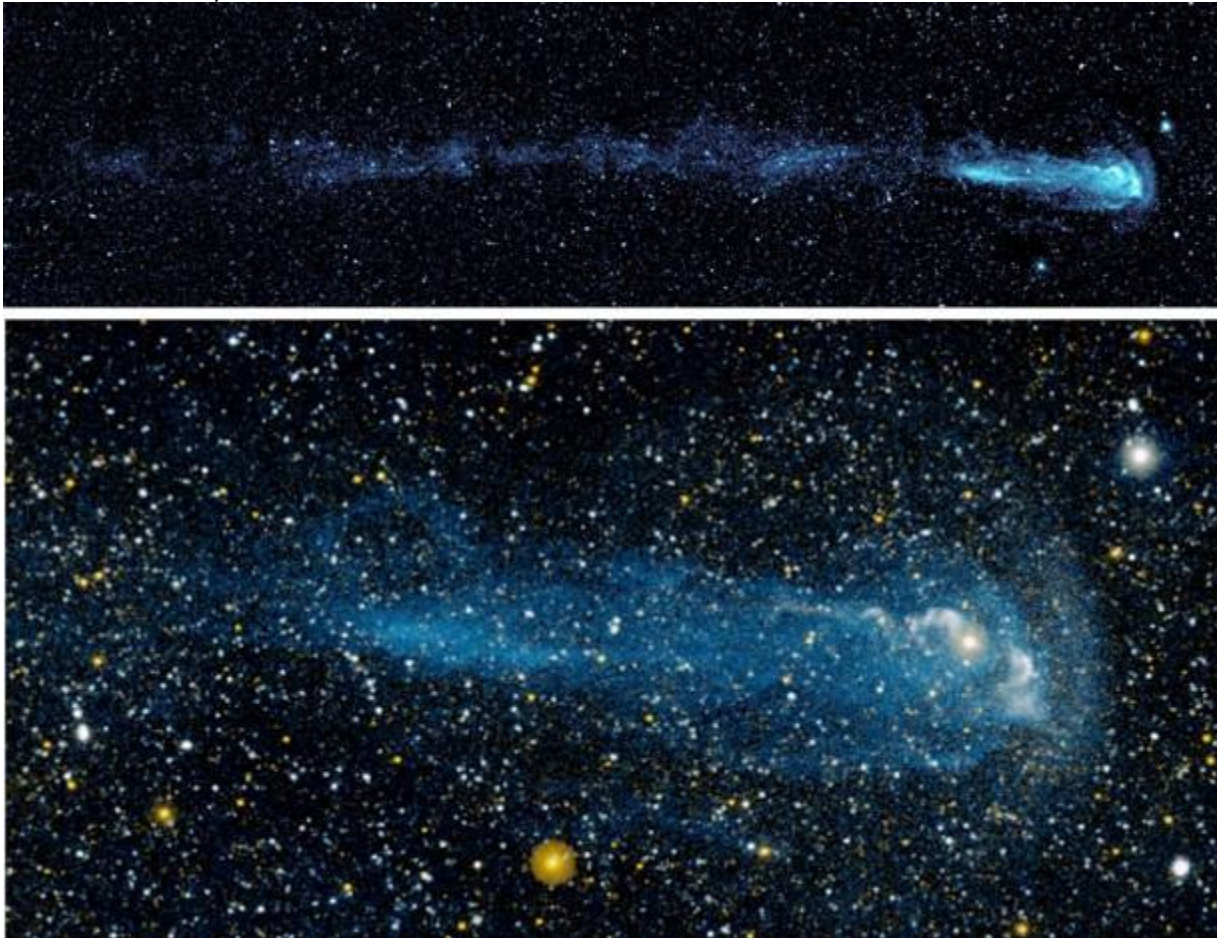
Another example: In April, scientists announced that galaxies such as NGC 1512 have giant ultraviolet spiral arms extending three times farther out into space than the arms that can be seen by visible-light telescopes. It would be like looking at your pet dog through an ultraviolet telescope and discovering his ears are really three times longer than you thought!

The images from the ultraviolet space telescope are ideal for hunting new phenomena. The telescope's small, 20-inch primary mirror (not much bigger than a typical backyard telescope) offers a wide field of view. Each image covers 1.2 degrees of sky—lots of territory for the unexpected.

If someone combing the archives does find something of interest, Seibert advises that she or he should first search astronomy journals to see whether the phenomenon has been observed before. If it hasn't, email a member of the Galaxy Evolution Explorer science team and let them know, Seibert says.

So what are you waiting for? Fire up your web browser and let the discoveries begin!

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



Astronomers looking at new ultraviolet images from the Galaxy Evolution Explorer spacecraft were surprised to discover a 13-light-year long tail on Mira, a star that has been extensively studied for 400 years.