50th Anniversary Year

Astro Chatter

A montage of nearly 2,500 astrophotos of comet Holmes searched from the Internet was created. Amateur astronomers contributed to this image without knowing about it. With it, Dustin Lang of Princeton & David Hogg of New York University used http://astrometry.net/ to match background stars and position each image’s comet in the frame. Then they used a statistical model to deduce Comet Holme’s orbit. Mining Internet data could be of value to science in other ways such as finding supernovae or other transient events.

SpaceX has announced that it will start development of a new rocket, the Falcon Heavy. It’s essentially three Falcon 9 rockets strapped side to side. It will launch 54 metric tons of payload into orbit for between $80 to $125 million. This is a third or less of competing vehicles, and is expected to break $1,000 per pound.

The Falcon 9 has already demonstrated the launch of their “Dragon” capsule into orbit with recovery in the Pacific. The plan is to deliver cargo, then astronauts to the ISS. SpaceX is courting military business, and has announced concepts using their vehicles for missions to the Moon, asteroids and Mars.

Lowering costs is important. Without lowering costs, the Return the Moon concept is still born. The Constellation program was never properly funded, and the 2020 deadline was estimated to take until at least 2027, by independent organizations. - Stephen
The SWAP SHOP
This column is for those interested in buying, trading or selling. Ads run for six months. The month and year the ad will be removed is shown. Submit ads to Stephen Uitti, 313 389-5609 publications@warrenastro.org.

FOR SALE: Celestron Ultima 2000, an 8" Schmidt-Cass go-to scope. It's in good shape, works well, and has fine optics. Includes hard case. Asking $900. Contact Bob Zinke, 586-264-0884, email: r1d3z@yahoo.com [6-2011]

FOR SALE: Late 1970's model Criterion RV-6 Dynascope 6" Newtonian reflector. Original owner. Well used, but good condition. Mirrors rarely cleaned and could use another cleaning. Original pier, German equatorial mount, setting circles, finder scope and Ramsden eyepieces. Clock drive motor died & replaced with a hand-made manual slow-motion control. Includes hardware for mounting a camera & solar projection screen. I can no longer lift it and am looking for something smaller and lighter. Asking $200 or best offer. Brian Klaus 586-731-0011 [4-2011]

Astronomical Phenomena - May 2011

Day  
Event
1   Moon furthest South (-25.1°)
2   Pluto 5.9°N of Moon
6   LAST QUARTER
7   Moon at apogee
7   Neptune 4.0°S of Moon
9   Jupiter 5.9°S of Moon
10  Uranus 5.6°S of Moon
11  Mercury stationary
14  NEW MOON
16  Moon furthest North (25.1°)
16  Venus 0.1°S of Moon
20  Mars 4.8°N of Moon
20  Moon at perigee
21  FIRST QUARTER
21  Regulus 4.2°N of Moon
25  Spica 3.0°N of Moon
26  Mercury greatest elong W(25°)
28  FULL MOON
28  Antares 1.8°S of Moon
28  Moon furthest South (-25.0°)
30  Pluto 5.9°N of Moon
31  Saturn stationary

Seven Ponds Open Invitation
WAS members are invited to The Seven Ponds Astronomy Club monthly meetings. More information about upcoming meetings, maps to Seven Ponds Nature Center, etc. is available at at http://bhmich.com/sevenpondsac/. Please let me know if you might attend so that appropriate plans can be made. Any questions, please contact me.
- John Lines

Snacks Form
A new web based form is up as an alternative way to sign up for snacks. Sheila Judd will see it, and use it to coordinate who’s bringing snacks when. If there’s a conflict, Sheila will contact you.
http://tinyurl.com/6zo6jt6

Oakland Astronomy Club newsletter
http://oaklandastronomy.ulmb.com/oacnews.html

Clear skies, - Bill MacIntosh

WAS Club logo wear at WAS meetings

(Photos and modeling by Jon Blum)
Diane Worth, dianewsky-night@yahoo.com or 248-980-7832 sells club logo clothing (hats, shirts, sweatshirts, jackets). Stephen Uitti brings a catalog of available items to meetings.
Observatory Rules

1. Closing time depends on weather, etc.
2. May be closed one hour after opening time if no members arrive within the first hour.
3. Contact the 2nd VP for other arrangements, such as late arrival time. Call 586-992-0498.
4. An alternate person may be appointed to open.
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 staff availability.
7. Postings to the Yahoo Group and/or email no later than 2 hours before starting time in case of date change or cancellation.
8. It is best to call or email the 2nd VP at least 2 hours before the posted opening with any questions. Later emails may not be receivable.
9. Generally, only strong rain or snow will prevent the open house... the plan is to be there even if it is clouded over. Often, the weather is cloudy, but it clears up as the evening progresses.

-Bob Berta, 2nd VP

2011 Stargate Observatory Open House
Apr 23, May 7, June 4, July 9, Aug 20, Sept 24, Oct 22, Nov 19, Dec 3

2011 WAS Meetings
Cranbrook Meetings: 1st Mondays
Apr 4, May 2, June 6, July 11

Macomb Meetings: 3rd Thursdays
Mar 17, Apr 21, May 19, June 16, July 21

WAS 2010 Upcoming Presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 May</td>
<td>Ken Bertin</td>
<td>Cassini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 May</td>
<td>Mike O'Dowd</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 May</td>
<td>Jonathan Kade</td>
<td>Satellite Disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 May</td>
<td>Bob Halsall</td>
<td>Solar eclipses witnessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 June</td>
<td>Debra Chaffins</td>
<td>Weather Clues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 June</td>
<td>Jim Shedlowsky</td>
<td>Texas Star Party video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 June</td>
<td>Gary Strumolo</td>
<td>Green Laser Pointers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Events

23 April: Stargate Open House
24-30 May - 10th: Annual Cadillac West Star Party.
29 May - 5 June: Texas Star Party
30 May - Two Hearted Star Party

Cranbrook May 2 Talks
The short talk will be by Brian Klaus, speaking about *Maintaining Your Astronomy Habit Despite the Setbacks of Life*. The talk is about how he has been able to continue his astronomy hobby in spite of severe medical problems over the past three years. Brian has been a member of the WAS for over 30 years. He personally brought the snacks to most meetings for 15 years. At age 15 he started with a 60mm refractor.

The main speaker will be Ken Bertin speaking about astronomer Giovanni Domenico Cassini, who discovered Cassini's division, the dark gap between the rings A and B of Saturn, along with four of Saturn's moons. He was also first to record observations of the zodiacal light. He was able to determine the rotational period of both Jupiter and Mars. These observations helped Ole Romer establish that the speed of light is finite. Ken has been a WAS member for about 30 years, and is a past president. At age 7, his first telescope was a 60 mm Tasco. He has observed 10 total solar eclipses. An avid astronomical historian, his previous talks covered astronomers Galileo, Kepler, Tycho Brahe, the Herschel family, E. E. Barnard, Christian Huygens, and George Hale.
**Macomb May 19th Talks**

Four short talks will be presented.

Mike O'Dowd will speak about *Global Planetary Weather Systems* which will explain the seasons, wind directions, frontal systems and look at some weather patterns on other planets. Mike joined the WAS around 1987 and is a former Treasurer & 2nd VP. His 1st scope in Jr. High was a Christmas gift to help see Comet Kohoutek, which he didn't ever see.

Jonathan Kade will speak about *Satellite Disasters*. What are the chances of catastrophe amongst the thousands of satellites high above the earth? He will explore some possible scenarios, including causes, consequences, and prevention/mitigation. He the current treasurer of the WAS, & is fond of investigating doomsday scenarios, especially related to technology.

Bob Halsall will speak about *Solar Eclipses* he has witnessed, and will include photos from the area we visited on eclipse trips. Those include Aruba, Africa, Italy, Greece and areas in and around China. He was WAS president, 1st VP and Secretary in the 1990s. He redesigned and rebuilt the club 12" Cassegrain to improve performance and make it convertible to a Newtonian.

Gary Ross will speak about *Journeys to Omega Centauri*, in which will be related the three expeditions in search of that celestial City of Cibola [the *Seven Cities of Gold* myth in Mexico -ed], in order, one that failed miserably, one which was still-born, and one that succeeded as related of late in the WASP, with additional moral didactic, technical details, and self-approbation.

**Vollbrecht Planetarium Spring Series**

Mike Best presents a series of 8 public shows at Vollbrecht Planetarium, 19100 Filmore, Southfield, MI 48075. NASA has designated 2011 the *year of the solar system*. Mike will emphasize details about our solar system in 1.5 hour shows. Show times are 7 pm Friday evenings. Shows are designed for the general public and included lecture/question answer, a slide presentation on the days subject, and star show using the Spitz A3P projector. The Vollbrecht Planetarium is attached to Adler Elementary school. Parking is free in front of the school, but use the Vollbrecht entrance at the East end of the building.

Advance tickets may be purchased at the Southfield Parks & Rec. in the Southfield Civic Center. Tickets are $38.00 for the series. Individual show tickets are $5.00 for Southfield residents, $5.50 for non residents. Tickets may also be purchased at the door for $40.00 for the series, $7.00 residents and $7.50 non residents.

- April 15, Mars, Asteroids & Mid Spring Skies
- April 22, Jupiter, Saturn & Mid Spring Skies
- April 29, Uranus, Neptune, Comets & Late Spring Skies
- May 6, Dwarf Planets, Kuiper Belt, Oort Cloud & Early Summer Skies
- May 13, The Lives of Stars, Nebulae & Mid-Summer Skies
- May 20, Galaxies & Late Summer Skies

Call Vollbrecht Planetarium, (248) 746-8880 for more information.

- Cliff Jones

**Passing of a Giant**

Well-known local amateur astronomer and long-time honorary member and friend of the W.A.S. Jack Szymanski passed away on Thursday the 14th of April at age 69.

"Big Jack" was a founder & principal in the Detroit Observational and Astrophotographical Association, along with Larry Kalinowski, Gary Ross, and Jerry Persha. He was an honorary member of the WAS. Among his many contributions was music for the many photographic slide shows & films the DOAA put together, such as *When A Man Looks Upwards* (written by Gary Ross and narrated by Larry Kalinowski).
March 7th Board Meeting

2nd VP: Bob Berta reported that some 130 Students and parents showing up for the after school open House Astronomy Event at Beck Centennial Grammar School Tuesday Night March 1st. Lectures were presented by Bob Berta, Dave Bailey and Lee Hartwell. Observing was facilitated through Bob’s 11” SCT Telescope.

Treasurer: Diane Hall will be manning a table representing the WAS at the 8th Annual Astronomy Expo & Swap Meet in Livonia Saturday March 12.

Work on the 501(c)(3) is resuming. We’ll seek professional assistance.

Outreach: Upcoming Star Parties: Metro Beach Star Party, Saturday March 26, 500 possible attendees. Need club members to bring scopes. Farmington Hills Star Party, Saturday March 26. This is a first time event, so the number of attendees is unknown. Need scopes anyway. Contact Jon Blum for more info.

1st VP: Therese Oldani knows contractor who may be able to help fix clubs leaky observatory out at Stargate.

The board discussed recent email from club member Dave D’Onofrio.

- Mike O’Dowd

March 7th Cranbrook Meeting

Cliff Jones mentioned his lectures at the Southfield Vollbrecht Planetarium during the month of February and March. Mike Best will be giving lectures in late March and in the months of April and May. See article, this issue.

In the News was presented by Ken Bertin.

Some of the stories included:
* Shuttle Discovery launched Robonaut 2 to the International Space Station.
* More delays to the Jams Web Telescope, including dying pixels in one of its imaging cameras.
* Two planets discovered orbiting a star in the same orbit, perhaps giving a clue as to how our own moon formed when a Mars size impactor slammed into Earth early in its history.

Gary Gathen presented a Video called The Powers of Ten a film by Charles & Ray Eames. A film starting at a picnic by the lakeside of Chicago then panning out to the furthest reaches of the universe, then zooming back into the hand of a sleeping picnicker reveling the DNA molecules in the nucleus of his cells.

The main presentation was given by Stephen Uitti, titled Cool Space Missions. Included was the first spacecraft to fly by Comet Haley, the Russian Vega Probe. The closest flyby to Comet Haley, the ESA probe Giotto.

Also included was the collision of a copper impacter into Comet Tempel 1, released by Deep Impact and the subsequent flyby by the spacecraft Stardust rechristened NEaT.

Dale Partin provided the evenings refreshments. Thanks Dale.

- Mike O’Dowd

New scope installed at D-BAR-A scout camp
March 17th Macomb Meeting – 42 Attended
1st VP: Introductions were made. Blum started scheduling speakers for the first couple months of 2012. Our next debate will be on April 4, and the subject will be *Does science fiction inspire genuine public interest in astronomy and cosmology or does it promote scientific error and confuse the general public?*

**Snacks:** see 1st VP Blum or Hospitality Coordinator Sheila Judd if you are interested in bringing snacks. Dale Partin brought snacks tonight.

2nd VP: Open House March 26 – Stargate to be canceled because the buildings will not be open; please attend the March 26 Outreach events instead.

**Publications:** The WASP is up; hard copies available for those without Internet access.

**Outreach:** Metro Beach 2nd Annual SIDEWALK Astronomy and more, including portable planetarium. Talks given by Gordon Hansen of the FAAC, John Lines of Seven Ponds and Jonathan Kade of the WAS. Telescopes wanted. Observation will run from 4 pm until 11 pm.

**Star Parties:** Bill Beers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winter Star Party in Florida</th>
<th>Cadillac May 24 – 30th – commemorative t shirts, orders must be in May 1.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 30 – June Two Hearted Star Party</td>
<td>Texas Star Party - May 29 – June 5 at Fort Davis</td>
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</table>

**Discussion:** the group meets the 4th Thursday of the month at Gary Gathen’s house.

**Radio Astro:** The radio astronomy group meets at 10 am every Sat at McMath- Hulbert; work goes until 2 PM or later.

**Bylaws vote:** Jon Blum brings up the final by-law revision, the one that wasn’t brought up at the January meeting. The requirement that the club President first be a member of the Board, following past practice. Ken Bertin offers a spirited rebuttal of making that an official change. Discussion from the floor, pro and con, follows.

**Vote:** 9 in favor, 17 against. Amendment to the bylaw fails.

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Globe at Night is starting up again. March 22 – April 4th for Northern Hemisphere. For more information go to [www.globeatnight.org](http://www.globeatnight.org).

**In the News:** Info presented by Ken Bertin: March 19 the moon will be at sunset in Perigee, the largest in almost twenty years. Probe set to become Mercury’s first satellite. Newly found brown dwarf is ultra-cool.

**Annual Expo in Livonia,** great attendance.

- *Therese Oldani*  

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**Web Master’s Report**

- The newsletters that were hosted by SEDS (1996-2000) have been moved to our website: [http://www.warrenastro.org/was/newsletter/default.aspx](http://www.warrenastro.org/was/newsletter/default.aspx)
- All WASP HTML edition image references and links have been updated to... hopefully... work. Some images were missing from the old site, and those are still gone unless I scan them in.
- The WASP logo has been replaced with a higher-quality version I scanned in from a 1970s WASP.
- All photo galleries have been updated to use paged image lists. This reduces the number of images on the screen at once and hopefully makes it more visually appealing.
- Scanned and added a number of photographs to the history gallery: [http://www.warrenastro.org/was/history_pictures/default.aspx](http://www.warrenastro.org/was/history_pictures/default.aspx)
- Added a new "Member Astrophotos" gallery for members with a handful of images they want to share, or who cannot create their own Flickr account.
- Scanned in many old photos to include here: [http://www.warrenastro.org/was/astro_photos/wasgallery.aspx](http://www.warrenastro.org/was/astro_photos/wasgallery.aspx)
- Started work on a new, modernized, database-driven website. This may one day replace our Meetup use. I don't expect this to launch until next year.
- Started looking at more temporary ways to improve the visual appeal of the website. Unfortunately, I'm not much of a visual designer.

- *Jonathan Kade*
Treasurer's Report

I have not put together a schedule of payments for the year yet. I renewed the PO Box and tried to pay our incorporation fee with the state, but can't do that until August.

MEMBERSHIP: We had one new member in March: Dr. Bob Rooney, a friend of Dick Gala's from the Royal Oak astronomy study group. We had fifteen renewals. As of tonight, we are up to 79 memberships.

SENIOR MEMBERSHIP: The trend towards senior renewals (due to the publicizing of the age change) has continued. I suspect we're at 50% or higher senior enrollment now. Not so great for the treasury.

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS: I renewed five subscriptions this month.

RENEWAL LETTERS: The renewal letters were a success. I think some people renewed who might not have if we hadn't sent them.

INCOME & EXPENDITURES: We took in $855.01 and spent $389.85. We have $5368.53 in the bank account and $363.99 in cash.

COSTS & REIMBURSEMENTS: $10 for Google Adwords advertising for Metro Beach event. This was in addition to $150 in free credits from Google.

$40 for post office box renewal
$20 to FAAC for table at Expo (previously reported, paid late)
$53 to Attila Danko for Clear Sky Clock (previously reported, paid late)
$16.90 to me for domain name renewal
$5.50 to Gary Ross for postage
$9.50 to Diane Hall for WAS flier copies for Metro Beach event
$8 to a member for overpayment of dues

INCOME

New memberships: $22
Renewals: $377
Calendar payment: $18
Donations: $42 (Cranbrook), $82 (Macomb)

2011 Spring Star Party Tee-shirt Request Form

This year is the 10th Annual Cadillac Spring Star Party. We are offering logo T-Shirts. Submit your requests before May 1st to get yours in time for the big event: S – XL $8, 2XL – 3XL $11 each, White or Gray. Contact Bill Beers – BEEZOLL@aol.com or 586 321-8207.

Jonathan Kade