

# The W.A.S.P. newsletter

JUNE 2006



## The Warren Astronomical Society Paper

P.O. Box 1505

Warren, Michigan 48090-1505

[www.warrenastronomicalsociety.org](http://www.warrenastronomicalsociety.org)

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// June, 2006

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email: [jupiter1927@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jupiter1927@sbcglobal.net)  
email: [riyadmatti@yahoo.com](mailto:riyadmatti@yahoo.com)  
email: [biker123@netzero.com](mailto:biker123@netzero.com)  
email: [dpartin@comcast.net](mailto:dpartin@comcast.net)  
email: [drpdmartin@hotmail.com](mailto:drpdmartin@hotmail.com)  
email: [suitti@uitti.net](mailto:suitti@uitti.net)  
email: [solarmartykz@att.net](mailto:solarmartykz@att.net)

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](http://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](mailto: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

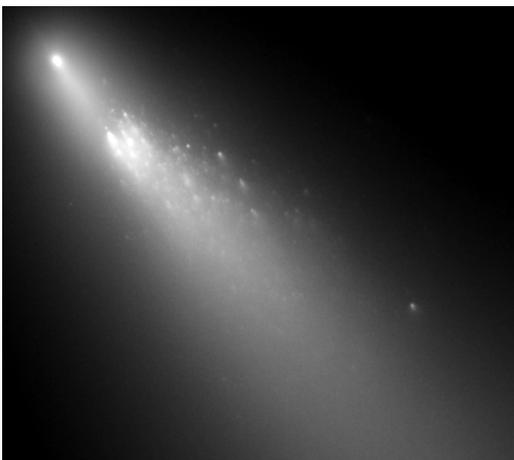


SW3 has made quite a splash with professional astronomers. Component B has broken up considerably and the Hubble telescope was able to capture the breakup. The photo shows the multitude of pieces that have fallen behind the

B component. Those pieces are difficult to see in amateur 'scopes. Estimates of how many pieces there are range from forty to well over a hundred. Radio telescopes have detected well beyond forty.

Astronomy Day at our Stargate Observatory turned out to be quite well attended. An unofficial head count estimated about eighty people observing through a dozen telescopes that night. A space station passage that moved directly overhead from NW to SE brought a lot of ooohs and aaahs from the visitors, before it disappeared in the Earth's shadow. Jupiter, Saturn and the first quarter Moon complemented the cloudless, deep blue sky. It was one of the best turnouts we've had for an Astronomy Day star party.

Jupiter's new red spot (Red Junior) can be seen in the Hubble photograph, centered in the left half of the picture. A portion of the Great Red Spot is seen along the right edge. Today's pictures are very easy to enhance. Junior's red color may not be so easy to see visually. If you









are encouraged to bring their telescopes to Cranbrook for viewing by the public from 1 to 4 pm, and then to meet at Stargate for the rest of the afternoon and evening.

Bob and Riyad are still working on a focuser for the 12 inch telescope.

A CCD class is in the works for this summer.

Mark Gottlieb is requesting a star party in his area in Bloomfield Hills on May 18.

Dale presented a proposal for an Astronomy Prize for discussion only.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dale Partin

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Warren Astronomical Society  
Minutes of club meeting  
May 1, 2006 - Cranbrook

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 pm.

John McSorley is a new visitor and wants to join. Rosie Blum is also a new visitor.

The officer and committee reports were given.

Bob Berta said that he is considering teaching a class on CCD imaging.

Marty said that May 6<sup>th</sup> is National Astronomy Day. Club members are encouraged to bring their telescopes to Cranbrook from 1 to 4 pm, or to Stargate afterwards.

Don Klaser of the Ford Area Astronomy Club is interested in having those who have given a nice astronomy talk at the WAS to give it again at their club.

Dale Partin discussed the proposal for an astronomy prize and answered questions about it.

Bob Berta gave two talks entitled Im only human and What are the colors of planetary systems. 33 people attended the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dale Partin

Warren Astronomical Society  
Minutes of club meeting  
May 18, 2006  
Macomb

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm. Norman and Riyad were away, and Bob Berta led the meeting.

The officer and committee reports were given. Phil Martin reported that the club checking account has \$3879.17, and the loose cash account has \$58.04. Dale Partin presented the minutes of the last WAS meeting at Cranbrook and they were approved.

Bob Berta said that he is still working on getting a new focuser for the clubs 12.5 inch Cassegrain telescope. He said that there was a good turnout at Cranbrook and at Stargate on Astronomy Day, May 6th. He also said that there will be an open house at Stargate on Saturday, May 20th.

Dale discussed a proposal for an Astronomy Prize for high school students.

Bill Beers said that a star party at his property in western Michigan will be held May 24-29.

Helping get better audio-visual equipment for recording club presentations was discussed. It was suggested that Larry Phipps make a request at the next board meeting to obtain funding for improvements.

Bill Beers gave a presentation on the last Texas Star Party. Jim Shedlowsky gave a presentation entitled The Eyes Have It on aspects of the human eye that are important for astronomy.

Bob Watt reported that the 2 inch eyepiece and Barlow lens which he reported missing some months ago were found at home.

30 people attended the meeting.

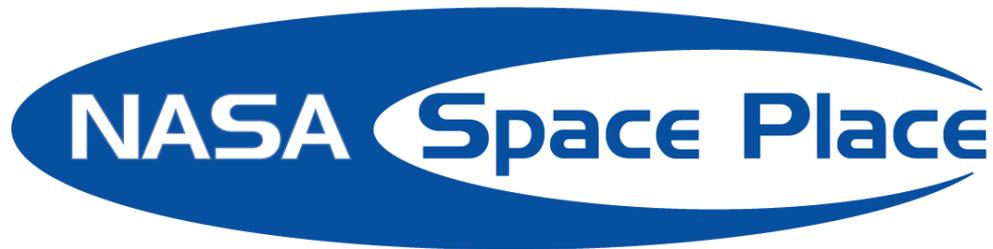
The meeting adjourned at 10:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dale Partin



(Horse-head by Phil Martin)





## **Not a Moment Wasted**

**By Dr. Tony Phillips**

**The Ring Nebula. Check. M13. Check. Next up: The Whirlpool galaxy.**

**You punch in the coordinates and your telescope takes off, slewing across the sky. You tap your feet and stare at the stars. These Messier marathons would go much faster if the telescope didn't take so long to slew. What a waste of time!**

**Don't tell that to the x-ray astronomers.**

**"We're putting our slew time to good use," explains Norbert Schartel, project scientist for the European Space Agency's XMM-Newton x-ray telescope. The telescope, named for Sir Isaac Newton, was launched into Earth orbit in 1999. It's now midway through an 11-year mission to study black holes, neutron stars, active galaxies and other violent denizens of the Universe that show up particularly well at x-ray wavelengths.**

**For the past four years, whenever XMM-Newton slewed from one object to another, astronomers kept the telescope's cameras running, recording whatever might drift through the field of view. The result is a stunning survey of the heavens covering 15% of the entire sky.**

**Sifting through the data, ESA astronomers have found entire clusters of galaxies unknown before anyone started paying attention to "slew time." Some already-known galaxies have been caught in the act of flaring—a sign, researchers believe, of a central black hole gobbling matter from nearby stars and interstellar clouds. Here in our own galaxy, the 20,000 year old Vela supernova remnant has been expanding. XMM-Newton has slewed across it many times, tracing its changing contours in exquisite detail.**

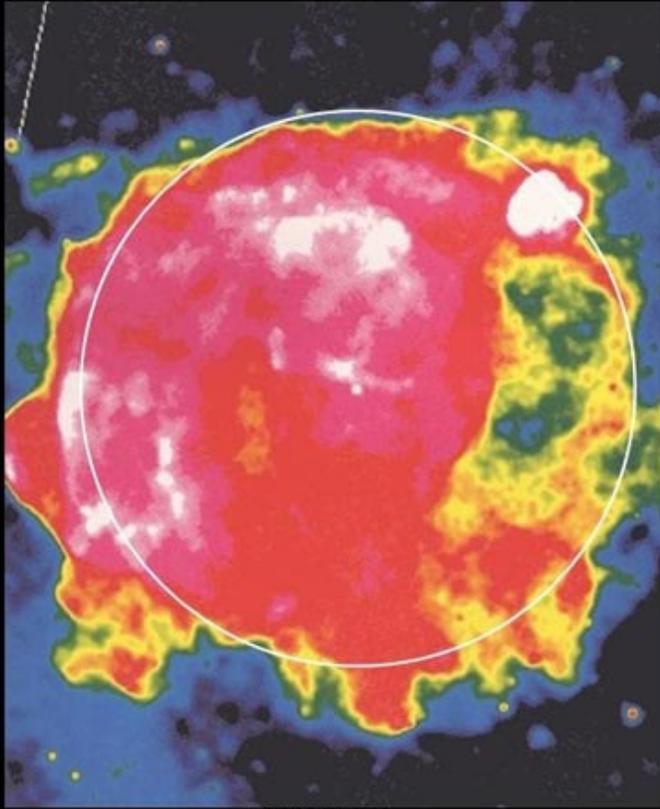
**The slew technique works because of XMM-Newton's great sensitivity. It has more collecting area than any other x-ray telescope in the history of astronomy. Sources flit through the field of view in only 10 seconds, but that's plenty of time in most cases to gather valuable data.**

**The work is just beginning. Astronomers plan to continue the slew survey, eventually mapping as much as 80% of the entire sky. No one knows how many new clusters will be found or how many black holes might be caught gobbling their neighbors. One thing's for sure: "There *will* be new discoveries," says Schartel.**

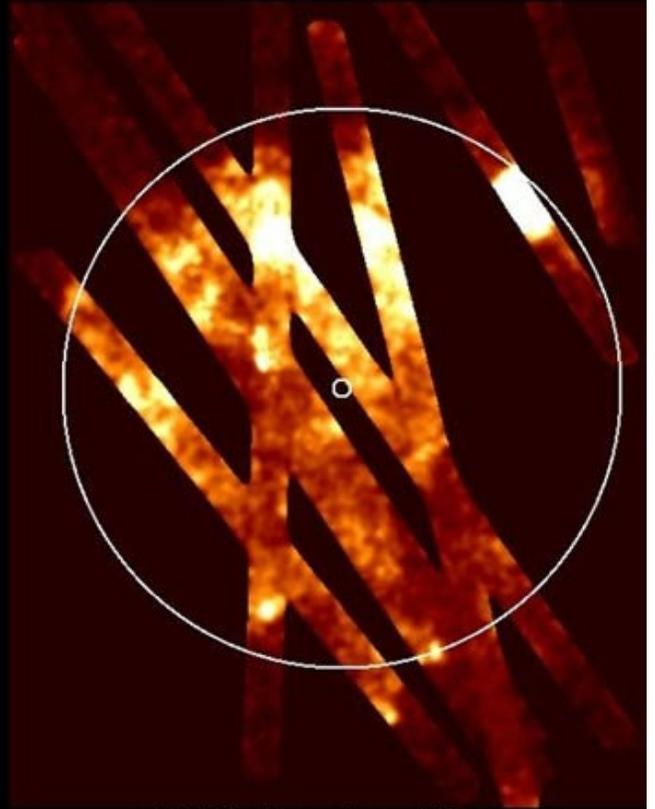
**Tap, tap, tap. The next time you're in the backyard with your telescope, and it takes off for the Whirlpool galaxy, don't just stand there. Try to keep up with the moving eyepiece. Look, you never know what might drift by.**

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

## Vela Supernova Remnant



ROSAT



XMM-Newton Slew

*The image on the left is the Vela Supernova Remnant as imaged in X-rays by ROSAT. On the right are some of the slew images obtained by XMM-Newton in its “spare” time.*