



Presidents Message – June, 2011

It seems there is always something happening in Astronomy. A couple weeks ago a new supernova was discovered in the Whirlpool Galaxy. This is the second time in six years that a supernova has been observed in the popular Whirlpool Galaxy, designated M51 in the Messier Catalog.

On June 28, 2005, Supernova 2005cs was discovered by amateur supernova hunter Wolfgang Kloehr of Schweinfurt, Germany, in a CCD image that he took with an 8-inch reflector. That supernova was identified as a Type II, which created speculation that it was similar in nature to "1987A" the brightest supernova of modern times.

This 2011 celestial event has been observable with medium to large aperture telescopes. The first recorded sighting of it came on May 31st, when French amateur Amédée Riou noticed a previously absent 14th-magnitude star in a CCD image of the galaxy with a brand-new 14-inch reflector. Riou said that he immediately noticed that something was different. Riou recorded it again the following evening. The object was independently identified on June 1st by Thomas Griga in Schwerte, Germany. The next night it got picked up by French observer Stéphane Lamotte Bailey, who noticed it on digital images taken through his 8-inch telescope.

The Whirlpool galaxy is a galaxy found in the constellation of Canes Venatici, very near the star Alkaid in the handle of the Big Dipper. It is easily found with binoculars or a small telescope. The supernova will be quite tricky to spot visually and you may need a good sized Dobsonian or similar telescope to spot it, but it will be an easy target for those interested in Astro imaging. The whirlpool galaxy was the first galaxy discovered with a spiral structure and is one of the most recognizable and famous objects in the sky. On Monday, June 6th, Dr. Jack L. Davis, lead operator of our Observatory's 16 inch Takahashi telescope, took a series of images of the galaxy, in which the supernova is easily identified when compared to previous images. Good work Jack!

Generally these supernovae do not sustain their initial brightness more than a week or two, so this new one may be dimming as this column is being written. If conditions are good, perhaps we can take a look at it after the membership meeting this coming Tuesday, the 21st.

Mike Thomas

May, 2011

May 2011 Meeting Minutes

- **The accomplishments, and sterling character of our recently deceased fellow member and friend, Dr. Walt Dillard was reflected upon by those present.**
- **Member John Dykes gave a PowerPoint lecture on Astro-imaging.**

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Speaker info for the *****Tuesday, June 21, 2011 @ 7pm***** membership meeting:

**"The Story of the Titanic"
A slide-show lecture by Mike Thomas.**

Events Calendar

~ June 2011 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Partial Solar Eclipse. eastern Asia, Alaska, N. Canada New Moon	2	3	4 Star Party Dark Skies
5	6	7	8 Moon 1 st Quarter	9	10	11 Star Party
12	13	14	15 Total Lunar Eclipse; Africa, Asia, and Australia. Full Moon	16	17	18 Star Party
19	20	21 <i>WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO</i> Summer Solstice 17:16 UTC	22	23 Moon Last Quarter	24	25 Star Party
26	27	28	29	30	Notes:	

~ July 2011 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 New Moon Partial Solar Eclipse-Antarctica	2 Dark Skies Star Party
3	4	5	6	7	8 Moon 1 st Qtr	9 Star Party
10	11	12	13	14	15 Full Moon	16 Star Party
17	18	19 <i>WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO</i>	20	21	22	23 Star Party Moon Last Qtr
24	25	26	27	28 Southern Delta Aquarids meteors	29	30 Dark Skies Star Party New Moon
31	Notes:					