



M-51



WNCC Foundation (WNAS)
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Carson City, NV 89703



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President's Corner

The WNAS President's Corner

The following was written for the July Newsletter, which was delayed due to the fire and its associated problems.

Hello, to those who I have had the pleasure to meet and I look forward meeting all of you. Red has decided to step down as your President and was quickly elected Secretary-Treasurer. Red left some big shoes to fill and with both his and your help, we can continue the Club's momentum. With the new JCDO Board of Governors now firmly established, WNAS now has some new inputs and directions to improve itself and JCDO.

One area that needs help is our WNAS bi-monthly meetings! The health of any organization is based on its communications, camaraderie and its sharing of knowledge. In order to better know you and your interests, we have put together a questionnaire which we hope you will fill out either on line or take the enclosed and mail it back to us.

In the mean time, we think you might be interested in learning more about astronomy. With that in mind, we are intending to have a "class (or guided open discussion)" about different subjects which will be part of our bimonthly meetings. Since currently we only have optical instruments, photons form the

basis of our information gathering and we thought we would start with the basics. As we get to know photons, how they are generated, interact with matter, are collected and focused for interpretation; we will see how our telescopes should work. This "class" will continue over several meetings if the interest is high.

Speaking about our meetings, last meeting I introduced you to a new format of operating, training and maintenance for the equipment. This requires your input as to how you see us going forward. The format has specific levels of Certified Operators, Certified Trainers, and Certified Equipment Maintenance Persons. These achievement levels will exist for each piece of equipment. Checklists and logs will be kept so equipment usage and maintenance can be scheduled. Each certification level will involve training from a person holding the next highest level of certification. You get the idea. I will be handing out info for your input at the next meeting. The Board of Governors has given us a "go" for this program. Now we need "you" for it to work. This is an ideal time to learn about a different telescope or how to use one for the first time. See YOU at our next meeting.

Please contact me with your comments and ideas: www.roger.block@att.net.

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WNAS web site:
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Events Calendar

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
November		1	2	3	4 Last Qtr	5	6 Star Party
	7	8	9	10	11	12 New Moon	13 Star Party
	14	15 BD of Gov Meeting	16	17 Leonid Showers	18 First Qtr WNAS Mtg	19	20 Star Party
	21	22	23	24	25	26 Full Moon	27 Star Party
	28	29	30				

December			1	2	3	4 Star Party Last Qtr	
	5	6	7	8	9	10 11 Star Party New Moon	
	12	13 Geminid Showers, BD of Gov Mtg	14	15	16 OP Board Meeting	17	18 Star Party First Qtr
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26 Full Moon	27	28	29	30	31	

Dates to Remember:

November 2004

4th Last Quarter Moon 21:55
12th New Moon 06:26
17th Leonid meteor shower peaks this morning
18th First Quarter Moon 21:52

Nov. 18th WNAS General Membership Meeting 7:00 p.m.

26th Full Moon 12:10

December 2004

4th Last Quarter Moon 16:54
11th New Moon 17:30
13th Geminid meteor shower peaks this evening
18th First Quarter Moon 08:41
25th Observatory Closed
26th Full Moon 07:08



Come to the next meeting and receive a coupon for a 25% discount at the Franktown Grill at Thunder Canyon (maximum of 4 guests per coupon) and other fun door prizes.

Ask Jack

This month we're introducing a new column to the WNAS newsletter titled "Ask Jack." With this column we hope to engage the membership in questions that are of interest to you individually. Myself and other members of the Newsletter Committee try our best to submit articles for each newsletter that are informative and of interest, but may not answer many of your own questions.

As always, we welcome and encourage articles written by interested Society members, but realize this is a time consuming task, so we'll let you ask the questions and we'll do our best to provide answers in future newsletters. Questions should be related to WNAS activities, the JCD Observatory and the field of Astronomy. Please submit your questions to the Editor at www.zapkgbg@msn.com.

First Question: When is the next WNAS General Membership Meeting?
 Answer: November 18th at 7:00 pm at the JCD Observatory.

High School Students Visit Observatory

This group of students were among the 800 students from northern Nevada attending "College Day." Most of the students pictured looked at sunspots and solar prominences for the first time. Pictured is Professor Robert D. Collier answering questions from possible future astronomers.



Geminids Meteor Shower

The Moon is new on Dec. 11th and will not hinder viewing the Geminids which is calculated to peak during the evening of Dec. 13th. This should be a good shower with bright medium speed meteors. A few should leave nice persistent trails. Geminids seem to be from very dense material suggesting that it may originate from an asteroid rather than from a comet. At about 10:00 in the evening look toward the stars Castor and Pollux in the constellation Gemini. Gemini will rise in the northeast at about 8:00 pm on Dec 13th.

Objects in the Night

Can you identify the celestial objects in the Desert Sky logo? See page three for the answers



WNCC Observatory Board of Governors Meeting Minutes

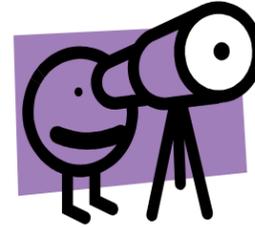
Board President Jack L. Davis opened the meeting at 5:05 pm on Oct. 18th.

Open issues - Solar Observatory Computer, Arrival of new CG8 telescope and related problems, Status of new camera equipment still on order, Status of current grants, Observatory auxiliary power source unit and lightning protection equipment purchases, Observatory Library Book purchases, 18" Genoa Telescope acquisition, High School telescope loan program and the light blocking wall between the Observatory and the lights of Carson City.

New Business - Placement/Financing of Dome for 18" Genoa Telescope, Inexpensive CCD camera for Star Party use, Nomination of new Board member, Observatory open house on October 20 and on Oct 27 for lunar eclipse.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

THE BEST TIME TO VIEW



As an amateur astronomer, we have all noticed the blurring and dancing our atmosphere creates on viewing. This scintillation is caused by the heating of the atmosphere from the ground around or should I say under the path you are viewing. This temperature change expands the air making it less dense than the air around it and as it mixes the photons bend as if going through a lens. We can see the same effect by looking at the bottom of a swimming pool and perturb the surface. The shadow bands we see are from the changes in curvature and length differences of the air-water boundary that the photons must traverse. We have another way to view directly the heating effects by

using a telescope, trained on a bright but out of focus star. If the telescope is temperature equalized, place your hand in the star's light path before it reaches the telescope. You should see on a cool night the heat rising from your hand. This also can serve as to whether your scope is temperature equalized. If it is not, you can not expect a clear image.

Just as your telescope takes time to radiate any heat (another advantage to having outside stored scopes in winter-time), the earth must also radiate solar gain received during the day. Thus, a good viewing night might be one where the clouds of a front move out just at sunset and the front temperature differential is not too much. Otherwise it is going to take time to cool the earth and the lower layers of the atmosphere. This is why most great viewing occurs after midnight and sometimes not until 2 in the morning.

October 27 - Total Lunar Eclipse

For all those enthusiastic and determined amateur astronomers, like myself, we've all noticed the very unusual weather conditions for our Saturday night star party's recently. We had a great night on Sept. 4th, proceeded by two months of overcast or extremely windy conditions. Finally, a much appreciated break in the weather on Nov. 6th, unfortunately, this was too late for the total lunar eclipse on the 27th. A small group of members and community residents did show up at the Observatory for an evening of hopeful conversation and hot coffee. Normally several lunar eclipses occur each year, but none will occur in 2005 or 2006, the next on March 7, 2007.



Out of the Ashes

The observatory had a close call with fate this past July in the form of the "Waterfall Fire" although the fire got within 10 meters of the weather station, a recorded temperature of 42° C (108° F) appeared on its sensor. In order to prevent damage to the telescope optics we've had the rolling roof shut down since the fire. After the recent rain and snow we finally re-opened the the rollon roof on October 20th. We hope to, quickly, get all the telescopes, including the radio telescope and the solar telescope operational very soon. I'm overwhelmed with gratitude for those volunteers that have given so much of their time and talent to keeping the observatory accessible to WNCC students, WNAS, and the general public.

Thank you WNAS!!
 Robert D. Collier, dir JCDO

WNAS Website Questionnaire

Roger Block, WNAS's newly elected President is very interested in learning more about members astronomy, observing and participation interests. Now included on the WNAS website is a questionnaire for just this purpose. Take a few minutes to fill it out and we'll try to tailor some of the Society's activities and our Newsletter to your interests!

World's Funniest Joke

According to a poll conducted by the **British Association for the Advancement of Science**, the following is the world's funniest joke:

Famed fictional detective Sherlock Holmes and his gruff assistant Doctor Watson pitch their tent while on a camping expedition, but in the middle of the night Holmes nudges Watson awake and questions him.

HOLMES: Watson, look up at the stars and tell me what you deduce.

WATSON: I see millions of stars, and if there are millions of stars, and if even a few of those have planets, it is quite likely there are some planets like earth, and if there are a few planets like earth out there there might also be life.

HOLMES: Watson, you idiot! Somebody stole our tent.

Note From Editor

As the new Editor for the WNAS Newsletter I would like to encourage the Societies membership to participate in the creative enhancement of our six publications a year. Articles and new ideas are always appreciated. I've added a few new features such as the "Objects in the Sky" and the "Ask Jack" column and hope you will enjoy there addition, but most of all, I would like to hear from you.

Objects in the Sky answers: Saturn (easy) upper right; Globular Cluster M13 left center