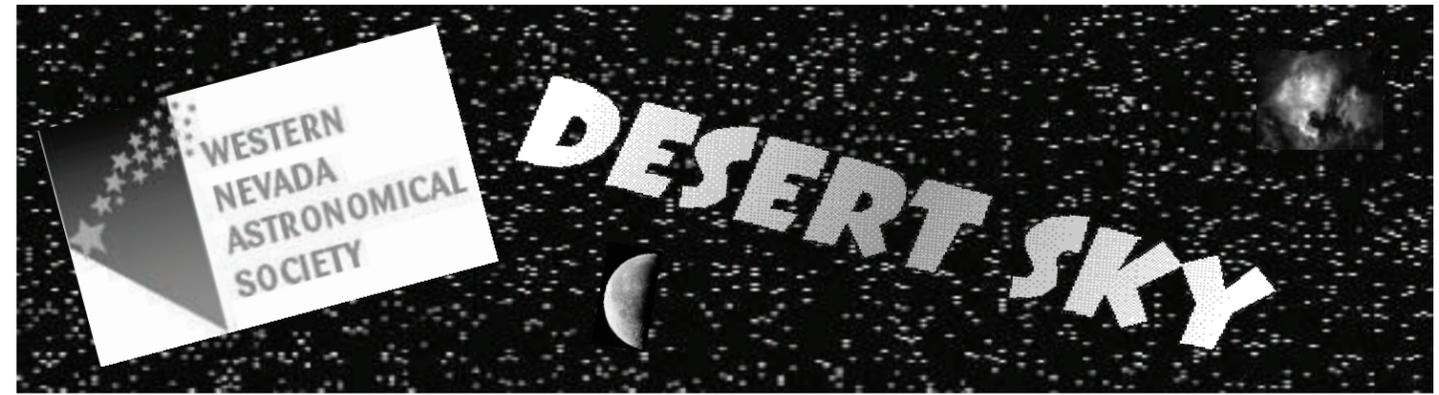




WNCC Foundation (WNAS)
2201 West College Parkway
Carson City, NV 89703



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President's Corner



It is both an honor and a pleasure to have the opportunity to serve as the president of the Western Nevada Astronomical Society (WNAS) for this new year 2006. We members of WNAS along with the many amateur astronomers in our membership are very excited about this year of new technical challenges, educational programs, observational enhancements at the Jack C. Davis (JCDO), and the expectation of new discoveries.

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Events Calendar

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
January	1	2	3	4 Earth at Perihelion	5	6 First Qtr Moon	7 Star Party
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Star Party Full Moon
	15	16	17	18 BOG Meeting	19 WNAS Meeting	20	21 Star Party
	22 Last Qtr Moon	23	24	25	26	27 Saturn at Opposition	28 Star Party
	29 New Moon	30	31				

Dates to Remember:

JANUARY, 2006

4th Earth at Perihelion
6th First Qtr Moonrise, 11:32
14th Full (Old Moon) Moonrise, 17:18
18th Board of Governors, 19:00
19th WNAS General Mtg, 19:00
22nd Last Qtr Moonrise, 00:21
27th Saturn at Opposition
29th New Moonrise, 07:37

January 19th WNAS General Membership Meeting 7:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY, 2006

4th First Qtr Moonrise, 10:27
12th Full (Snow Moon) Moonrise, 17:14
15th BOG/OPS Meeting, 19:00
20th Last Qtr Moonrise, 00:20
24th Delta Leonid Showers
27th New Moonrise, 06:38

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
February				1	2	3	4 Star Party First Qtr Moon
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Star Party
	12 Full Moon	13	14	15 BOG/OPS Meeting	16	17	18 Star Party
	19	20 Last Qtr Moon	21	22	23	24 Delta Leonid Showers	25 Star Party
	26	27 New Moon	28				

The following is a short list of just a few of the innovations earmarked for the JCDO this year: (1) Our volunteers are going to be busy getting our external solar observatory operating with our new Solar Max 90 telescope that will bring "real time" images of the sun through a H-alpha filter. We will display the images of solar prominences on the screens in the observatory. (2) All three telescopes in the JCDO telescope room imaging a wide assortment of astronomical objects. (3) Permanently mounting a spectrograph on our C-14 Celestron telescope as well as offering a course in stellar spectroscopy this spring. (4) Calibrating JCDO telescopes to have the capability to do a wide variety of research from looking for undiscovered asteroids to extrasolar planets. This can be done with precise refinements and will be a challenge that is well worth our concerted efforts.

As your president, my major goal is to help provide leadership and programs that will inspire and stimulate a life-long interest in astronomy. The partnership between WNAS and JCDO is growing stronger each year as a result of the dedication of many talented and enlightened WNAS volunteers. Come and be a part of the excitement and educational opportunities at WNAS!!

The following are a few of the goals, events and programs planned for WNAS during 2006:

1. More telescopes around town and on the WNCC campus.
2. Continue our "Novice Observer Training Courses" this summer.
3. Mail returnable questionnaires to members to find out your interests.
4. Plan our WNAS meeting lectures further out (see page 3 for subjects).
5. Plus a look at the current night sky at every meeting!!

We will begin our journey together with our first meeting on January 19th at 7:00 pm with the program entitled "Touring the Sky with a Planisphere." We'll also take a close look at this seasons most prominent constellations, Orion and Gemini. Come join us and begin a full year of learning and navigating through the night sky. ALL are Welcome!!

Ask Jack

This is the memberships column to ask questions about WNAS activities, the JCD Observatory and the field of astronomy. Please submit questions to the Editor at www.zapkgbg@msn.com or at the next WNAS membership meeting on **January 19th**.

Q: What is the closest star forming region to our solar system? The Orion Nebula (M-42) is the nearest star formation region to Earth. This nebula is easily seen with the naked eye due to light from the "Trapezium", a system of four hot, bright, new stars at the heart of the nebula. Because of its close proximity to earth this is a particularly well studied region, despite this fact, star formation is not all that well understood. The Orion Nebula is actually part of a much larger cloud that covers most of the constellation of Orion, which includes the Horsehead Nebula.

Q: How would our seasons be different if the Earth's axis was not tilted 23.5 degrees, lets say it was not tilted or it was 90 degrees? If the Earth was not tilted on its axis, we would not have seasons. If we were tilted 90 degrees (like Uranus, 97.9 degrees) we would have extreme seasons. It's believed a catastrophic collision with another large body eons ago may have tipped Uranus over on its side.

Q: Other planets have moons with names. Is there an official name for our Moon? The "official" name is the Moon, with a capital M. The satellites of the other planets are called moons (small m). Similarly, stars are referred to as suns, but our star is the Sun.

Something to Contemplate

"Stargazing must be one of the oldest pastimes of humanity. It led to astrology, astronomy, measurement of the seasons, and the very beginnings of science. I think no single experience of the world speaks to us so directly as when we contemplate the infinity of space, its vastness and countless heavenly bodies. In this way the stars unite us, regardless of country, ethnicity, and even time."

... from the liner notes of Philip Glass's recording of "Orion", composed for the Olympic Games held in Athens in June of 2004.

WNAS Information Board - Past and Future Events

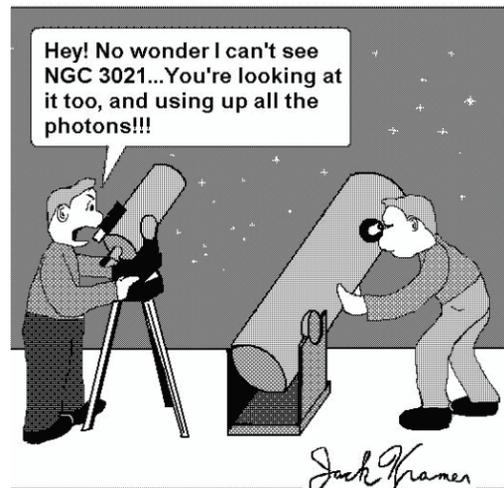
First off, I would like to remind all members that January 19th will be the next general membership meeting of the WNAS. We hope to see a good crowd and it would be great if everyone could arrive by 7:00 pm at the Observatory. We are planning to demonstrate the use of a planisphere and review a few of the seasons most prominent constellations and their mythological significance

We plan to announce this summers Novice Training Courses in the next newsletter. These are one night events, normally on Saturday nights in conjunction with our normal star parties. We ask participants to come about an hour before it gets dark and we have a short lecture involving the use of telescopes and the night sky.

Robert Collier has suggested that WNAS in conjunction with the JCDO start a program to introduce members and the public to all the major constellations over the next year. This will be done at the General Membership meeting, the Saturday night star parties and during the Novice Training Courses.

Objects in the Night

Can you identify the celestial objects in the Desert Sky logo? See page 2.



Cartoon provided by permission of Jack Kramer

For Sale: Celestron 8i Special Edition, 8" SCT, with/Goto, Pelican Case and Accessories, \$1400.00, Like new Harold Mason at ripcheep@earthlink.net or (775) 882-0399

Note from the Editor: Some of the pictures may not come out as clear as we would like in the newsletter, go to our website for the best resolution.

Objects in the Night Sky answers: Galaxy North American and Pelican Nebulas in the upper right corner and last quarter moon.

WNAS OPERATIONS MEETING MINUTES

Robert Collier called to order his first operational meeting as WNAS President at 8:00 pm following the WNCC Observatory Board of Governors meeting at 7:00 pm. Business topics discussed were the development of a program to place telescopes around town on a more regular basis and place them on the WNCC campus during the day for solar observation. These programs are intended to raise interest in the field of astronomy. It was decided that program events for the General WNAS meeting should be planned out for at least 6 months (Jan – Use of a Planisphere, May – Discussion of the Moon, July – Spectroscopy). It was determined we would try sending a questionnaire via snail mail to the general membership to find out members interests. A new event structure for future WNAS meeting should be implemented. Each meeting will start with a presentation of what will be viewable in the night sky for the next two months and/or will be presented in the Newsletter. The January 19 General Membership meeting will feature a tour of the night sky using a Planisphere. Also Jack L. Davis, WNAS Board member and Observatory volunteer will present a few interesting facts pertaining to the mythological significant of Orion and Gemini. WNAS will try to use the community events calendars in The Appeal and Reno Gazette to increase interest in the Saturday night Star Party's. Overall this was a very productive meeting, we were all inspired by Robert, and his enthusiasm was met with many new ideas and proposals. We hope to see many new members at the General Membership meeting on January 19th @ 7:00 pm.

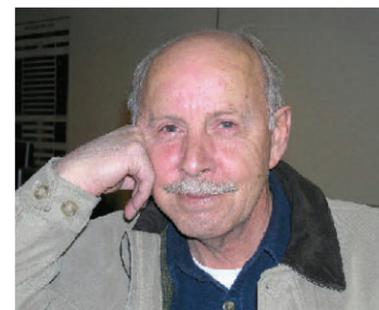
Jack C. Davis Logo and Motto Contest

At the beginning of the Fall 2005 semester at Western Nevada Community College (WNCC), Professor Robert Collier and astronomy student Kerianne Carlisle collaborated on an Honors Project. During the semester, they held a college wide contest to obtain students' ideas for a logo and a motto for the Jack C. Davis Observatory.

The project was successful! Several students submitted entries, and first, second and third prize winners were chosen for either their logo or their motto entries.

The contest winners were declared at the star party on December 17th. Mr. James LaLonde designed the first place logo, and Ms. Jessica Holton composed the first place motto. These and the other winning contest entries will provide ideas for the college's marketing design specialists, who create the "look" for the college's advertising materials.

Space News - Fermi's Paradox



In 1950 Enrico Fermi posited that if many civilizations have arisen in the Milky Way Galaxy then surely some of them have colonized beyond their home star and many of those colonies have sent out colonies. Those waves of colonization would have spread across the Milky Way in less time than the age of the galaxy. So where are they and why haven't we seen them?

In his book, "Where is everybody?" Stephen Webb considers 50 proposed solutions to the "Fermi Paradox", including (1) ours is the first and only civilization in the galaxy, (2) others exist but are hiding, and (3) they have already been here and we are their descendants.

Then in 1981, cosmologist Edward Harrison suggested a powerful self-regulating mechanism that would neatly resolve the paradox. Any civilization bent on the intensive colonization of other worlds, would be driven by an expansive territorial impulse and would possess immense technological powers. So aggressive a nature would be unstable in combination with the technology and such a civilization would self-destruct long before it could reach the stars.

Unrestrained territorial drive has served biological evolution well for millions of years but may become a liability once a species acquires powers more than sufficient to destroy itself. There may be some filter of natural selection that eliminates those civilizations driven by aggressive expansion.

If Harrison is right there may be many highly evolved civilizations in our galaxy but his regulatory mechanism should preclude any relentless wave of colonization from overrunning and cannibalizing the Milky Way. Article by Stargeezer