



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



Events Calendar

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
March					1	2	3 Star Party, Full Moon
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Star Party
	11 Last Qtr Moon, Time Change	12	13	14	15 WNAS Meeting	16	17 Star Party, Dark Sky
	18 New Moon	19	20	21 Vernal Equinox	22	23	24 Star Party
	25 First Qtr Moon	26	27	28	29	30	31 Star Party

April	1	2 Full Moon	3	4	5	6	7 Star Party
	8	9	10 Last Qtr Moon	11	12	13	14 Star Party, Dark Sky
	15	16	17 New Moon	18	19 OPS Meeting	20	21 Star Party, Dark Sky
	22	23 First Qtr Moon	24	25	26	27	28 Star Party
	29	30					

Dates to Remember:

March, 2007

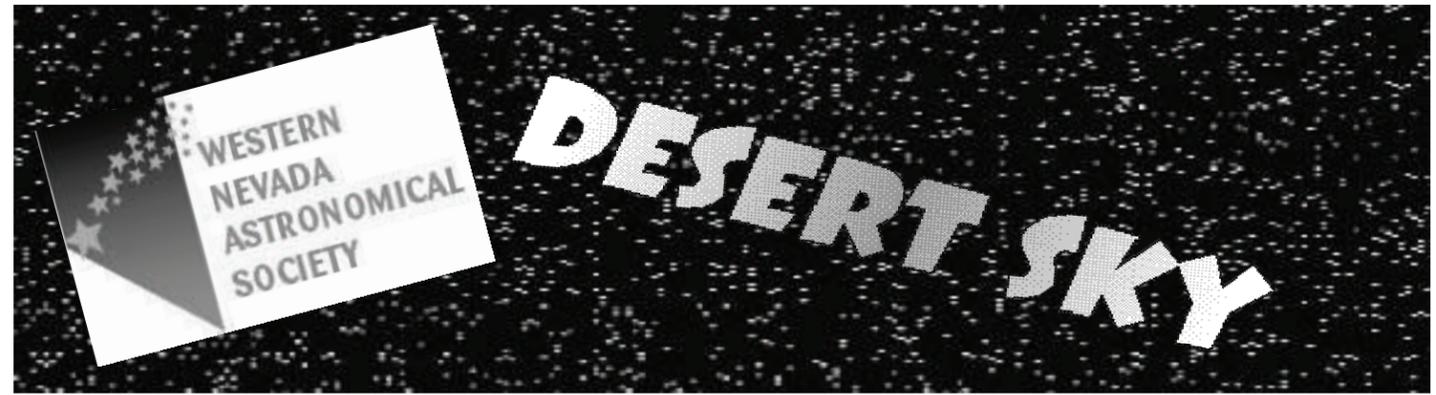
3rd Full Moon rise: 5:56 pm
11th Last Qtr Mn rise: 2:02 am
11th Daylight Savings Time Begins
15th WNAS Mtg @ 7:00 pm
18th New Mn Rise: 6:52 am
21st Vernal Equinox, first day of spring
25th First Qtr Mn Rise: 11:24 am

March 15th WNAS General Membership Mtg 7:00 p.m.

April, 2007

2nd Full Moon rise: 7:46 pm
10th Last Qtr Mn rise: 2:37 am
17th New Moon rise: 6:10 am
19th OPS Mtg @ 7:00 pm
23rd First Qtr Mn rise: 11:26 am

*These are the best dark sky weekends for observing faint objects.



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President's Corner

The Western Nevada Astronomical Society (WNAS) is going on the fourth year of its operation. As in any organization, there are those members that are active participants and those that prefer to be behind the scene in a supportive roll; both groups are important and absolutely vital to the successful operation of the society. Red Sumner served, as president of the society for the first 2 years and Roger Block was our second elected president with Jack L. Davis filling in a portion of Roger's unexpired term. Jack became the third elected president and I succeeded Jack as the 4th elected president. My tenure as your president is coming to an end and I just wanted to make a few remarks before I pass the baton to a new president. In the last couple of regular membership meetings there has been a continuing discussion and an introspection among the membership as to what operational successes and failures have transpired since the inception of WNAS. There are those that have stated our society doesn't perform like a typical astronomical society. We do not take road trips to dark locations and participate in special functions like taking telescopes out and enjoying each other's company all together under the stars. There are those that have been talking for a long time that we should have monthly membership meetings rather than bimonthly meetings thinking that would help preserve continuity and better camaraderie. Some members posited the stellar success of our "Novice Nights" helping people learn to operate and adjust their personnel telescope, instruct local teachers and their K-12 and college students about the night sky over the observatory as well as introduce the public to the latest technology operating our largest telescopes. There are those that would like this organization to become a "users group" that should continue just as we are, supporting the activities of the observatory and drop the society altogether. At any rate, WNAS members should be proud of the enormous contribution they are making to satisfy the curiosity and hunger for knowledge of the night sky. Yes indeed, we are a mixed bag and there is no doubt that improvements and adjustments should be made. Finally, I have come to this personal affirmation regarding what WNAS should do at this juncture.

This astronomical society is made up of a "very gifted" group of individuals that have the capacity to do any or all the above. The most vital missing ingredient is the willingness to take a leadership role in making things happen. Yes, that means you. The future of our organization rests among the collective ideas of some of the most talented people I know, and that is you. The upcoming election of a new slate of officers is an imperative for stepping up and doing your part to make WNAS the organization you want it to be. It has been personally very satisfying to served as your president because I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to lead a group of wonderful intellectually curios individuals.

What are open and globular star clusters? Why do we see open clusters primarily in the winter and the summer, while a majority of globulars are on display from late spring until early fall? Tim Burns will discuss these and other topics related to star clusters at our **March 15th WNAS** meeting. Don't miss this! (Thank You!!)

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WNAS web site:
<http://western-Nevada-astronomical-society.com>

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 *March 15th*.

Q: What is a Black Hole? Any object whose mass and density has a computed escape velocity greater than the speed of light.

Q: What is libration? No this isn't having a drink at the appointed time every evening, that's libration! It is the small oscillation of a celestial body about its mean position. The term is used most frequently in connection with the moon. As a result of libration it is possible to see 59% of the moons surface at different times.

Q: What is meant by a singularity? This is a point at which the known laws of physics breakdown. For example, the singularity at the center of a black hole is a point at which matter is compressed into an infinitely small volume and so has an infinitely large density! In the theory of the Big Bang, the Universe was born from a singularity of infinite density and temperature.

Q: How can a comparison be made between what the eye sees, a telescope sees and a CCD chip can detect? The naked eye can see stars down to 6th magnitude, the largest telescope can see faint galaxies down to 30th magnitude. The difference is a factor of 4,000,000,000: where does it come from? From a difference in aperture (1/2 inch in the eye vs 6 meters in the largest telescope or a factor of 500), a difference in detecting efficiency (0.1% of all photons for the eye vs. 50% for a CCD, or a factor of 500), and a difference in integration time (the eye reads out every 1/10 second vs a 30 minute integration with a CCD, or a factor of 16,000).

WNAS Information Board - Past and Future Events

First off, I would like to remind all members that Thursday, **March 15th** 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. Topic of discussion will be the future of WNAS.

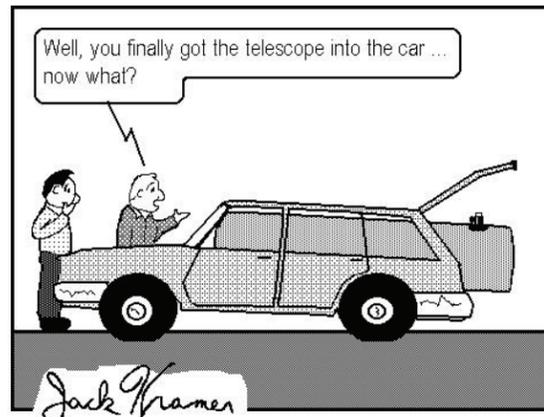
There have been a number of special events at the Observatory the last two months. WNAS hosted a birthday party for Ben Penwell on January 13th. Ben invited up 9 friends from his 4th grade class at Jacks Valley Elementary School. There was a total of 13 folks in the group and all enjoyed a short lecture by Robert Collier and a tour of the night sky by Dr. Jack L. Davis. Unfortunately it was an overcast night, which precluded the use of any telescopes.

On January 16th the JCD Observatory hosted a dinner and lecture event for 25 attendees from Harley Davidson's executive headquarters in Carson City. The event/meetings are normally held at local restaurants. Harley Davidson has been one of the observatories strongest supporters and it is greatly appreciated by the Board and Foundation. About 25 folks attended and were entertained with a lecture and Q&A session by Robert Collier, Walt Dillard and Red Sumner.

Many of the Saturday night star parties were either rained out or clouded in, which left a lot of us giving extended tours of the Observatory, instead of looking at the stars!

As a reminder to all members, we are still in need of Saturday night volunteers for our weekly star parties. If any of you have an interest in imaging the night sky the C-400 and BRC-250 are now fully operational!

Objects in the Night



Cartoon provided by permission of Jack Kramer

Note from the Editor

As many of you may have noticed the WNAS website hasn't been updated in quite a while. We are looking for a webmaster if anyone is interested let one of the officers know! We are currently only putting the articles from past newsletters on the website. With our current programs we are unable to post the entire newsletter with photos and all. We anticipate that in the near future we will go to a PDF format for the newsletters. If any of the members are familiar with this format and would like to tackle a newsletter or two let me know!

WNAS January General Meeting Minutes

Robert Collier opened the January 18th meeting of the WNAS general membership 7:05. After welcoming the 12 attendees, the minutes from the last meeting were approved. Dana Luterick followed with a treasury report, the Association has approximately \$3700.00 in funds available. Payment was approved to Brian Guerin for the cost of publishing the WNAS newsletter for the last 14 months.

Topics of discussion:

Robert discussed once again the status of the observatories light blocking wall. Ed Martin (Construction Technology Instructor) has everything organized and is ready to go. The holdup at this time has been the weather.

The WNAS scholarship program that was recommended at the last meeting heard further discussion. The suggestion at this time is to provide two \$500.00 scholarships, one in physics/astronomy and the other in general science. If the scholarships are approved they will be used in the April WNCC scholarship committee meeting.

The visiting scholarship program to be sponsored by WNAS was discussed and deferred to a later meeting.

Nominations for new officers was put to the membership and no nominations were accepted. This will leave the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Webmaster unfilled for the next year. Brian Guerin will continue to publish the newsletter for now.

Excerpt from the last minutes:

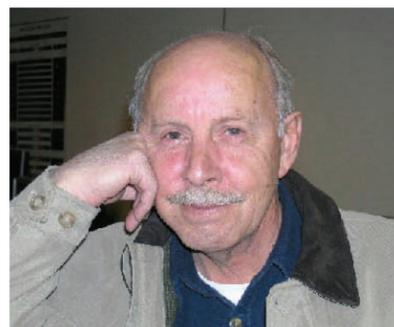
"A discussion on the future of the WNAS was brought up by Barry Morgan. Currently there are several Astronomical Societies supporting the interest of amateur astronomers in the Reno, Sparks, Carson and Minden areas. The point was made that the WNAS is basically a support arm for the Jack C. Davis Observatory and may better serve its members and the Observatory if this fact is formalized."

Robert initiated the discussion started last month by Barry Morgan pertaining to the future of the WNAS. With interest waning in the WNAS, it's becoming apparent that the main interest of club members is in the Jack C. Davis Observatory and its operation rather than in a traditional astronomical society. Mike Thomas recommended a WNAS meeting just to discuss the future of WNAS, this meeting will take place on February 15th at 7:00 at the JCDO. Robert will present the membership with the results of this meeting in the Presidents Corner for March. Red Sumner recommended a motion to dissolve the WNAS, but was asked to set this aside until the Feb 15th meeting was concluded. It's strongly suggested that if you want the WNAS to continue as an astronomical society and not just an arm of the JCDO, we suggest you arrive at the March General Membership meeting ready to volunteer your time and be able to accept an official position in the WNAS.

Robert Collier gave an excellent lecture on the most interesting astronomical events, research and accomplishments of 2006. The lecture covered some very interesting events such as the Stardust and Corott space missions. Thanks to Robert for a great job and one appreciated by all that attended.

Robert adjourned the meeting at 8:45 pm. The next WNAS meeting will be March 15th at 7:00 pm.

Space Notes: Interesting Space Websites



For this months rather short column I thought a few interesting websites might be of interest to the membership.

www.universetoday.com - A good site for breaking news and interesting stuff with a downloadable observing guide.

www.outofthecradle.net - The sub-heading says 'Chronicles of the New Space Age'. It does a pretty good job, I think. This month has a review of the Billy Bob Thornton movie 'The Astronaut Farmer'

www.astrobio.net/news/ - Articles on cosmology and man's effort in the search for extraterrestrial life. Clear skies and happy surfing.....Stargeezer