



DESERT SKY

Presidents Message - December, 2007

The planet Mars will be in opposition on Christmas Eve, December 24th. On that day Mars will be opposite the Sun and will be completely illuminated. This doesn't always mean that Mars is at it's closest point to us at that time, because our orbits around the Sun are not circular. Mars oppositions can be anywhere between 35 and 60 million miles from Earth. According to Astronomy magazine, Mars closest distance from us will actually be on December 18th, when the distance between us will be 54 million miles.

Mars oppositions happen every 780 days. This year Mars will climb up to 77 degrees above the horizon. This is quite high, so there will be a minimum of atmosphere to mess up our viewing. Mars will be a good object to study from now until late January, during which some surface detail will be visible. The weekly star parties at the Observatory will give us a good opportunity to educate visitors. So you may want to do some planetary observing on our neighbor "the Red Planet".

Mike Thomas

November 20th Minutes

Mike Thomas opened the meeting at 7:00 pm. Twelve members and guests were in attendance. Mike started out with a brief history of the recent comet 17/P Holmes and the fact that the observatory volunteers had been very successful in imaging this object. The results of last weekends novice night were reviewed and all agreed more advertising needed to be done. Frank Davis's presentation on telescopes a success and we all appreciate his efforts. The previous meetings notes were approved and the monthly budget figures were reviewed.

Observatory reports were given by Robert Collier, Jack L. Davis gave a report on the Jack C. Davis Observatory board issues. Besides the light wall which is finally being built there was little new to report in these two areas. Telescope operates reported nothing new for the most part, except to remind everyone interested that Adam Block would be presenting a lecture series on Nov 30 and Dec 1 at the observatory. Everyone interested signed up and was told to keep in contact for exact times.

The star party greeter program that Mike wanted to initiate seems to be working itself out without assigning anyone in advance for this job, Saturday night star parties are of course still a big success.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30. After a break Jim Bean presented a very interesting talk on "Solar Weather and Magnetic Fields."

Next WNAS General Membership Meeting - December 18th

WNAS Officers

President

Mike Thomas
mnetomas@sbcglobal.net

Vice President

Robert Collier
collier@wncc.edu

Treasurer/Secretary

Brian Guerin
zapkgbg@msn.com

Newsletter Editor

Brian Guerin
zapkgbg@msn.com

Webmaster

Jim Bean
jbean@carson.k12.nv.us

December WNAS Membership Meeting GUEST SPEAKER!!

Harold Mason will present "The Stuff Between the Stars"

Events Calendar

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
16		17 First Qtr Moon	18 WNAS Meeting	19	20	21	22 Star Party Winter Solstice
23		24 Full Moon, Mars Opposition	25	26	27	28	29 Star Party
30	30 Last Qtr Moon		1	2	3	4	5 Star Party Dark Sky
6	7		8 New Moon	9	10	11	12 Star Party Dark Sky
13	14		15 WNAS Mtg, First Qtr Moon	16	17	18	19 Star Party

December January



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