



DESERT SKY

Presidents Message - January, 2008

Orion is my favorite constellation. It graces us with its presence during the Winter months. In mythology Orion was a great hunter, and the son of Poseidon, the God of the Sea. Some say that he was in love with the Seven Sisters of the Pleiades and that is why Orion follows the Pleiades in the night sky. I don't believe that, because Orion's bow is pointed toward the "Sister" and if he loved them he would not try to strike them with arrows. Regardless, Orion is a magnificent constellation, which actually (sort of) looks like its namesake.

Everyone's observational target in Orion is the Great Nebula (M42), which is located below the three stars of Orion's belt, in his sword. This huge "star nursery" is visible to the naked eye, and is a wonderful object for binocular and small telescope viewing.

The Horsehead Nebula is also in Orion. It is a dark nebula, shaped like a horse's head, which obscures part of the glowing nebula IC434. You can find IC434 just south of the Easternmost star of Orion's belt. The Horsehead is difficult to locate with small telescopes. Dr. Jack Davis, a WNAS member was able to get a nice image of it recently, using the Observatory's C400 Takahashi telescope.

The supergiant star "Betelgeuse" marks Orion's Eastern shoulder. It is so large that if it was centered where our Sun is, its sphere would reach beyond the Earth, nearly to Mars.

The star "Rigel" signifies Orion's Western most foot. It is an intensely hot star and has the energy output of 50,000 Suns.

Orion is on the Celestial Equator, so it is visible from both hemispheres. It has many interesting sights that I have not mentioned here. So, go outside and enjoy Winter's most impressive constellation. Mike Thomas

December 18th Minutes

Mike Thomas opened the general membership meeting at 7:05 pm. Thirteen folks attended the meeting and each member and/or guest introduced themselves. In Mike's introduction, he talked about the recent position of Mars and the best times to view the planet in the weeks to come.

Brian Guerin presented the Treasury report (\$3,239.38) and the last meetings minutes were approved as presented in the last newsletter.

Robert let all the telescope operators know that money was available for new software and to let him know of any requests. Jack Davis gave a brief update on the JCDO Board of Directors, basically saying the request to the College for a paid assistance was on hold pending funding.

The meeting was closed at 7:30 and Harold Mason gave an excellent lecture on "The Stuff Between the Stars".

Next WNAS General Membership Meeting - February 19th

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January WNAS Membership Meeting GUEST SPEAKER!!

Mike Thomas will give a lecture on "The 1908 New York to Paris Automobile Race"

Events Calendar

	January							February																																	
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10						
							15 First Qtr Moon @ 7:00 pm WNAS Meeting	14	15	16	17	18	19 Star Party	20	21	22 Full Moon	23	24	25	26 Star Party	27	28	29 Last Qtr Moon	30	31	1	2 Star Party Dark Sky	3	4	5	6 New Moon	7	8	9 Star Party Dark Sky	10	11	12	13 First Qtr Moon	14	15	16 Star Party



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