



DESERT SKY

Presidents Message - February, 2009

Everybody likes comets. Set your alarm for a couple hours before dawn on Tuesday, February 24th. Stagger outside, with a cup of coffee and binoculars, then look toward the southwest around 30 degrees up from the horizon where you will find the constellation Leo. On the east side of Leo you will see Saturn, and just a few degrees below Saturn will be Comet C/2007 N3 Lulin.

This time/location will be it's closest approach to Earth, at a distance of 38 million miles. It is supposed to be about Magnitude 5, and visible to the naked eye in a dark sky. With binoculars it may put on a good show in combination with Saturn. The comet is glowing an emerald green color due to sunlight illuminating cyanogens, which is a poisonous gas. (per Spaceweather .com)

The comet was discovered by a young student at Sun Yat-Sen University in China. He was examining an astro-image taken by astronomer Chi Sheng Lin at the Lulin Observatory in Taiwan. It was named after that observatory. The fact that the comet was discovered through the work of China and Taiwan is ironic when one considers the acrimony between the two nations. I guess this is further proof that science transcends borders. How cool is that?

Mike Thomas

Buzz Aldrin Commemorative Coin Raffle

Minted on the Number One Coin Press at the former U.S. Branch Mint in Carson City, Nevada (1 troy ounce of silver)
Commemorating the opening of the Jack C. Davis Observatory.
Autographed by Buzz Aldrin, second man on the moon, and Jack C. Davis

Included with the Commemorative Coin will be a 4" Celestron GoTo Telescope

Tickets—\$20.00 each or 6 for \$100.00

Make checks payable to WNC Foundation at:
WNC Foundation, 2201 West College Parkway, Carson City, NV 89703

Drawing to be held at the Observatory on December 26, 2009

Winner need not be present to win. (Call 775-445-3240 for additional information)

February WNAS Membership Meeting GUEST SPEAKER!!

Mike Thomas will present the slideshow/lecture: "**Lord Horatio Nelson, Admiral of the King's Navy**"

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Events Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
15	16 Last Quarter Moon	17 WNAS Meeting	18	19	20	21 Star Party, Dark Sky
22	23	24 New Moon, Comet C/2007 N3 Lulin	25	26	27	28 Star Party, Dark Sky
1	2	3 First Quarter Moon	4	5	6	7 Star Party
8 Saturn at Opposition	9	10 Full Moon	11	12	13	14 Star Party
15	16	17 WNAS Meeting	18 Last Quarter Moon	19	20 Vernal Equinox	21 Star Party

February March



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