



DESERT SKY

Presidents Message - March, 2009

On January 15th NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center reported that over the past three Martian years (the equal of seven Earth years) large methane gas emissions have been detected coming from three locations on Mars. The Center's Mike Mumma said that they have conclusive evidence that there are methane plumes originating from areas having evidence of ancient water flow or ground ice. The plumes are observed primarily in the Martian spring and summer, possibly because the underground source is released when ice in surface cracks melts, allowing the release of the gas. Animals and decomposing plants account for 90% of the Earth's methane, so this is cause for a lot of speculation about life on Mars. Many believe that there may be methane producing bacteria, or some other underground organism that exists deep enough where there is liquid water. Others say that the methane could come from a geochemical process (non biological) where iron oxide conversion results in the gas. However, it appears that right now smart money is on the biological explanation, meaning that there may very well be life on Mars. How cool is that? Mike Thomas

"Galileo Telescope" Purchase. On March 7th Mike Thomas made a motion to officers of WNAS to purchase 25 special "Year of Astronomy" Galileo telescopes at a discounted price in conjunction with a fellow Reno organization. The motion was passed (\$12.30 each) unanimously. At least two will remain at the JCDO for demonstration purposes by WNC/JCDO and WNAS. Club members had many excellent ideas for use of the remaining telescopes.

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)

March WNAS Membership Meeting GUEST SPEAKER!!

"Omega Centauri, King of the Milky Way Globular Clusters"
A lecture/slide show Presented by WNAS President Mike Thomas

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Events Calendar

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

March
April



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