



Presidents Message - June, 2010

In the recent days there has been a rumor that a newly discovered comet will soon be visible to the naked eye. As of the first week of June this is the information available on the comet:

The object was discovered by astronomer Robert H. McNaught, age 55, of the Australian National University at the Siding Spring Observatory. He first viewed the comet in September, 2009, using the observatory's 1/2 meter Schmidt telescope. It has been designated "Comet C/2009 R1" McNaught gained fame by discovering "Comet C/2006 P1" in August, 2006, which became the brightest comet in decades, and was visible for many months. Mr. McNaught is a prolific discoverer of celestial objects. This new comet is the 51st comet he has discovered. He has also discovered over 400 asteroids! That is impressive in anyone's book.

The new comet is becoming brighter than originally expected. It will reach it's brightest from mid June to early July when it is 37 million miles from the Sun. At that time it will be visible about 2 hours before sunrise, and 20 degrees above the Northeast horizon, near the star Mirfak. It should be a naked eye object on June 15th, the date of our monthly meeting. It is expected to reach a brightness of Magnitude +2 at that time. There should be a coma and a tail visible as a result of solar radiation burning off the surface ice and dust. This may appear slightly green, as many comets contain Cyanogen gas which jets out of the nucleus when solar radiation increases. This poisonous gas combines with carbon and burns green. I might be motivated enough to set my alarm and get up to see this one.

The real story here is probably the amazing number of objects Robert McNaught has discovered. How cool would it be to just discover one, and name it after me!

Mike Thomas

May 2010 Minutes

The May meeting highlights were:

- The members present were reminded that the Saturday observatory star parties include viewing with telescopes on the patio, tours of the facility, and lectures in the classroom. These activities are guided and hosted by our members, so we can always use some help through increased member participation.
- Professor Collier gave a report on the status of new equipment that has been ordered for enhancing observatory capabilities.
- Mike announced that we have stipulated that the students who are awarded our two scholarships are required to visit the observatory, and meet the membership. This is a result of a perceived lack of appreciation by previous recipients.
- Mike gave a PowerPoint presentation on the "Star Trek Phenomenon"

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Speaker info for the ***Tuesday, June 15, 2010***membership meeting:

**The June 15th monthly meeting program will be the slideshow/lecture
"Leonardo da Vinci"
Presented by Mike Thomas.**

Events Calendar

~ June 2010 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Moon at apogee	4 Moon Last Quarter	5 Star Party
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Star Party Dark Skies New Moon
13	14	15 <i>WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO</i> Moon at perigee	16	17	18	19 Star Party Moon 1 st Quarter
20	21 Summer Solstice 11:28 UT	22	23	24	25 Ceres 1.0° south of Moon, occultation	26 Star Party *Full Moon, partial lunar eclipse
27	28	29	30	Notes: 1. Pluto at opposition on June 25 2. *Moon setting during eclipse		

~ July 2010 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 Star Party
4 Moon Last Quarter	5	6	7	8	9	10 Star Party Dark Skies
11 New Moon Total Solar Eclipse S. Pacific Ocean	12	13	14	15	16	17 Star Party
18 Moon 1 st Quarter	19	20 <i>WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO</i>	21	22	23	24 Star Party
25	26 Moon Full	27	28 Southern Delta Aquarids Meteor Shower	29 Southern Delta Aquarids Meteor Shower	30	31 Star Party