



**Presidents Message – April, 2011**

The Comet C/2009 P1 Garradd is coming our way. The comet was discovered by Gordon J. Garradd, an astronomer at the Siding Spring Observatory, New South Wales, Australia. He first observed it in August, 2008, with a 0.5 meter Schmidt telescope, at a dim magnitude of 17.5. Garradd has discovered many comets during his productive career. The Siding Springs site is the home of twenty telescopes, including the 3.9 meter Anglo-Australian Telescope.

The Comet is a visitor from the distant Oort Cloud, which is the originating home of long period comets. It is believed that this may be the first time this comet has visited the inner Solar System.

At this time Comet Garradd's magnitude is increasing, and it is 15 degrees above the Southeast horizon traveling Northward through the constellation Aquarius. In the first week of May the comet will become more visible, even becoming viewable in a 4 inch telescope. We will probably be able to view the comet quite easily during the period of May through the Fall months. Take some time some Saturday evening to visit the Observatory and view the comet at one of our regular scheduled Star Parties.

This coming Tuesday, the 19th, at 7 PM we will have our monthly membership meeting. After the business portion of the meeting concludes, at approximately 7:30 PM, the slide-show lecture, "Sir Ernest Shackleton & the Trans Antarctic Expedition" will begin. This is an inspiring story, don't miss it.

*Mike Thomas*

March, 2011

**March 2011 Meeting Minutes**

- Mike gave a report on the WNAS members attempt to complete a Messier Marathon on the evening of March 5th. In summary, the cloudy weather prevented telescope viewing. Another attempt will be made on the first weekend of April.
- Observatory Director Robert Collier provided an update on the WNC budget issues and the threat of cutbacks affecting the Observatory.
- Red Sumner gave a PowerPoint lecture on Asteroids.

*WNAS Officers*

**President**  
Mike Thomas  
mnethomas@sbcglobal.net

**Vice President**  
Robert Collier  
collier@wnc.edu

**Treasurer/Secretary**  
Brian Guerin  
zapkbg@msn.com

**Newsletter Editor**  
James Bean  
jbean@carson.k12.nv.us

**Webmaster**  
Doug George  
doug\_george@msn.com

Speaker info for the \*\*\***Tuesday, April 19, 2011 @ 7pm**\*\*\*membership meeting:

**“Sir Ernest Shackleton and the Trans-Antarctic Expedition”**

Presented by Mike Thomas, this slide-show lecture brings to life the true story of Shackleton’s attempt to cross the continent of Antarctica, from sea to sea in 1914. The presentation is filled with photographs taken during an expedition that became the role model of leadership in extreme circumstances, and survival against all odds. It depicts the struggle of the men who tried to save their ship, the “Endurance”, and themselves. This is a truly “**don’t miss**” story of an epic adventure.

# Events Calendar

~ April 2011 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Dark Skies Star Party
<b>3</b> New Moon Saturn at opposition	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Star Party
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Moon 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Star Party
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Full Moon	<b>19</b> <i>WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO</i>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Lyrid meteors	<b>22</b> Lyrid meteors	<b>23</b> Star Party
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Moon Last Qtr	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Dark Skies Star Party

~ May 2011 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> New Moon	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Eta Aquarid meteors	<b>6</b> Eta Aquarid meteors	<b>7</b> Star Party Dark Skies Astronomy Day
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Moon 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr	<b>11</b> Conjunction of Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Star Party
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <i>WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO</i> Full Moon	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Star Party
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Moon Last Qtr	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Star Party Dark Skies
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Notes:</b>			