



## Presidents Message – July, 2011

The current flight of Space Shuttle Atlantis marks the end of a long and exciting portion of our country's space program. There have been many triumphs and two major tragedies in the 30 years that the shuttles have been flying. The shuttle system has hauled a variety of hardware into space, including the Hubble Telescope, Spacelab, countless satellites, and of course the component parts of the International Space Station.

The shuttles can carry a maximum payload of payload of 26 tons into low Earth orbit, reaching a speed of 17,500 MPH to do so. Ever since the first shuttle flights in 1981, they have been the world's workhorse for lifting men and equipment into space. This month's flight of Shuttle Atlantis is the 135th shuttle mission.

In 1986 Shuttle Challenger was destroyed in a catastrophic explosion during liftoff, killing it's seven person crew. Tragedy struck again in 2003 when Shuttle Columbia broke apart during reentry, causing the deaths of another seven astronauts. Those two shuttle crews join the three Apollo astronauts who died during a systems check in January, 1967, on our honored roll of space heroes.

According to a recent article in Astronomy magazine, Atlantis will be retired and displayed at the Kennedy Space Center, Shuttle Enterprise will be moved from the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum to the Intrepid Air and Space Museum in New York. The Discovery shuttle will find a home at the Udvar-Hazy Center in Virginia, and the Endeavour will go to the California Science Center in Los Angeles.

The retirement of the shuttles leaves America with no system capable of delivering humans into space. The theory is that private commercial entities, like Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic, will step up and offer such a service. In the meantime we have to rely on the Russian Soyuz spacecrafts, pretty much 40 year old technology, to ferry crew to and from the International Space Station. I hope the economy and the nation's motivation for space science, will both improve and put Americans back in Space, in "Made in America" equipment.

*Mike Thomas*

June, 2011

### June 2011 Meeting Minutes

- The opening of the new UNR-two dome observatory at the Redfield Campus was discussed.
- Mike gave the PowerPoint lecture presentation "The Story of the Titanic".

### *WNAS Officers*

**President**  
Mike Thomas

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Speaker info for the **\*\*\*Tuesday, July 18, 2011 @ 7pm \*\*\***membership meeting:

### **“Marco Polo”**

**This slide-show lecture by Mike tells the story of the world's number one tourist in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The presentation will show you that he was much more than that during his 24 year, 15,000 mile trip through Asia.**

**Note: This lecture will be the last History lecture for sometime, due to the Board of Governor's recent decision to greatly reduce the presentation of such lectures.**

# Events Calendar

~ July 2011 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1</b> New Moon Partial Solar Eclipse-Antarctica	<b>2</b> Dark Skies Star Party
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Moon 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr	<b>9</b> Star Party
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Full Moon	<b>16</b> Star Party
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <i>WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO</i>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Star Party Moon Last Qtr
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Southern Delta Aquarids meteors	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Dark Skies Star Party New Moon
<b>31</b>	<b>Notes:</b>					

~ August 2011 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Star Party Moon 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Perseids Meteor Shower	<b>13</b> Star Party Full Moon *Perseids Shower
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <i>WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO</i>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Star Party
<b>21</b> Moon Last Qtr	<b>22</b> <b>**Neptune at opposition</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Dark Skies Star Party
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> New Moon	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Notes:</b> *Perseids Meteor Shower, Aug. 12 & 13 ** <a href="http://www.space.com/8966-neptune-nears-orbit-discovery-1846.html">http://www.space.com/8966-neptune-nears-orbit-discovery-1846.html</a>		