



## Presidents Message – March, 2012

We have designated the first Saturday of each month as the Open House-Telescope Clinic Star Party Night, or "O.H.T.C.S.P." night. There is no lecture on those Saturdays and our visitors can familiarize themselves with the Observatory, do some observing, learn about their own telescopes, etc. There has been a lot of interest in these events. On Saturday, March 3rd, I would estimate that 40 to 50 guests came, and four families brought their telescopes to get assistance from our members.

I believe that telescopes are one of the most 'set aside' items that are purchased by people. Many well intentioned parents, in an effort to open their children's eyes to the wonders of the night sky, buy them a telescope for Christmas or their Birthday. The excited kid and enthusiastic parent open the box, lay out all the parts, cast aside the 'Learn About Your Telescope' booklet, and immerse themselves in the frustration of trying out the cool new apparatus. The parent is soon abandoned by the child who has become bored with the laborious process of assembly, and is now watching 'Xena Warrior Princess' on TV, unsupervised. The parent works long into the night, way after the child is in bed, and sometime around dawn, the scope is ready for deployment, but the Sun is coming out and the 'First Light' for it will have to be the next evening.

That evening the parent sets up the telescope in the spongy grass in the backyard, the tripod is unsteady, and the telescope wobbles on the mount. The neighbor's five 250 watt spotlights are illuminating the yard, and the finder scope is on backwards. The kid has discovered that it is more fun playing with the box the telescope came in, and the 'Learn About Your Telescope' booklet is now lining the bottom of the parakeet cage. Our dedicated, although slightly less motivated parent finally points the telescope at a particularly bright celestial object, looks in the eyepiece and promptly burns his retina as the magnified light of the streetlight on the corner hits his eye. It is at that moment in time that our intrepid parental unit throws the telescope into the darkest, most remote area in the home's coat closet, where it resides to this day.

So that is why we have our Open House/Telescope Clinic. Go forth into those coat closets my friends. Dig out those telescopes that have been cast aside, find a kid that could use some mentoring and bring him or her to the Observatory. Let them discover the night sky in a proper fashion. They will never forget the experience, and neither will you.

*Mike Thomas*

February, 2012

### February 2012 Meeting Minutes

- Mike's President Report addressed the gullibility of people in regards to believing in "alternative" documentary topics such as, "Aliens Built the Pyramids", etc.
- Gary Cole gave an interesting lecture on "Polarimetry".

### *WNAS Officers*

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### Evening program for the 7:00 PM, Tuesday, March 20, 2012

#### **"Caveman, the Story of the Neanderthal"**

Presented by Mike Thomas.

Who were these creatures? They were not human, but they acted like humans in many ways. The Neanderthal lived for two hundred thousand years, and then disappeared 30,000 years ago. This slide-show lecture tells the story of these fascinating "human-like" beings.

# Events Calendar

~ March 2012 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b> Moon 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Star Party  <b>Mars at opposition</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Full Moon	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Star Party
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Conjunction of Venus & Jupiter	<b>15</b> Moon Last Qtr	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Star Party
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO Vernal equinox (05:14 UTC)	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> New Moon	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Dark Skies Star Party
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Moon 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr	<b>31</b> Star Party

~ April 2012 ~						
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> Full Moon	<b>7</b> Star Party
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Moon Last Qtr	<b>14</b> Star Party
<b>15</b> Saturn at opposition	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> New Moon Dark Skies Star Party  Lyrid meteors
<b>22</b> Lyrid meteors	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Star Party
<b>29</b> Moon 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr	<b>30</b>	<b>Notes:</b>				