



Presidents Message – October, 2012

Many of you have probably heard about the "Earth Had Two Moons" theory. Some astronomers believe that a few billion years ago Earth had two moons, and the smaller one smashed into the big one. They are calling this the Big Splat. This was recently put forward in the prestigious journal, Nature.

The theory is an explanation for the fact that the Moon's farside has more hills and rough terrain than the nearside. In other words, the Splat made our moon mis-shaped. Not all scientists are on board with this scenario.

It is generally believed that Earth was struck by some kind of "Rouge Planet" 4.5 billion years ago, and that the collision resulted in ejecta that formed the Moon.

However, this new proposal states that two moons were formed from that collision. The larger of the moons was about 25 times heavier than the small one. So the little guy was eventually overcome by the gravity of its big brother. The small moon hit the big one at about 5,000 miles per hour, which is slow enough that the rock compositions did not melt.

The crust material of the small one would have spilled over and around the large moon. This would not have left a crater due to the low merging speed, but the material thrown around to the opposite side created totally different topography on the two sides. Since the Moon and Earth are locked in synchronous rotation, the "smoother" side always faces the Earth.

The solar system was certainly a chaotic, violent area back when it was first forming. If there had been two moons, it's a shame they collided, because it would be very cool to have the pair in our sky.

Mike Thomas

Sept. 2012

September 2012 Meeting Minutes

- Mike announced that there will be Saturday Star Party lectures only on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays
- The members were briefed on the new project, "Prometheus", which will use the 16 inch telescope to search for exoplanets.
- Those present voted approval for dedicating funds for the "Walt Dillard Memorial Scholarship".
- It was decided to move forward with the sale of the "Water Heater", 18 inch telescope.
- Mike gave a lecture on Leonardo da Vinci.

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Monthly Membership Meeting 7:00PM, Tuesday, October 16, 2012 Guest Speaker: Mike Thomas

**Thomas Herring, PhD. Physics Instructor, Western Nevada College, will present:
"Expanding Universe-Noble prize lecture"**

Events Calendar

~ October 2012 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Star Party Open House
7	8 Moon Last Qtr 	9	10	11	12	13 Star Party Dark Skies Lecture @ 6:30pm
14	15 New Moon 	16 <i>WNAS Meeting</i> 7pm JCDO	17	18	19	20 Star Party Dark Skies Open House
21 Orionids meteors →	22 Moon 1 st Qtr 	23	24	25	26	27 Star Party Lecture @ 6:30pm
28	29 Full Moon 	30	31	Notes: Lectures are TBA; Orionids meteors (21/22),		

~ November 2012 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
11/23 Total Solar Eclipse: The path of totality will only be visible in parts of extreme northern Australia and the southern Pacific Ocean 11/28 Penumbra Lunar Eclipse: The eclipse will be visible throughout most of Europe, eastern Africa, Asia, Australia, the Pacific Ocean, and North America				1	2	3 Star Party Open House
4	5	6	7 Moon Last Qtr 	8	9	10 Dark Skies Star Party Lecture @ 6:30pm
11	12	13 New Moon 	14	15	16	17 Dark Skies Star Party Open House Leonid meteors
18 Leonid meteors	19	 20 <i>WNAS Meeting</i> 7pm JCDO Moon 1 st Qtr	21	22	23 Total Solar Eclipse	24 Star Party Lecture @ 6:30pm
25	26	27 Conjunction of Venus & Saturn	28 Full Moon 	29	30	Notes: