



Presidents Message – June 2013

The Mars Opportunity Rover has just set a record for the longest distance driven by an American vehicle "off Earth". Opportunity landed on Mars on January 25, 2004, and has been driving from interesting site to site for nine years now. Its twin, the "Spirit" rover, landed on Mars three weeks earlier, on January 4, 2004, and performed for six years. The rovers had been designed to operate for only 90 days, in order to complete the mission. The feeling was that Martian dust and grit would build up on the solar power panels, and they would lose power, dying a quiet death on the frozen plains of Mars. Apparently, NASA did not take into account the frequent winds of Mars, which blew away the dust from the panels, enabling the rovers to exceed everyone's longevity expectations. So the Opportunity rover is still doing its job, currently on the rim of Endeavour Crater.

To get back to the point; Opportunity just passed 22 miles of exploration driving. This breaks the forty-one year old American record set in 1972. Astronauts Gene Cernan, and Harrison Schmitt, drove the Apollo 17 Lunar Rover 22 miles in the Moon's Taurus-Litrow Valley. The U.S. does not hold the record for the longest drive "off Earth". That record belongs to the Soviet Union's unmanned Lunokhod 2 rover, which drove a total of 23 miles on the Moon in 1973. The way things are going, it looks like Opportunity has an excellent chance of topping that record as well. In fact, NASA is predicting that Opportunity will do just that around January, 2014.

NASA has a rich and interesting history, filled with triumphs and tragedies. Space missions have been big news for the past six decades. To revisit some of the early history of NASA, the monthly membership meeting program, on June 18th, will be the slide-show lecture "The Birth of NASA, and the Mercury Program".

Mike Thomas.

May 2013 Meeting Minutes

- Professor Collier gave a report on the Observatory's recent 10th anniversary celebration.
- John Dykes gave a report on the very successful anniversary silent auction, and art gallery reception. (John's astro-photography was a big hit and a substantial amount of money was raised)
- Ron Bardardson gave a report on the progress of "Project Recon".
- Mike gave the lecture "Myths and Urban Legends".

WNAS Officers


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Monthly Membership Meeting 7:00PM, Tuesday, June 18, 2013





"The Birth of NASA, and the Mercury Program"

Mike Thomas revisits this slide-show presentation; covering the exciting years of our country's first manned space flights. The lecture focus is on the Mercury Seven Astronauts. These brave men became the nation's heroes when they took their rides into space on rockets that were basically untested technology.

~ June 2013 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Star Party
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 Star Party/Dark Skies New Moon 
9	10	11	12 Mercury at Greatest Eastern Elongation	13	14	15 Star Party
16 Moon 1 st Qtr 	17	18 WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO	19	20	21 Summer solstice occurs at 05:04 UTC	22 Star Party Lecture @ 7:30 pm
23 Full Moon 	24	25	26	27	28	29 Star Party
30 Moon Last Qtr 	Notes:					

~ July 2013 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Star Party Dark Skies
7 New Moon 	8	9	10	11 *Occultation @JCDO 00:31 hrs local time Asteroid 1910 Mikhailov	12	13 Star Party
14	15	16 WNAS Meeting 7pm JCDO Moon 1 st Qtr 	17	18	19	20 Star Party
21	22 Full Moon  Conjunction of Mars and Jupiter	23	24	25	26	27 Star Party Delta Aquarids Meteor Shower
28 Delta Aquarids Meteor Shower	29 Moon Last Qtr 	30	31	*The JCDO is predicted to be in the shadow of the Occultation event. The event is predicted to occur at 00:31:15 hrs local time with a max duration time of 2.9 seconds		

