

Martian Chronicles

Volume 25 Issue 1

January 2007

Attention!

The next MARS club meeting will be held at MOSI in the Saunders Planetarium on January 10th from 7:30 - 9:00 PM.

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****Your Article, Story, . . . could be here. This Newsletter is for all M.A.R.S. Club members. Please send your Newsletter contribution to newseditor@marsastro.org**

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Up Coming Club Events.



Jan. 2007

12th M.A.R.S. Club meeting. Program: Telescope hardware. Open to everyone.

27th Skywatch at MOSI 6-10pm.



The Scope of Things

Dennis Farr

President

What did you get for Christmas?

Do you know of anyone that gave any astronomy related items in the hope they would foster an interest in another person?

It's common this time of year for parents to buy department store telescopes for their children. If you were not experienced with the current state of the art in telescopes and paid \$150 or \$200 for a telescope at the Super Mega Mart, wouldn't you feel like you are getting a quality piece of scientific equipment?

Unfortunately many budding scientists have been discouraged by using this department equipment. Likewise, many older and wiser people have gotten to astronomy by diving headlong into the latest high tech, go-to, GPS, computerized equipment only to end up frustrated after looking at Saturn and the moon for three consecutive nights.

Astronomy is so much more than looking through telescopes. Take time to learn the history of the early astronomers. Learn about Herschel, Messier, Hubble.

Recently I've been collecting old astronomy books on eBay. Mostly written before 1900, they give an incredible perspective on the history of astronomy. Most interesting were the theories on the Sun. There were simply no logical reasons based on the knowledge of the day to explain why the Sun stayed constantly hot for so long. Also of interest is the state of the art of measuring everything in the sky, including the heat produced by the Sun.

The January club meeting presentation will be by James Dagget, a long time member and astronomer and one of our newly elected directors. Jim has put together a talk on the various types of astronomy hardware including scopes and mounts. Be ready to find out the difference between a GEM and a DOB, not to mention a NEWT and a MAK.

Mark your calendar also, for the 2nd Annual M.A.R.S. star party to be held the weekend of March 10th. We are still working on securing the primary location, but there is a secondary site so it will definitely happen that weekend.

See you all at the next meeting.

Remember, astronomy is looking up!

Computers, the Internet and Astronomy

In the movie War Games (1983) the computer asked “Do you want to play a game? “.

So, do you? Here are a few places to get space and astronomy related games on the Internet.

Orbiter Space Flight Simulator

ORBITER is a free flight simulator that goes beyond the confines of Earth's atmosphere. Launch the Space Shuttle from Kennedy Space Center to deploy a satellite, rendezvous with the International Space Station or take the futuristic Delta-glider for a tour through the solar system - the choice is yours.

But make no mistake - ORBITER is not a space shooter. The emphasis is firmly on realism, and the learning curve can be steep. Be prepared to invest some time and effort to brush up on your orbital mechanics background.

The Orbiter download file is over 60Meg, so you should probably have a high speed internet connection and a PC running at least 600Meg, and a pretty high end graphics display. You can download the program at

<http://orbit.medphys.ucl.ac.uk/orbit.html>

Human Visions Online Solar Space Game

This game says it's for 'children', but don't let it fool you. There are a lot of interesting facts and figures that will stump all but the most experienced astronomers. It's a fun little time consumer. Play the game at

<http://spacegame.iwarp.com/>

Minutes of the December meeting:

Mars Club meeting 12/8/2006

There were 18 members and 2 guests in attendance. The business meeting followed a holiday social.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the officers that were nominated by the board

The bylaws were adopted by vote of the members.

Al Peche announced the beginning of fund raising for the new planetarium. Everything visible on the new chronosphere is 'adoptable' though planets are more expensive. Chairs are 'adoptable' as well.

Liz announced that Jimmy Thomas placed all programs for the year on 2 CD's that are available to members. One CD contains a presentation by Dr. Joseph Carr "Christmas Star".

David Yarger is hospitalized. A get well note has been sent.

Tanja announced that our next SkyWatch is on 12/30.

January meeting - Telescope Basics

February - Astronomy & Astrology

March - Star Party at Homeland, FL

Frances still has 2007 calendars available

Tanja – MOSI has telescopes for sale – Orion scopes are available through the MOSI store at internet prices with no additional charge for shipping or assembly.

This month's issue of National Geographic features the planet Saturn

Annual program presentation "T'is the Season" concluded the meeting.

NEWSLETTER OF THE MUSEUM ASTRONOMY RESOURCE SOCIETY ASTRONOMY CLUB

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*Newsletter of the Museum Astronomical Resource Society
Martian Chronicles is published monthly by the Museum
Astronomical Resource Society (also known as M.A.R.S.
Astronomy Club), to provide club news and other items of
interest to its member. MARS is sponsored by MOSI Tampa
Florida. Annual club membership dues are \$15.00 single
and \$20.00 for families. Dues can be paid to any club officer
at a meeting or event or mailed to the Club Membership/
Renewal Address listed below. Newsletters are available to
nonmembers by requesting a complimentary issue. Please
send all inquiries, comments and newsletter contributions to
the address below. The deadline for submitted contributions
is the 25th of the month prior to the next issue. Contribution
may be delayed in publication due to available space.*

*Membership/Renewal
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