

June 2004

Volume 20, Number 6



Martian Chronicles

Newsletter of the Museum Astronomical Resource Society

Upcoming Events

June 2004

Tuesday 06/08, Venus Transit, MOSI

Be on the "Dome" by 05:30 a.m.
Call Craig MacDougal for information.

Friday 06/11, Club Meeting

Monthly Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the MOSI planetarium.
Program: "Ring World"

Saturday 06/19, SPAC Star Party

From dusk until dawn at Hickory Hill (possible, call SPAC to confirm) Sunset – 08:29 p.m. EDT

Saturday 06/26 MOSI/MARS SkyWatch

Sunset – 08:30 p.m. EDT

July 2004

Friday 07/02, Science Museum/MARS Presentation

7:00 p.m. in the MOSI planetarium.
Program: What's Up: Saturn and the Cassini Mission

Friday 07/09, Club Meeting

Monthly Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the MOSI planetarium.
Program: Venus Transit

Saturday 07/17, SPAC Star Party

From dusk until dawn at Hickory Hill (possible, call SPAC to confirm) Sunset – 08:27 p.m. EDT

Saturday 07/24 MOSI/MARS Sky Watch

Sunset – 08:24 p.m. EDT

Newsletter Help:

All contributions to the next months Newsletter must be received by the 15th day of the current month.

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MOSI Sky Watch: MOSI staff and M.A.R.S. volunteer observing sessions are normally held on the Saturday evening nearest the First Quarter Moon. Please come out and assist us at these events. Additional Sky Watch sessions will resume in the fall. Sky Watch sessions are held at MOSI. Call to check on any schedule changes. The Saunders Planetarium: 813-987-6360; MOSI Information Desk: 813-987-6012

SPAC Star Parties: Hosted by the St. Petersburg Astronomy Club (SPAC). Held on the Saturday evenings nearest the new moon, at Hickory Hill near Brooksville. For more information call the SPAC hotline: 813-792-0721

Have You Checked the Calendar?: Our online club calendar is now being updated with important dates related to club, astronomy, and space events. If you have a question about an upcoming event, be sure to check the calendar. Either go to the club website (www.marsastro.org) and click on the "Online Club Calendar" link near the top of the page, or access the calendar directly by going to URL: <http://calsnet.com/marsastro>

Martian Happenings:

May 14, 2004 Meeting Minutes

Frances Ferguson called the May meeting of the MARS Astronomy Club to order at 7:45 p.m. on Friday May 14, 2004. There were 24 members and guests present.

Presentation: Douglas Ordetx presented an enlightening show on Binoculars pointing out the various features to investigate before deciding on the right pair for you.

Business Meeting: Frances Ferguson called the business meeting to order and requested reports from the officers.

Old Business: Mr. Ordetx reported that the scheduled program for May's meeting on the transit of Venus has been changed to July. The program for the June meeting will be the NASA planetarium show "Ring World," produced by the JPL and NASA, highlighting the Cassini - Huygens mission to Saturn. Additionally, Craig MacDougal will share highlights of the transit of Venus. Ms. Ferguson asked if there were any special requests for programs. Paul DeVillier suggested a program on how to use basic astronomy software.

A person from the audience asked if anyone had any information on astronomy motels like the Star Hotel in Arizona advertised in astronomy related magazines. Craig MacDougal offered to investigate and write a newsletter report on the subject - if Frances remembers to e-mail and remind him.

Mildred Simpson handed out a printed treasurer's report. She also announced that Astronomy magazine puts out a deep space calendar each year. The calendar retails for \$11.99. If we order a minimum of 12 there is a 50% discount, and if the order is submitted before July 31 there is a 55% discount. A motion was made and seconded to order the minimum of 12. Those 12 were quickly spoken for and additional orders were taken. Please contact Mildred right away if you would like to place an order.

Frances announced that MOSI receives grants based upon volunteer hours. Anyone 14 years old and up can volunteer. All members and/or people who volunteered at Astronomy Day or performed any volunteer hours were asked to fill out a volunteer form and hand it in at the next MARS meeting. This includes all skywatch nights. Frances can add these volunteer hours at any time once they are reported. Anyone with 60 volunteer hours receives a year's membership.

Paul DeVillier reported on the success of Astronomy Day praising the work of Joe Wasielewski and the club's volunteers. Paul has volunteered to chair the event next year. Thank you Paul. Certificates of Appreciation were handed out to the volunteers.

Frances raised the question of whether we should suspend the MARS summer sky watches due to weather and resume the sky watches in September. After a discussion, Mr. DeVillier moved to suspend the MARS sky watches until September. The motion was seconded and passed.

Craig MacDougal announced a Star Party on June 8, 2004 starting at 5:30 a.m. for the Transit of Venus. Bring a telescope with a solar filter. Breakfast will follow.

New Business:
Frances asked: "Should we offer a family membership?"
Think about it.

Paul DeVillier announced that he has a 8" Celestron telescope for sale. It weighs 90 lbs and the tripod weighs 50 lbs. It comes with a power pack. He paid \$1,019 and will sell it for \$750.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53

Respectfully submitted,
Wade E. Holland, Secretary

June 11th Meeting Program:

"Ring World"

This a planetarium show provided by JPL/NASA describing the Cassini-Huygens mission.

Treasure's Report by Mildred Simpson

Working Fund					
DATE	TRANSACTION	CATEGORY	DEPOSIT	WITHDRAW	BALANCE
1-Jan-04	Balance Brought Forward				\$430.10
6-Jan-04	Staples	Printing		\$ (8.03)	\$422.07
6-Jan-04	USPS	Stamps		\$ (14.80)	\$407.27
9-Jan-04	Paul DeVillier	Dues	\$ 11.25		\$418.52
13-Feb-04	Club Approved Reserve Fund	Reserve Fund		\$ (163.13)	\$255.39
13-Feb-04	William (Casey) Flippen	Dues	\$ 12.00		\$267.39
13-Feb-04	Denny; Dave, Liz, Adam	Dues	\$ 33.75		\$301.14
24-Feb-04	Henry (Hank) Molesky	Dues	\$ 15.00		\$316.14
5-Mar-04	Newsletter	Postage/Printing		\$ (9.87)	\$306.27
9-Apr-04	Greg Shanos	Dues	\$ 15.00		\$321.27
9-Apr-04	Newsletter	Postage/Printing		\$ (13.64)	\$307.63
9-Apr-04	Post Cards	Postage		\$ (0.68)	\$306.95
9-Apr-04	Astronomy Day	Handouts		\$ (13.31)	\$293.64
24-Apr-04	Alvin Dozier, Astro Day	Comet Demo		\$ (24.16)	\$269.48
24-Apr-04	Alvin Dozier	Dues	\$ 15.00		\$284.48
24-Apr-04	Alfred (Ted) Elde III	Dues	\$ 7.50		\$291.98
24-Apr-04	Carol & Jim Viggiano	Dues	\$ 15.00		\$306.98
24-Apr-04	Tara Scaglione	Dues	\$ 7.50		\$314.48
24-Apr-04	Astronomy Day	Donations	\$ 35.10		\$349.58
24-Apr-04	Paul DeVillier	Astro. Day		\$ (36.00)	\$313.58
12-May-04	Newsletter	Postage/Printing		\$ (16.69)	\$296.89
12-May-04	USPS	100 Stamps		\$ (39.00)	\$257.89
14-May-04	Daniel Provost	Dues	\$ 15.00		\$272.89
14-May-04	Annette&Ronald Nascimento	Dues	\$ 14.00		\$286.89
Reserve Fund					
DATE	TRANSACTION	CATEGORY	DEPOSIT	WITHDRAW	BALANCE
13-Feb-04	Club Approved Reserve Fund	Reserve Fund	\$ 163.13		\$163.13
1-Mar-04	Paul DeVillier	Donation/Reserve	\$ 36.00		\$199.13
1-Mar-04	Mildred Simpson	Donation/Reserve	\$ 2.87		\$202.00

What's Up: Saturn and the Cassini Mission by Jimmy Thomas

I hope that you are making plans to be with us on Friday, July 2, from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm, in The Saunders Planetarium at MOSI, for "The Planet Saturn and the Cassini – Huygens Mission." The mission is a cooperative mission amongst the members of NASA, ESA, and ISA. This is the fourth of six presentations this year co-sponsored by M.A.R.S. and the Science Library at MOSI.

We will present an overview of the planet Saturn, its moons, and the Cassini - Huygens mission. The mission will reach orbit with Saturn on July 1st. Its Huygens probe will be deployed toward Saturn's largest moon Titan in for a landing in January of 2005.

We will only have one hour for the presentation, so please be on time in order to catch everything. We hope to see you July 2 at 7:00 pm in The Saunders Planetarium at MOSI.

Martian Contributions:

From the “Keeper of the Frog Scope” by Frances Ferguson, President

Hello fellow MARS Club Members and friends. Doug Ordetx did a nice presentation on Binoculars at the May meeting. I now have a better understanding of what to look for if I was looking for a pair of binoculars. Thank you Doug, and I hope you and Mercedes are enjoying your trip to Spain.

At our next meeting we will be discussing the Transit of Venus, and Steve Dixon will provide the NASA planetarium show “Ring World,” describing the Cassini-Huygens mission that is entering Saturn orbit July 1st!

June brings the Transit of Venus in Earth’s view. Our own globe trotting Greg Shanos is viewing it from somewhere in Europe.

For those who wish to view it live and in person, MOSI staff

will be on the IMAX Dome Tuesday morning June 8th. If you want to help with telescopes, call Craig MacDougal at 987-6339. We are still looking for program suggestions and presenters. If you have a subject for a presentation, let one of the officers know. September is the next open month.

Check the calendar for the MOSI Sky Watch dates throughout the summer. Even though we voted to cancel the additional MARS Sky Watches that follow the MOSI nights (during the Summer), we still need to show our support and assist the MOSI staff with telescopes.

Remember, if you help at any of the club or MOSI events, you need to register as a MOSI volunteer. Contact Mildred Simpson for volunteer forms, information, and to report your volunteer hours.

Johann Franz Encke by Roaming Astronomer – Jimmy Thomas

Johann Encke was born September 23, 1791 in Hamburg and died August 26, 1863 in Spandau, Germany. He was a German astronomer, mathematician and physicist who was noted for calculating the orbit of the comet that now bears his name - Encke's Comet. He also discovered a faint division in the outermost ring of Saturn, now known as Encke's Division.

Encke began his education in Hamburg. Then in 1811 he enrolled at the University of Göttingen, where he worked under the direction of Carl Friedrich Gauss. In 1816 Encke became assistant at the Seeberg Observatory near Gotha, Germany. There he completed his investigation of the comet of 1680, which was the subject of much interest by many astronomers. Leonhard Euler had calculated a period for the comet of 170 years, Edmond Halley calculated 575 years, and Alexandre Pingré calculated 5,864 years. Encke's calculations, which were based on more observational data, yielded a more accurate period of 8,814 years. For this achievement, he was awarded the Cotta prize in 1817. Encke also studied observations of the comet of 1812 and correctly assigned it a period of 71 years.

In 1818 Jean-Louis Pons discovered what became known as the Comet of 1819. Immediately following its discovery, Encke was able to associate it with comets "discovered" in 1786, 1795 and 1805. He determined that all of these

observations were of the same comet and that it had a period of 3.29 years. He then predicted, correctly, that it would return in 1822. For this achievement, the comet became known as Encke's Comet.

Encke was made vice director of Seeberg Observatory in 1820 and director in 1822. From 1822 to 1824, Encke studied observations from Venus' transits of the Sun recorded in 1761 and 1769. From these, he derived a value for the solar parallax of 8." 57, indicating a distance of 153,000,000 kilometers or 95,300,000 miles. This measurement was very close to the presently accepted average distance of 149,600,000 kilometers or 92,980,000 miles. Encke's parallax distance held until more accurate measurements could be taken of transits by minor planets, which have no atmosphere to confuse the points of contact as they cross the Sun.

In 1825 Encke was appointed professor of astronomy and director of the observatory of the University of Berlin. There he planned and supervised the construction of a new observatory, completed in 1835. From 1829 to 1859 Encke published eight treatises on Encke's Comet in the Berlin *Abhandlungen*. In 1837, while observing at Berlin, Encke discovered a faint division in the outermost ring (also called "Ring A") of the planet Saturn. This became known as Encke's Division. In addition to his other achievements, Encke compiled star charts, established methods for calculating the orbits of minor planets and methods for calculating the orbits of double stars.

Newsletter of the Museum Astronomical Resource Society

Martian Chronicles is published monthly by the Museum Astronomical Resource Society (also known as the MARS Astronomy Club) to provide club news and other items of interest to its members. MARS is sponsored by the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI), Tampa, Florida. Annual club membership dues are \$15.00, which may be paid to any officer at club-sponsored events or mailed to the **CLUB MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL ADDRESS** listed below. Make checks payable to Mildred Simpson, our club treasurer. Newsletters are available to nonmembers by requesting a complimentary trial issue. Please send all inquiries, comments and newsletter contributions to the address below. The deadline for submitted contributions is the 15th of the month prior to the next issue. Contributions may be delayed in publication due to available space.

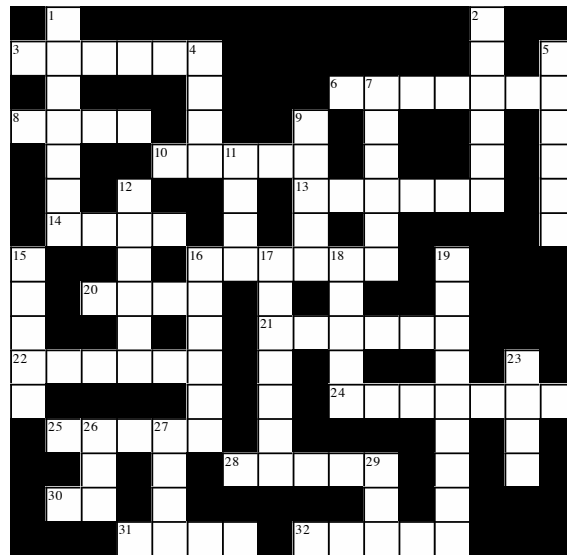
We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.marsastro.org

Membership/Renewal
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Martian Challenges By Steve Dixon



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8 Earth's nearest neighbour
10 Moon of Saturn discovered in 1789
13 Brightest star in the Aquila constellation
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25 First American to orbit the earth - John ...
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4 First man to orbit the earth - ... Gagarin
5 Performed the first accurate measurement of the distance to a star
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9 British scientist ... Newton
11 Gigantic star in Cetus
12 'Shooting star'
15 Constellation : The dragon
16 Annie Jump American astronomer
17 Eighth planet from the sun
18 Third planet from the sun
19 Moon of Saturn discovered in 1789
23 Constellation : The lyre
26 Constellation : The lion
27 Initials of the American space authority
29 Hub of the solar system

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