

July 2004

Volume 20, Number 7



Martian Chronicles

Newsletter of the Museum Astronomical Resource Society

Upcoming Events

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

August 2004

Friday 08/13, Club Meeting

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

Saturday 08/14, SPAC Star Party

From dusk until dawn at Hickory Hill (possible, call SPAC to confirm)

Saturday 08/28 MOSI/MARS Sky Watch

Sunset – 07:55 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:

June 11, 2004 Meeting Minutes by Mildred Simpson

The monthly meeting of the MARS Club took place on June 11, 2004 at 7:40 p.m. with 16 people present.

Venus' transit of the Sun was discussed. Paul DeVillier shared a poem written by the first observer of the transit. He also shared a copy of an article related to the transit and picture off of the web. Craig MacDougal gave his report of the Venus transit. He elaborated on the setup for viewing from the MOSI IMAX Dome and what we observed from there.

Paul brought his photographs of our Astronomy Day celebration which were passed around for all to enjoy .

The evening's feature program was the video "Ring World" provided by Steve Dixon, which was produced by NASA and JPL. The video was on the Cassini – Huygens mission. It was to reach outer Saturn that day with a fly-by of Phoebe. The video took us from mission concept through the liftoff and the planned fly-bys for the entire four year mission. It explained how Cassini gathers its scientific data, what the targets are, and how it transmits that data and pictures back to earth.

After the video, Craig MacDougal checked on-line to get any latest news about the Cassini mission. He reported that orbit insertion had been successful and that pictures would be available Saturday.

Old business: Mildred Simpson spoke about the Astronomy Calendars. A page was passed around for people to verify or change their orders.

We also signed a card for Mr. Joe Carr who has not been feeling well.

Frances Ferguson asked if anyone had thought about a family membership. She reminded people that we had until the August meeting to make a decision and cast their vote. The issue must be settled before the September meeting when members dues are due.

We are planning our July meeting feature presentation to be Greg Shanos' report on the Venus Transit as viewed from Europe.

July 2nd is Jimmy Thomas' presentation in cooperation with the MOSI Science Library. It will be on the Cassini-Huygens mission.

We adjourned at 8:40.

July 9th Meeting Program:

"Our Experiences of the Transit of Venus"

Greg Shanos will be hosting a highly interactive presentation on the recent transit of Venus. He will be discussing his personal experience of the transit, and asks that other club members be prepared to discuss their experience as well. Greg will be sharing a Power Point presentation from the NASA Ambassadors Society, his own videos and photographs of his 6-hour transit viewing from Corfu, Greece; and his meeting with the Astronomical Society of Corfu. The details of the presentation are still evolving, but Greg's presentations are always fun and informative.

Treasure's Report by Mildred Simpson

A quarterly financial report will be published in August.

Current Membership:40

New members: Gavin Canan, Valrico; Chris Katnik, Lutz

Astronomy Calendars: I ordered 35 calendars. They will cost \$6.00 each. After the reserved copies have been bought, the rest will be on a first come basis.

Martian Contributions:

From the "Keeper of the Frog Scope" by Frances Ferguson, President

Steve, we missed you at the June meeting. The video "Ring World" that you provided for us was very informative.

I am looking forward to Greg Shanos' presentation "Our Experiences of the Transit of Venus". Greg was able to witness the entire 6 hours of the transit.

I received a request from a person out of state asking if we had information about stores in our area that would offer follow up support for a brother who was getting a telescope. I realized that I do not know anything about what is available in the Tampa Bay area. I would like to start a list with information about what is available. If you can submit any information to me about stores that you have dealt with for any equipment or services, I will be

glad to compile the list for future use. (Please provide this information in writing.) I did refer her to the MOSI telescope class.

You know, I like the pretty pictures from the Hubble Space Telescope. With all the talk about the uncertainty concerning the future of the Hubble, I did some investigation and found the web site www.savethehubble.org. I was able to sign a petition, which will go to Congress and NASA. The petition requests that the Hubble not be retired so it can continue to be used for scientific purposes, as well as for educational outreach. Please do the same if you feel as I do.

I have contacted [The Shopper](#) to have the monthly club meetings listed on the Hola! Page.

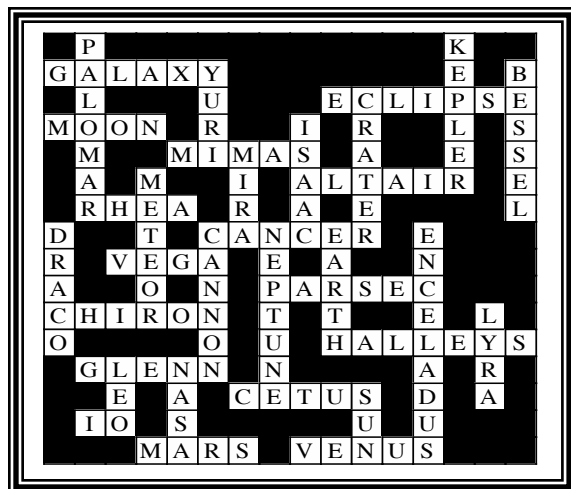
Solutions for June Challenge

Fun Links – Please Contribute!

<http://www.savethehubble.org>
Petition to save the Hubble

<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/calendar/>
Calendar of space related events

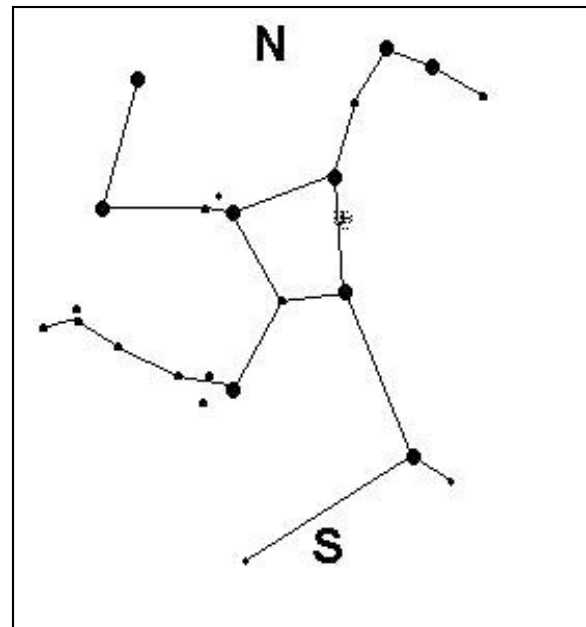
http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/RS_OneDay.htm
| Complete sun and moon data for one day



Constellation of the Month – Hercules by Craig MacDougal

Hercules

If the afternoon thunderstorms have cleared out by 9:30 at night, then go out to get a look at our constellation for July. Face toward the east, and look most of the way up to zenith. There you will find a square made up of 2nd and 3rd magnitude stars. This square covers an area of the sky a bit smaller than your fist at arms length, and it's noticeably "squashed" on the right end. This "squashed square" (also known as the "keystone") is the key part of that legendary strong man of old: **HERCULES** (HER-q-lees). The keystone is generally considered to be his torso, or thereabouts. His head is generally considered to be off to the right of the keystone, and he's usually shown facing east. So you can imagine our strong man running full tilt back toward the horizon with the pelt of Leo on his back. (Remember Leo?) The story of Hercules is a long one that has been told in a variety of forms for thousands of years. His mother was Alcmene, the most beautiful and wise of the mortal women. His father was Zeus. (It's beginning to seem like half of the characters portrayed in the sky were fathered by Zeus.) Zeus visited Alcmene disguised as her husband. (Visiting beautiful women while in disguise was apparently a hobby of Zeus.) Anyway, Zeus also arranged for the infant to drink some of his wife's (Hera) milk. Having drunk the milk of a goddess, Hercules was now immortal. Hera was quite annoyed over the entire situation. She could not kill Hercules, but she vowed to make his life very miserable. Hera made Hercules temporarily insane at one point, and this caused him to kill his family. When he came to himself, he was of course remorseful and asked the Oracle at Delphi how he might atone for this. The Oracle's instructions were to serve the king of Mycenae for twelve years. The king gave him a set of tasks that are known as the Labors of Heracles. (Heracles is the original form of the name. The version we know is Greek.) The first task was to kill a certain invincible lion. (Sound familiar yet?) He also killed a multi-headed monster, which became the constellation Hydra. While he was battling Hydra, a crab came out of the rocks and started going after Hercules' ankles. This didn't last long, since Hercules simply stepped on it between swings of his sword. For this short scene, the crab gets billing in the sky as the constellation Cancer. (I guess he had



connections with Zeus, or something.) Anyway, Hercules completes the original ten Labors. The king however, got greedy on another. So he gives him two more, expecting to do him in for sure this time. Hercules cheerfully dispatches a dragon (Draco), and rather than kill the three-headed watchdog of the underworld, dragged him back to the king. The king was surprised to see Hercules, and more surprised to be staring at this none-too-happy watchdog that Hercules had (for now) a firm grip on. The king wisely proclaimed that Hercules was a free man, and graciously suggested that he take his "puppy" outside before he let go of it. (Whew!) Let's turn back to the keystone, for about a third of the way from the upper left corner, to the upper right corner, is one of the glories of the heavens. Check this spot with binoculars, and you will find a fuzzy spot. This is M13, the great Hercules globular cluster. Now you have seen with your own eyeballs this grand collection of many thousands of stars that adorns the pages of every book on astronomy that I know

**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.

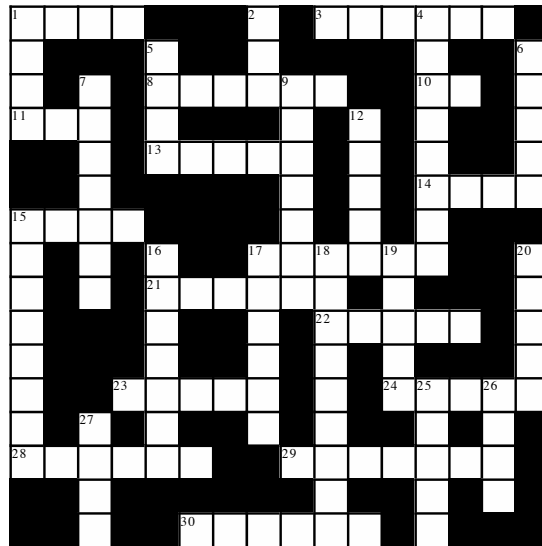
We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.marsastro.org

Membership/Renewal
M.A.R.S.
C/O Mildred Simpson
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Tampa, FL 33603

Martian Challenges By Steve Dixon



ACROSS

- 1 Earth's nearest neighbour
- 3 Larger moon of Mars
- 8 Satellite of Jupiter discovered by Galileo
- 10 Satellite of Jupiter discovered by Galileo
- 11 Hub of the solar system
- 13 Alternative name for Beta Persei
- 14 Initials of the American space authority
- 15 Constellation : The

- lyre
- 17 The star Alpha Geminorum
- 21 Luminous atmospheric phenomenon
- 22 Constellation : The scales
- 23 The sun's most distant planet
- 24 Largest moon of Saturn
- 28 Smaller moon of Mars
- 29 Cosmological theory (3,4)
- 30 Object which orbits the sun

DOWN

- 1 The red planet
- 2 Constellation : The lion
- 4 Russia's Cosmodrome
- 5 Russian space probes which visited Halley's comet
- 6 Lunar 'seas'
- 7 Alternative name for Alpha Scorpii
- 9 Famous 200 inch telescope
- 12 Heavenly body having a tail
- 15 Powerful, rapidly varying infrared source
- 16 The first person to use a telescope in astronomy
- 17 The entire Universe
- 18 First American woman in space (5,4)
- 19 Path followed by a heavenly body
- 20 First American to orbit the earth - John ...
- 25 British scientist ... Newton
- 26 The constellation in which Canopus is located
- 27 Gigantic star in Cetus

About Our Organization...

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