

September 2004  
Volume 20, Number 9



# Martian Chronicles

Newsletter of the Museum Astronomical Resource Society

## Upcoming Events

### Newsletter Help:

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

### Contents:

1 Upcoming Events

### Martian Happenings:

2 Meeting Minutes

2 Notice to Vote

2 Treasurer's Report

2 September Program

### Martian Contributions:

3 Frog Scope

3 Fun Links

3 Challenge Solution

4 Sky Watch Report

4 Meteors Lecture

4 Classified Ads

5 Constellation of the Month

6 Martian Challenges

### Martian Contacts:

6 About Us

6 Mailing Cover

### September 2004

#### Friday 09/10, Club Meeting

Monthly Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the MOSI planetarium.  
Program: "Teacher Astronaut Program"

#### Saturday 09/11 or 18, SPAC Star Party

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

#### Friday 09/24, Fall Sky Watch, MOSI

From 08:00 to 10:00 pm  
Call (813) 987-8000 for reservations

#### Saturday 09/25 MOSI/MARS Sky Watch

Sunset – 07:22 p.m.

### October 2004

#### Friday 10/08, Club Meeting

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

#### Saturday 10/16 or 18, SPAC Star Party

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

#### Saturday 10/23, MOSI/MARS Sky Watch

Sunset: 06:53 p.m.

#### Wednesday 10/27 Lunar Eclipse Watch

From 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
Call (813) 987-6000 for reservations

**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](http://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:**

### **August 13, 2004 Meeting Minutes** by Steve Dixon

Frances Ferguson canceled the meeting due to the approach of Hurricane Charley.

### **Notice to All Members** from Frances Ferguson, President

Club members will vote during the September 10<sup>h</sup> meeting on whether or not to adopt the following change to our membership dues structure.

The M.A.R.S. Club will offer a Family Memberships for a cost of \$20.00. Family memberships will receive 2 votes in all club decisions. Everyone in the household will be eligible for all other club benefits. If passed, the new membership's fees will become effective September 2004 when the new membership year begins. If you wish to vote and will be unable to attend the meeting, you can send your vote to Frances Ferguson at [faferguson@sisna.com](mailto:faferguson@sisna.com)

### **Treasure's Report** by Mildred Simpson

The treasurer's report will be available at the September meeting.

### **2005 Astronomy Calendars Have Arrived!**

If you reserved a calendar, please bring \$6.00 to the September meeting and pick up your copy. The club needs to collect these funds in order to clear our bill with Astronomy Magazine for these calendars. Those that ordered a calendar and cannot make the meeting should contact Mildred Simpson and make appropriate arrangements. Excess copies will be sold on a first come first served basis.

### **Annual Dues are Due at the September Meeting.**

Please make every effort to pay your dues at the September 10<sup>h</sup> club meeting. Our club keeps its member dues at a very reasonable rate – just enough to meet operating costs. It is very important that each and every one of us pay on time. If you cannot make the meeting or pay your dues at that time, contact Mildred Simpson and make appropriate arrangements.

September 10<sup>h</sup> Meeting Program:

“Teacher Astronaut Program”

Mr. Frank Lock will be presenting an update on the Astronaut Teacher Program.

## Martian Contributions:

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

I was planning on putting a positive spin on last month’s storm hitting Tampa. I thought I would do some dark sky observing while all the electrical was out. O. K., so I would not have a house to live in but I knew the Frog Scope would be just fine. Fortunately “Charley” missed Tampa - unfortunately he did not miss Florida. I hope every one survived “Charley” with little or no damage.

Carolyn Olivero teaches at Symmes Elementary School in Riverview. The school’s theme this year is “Exploring our Universe.” They are interested in club members having a Stargazing event at their school. She will be providing more information to the club so that we can see how we can best assist them.

Several club members have expressed interest in attending classes to learn how to find things in the sky.

Is there anyone who would be interested in teaching this class to our club members?

The new membership year starts in September. Because last month’s meeting was cancelled, the vote regarding a motion for Family Membership will be taken at the September meeting. The motion is to create a family membership fee of \$20.00 per year. The membership will entitle the entire family to all club benefits, but it will limit the family to (2) votes and (1) copy of the Martian Chronicle. Single membership will stay at \$15.00. The membership year runs from September through August. Dues are due at the September meeting.

The end of the year is coming fast. Soon it will be December and we will be electing new officers. Please consider serving in one of the many offices.

Thanks to Joe Wasielewski and Mildred Simpson for staffing a table at the MOSI Open House for Home School families. There were many interested people.

### Solutions for August Challenge

**Fun Links – Please Contribute!**

<http://www.star.le.ac.uk/edu/comets/meteors.html>  
Introductory guide to meteors

<http://meteorites.jpl.arizona.edu>  
Properties of meteorites

[http://epsc.wustl.edu/admin/resources/moon\\_meteorites.html](http://epsc.wustl.edu/admin/resources/moon_meteorites.html)  
Lunaites

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

## **MOSI/Mars Sky Watch Report** by Steve Dixon

We didn't get rained out! Seventy-four (74) people turned out for our Sky Watch on Saturday, August 24<sup>th</sup>. Several of our guests had shown up a full hour before the event. Many of them stayed until we closed shop a little after 9 p.m.. During set-up, I took advantage of the daylight to go over the various parts and operation of a Newtonian-Dobsonian telescope with our guests. I then passed out NASA pictures with printed information and bookmarks relating to the Cassini-Huygens mission; and also "Getting Started in Astronomy" pamphlets provided by Mildred Simpson. The Frog Scope presented a wide-angle view of the moon using a 25mm eyepiece (~50X) while Mark Dixon assisted viewers in searching for lunar details using a 10.5 mm eyepiece (~120X). Craig MacDougal used the MOSI 8" Meade to order up some double stars and clusters.

## **MARS/MOSI Science Library Lecture Report** by Steve Dixon

Thank you Jimmy Thomas for a fun lecture on "Meteoroids, Meteors, Meteorites, and Tektites." There were seven (7) people present including Jimmy. Jimmy provided samples of meteorites and tektites from his personal collection and from the MARS collection donated by Greg Shanos. I am attempting to post the PDF file of the lecture on our web site. Those that were unable to attend can view the text of the presentation there.

The next lecture is scheduled for Friday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The subject will be "The Planet Venus and the NASA Messenger Mission. The history of exploration of our sister planet Venus and how missions such as the NASA Messenger Mission, flying by Venus on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, are helping us to learn more.

## **Members Selling Astronomical Items:**

Meade Telescope ETX90EC with Autostar and heavy duty tripod, dew shield, regular controller and Autostar controller.  
\$600 new – used approx. 2 hours \$450 firm. 863-425-0404 Jim Zachary

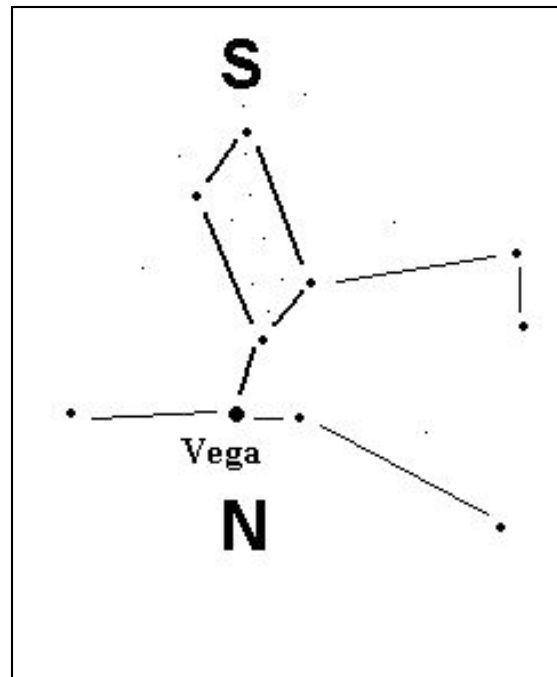
Celestron Advanced Series GT C8/C8-NGT Telescope. \$795.00. \$750.00 for MARS Members. Retail at \$1019 + S/H.  
Bought 01/04, used once, too heavy to carry – no permanent viewing site. Paul DeVillier Home: 973-4418; Cell 494-6339

## Constellation of the Month – Lyra by Craig MacDougal

To this point in our monthly excursions through the heavens, we have been looking for relatively big constellations. This is because these are the most obvious star patterns in the sky. One could argue that if they weren't so obvious, the ancients would have divided them into smaller constellations. One can argue many things however, and I find that I have digressed before I've even gotten started.....

This month we have an obvious constellation that is pretty small. It's easy to find simply because the brightest star in this constellation is the fourth brightest star that can be seen from Tampa, and the fifth brightest in the entire sky. The constellation is **LYRA** (LIE-ra), and its bright beacon is **VEGA** (VEE-ga. That's right Chevrolet, got it wrong, but few astronomers I know are very picky about how you pronounce it.) I said Lyra is small, but I can hear you asking, "How small is it?" Well, if you hold your arm stretched to the sky, palm of your hand facing up, and fingers together, you can cover up the main asterism of Lyra. Go out at 9:30, and if you can see any stars at all, face north and look straight up, and just a bit to your left (which is west). There you will find a very bright blueish-white star. It is the brightest star around that part of the sky. It is a tad dimmer than our friend Arcturus (remember Arcturus?) which is now low in the west. Compare the color of Vega to Arcturus, and you will get a good example of the range of star colors. Just to the south of Vega you will see a neat parallelogram of stars.

Lyra represents a lyre, which is a small harp. This harp has a place in the sky because it was part of one of the most famous of the Greek legends. Although Hermes invented it, he gave it to Orpheus, by far the best musician in the land. Orpheus was able to charm trees to grow where he wanted, and to change the course of streams by playing this lyre. He went with Jason and the Argonauts on their quest, and saved them from the songs of the Sirens with his own music. Orpheus was married to Eurydice, a most beautiful Nymph. When she died of snakebite, Orpheus was heartbroken. He went to the Underworld to ask to have her restored. He played his lyre and charmed Hades, the big cheese of the Underworld. Hades said that he could have her back as long as he walked back up to daylight without looking back to see if she was behind him. Orpheus did OK until he just reached the daylight. He then



turned back and saw her just long enough to watch her disappear. He was then inconsolable. He just sat on rocks and sang sad songs. Many ladies of the land offered to help him get over his loss, but he ignored them all. Thoroughly annoyed at this, the ladies ganged up and stoned him to death. Then, he finally joined Eurydice in the Underworld, and his lyre was placed in the sky. If you have some binoculars at hand, start at Vega and go east just a little ways. You should come across an obvious pair of stars. They are almost exactly the same magnitude, and aligned north-south, more or less. In some binoculars, you will get to this pair before Vega leaves the field of view. This is Epsilon Lyra, the so-called double-double. It gets such a name because each of those two stars can be resolved into a pair of their own, if you have access to a telescope that is bigger than 4 inches in diameter. Now that you know where Epsilon is, take away the binoculars and look with the unaided eye. Can you resolve the pair? If you can, don't let anyone tell you that you need glasses.

**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.

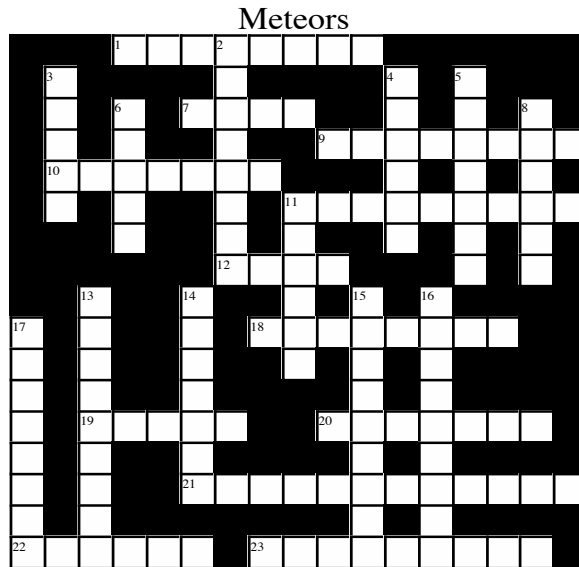
**We're on the Web!**

See us at:

[www.marsastro.org](http://www.marsastro.org)

**Membership/Renewal**  
M.A.R.S.  
C/O Mildred Simpson  
1522 West River Lane  
Tampa, FL 33603

**Martian Challenges** By Steve Dixon



From paper by James Thomas

**ACROSS**

- 1** 2.205 pounds
- 7** 5280 feet
- 9** meaning astronomical phenomenon
- 10** point from which meteor shower appears
- 11** 0.621 mile
- 12** typical size of meteoroid
- 18** A slow, bright meteor. Size of basketball to small car.
- 19** glowing trail that marks

meteoroid path

- 20** A fireball that explodes.
- 21** another name for a meteor (8,4)
- 22** evenly distributed meteoroids, reliable hourly rates
- 23** small bit of ice, rock, or iron drifting through space

**DOWN**

- 2** about October 21 meteor shower

- 3** concentration of meteors
- 4** effect produced as meteoroid falls into our atmosphere
- 5** Meteor \_ occur when Earth encounters vast swarms of meteors.
- 6** used since 1945 to detect meteors.
- 8** remains create vast swarm of meteors
- 11** Scale zero begins at absolute zero
- 13** 63,240 AU (4,4)
- 14** Scale zero begins at point water freezes
- 15** what a meteoroid is called after it reaches ground
- 16** Meteor Crater near Winslow Arizona
- 17** about December 13th meteor shower (Craig's favorite)

**About Our Organization...**

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