



July 05

Volume XXXV, Issue 7

Executive Board

PRESIDENT

Chuck Cardona III '06
Programs & Publicity Chair
631-727-6769
chaz@owl.net

VICE PRESIDENT

Bob Vanson '06
Radio Astronomy Chair
631-218-2350
bvanson@aol.com

TREASURER

Barbara Lebkuecher '06
631-722-3850
barbaraleb@aol.com

SECRETARY

Donna L. McCormick '06
631-696-3333
mccormick@scientific-consultants.com

FINANCE CHAIR

Bill Bogardus '06
631-474-2723
wbogardu@optonline.net

DIRECTORS

Alarico Verticchio '07
631-727-8393
akam10@optonline.net

Dr. Jeffrey Katz '07
631-696-3333
katz@scientific-consultants.com

Rich Huber '06
631-598-4613
raflash99@aol.com

Kurt Massey '06
631-325-2123
kamassey@peconic.net

Martian Sunset



Image, courtesy NASA/JPL

On May 19th, 2005, NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Spirit captured this stunning view of the Sun as it sank below the distant rim of Mars' Gusev crater. The complete story and full resolution image can be found at <http://marsrovers.jpl.nasa.gov/gallery/press/spirit/20050610a.html>.

Deep Impact, a Smashing Success

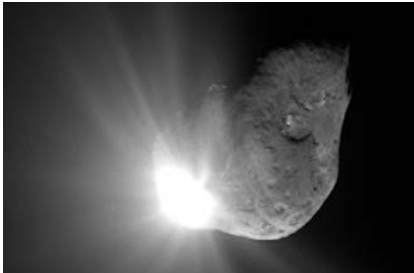


Image courtesy, NASA / JPL

NASA's Deep Impact probe, having performed brilliantly, returned this and many other spectacular images of Comet Tempel 1. This image was acquired with the Deep Impact mother craft 67 seconds after the impactor probe, after having returned a treasure trove of data and images, was obliterated by the comet. The latest images and news on the mission can be found at NASA's Deep Impact site: http://www1.nasa.gov/mission_pages/deepimpact/main

Table of Contents

July 05	Volume XXXV, Issue 7	1
Executive Board		1
PRESIDENT		1
VICE PRESIDENT		1
TREASURER		1
SECRETARY		1
FINANCE CHAIR		1
DIRECTORS		1
Martian Sunset		1
Deep Impact, a Smashing Success		1
Table of Contents		2
Editor's Column		3
Gift Corner & Classifieds		3
Announcements & General Interest		4
Talk by John Dobson		4
Space Shuttle Discovery, STS-114, on Schedule for Return to Flight		4
Urgent, Suffolk Executive Steve Levy Set to Veto Montauk 'Dark Sky' Site		4
HEAVENLY EVENTS TO WATCH FOR July 05		5
June's Beautiful Triple Conjunction		6
Lights too Bright at New Miller Place-Yaphank Firehouse		6
Don't light up my life		7
Newsday, Sunday, July 3 rd		7
'Shining Beacon' Or a Spoiler Of the Night Sky?		7
New York Times, Sunday, June 19 th , 2005		7
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE		8
WELCOME TO OUR NEW OR RETURNING MEMBERS:		9

Editor's Column

<p>Tom Madigan, Editor Tom Madigan 99 North Summit Ave. Patchogue, NY 11772-2226 tmadigan@optonline.net 631-714-4388</p> <p>Cutoff for submissions is the 15th of the month preceding publication</p> <p>Visit the new Custer Website at http://www.custerobservatory.org Custer Comment Archive: http://tmadigan.home.netcom.com/custer</p>	<p>The Custer Comment is published monthly by</p> <p>Custer Institute P.O. Box 1204 Main Bayview Road Southold, NY 11971 631-765-2626</p> <p><i>"I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sarah Williams</i></p>
--	--

I apologize for the lateness of this month's Custer Comment. I've had some ongoing technical problems with my computer that have prevented me from completing this month's issue in a timely fashion. Those problems have, since, been solved. In addition, up until July 7th, I've been extremely sick and have been unable to get out of bed. That condition has largely abated.

Custer's new slate of officers and board of directors is published on this month's front page. Please take note.

Best,
 Tom
Tom Madigan, Editor

Gift Corner & Classifieds

<p>WE HAVE METEORITES.</p> <p>Great sets mounted in beautiful display cases. Perfect for gifts.</p> <p>Custer coffee mugs, only \$4.</p> <p>Do you have <i>yours</i> yet?</p>	<p>The Gift Shop still has a dwindling number of copies of <i>ASTRONOMY FOR ALL AGES</i>, by Philip Harrington & Edward Pascuzzi, just \$20. As an added bonus, copies are signed by Ed Pascuzzi. We also have copies of <i>PARALLAX</i> by Alan W. Hirshfeld, guest speaker at the 2003 Jamboree. Quantities are limited so hurry and add this well-written and informative volume to your collection while supplies last.</p>	<p>We have Susan Harder's patented & dark sky friendly PARSHIELD® OUTDOOR FLOODLIGHT SHIELDS for PAR 38 type bulbs. Controls glare, reduces light trespass & allows you to direct the light where you need it. Two shields per box in your choice of Off White or Bronze finish for \$20.00, tax incl.</p>
--	---	--

Announcements & General Interest

Talk by John Dobson

July 6 - 12 at NYC's Pioneer Theater

A Sidewalk Astronomer

Featuring John Dobson

The Pioneer Theater is located at 155 East 3rd Street at Avenue A in downtown Manhattan - ph (212) 591-0434 advanced tickets available at www.twoboats.com/pioneer .

78 minutes --- Produced and Directed by Jeffrey F. Jacobs www.telescopepictures.com

"Entertaining, painlessly educational documentary, showcasing the heavens and the man who brought them down to earth. Dobson's colorful language and passionate beliefs transcend particulars. And as Dobson muses on the nature of time and space, Jacobs intermixes footage from satellites with images from the astronomer's slide show in a collage of swirling astral configurations. Never intrusive, the camera captures a discourse that is already well-rehearsed -- and fascinating -- performance art."
---VARIETY, May 17, 2005

Membership Renewal Time is Here

The Custer fiscal year ended June 30th. Check the top right of the address label on this copy of the Comment. If it says EXP 06/05, then your membership expired at the end of June, 6/30/05, and now is a good time to send in your renewal. If it says EXP 06/06 or later, you have already paid for the coming year. Make checks payable to and mail your renewal to CUSTER INSTITUTE, INC., Main Bayview Road, PO Box 1204, Southold, NY 11971. Yearly membership rates are: Junior/Students (to age 19) and Senior Citizens - \$25; Individuals - \$45; Familys - \$60; Sponsors - \$100 and Lifetime - \$1000. Add a note to let us know of any address or home phone number changes. You can also print out a Membership Application on our web site www.custerobservatory.org & use it for updating. It is found under Custer Links. Fill in your name and just the information that needs to be updated.

Editor: This procedure is for those who still receive the Custer Comment by standard US mail. A solution for electronic recipients is currently being worked out.

Space Shuttle Discovery, STS-114, on Schedule for Return to Flight

All systems are go for Wednesday's return to flight of the Space Shuttle Discovery. The official countdown to launch begins Sunday, July 10, 2005 at 6:00 PM, EST. The redesigned and reengineered space craft sits atop Launch Pad 39-B at NASA's Kennedy Space Center awaiting the final command that will send the 7-member crew on the long-awaited 'Return to Flight' mission, STS-114. For further details and the latest news and images, please visit NASA's official 'Return to Flight' home page at: http://www.nasa.gov/externalflash/rtf_front/index.html .

Urgent, Suffolk Executive Steve Levy Set to Veto Montauk 'Dark Sky' Site

<http://www.danspapers.com/paper/3.html>

Please contact the office of Suffolk Executive Steve Levy and respectfully ask him to sign into law Suffolk bills IR 1652, Declaring Montauk's Roosevelt Park, a Dark Sky Park, and IR 1654, establishing an astronomical observatory at the same location. Steve Levy, (v): 631 853-4000, (e): county.executive@suffolkcountyny.gov .

HEAVENLY EVENTS TO WATCH FOR July 05

“ News item:
Flying saucers having been reported in the region
a peasant near Carpentras
spying a motorcyclist picking flowers beside the road
complete with helmet, gauntlets
and plexiglass accessories
but without (and this was the giveaway)
motorcycle at hand
cautiously stalked and shot him
taking him for a Martian.

It was only after he had discovered the motorcycle
around a bend of the road
that he suspected his mistake.

Martians should always wear
their motorcycles conspicuously displayed.

- Ramon Guthrie

Surviving last month's scrum with SATURN low in the west after sunset, MERCURY and VENUS remain close for the first half of July. (Use binoculars to spot Mercury.) Saturn has already dropped out of sight, headed for its conjunction with the Sun on the 23rd. Mercury will likewise be gone soon after midmonth. MARS, while not yet a headline performer (for telescope users,) is now showing up along the eastern horizon by 1 AM this month. Having crossed the celestial equator (northbound) in June, -0.2 magnitude Mars spends July among the dim stars of Pisces. Still in Virgo near the star Porrima (see below), JUPITER is easily found low in the southwest at dusk, well above and to the left of Venus but noticeably closing in on her during the month.

The twin components of the double star γ (Gamma) Virginis, or Porrima, may have already reached periastron, according to an article in the June, 2005 Sky & Telescope

Magazine (see pages 74-75.) It states that the two 3.5 magnitude stars may have been closest in space (at periastron) in mid-April, 2005, and closest separation (as seen by us) came in late May, when they were 0.3 arcseconds apart. Their orbital period would be reduced to about 168.9 years, not 171 years as previously listed. By the year 2010, Porrima again should be fairly easily splittable through good optics and sufficient magnification, but the two stars will have revolved through about 250° of angle in just 10 years.

- 4 At 2 AM this Independence Day morning the NASA spacecraft Deep Impact is due for collision with the nucleus of Comet 9P/Tempel 1. By doing so, it may cause the comet to brighten by several magnitudes, possibly making it visible through binoculars or small telescopes. See the June Sky & Telescope, (pp. 40-44 and 67-69) for details and charts for finding Comet Tempel 1.
- 5 The Earth is at aphelion this morning, its farthest distance from the Sun - about 94.45 million miles.
- 8 Use binoculars within an hour after sunset to enjoy the view of a very slender waxing crescent Moon just above Venus and Mercury close beneath Venus. The phases displayed by these three through a telescope could hardly be more different! Mercury, at half-lit phase, is at greatest elongation east of the Sun.
- 13 The Moon, approaching first quarter, sets alongside Jupiter tonight.
- 17 Stay up after midnight tonight to watch the red star Antares, α Scorpii, skim just over the top of the waxing gibbous Moon.
- 21 Full Buck Moon is at perigee. Beware of tidal problems in the event of a storm.
- 27 The Moon, approaching third quarter, rises just ahead of Mars this morning.

Prepared by Robert Chapin

June's Beautiful Triple Conjunction



Photo, courtesy Phil Harrington

With the silhouette of Custer's dome in the foreground, this stunning image of June's Venus-Saturn-Mercury triple conjunction was captured on the evening of June 25th, 2005 by author, life-long amateur astronomer and Custer member, Phil Harrington. *Thank you*, Phil, for sharing! The full resolution image can be found at:

<http://tmadigan.home.netcom.com/custer/venus.mercury.saturn.conjunction.orig.jpg>

Lights too Bright at New Miller Place-Yaphank Firehouse



Photo, courtesy Phil Harrington

Eagle-eye Custer member and veteran amateur Phil Harrington took this picture of the new firehouse on Miller Place-Yaphank Rd. The firehouse is not yet occupied and yet creates the garish nighttime environment so characteristic of poorly designed and deployed outdoor lighting. Phil took the appropriate action by contacting the local civic association, bringing this unacceptable situation to their attention. In his email to them, he correctly notes the new safety hazards to nighttime drivers. Ironically, of all public facilities, it's the firehouse in this case that's creating the hazard! We applaud you, Phil! May we all be as vigilant and proactive.

Don't light up my life

Newsday, Sunday, July 3rd

<http://www.newsday.com/mynews/ny-heback4326060jul03,0,3593002,print.story>

"Lots of people have been listening: town officials, county officials, state officials."

"She's been incredibly effective," says Assemb. Fred Thiele (R-Sag Harbor). "Any time the issue of light pollution comes up, she's a tremendous resource."

Custer's own Susan Harder is in the news again. This time in a good article that appeared in both the Nassau and Suffolk editions of Newsday for July 3rd, 2005, URL listed above. The article was great in highlighting the benefit to the Astronomical community that intelligently designed and deployed lighting can have. It was short on the very real danger to nighttime drivers, the offensive and garish environment poorly or indiscriminately installed lighting creates, the effect on nocturnal animal life and just as important, the immediate energy savings intelligently designed and deployed lighting has. These points are extremely important and should be used as co-equal arguments when discussing this issue with politicians and the uninformed.

'Shining Beacon' Or a Spoiler Of the Night Sky?

New York Times, Sunday, June 19th, 2005

"A HUGE beacon of light 600 feet in the air would be the signature feature of Charles B. Wang's proposed 60-story skyscraper near the Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale. It's also becoming a focus of opposition to the project."

"Dark skies" advocates say the beacon would have a host of negative effects, from disrupting bird migration to distracting pilots, and most of all, would make the stars even harder to see at night."

The real title for this story should be ***Lights Out for Wang Tower.***

The obscenity of this idea is matched only by the colossal arrogance of Charles Wang to think that he can simply erect a giant lighthouse/office building in central Nassau and that everyone will just love it and that they would share his vision of a 60-story monstrosity next to the Nassau coliseum. Metaphorically, it is this arrogance that is so adequately represented by the tower. Either he's watched too many Disney movies, has lost the ability to distinguish between dreams and reality or has spent too many years buying up small, mostly-good software companies and sticking his label on it and now thinks he can have his way with the people of Long Island. This colossus would not only be a *towering* effrontery to the residents of Nassau county, but to those of Suffolk as well. Because of it's height and his stated desire to *deliberately* turn night into day with either a rotating beacon or 'glowing sphere', Suffolk residents would have to endure his legacy, his 'mark on the world', as well. Marks like this we can all do without.

Editor: I've secured a reprint of this article, the first 2 paragraphs of which are reproduced, above. If you would like a copy, drop me an email for an electronic copy or a note with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a hard copy.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My fellow Custer members

It is with great pleasure and appreciation that I accept your nomination to the post of President. Custer has been fortunate to have Bob Vanson at the helm the past several years and it has been under his guidance that Custer has grown. He has earned a well-deserved rest from the rigors of command. Custer must continue in its positive direction and my intention is to do just that.

As many of you know, this is not the first time I have been president of my favorite organization. In my nearly 30 years at Custer I have always done all I can to help Custer to grow and prosper and will continue to do so. I hope to guide Custer in a nurturing way, encouraging our "all-volunteer army" to work in ways to help Custer to take it's well deserved place as one of the premier astronomical, scientific and educational organizations in the area.

Custer has grown in the past several years; we have seen programs, facilities, funding, membership and public outreach expand. We have also seen new and exciting projects come to fruition, including new telescopes, the new dome and major additions to Custer's technology fleet. I think it is extremely important to continue to move these areas forward.

Custer needs your support as we consider ways to expand membership, increase funding, work to repair and upgrade the facilities, expand programs, and especially increase public outreach. This final item, public outreach, I believe, should be the cornerstone of Custer's expansion. It has always been through the public programs that Custer has increased membership and attracted additional sources of funding. Custer has some excellent talent in its membership in the public outreach areas and we should use them to Custer's maximum advantage. I believe that by providing programs to the local schools and community organizations we will ultimately make Custer much more attractive to new members and new sources of funds. One of the first projects I will work in earnest on is to do my best to secure funding for a public outreach program.

I have already received many generous offers to help from our wonderful members and friends. They have volunteered to help in public outreach, program creation (we always need more programs), technology, cleanup and maintenance, physical improvements (including a much needed driveway), reviewing and updating the constitution (did you realize that a few years back the constitution was changed so that the Board elects itself? I think perhaps we should review that) and fund raising. I think it is most important to encourage these volunteers (and the many others I believe will also come forward) to put their heart and soul into our favorite place. It is always fun and enjoyable when everyone is working together and accomplishing things. Sometimes we don't always end up where we thought we might, but we have a great time on the journey.

All in all, I believe we have an exciting and promising year ahead of us. I will appreciate all the positive input and assistance I am confident I will receive. I have already received a large number of very constructive ideas from our members and I am very excited to get to work.

Thanks again and it will be great fun!

Chuck Cardona
President elect

WELCOME TO OUR NEW OR RETURNING MEMBERS:

Carol & Anthony Mitarotondo of Cutchogue, Mal Speer of Farmingdale & Russell Hilbert of East Marion.

Welcome one and all!

New or returning members:

Do you own or have access to a personal computer? Do you have Internet access? If the answer to both of these questions is “yes”, why not send me your email address and receive the Custer Comment electronically? Some of the immediate benefits are:

- Immediate delivery to your inbox; no lost, late or tattered issues;
- Print only what you want;
- Active links to relevant websites and content;
- Color photos;
- Electronic bulletins and alerts delivered directly to your inbox;
- No postage or mailing expenses, providing an immediate cost savings for Custer. The saved revenue can be used to help fund all the exciting new projects and initiatives currently underway.

This Issue of the Custer Comment was professionally printed by our friends at

**PATCHOGUE
PRINTING**

"Your Image Is Our Business"

Stationery • Forms • Invitations • Newsletters
Business Cards • Brochures • Menus • Tickets

DIGITAL COLOR COPIES

23 Havens Avenue • Patchogue, New York 11772
(1 block west of N. Ocean Avenue)
(631) 447-1506 • Fax (631) 447-1508



Professional Martial Arts Training with Certified Black Belt Instructor, Shihan Larry Beierle.

631-345-9611



ROBERT A. VANSON



VANSON FINANCIAL

REGISTERED INVESTMENT ADVISOR

"Your Life Planner"

37 Valley Forge Dr., Bohemia, NY 11716 631-218-2350

Homepage <http://www.vansonfinancial.com>

E-mail bvanson@aol.com

**** Astrotec ****

Telescopes and Accessories

Celestron Meade TeleVue JMI SBIG

Orion Lumicon Kendrick Stellarvue

EXPERT TECHNICAL HELP

Astro-photography Specialist

631-563-9009

Frank

**T
H
E
C
U
S
T
E
R
C
O
M
M
E
N
T**

Tom Madigan, Editor
The Custer Comment
99 North Summit Ave
Patchogue, NY 11772

Address Service Requested

First Class