

## The Skyscraper

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the monthly publication of



### The Amateur Astronomical Society of Rhode Island

47 Peepload Road  
North Scituate, RI 02857

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

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See back page for directions to Seagrave Observatory.

Please submit items for the newsletter by July 15 to Jim Hendrickson, 1 Sunflower Circle, North Providence, RI 02911 or e mail to [jim@distantgalaxy.com](mailto:jim@distantgalaxy.com)

#### Email subscriptions:

To receive *The Skyscraper* by email, send email with your name and address to [jim@distantgalaxy.com](mailto:jim@distantgalaxy.com). Note that you will no longer receive the newsletter by postal mail.

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# The Skyscraper

July 2004

## July Meeting & Annual Cookout

### Saturday July 10, 4:00pm at Seagrave Observatory

Cookout is open to members and guests for \$5 per person.

After eating our fill at our annual cookout and spending an enjoyable afternoon socializing with friends, we will retire to our clubhouse for a special evening program to be presented by Alan Hirshfeld. Prof. Hirshfeld is professor of Physics at UMass Dartmouth and associate of the Harvard College Observatory. His most recent book published is: "Parallax: The Race To Measure The Cosmos." He recently had an article published in Sky and Telescope magazine about the early development of photography. He is planning to speak before us about "The Universe In The Mirror. George Ellery Hale and The Rise Of Modern Astronomy." This will be in celebration of the upcoming 100th anniversary of the Mount Wilson CA observatory and the 100" groundbreaking Hooker reflector. This promises to be a fascinating and informative evening.

## Skyscrapers Calendar

Public observing is held every Saturday at Seagrave Observatory weather permitting and when the grounds are accessible.

<b>July 3 Saturday</b>	<b>dusk</b>	<b>Public Observing Night</b> at Seagrave Observatory
<b>July 10 Saturday</b>	<b>4:00pm</b>	<b>Annual Cookout and July Meeting</b> at Seagrave Observatory
<b>July 17 Saturday</b>	<b>dusk</b>	<b>Public Observing Night</b> at Seagrave Observatory
<b>July 24 Saturday</b>	<b>dusk</b>	<b>Public Observing Night</b> at Seagrave Observatory
<b>July 31 Saturday</b>	<b>dusk</b>	<b>Public Observing Night</b> at Seagrave Observatory

## Notices

Remember that the July meeting is our annual cookout on **Saturday July 10th** and the cost is \$5 per person to help defray the costs. Anyone going to White Mountain who wishes to have their gear transported in Steve's trailer must bring it to the cookout/meeting on July 10.

**Membership renewals are due.** Any member not paid after July will be dropped from the mailing list.

# President's Message

*Dan Lorraine, President*

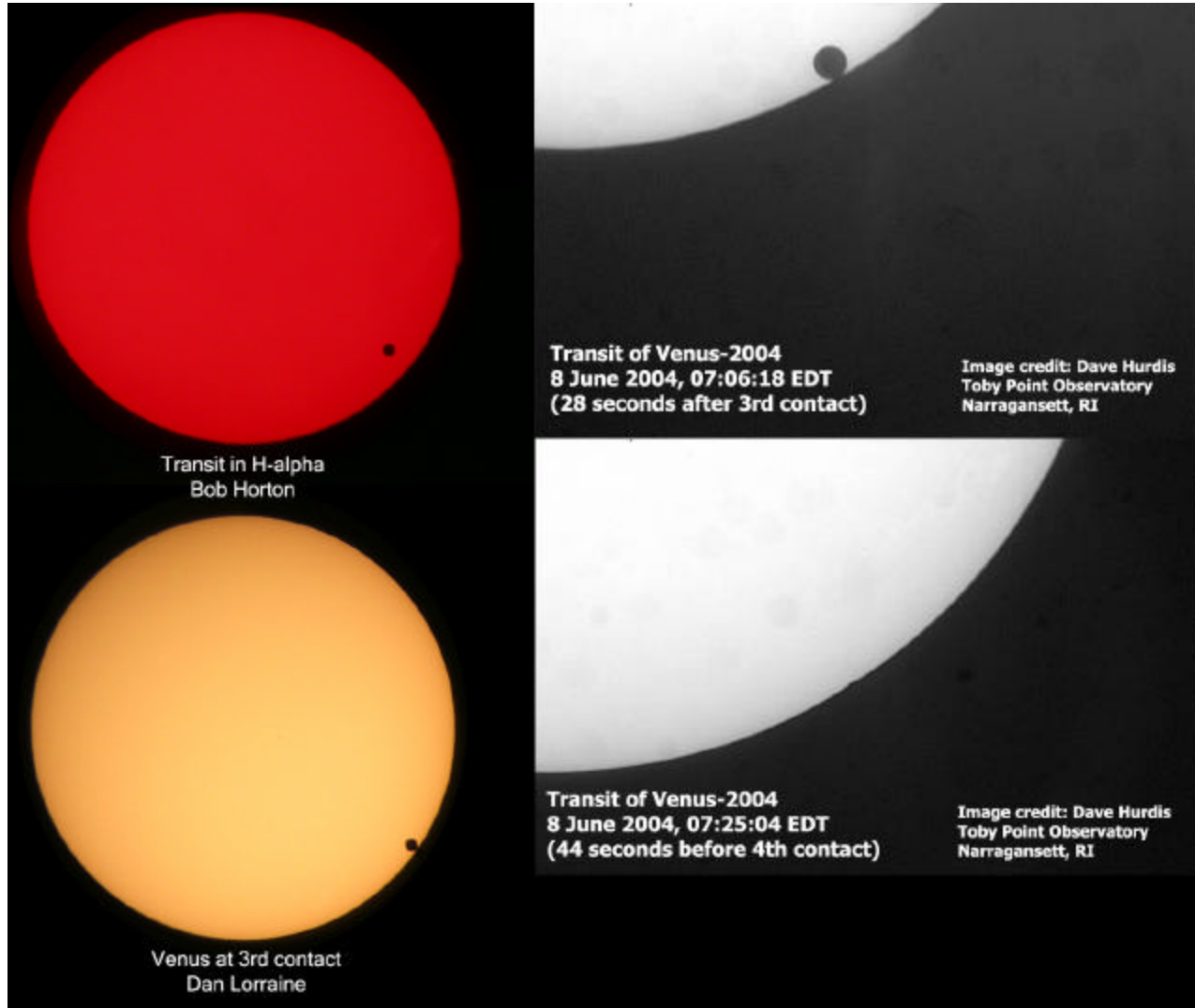
Wow! We're already into July and ready for our annual members and friends cookout! Remember there's something for both the carnivore and the vegetarian alike and all we ask for is a \$5.00 donation to help defray the costs. The cookout is all you can eat and includes hamburgers, hot dogs, veggie-burgers and veggie-dogs, salad, potato salad and more. I hope that you're all able to attend this very successful event. If you have lawn chairs please bring them with you.

If you missed the historic transit of Venus, please visit our web site to view members' photographs of this event. If you were clouded it then get ready for 2012 ... otherwise you'll have to catch the one in the year 2134.

One last reminder, if you haven't paid your dues, please do so as soon as possible. Remember, Skyscrapers is a non-profit

organization with a long and rich history and we count on your support to guarantee our future. If you can, please consider a small donation in addition to your dues ... no matter how small or large your contribution may be, it is greatly appreciated! Both Sky & Telescope and Astronomy magazines are also available with your membership at a \$10 discount. We have a lot of exciting events planned for our members over the next year and hope that you'll be part of them.

Lastly, was Frank Seagrave ever a Skyscrapers member? Watch the website as some important and recently discovered documents are added!



# Astronomical Odds and Ends in July

*David A Huestis, Historian*

I hope those of you who were interested in the transit of Venus this past June weren't disappointed. There were quite a few clouds around that morning, but I don't think anyone completely missed the event. Skyscraper members were spread out throughout the state to observe this very rare phenomenon.

My group set up our telescopes down at Pt. Judith. Sunrise was extremely cloudy. After about 15 minutes we finally got a six- or seven-minute look at the sun with Venus in transit before clouds obscured the view once again. During that brief time period the clouds were thick enough to afford us a view without filters. Not the best thing to do, but we only briefly glimpsed the image. The large black disk of Venus was very apparent. Number 14 welder's glass and special solar eclipse glasses enhanced the view.

The clouds finally parted an hour later and we were able to watch the rest of the event through completion. Venus' black disk was darker and more round than any sunspot I had ever seen on the surface of our Sun. We anxiously awaited the moment just before 3rd contact, when we expected to see the "black drop" effect.

We were not disappointed. All of a sudden the blackness of space outside of the solar disk seemed to drip inwards towards the disk of Venus approaching the solar limb or edge. It was a great phenomenon to observe. Slowly but surely (four or five seconds to this observer) the effect vanished as Venus' image began to exit the solar disk. We watched right up to the very end until that little notch of the planet's disk, like a little bite had been taken out of the sun, disappeared off the Sun's edge until 2012.

It was a great thrill to witness an event that had not been seen for 122 years. If you want to see some great images of the transit, including some fine shots of the "black drop" effect, please visit our website at (<http://www.theskyscrapers.org/>).

Almost any sky show after such a historical event like the transit of Venus can seem very trivial and anticlimatic. However, the month of July does have some interesting astronomical tidbits for which to watch.

Do you want to see Venus again? Well, after its recent rendezvous with the sun, in July Venus will become a

very prominent object in the early morning sky. Have you heard the phrase "once in a blue moon?" It refers to something that happens only once in a while. This year July is special because it has two full moons in it, one on July 2 and the second on the 31st. The second one is referred to as a blue moon.

Also in July the Earth is at its farthest point from the sun on the 5th, at 94,299,086 miles. In addition, another milestone will be celebrated on July 20th. Do you know what it is? On that date in 1969, Neil Armstrong first set foot upon the Moon. Buzz Aldrin soon followed him out onto the lunar surface. Ten more astronauts left their footprints on the Moon. Can you name them? All I can say is, you know you're getting old when you talk to young children when they view the moon through our telescopes at Seagrave Observatory and they tell you they learned about the Apollo moon landings in history class!!!!

The only other highlight for July is a couple of meteor showers at month's end. The first one, the Delta Aquarids, peak on the evening of the 27th to the early morning of the 28th. The Moon will be in a waxing Gibbous phase, a couple of days past first quarter. It will definitely interfere somewhat with observing all but the brightest of the meteors. Usually about 20 bright, yellow meteors can be observed per hour at peak. Because these meteors nearly broadside the Earth, their speed is a moderate 25.5 miles per second.

The second meteor shower, the Capricornids, come a day later on the night of July 29/30. The Moon will be even brighter, so I wouldn't expect very many to be seen. The Capricornids are characterized by their often yellow coloration and their frequent brightness. They are also slow interplanetary interlopers, hitting our atmosphere at around 15 miles per second. Expect perhaps less than eight meteors per hour at best, though the Capricornids are noted for producing brilliant fireballs.

Enjoy the astronomical tidbits the heavens provide for us during July. And just remember, it's never too late to plan ahead. See you in Hawaii on June 5/6, 2012 for the second of the current pair of Venus transits!!

Keep your eyes to the skies!

# Secretary's Report

Joel Cohen, Secretary

## Monthly Meeting

May 7, 2004

Skyscrapers Meeting Hall

Meeting Start - 9:27 PM

**Secretary's Report** - Approved as published in The Skyscraper

**Treasurer's Report** - Amended and then approved as amended

**Trustee's Report** - Ted Ferneza reported the gate hardware had been repaired. A grounds cleanup date was set for June 20th and a call for volunteers made. The president promised pizza for all those attending the work party.

**New Business** - New members nominated were Skip Gaede and Dawn Burdick. Al Hall moved to add a Paypal Icon to our website to allow the collection of dues and donations via the internet.

**Old Business** - New memberships for Tony Girardi and Tracy Halley were approved. A motion by Bob Horton to purchase the planetarium and telescope control software, Starry Night Pro was approved. A motion by Al Hall to purchase an LCD projector was tabled for further discussion.

Ted Ferneza presented the four options available for utilization of the Ash Dome donated by Raytheon Corporation. Pat Landers gave us the legal opinion that it was acceptable to sell the donated dome. A vote was taken by written ballot. The decision to sell the dome carried by a vote of 24 to 4.

**Librarian's Report** - Dave Huestis thanked all those who had returned books to the club library. Dave also thanked those who donated books.

**Upcoming Speakers** - Steve Hubbard reported that the line-up of speakers included Dr. Edward Deveney of Bridgewater State College, June; Dr. Alan Hirshfeld, Umass Dartmouth, July; Dennis diCicco of Sky & Telescope Magazine, August; John Huchra, Center for Astrophysics, Harvard University, September

**Good of the Organization** - Dan Lorraine – StarConn, June 5. Dave Huestis -- the Transit of Venus, June 8. Dan Lorraine – Skyscrapers field trip June 26 to the Harvard University's Observatories at Oak Ridge and America's Stonehenge at Mystery Hill. Bob Horton – meeting May 15 for the White Mountain Trip. Dan Lorraine publicly thanked both Dolores Rinaldi and Bob

Napier for a job well done in performing their duties as officers of the organization.

Adjournment - 10:33 PM

## Monthly Meeting

June 4, 2004

Skyscrapers Meeting Hall

Meeting Start - 7:44 PM

**Secretary's Report** - Not available

**Treasurer's Report** - Not Available

**Trustee's Report** - Ted Ferneza reported there was an issue with insects in some of the buildings and that he would spray to eliminate them. Ted also reported a large success in the cleanup effort and extended a hearty thanks to all who participated in the May project where an exceptional amount of cleanup was accomplished.

**New Business** - New members nominated names not available at this time. Dan Lorraine reported that Conrad Insurance is going out of business and that any member having a contact within the insurance industry please give us the names.

**Old Business** - New memberships for Dawn Burdick and Tony Gerardi were approved. A motion by Al Hall to install the PayPal icon on the website did not carry.

**Librarian's Report** - Dave Huestis thanked all those who had returned books to the club library. Dave also thanked those who donated books. Some dated software was offered to any member willing to take it. Dave also announced a work session for the Archives on June 12 from 1-4 p.m.

**Upcoming Speakers** - Steve Hubbard reported that the line-up of speakers included Dr. Alan Hirshfeld, Umass Dartmouth, July; Dennis DiCicco of Sky & Telescope Magazine, August; John Huchra, Center for Astrophysics, Harvard University.

**Good of the Organization** - Dan Lorraine – StarConn, June 5. Dave Huestis -- the Transit of Venus, June 8. Dan Lorraine – Skyscrapers field trip June 26 to the Harvard University's Observatories at Oak Ridge and America's Stonehenge at Mystery Hill. Bob Horton – call for volunteers for Astro Assembly, dates October 1 & 2.

Adjournment - 8:33 PM

## For Sale

Bob Napier is offering the following equipment for sale. If interested of for more information, contact Bob at bob\_napier@hotmail.com.

**MEADE 10" f-6.3 Classic** w/carrying case, Meade SuperWedge, Tripod, JMI WheelyBars, 2D Balance (top and bottom), 20mm Meade Eyepiece

**MEADE 8" f-6.3 UHTC**, Autostar II, GPS, SMT, Meade SuperWedge, Tripod, JMI WheelyBars, 2D Balance (top and bottom), 26mm Meade Eyepiece

**SBIG ST9E CCD Camera w/CF8A Color Filter Wheel**, RGB + IR Block Filters, Hard Case, Power Supplies, cables, w/water cooling option, CCDOPS Software

**SBIG ST7E CCD Camera w/CF8 Color Filter Wheel**, RGB + IR Block Filters, Hard Case, Power Supplies, cables, w/water cooling option, CCDOPS Software

**EYEPIECES** - MEADE Super Plossls, 9.7mm, 12.4mm, 15mm, 20mm Wide Angle, Meade 9mm Illuminate Reticule Eypiece

### Accessories

MEADE f-6.3 Focal Reducer

MEADE 1-1/4" Diagonal

CELESTRON Filter Set - 6 filters for 1-1/4" eyepieces

CELESTRON 2X Barlow - 1-1/4"

HOMEYER 1-1/4" Flip Mirror System w/Meade 25mm CCD Framing eyepiece

HOMEYER 1-1/4" Flip Mirror System w/Meade 25mm CCD Framing eyepiece

**SOFTWARE** - MEADE EPOCH 2000, CCDSOFT V.5 w/manuals

### **Directions to Seagrave Observatory**

#### **From the Providence area:**

Take Rt. 6 West to Interstate 295 in Johnston and proceed west on Rt. 6 to Scituate. In Scituate bear right off Rt. 6 onto Rt. 101. Turn right onto Rt. 116 North. Peeptoad Road is the first left off Rt. 116.

#### **From Coventry/West Warwick area:**

Take Rt. 116 North. Peeptoad Road is the first left after crossing Rt. 101.

#### **From Southern Rhode Island:**

Take Interstate 95 North. Exit onto Interstate 295 North in Warwick (left exit.) Exit to Rt. 6 West in Johnston. Bear right off Rt. 6 onto Rt. 101. Turn right on Rt. 116. Peeptoad Road is the first left off Rt. 116.

#### **From Northern Rhode Island:**

Take Rt. 116 South. Follow Rt. 116 thru Greenville. Turn left at Knight's Farm intersection (Rt. 116 turns left) and follow Rt. 116. Watch for Peeptoad Road on the right.

#### **From Connecticut:**

- Take Rt. 44 East to Greenville and turn right on Rt. 116 South. Turn left at Knight's Farm intersection (Rt. 116 turn left) and follow Rt. 116. Watch for Peeptoad Road on the right.
- Take Rt. 6 East toward Rhode Island; bear left on Rt. 101 East and continue to intersection with Rt. 116. Turn left; Peeptoad Road is the first left off Rt. 116.

#### **From Massachusetts:**

Take Interstate 295 South (off Interstate 95 in Attleboro.) Exit onto Rt. 6 West in Johnston. Bear right off Rt. 6 onto Rt. 101. Turn right on Rt. 116. Peeptoad Road is the first left off Rt. 116.



**47 PEEPTOAD ROAD  
NORTH SCITUATE, RI 02857**