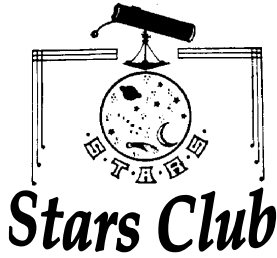


The Springfield

News from the STARS

"Sharing the Wonders of the Night Sky"

SINCE 1934



July, 2007



"On the Horizon"

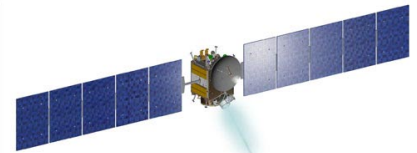
As this edition of the Stars Club newsletter reaches members, a rather rare opportunity exists to see a solar system object other than the Sun, Moon, one of the major planets or a bright comet with the unaided eye, provided you have access to a dark sky far from city lights. The object is the minor planet Vesta, which begins the month of July at magnitude 6.0, still visible without optical aid. Although it will fade with time, Vesta is well placed for evening binocular observations in Scorpius, which is also home to brilliant Jupiter, the largest planet, this summer and fall.

Also as this edition of the Stars Club newsletter reaches members, NASA stands ready to launch the Dawn spacecraft, as early as July 7th, when its launch window opens. Dawn's mission is to explore both Vesta and another minor planet, Ceres, in an effort to look for clues to conditions in the early solar system some 4.5 billion years ago. If all goes well, Dawn should reach Vesta first in October 2011. After spending six months there, it will leave Vesta to make the journey on to Ceres, with a scheduled arrival date in February 2015. This will make Dawn the first spacecraft to orbit two separate targets after leaving Earth.

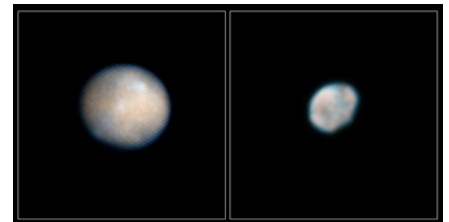
The Dawn mission has been designed to help astronomers study the surface features and landscapes of these two bodies, along with their internal and external compositions. Scientists are particularly interested in learning how water affected the formation of planets. Vesta and Ceres are ideal for studying what the early solar system was like, as they have remained relatively unchanged since its formation. So, as Dawn leaves Earth for its "Journey to the Beginning of the Solar System," don't forget that you too can visit one of these tiny worlds on any clear night this summer.

Mission to Asteroids Vesta and Ceres

DAWN



"A Journey to the Beginning of the Solar System"



Ceres and Vesta – Image Credit: NASA/ESA

- *Mike Kozicki*, Editor

Ed Faits Elected New President of Arunah Hill

Congratulations to past Stars Club President **Ed Faits!** On May 5th, Ed was elected president of the Arunah Hill Natural Science Center in Cummington, MA. He is looking forward to helping expand Arunah Hill's educational programs and has already led a work party to install a ramp for easier access to the telescope shed. Ed was also recently presented with the Stars Club's Korkosz Award for Outstanding Contributions to Astronomy for his many years of service to the local astronomical community.

Celebrating Seventy Years

On October 20, 1937 the Seymour Planetarium at the Springfield Science Museum opened its doors to the public for the first time. The projector at the center of the planetarium had been designed and built by Frank and John Korkosz of Chicopee. It is now the oldest operating American-built planetarium projector in the world. Join us at the September meeting as we look back at the history of this remarkable instrument.

The Korkosz Award

Each year, the Stars Club presents the Korkosz Award for Outstanding Contributions to Astronomy to an individual from the northeast in memory of Dr. Frank Korkoz, Stars Club member and planetarium pioneer. Congratulations to the following individuals who have received the Korkosz Award in recent years:

2004 – Peter Scherff

2005 – Ed Faits

2006 – Mike Kozicki

Nominations for the 2007 Korkosz Award are now open. If you would like to nominate someone for the award, please contact one of the club officers or directors.

The Stars Club's Diamond Anniversary Celebration

Founded in 1934, the Stars Club has historically marked the start of each of its new years with the September meeting. That makes this fall the beginning of the club's 74th year. A year from now, beginning in September 2008, we'll be celebrating the 75th anniversary of the club's founding. If you have any ideas or suggestions for events for the anniversary celebration, please contact one of the club officers or directors.

NOTICES

Executive Committee Meeting - The next Stars Club Executive Committee meeting will be held in late fall. If you have ideas for events or speakers, notices for the newsletter, or anything else you would like to bring to the club's attention, please contact one of the club officers or directors prior to October 31.

Website – The Stars Club website, <http://www.reflector.org>, is undergoing a major redesign this summer. Look for a new and improved version later this year. In the meantime, if you have ideas for the website or would like to contribute material to it, please contact **Mike Kozicki**.

Membership Dues – Club dues for 2008 will remain at \$20. Please send a check for \$20, payable to the Springfield Stars Club, to **Rich Sanderson** at P.O. Box 2793, Springfield, MA 01101 by December 31, 2007. Your dues offset costs of running the club, mostly the museum room rental fee and mailings. PLEASE help to support your club!

Sky & Telescope – One of the benefits of membership in the Stars Club is a reduced-rate subscription to Sky & Telescope magazine for just \$32.95 per year. If you are already a club member and wish to renew your subscription, return the renewal card you'll receive in the mail and a check for the proper amount, payable to the Springfield Stars Club, to **Rich Sanderson** at P.O. Box 2793, Springfield, MA 01101.

Club Election – The annual club election is held at the November meeting. If you would like to nominate a club member for an elected position, please let one of the current club officers or directors know.

Telescopes Needed – The success of "Stars Over Springfield" depends upon the efforts of club members, especially those who can set up a small telescope outside the Tolman Auditorium for visitors to look through. If you have a small telescope, please consider volunteering at an upcoming event this fall.

THE OBSERVING LOG

Perseid Meteors The Moon will be new when the Perseid meteor shower peaks on the morning of August 13th, allowing for ideal viewing conditions under dark skies. One of the best showers of the year, the Perseids may produce up to a meteor per minute when viewed far away from city lights.

Lunar Eclipse The year's second total eclipse of the Moon occurs on the morning of August 28th. The Moon enters the umbra of the Earth's shadow at 4:51a.m. Then, totality begins at 5:52a.m., shortly before moonset and sunrise. The next eclipse of the moon will take place next winter, on the evening of February 21, 2008.

Mars Brightens Watch the Red Planet brighten steadily in the morning sky this summer and fall as it heads toward a late-year opposition on December 24th. Although Mars won't be as close to us as it was for its 2003 and 2005 oppositions, it will be high in the sky in Gemini in December, affording excellent telescopic viewing.

Full Moon Dates: July 29, August 28, September 26, October 26, November 24, December 23

New Moon Dates: July 14, August 12, September 11, October 11, November 9, December 9

Autumnal Equinox (Start of Fall) – September 23, 2007 at 5:51a.m. EDT.

Winter Solstice – December 22, 2007 at 1:08a.m. EST.