

Poster: Transit of Venus Time Keg



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Chuck

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Abstract:

In past centuries, observers of transits of Venus have written messages for future witnesses of the celestial phenomenon. During and after the 2012 transit of Venus, spectators reflected on and shared their experience for their 22nd century counterparts. The written personal records and other transit of Venus artifacts from 2004 and 2012 will be sealed in the Transit of Venus Time Keg, a stainless steel time capsule made from a beer keg. Great Lakes Planetarium Association (GLPA) members can contribute their messages at the GLPA 2012 Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, PA, where the Transit of Venus Time Keg will be sealed, bringing closure, literally, to this popular and historically significant solar system alignment. A commemorative plaque celebrates nature's celestial spectacles, and invites people to open the Time Keg after 100 years as the 2117 and 2125 transits of Venus approach.

Poster Text:

The Transit of Venus Time Keg is a time capsule containing artifacts and personal reflections from the 2012 transit of Venus. It is intended to capture elements of the celestial phenomenon in the 21st century and to inspire observers in 100 years when the 2117 and 2125 transits of Venus approach.

We are now on the eve of the second transit of a pair, after which there will be no other till the twenty-first century of our era has dawned upon the earth, and the June flowers are blooming in 2004. When the last transit season occurred the intellectual world was awakening from the slumber of ages, and that wondrous scientific activity which has led to our present advanced knowledge was just beginning. What will be the state of science when the next transit season arrives God only knows. Not even our children's children will live to take part in the astronomy of that day. As for ourselves, we have to do with the present...

William Harkness, 1882

Your Message to the Future

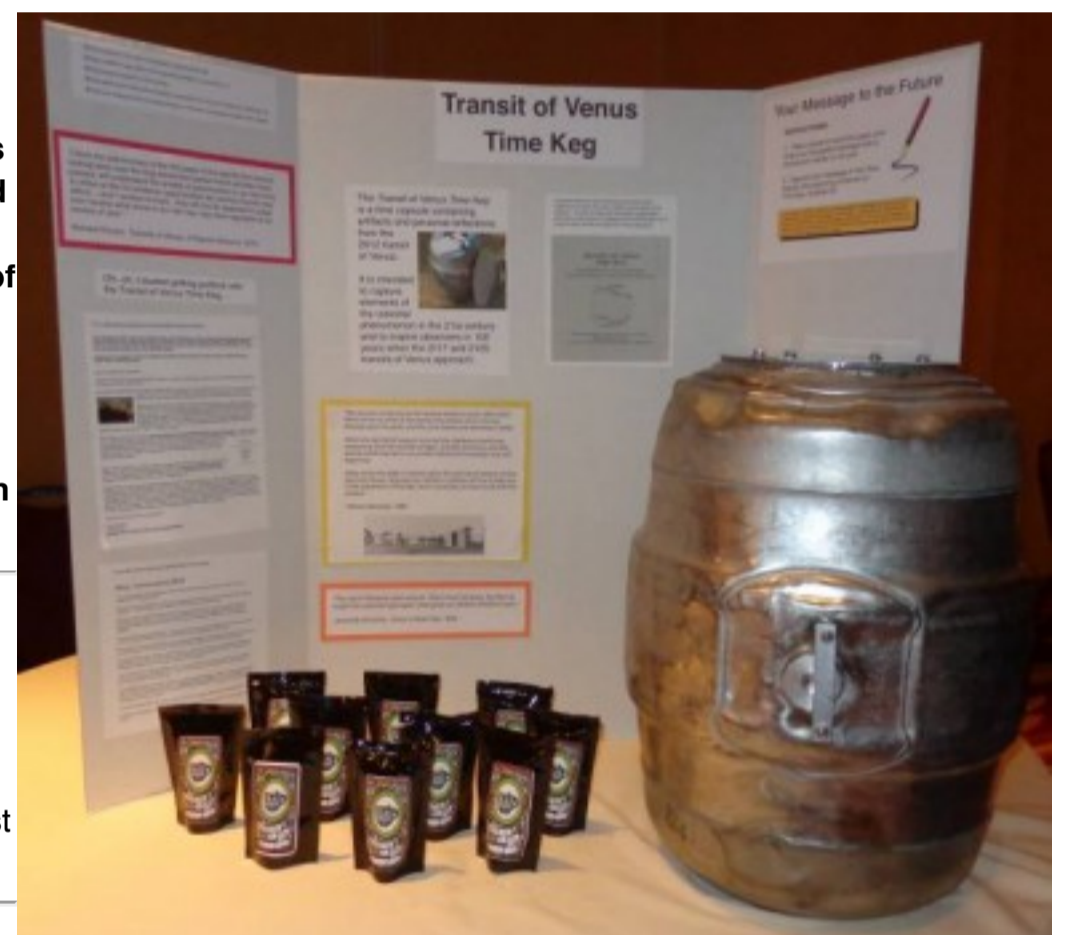
INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Take a sheet of acid-free paper and write your thoughtful message with a permanent marker or ink pen.
2. Deposit your message in the Time Keg by the beginning of dinner on Thursday, October 25.
3. Take a sample of Black Drop Effect coffee.

I will load all of the contents, including letters submitted during the GLPA conference, into the Time Keg on Thursday. I will caulk the steel lid with silicon and bolt the lid and the plaque into place. At a time and location to be announced, we will pound in the aluminum plug on the side of the Time Keg and bolt it down as well. Done.

"Thy return Posterity shall witness. Years must roll away, but then at length the splendid sight again shall greet our distant children's eyes."

Jeremiah Horrocks, Venus in Sole Visa, 1639



- Keg donated by The Livery microbrewery in Benton Harbor, MI.
- Keg modified by Harry Miller of The Apprentice Academy in South Bend, IN.
- Keg contents prepared by Chuck Bueter.
- Keg sealed at the Great Lakes Planetarium Association 2012 Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, PA.
- Keg to be displayed at the Air & Space Museum in the Penn-Harris-Madison Digital Video Theater.

"I think the astronomers of the first years of the twenty first century, looking back over the long transit-less period which will then have passed, will understand the anxiety of

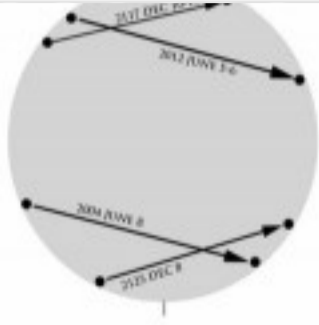
astronomers in our own time to utilise to the full whatever opportunities the coming transits may afford...; and I venture to hope...they will not be disposed to judge over harshly what some in our own day may have regarded as an excess of zeal."

Richard Proctor, Transits of Venus, A Popular Account, 1875



TRANSIT OF VENUS TIME KEG

MAY OBSERVERS OF CELESTIAL PHENOMENA
FIND VALUE AND JOY IN NATURE'S ELEGANT SPECTACLES.



FROM WITNESSES OF THE 2012 TRANSIT OF VENUS.
OPEN AFTER 100 YEARS
AS THE 2117 AND 2125 TRANSITS OF VENUS APPROACH.

A plaque affixed to the Time Keg instructs future observers to wait 100 years before opening the time capsule. A century-long wait still gives unspecified planners a few years to prepare for the December 2117 event if they choose to open the Time Keg early.

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