

# **Carnegie Institution NOVA Evening**

## **“Venus Unveiled”**

Presentation by Sean C. Solomon

*Director, Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution of Washington*

### **Suggested Reading List**

#### **“The Planet Venus”**

By Mikhail Ya. Marov and David H. Grinspoon

Since the end of the Cold War, American and Russian space scientists have had the opportunity to share key findings which were previously restricted for reasons of national security. Among many other advances, this collaboration has led to a significant gain in our understanding of our nearest neighbor in the solar system, the planet Venus. Recently, two scientists from opposite sides of the globe, Mikhail Y. Marov (formerly chief scientist for the Soviet era Venera project) and astrophysicist David H. Grinspoon, have joined forces to produce **“The Planet Venus.”** This comprehensive textbook integrates data collected from the Galileo, Magellan, Pioneer-Venus, and Venera missions to tell the story of this “unique planet with slow retrograde rotation, impressive geology, no magnetic field, bizarre atmospheric dynamics, and an extremely hostile climate.” “Must” reading for serious students of planetary science.

**Published by Yale University Press (1998) \$70.00 hardcover**

#### **“Venus Revealed: A New Look Below the Clouds of Our Mysterious Twin Planet”**

By David H. Grinspoon

Not content with collaborating on an academic study of Venus, David H. Grinspoon has produced this provocative book that is equally accessible to non-scientists and planetary specialists. **“Venus Revealed”** offers a history of our fascination with our “sister” planet, leading to recent discoveries of just how strange this sibling really is. Despite what is now known about the planet’s spectacularly hostile atmosphere, the author presents the intriguing proposition that we may be Venusians—that early forms of carbon-based life may have developed in the rich primal soup of that world billions of years ago, and spread to Earth exactly like a contagious disease. He even makes the case for future “terraforming” expeditions to enable human colonization of Venus. (We don’t recommend signing up for the Venusian edition of TV’s “Survivor” any time soon, however.) This entertaining offering should appeal especially to those interested in planetary ecology.

**Published by Perseus Books (1998) \$20.00 paperback**

### **“June 8, 2004: Venus in Transit”**

By Eli Maor

This book previews a spectacular “coming attraction” in the world of astronomy: the next occasion when the planet Venus will cross in front of the sun. The Venus transit—which last took place in 1882—provided astronomical observers with the opportunity to determine the mean distance between the earth and sun. However, previous attempts to record the transit were plagued by all sorts of mishaps, ranging from bad weather to shipwreck to untimely death. Maor’s book tells the history of five prior recorded attempts to observe the Venus transits, and demonstrates that the struggle to advance scientific knowledge, while ultimately rewarding, is an adventure every bit as challenging, unexpected, and perilous as Magellan’s voyage around the globe.

**Published by Princeton University Press (2000) \$22.95 paperback**

### **“Looking for Earths: The Race to Find New Solar Systems”**

By Alan Boss

Are we alone in the unfathomable vastness of the universe? Or are there other planets capable of generating and sustaining life in an atmosphere similar to Earth’s? Fifty years of intensive searching for other solar systems produced no credible claim for an extra-solar planet. Then, in the last two exciting years, several teams of astronomers around the globe caught the first glimpses of a rich crop of giant, Jupiter-sized gas planets—the first compelling evidence that not only are there other planets, but that they may well be more plentiful than ever imagined. With an insider’s perspective, prominent planetary scientist Alan Boss takes you to the front lines of this ongoing race for discovery, revealing the behind-the-scenes story of scientific determination, frustration, and triumph. He leads readers to the mountaintop observatories that house the world’s most powerful telescopes, and into the tension-filled scientific meetings where new results are announced and old results overturned, bringing the process of discovery vividly alive.

**Published by John Wiley & Sons (2000) \$16.95 paperback**

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