



Lake Afton Public Observatory

FOR: Immediate Release

FROM: Lake Afton Public Observatory
WSU Fairmount Center for Science and Mathematics Education
Robert Henry, 316.978.3991 or Greg Novacek, 316.978.3854

DATE: September 22, 2014

RE: Lake Afton Public Observatory – New programs for Fall, 2014.

How Far is Far and Reflections of the Moon

The stars, nebulae and galaxies in our universe are unimaginably far apart so just how can astronomers measure these distances? During this program observatory visitors will have the opportunity to observe a gas giant planet, a multiple star, a cluster of stars, a nebula and a nearby galaxy as they learn just how far away these objects really are and how astronomers determine these vast distances. *"How Far is Far?"* will be presented on Friday and Saturday evenings, October 10-11, 17-18, and 24-25; November 14-15, and 21-22; and December 12-13, and 19-20.

Sunlight reflects off the surface of the moon revealing craters, mountains, and smooth, dark plains. Join us as we explore this harsh landscape through the Observatory's 16 inch telescope. We will also observe the two most distant planets in our solar system, Uranus and Neptune. *"Reflections of the Moon"* will be presented on October 3-4 and 31; November 1, 7-8, and 28-29; and December 5-6.

The Lake Afton Public Observatory has numerous exhibits that complement the observing programs. One exhibit is designed to help visitors understand the vast distances between objects in our universe while another reveals the methods astronomers use to measure these distances. There is an exhibit that compares and contrasts the planets in our solar system and another that scales our solar system down giving you a better idea of the relative sizes of the planets and distances to them. Other exhibits allow you to make a small telescope, or test your astronomy knowledge to launch the Space Shuttle. You can also use small telescopes and binoculars outside to observe astronomical objects on your own.

*** MORE ***

Office:
1845 Fairmount
Wichita, KS 67260-0032
(316) 978-3191

Program Information:
(316) WSU-STAR
Internet:
<http://webs.wichita.edu/lapo>

Observatory:
20 mi. SW of downtown Wichita
on MacArthur Rd. at 247th St. W.
(316) 794-8995

The Observatory also features a photography program each month where anyone with a 35mm single-lens reflex camera (that's a camera with a removable lens) can take celestial photographs using the Observatory's telescope as a giant telephoto lens. At 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 4th the photography program will feature the Sun. Then at 10:00 pm on Saturday, November 22nd, the photography program will be pointing its cameras at the Andromeda Galaxy or M31. Finally, on Saturday, December 6th at 10:00 p.m. the astrophotography program will focus its attentions on our nearest celestial neighbor, the Full Moon.

Please note that for these astrophotography programs your SLR camera must have a manual override and you should be familiar with using its manual settings such as changing ISO and exposure settings. For all astrophotography programs a cable release is recommended, and for M31 it is necessary.

But wait! What if you don't have a 35mm SLR camera? The Observatory has a solution ... just bring a USB flash drive with you. The Observatory staff will help you use the Observatory's camera to take your pictures and then transfer them to your flash drive for you to take home, process and enjoy.

Opening Times and Admission

The Lake Afton Public Observatory is open to the public every Friday and Saturday evening. From October through December 20, the Observatory is open from 7:30 until 10:00 p.m. and then will close for the holidays from December 22 through January 1. Admission to the Observatory is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children ages 6-12; children under 6 are admitted free. There is also a special family rate where 2 adults and their immediate minor children or grandchildren get in for just \$15.00. For additional program information, you can "friend" the Lake Afton Public Observatory on Facebook, call the information hotline at WSU-STAR (978-7827), or go to the Observatory's website at <http://webs.wichita.edu/lapo>

Location

The Observatory is located about 20 miles southwest of downtown Wichita on MacArthur Road at 247th Street West in Lake Afton County Park. It is immediately north of the lake, just off MacArthur Road. Lake Afton can be reached by any of the following routes: west from Wichita on U.S. 54 to the Lake Afton sign at Viola Road three miles past Goddard, then three miles south and one mile east; or southwest on K-42, 7 miles to Schulte and nine miles west on MacArthur.

Events Taking Place in the Sky

Would you like to know when full moon will occur? Have you ever pondered the name of the bright star you saw near the moon? Is there a meteor shower this month? To discover the answers to these questions or if you just want to know what events are taking place in the sky during the current month call the Observatory's Program and Sky Information line at WSU-STAR (978-7827).

The Lake Afton Public Observatory is operated by the Fairmount Center for Science and Mathematics Education, a part of the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Science at Wichita State University.

Lake Afton Public Observatory Public Program Schedule October – December, 2014

Program	October	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Reflections of the Moon</i>	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.	October 3-4, 31
Photography: Sun	3:00 p.m.	Saturday, October 4
Total Lunar Eclipse	4:00 – 6:30 a.m.	Wednesday, October 8
Native American Storytelling	8:00 – 10:00 p.m.	Friday, October 10
<i>How Far is Far?</i>	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.	October 10-11, 17-18, 24-25
Partial Solar Eclipse	4:00 – 6:30 p.m.	Thursday, October 23
Program	November	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Reflections of the Moon</i>	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.	November 1, 7-8, 28-29
<i>How Far is Far?</i>	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.	November 14-15, 21-22
KAO Telescope Fair	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.	Saturday, November 22
Photography: Andromeda Galaxy	10:00 p.m.	Saturday, November 22
Program	December	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Reflections of the Moon</i>	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.	December 5-6
Photography: Full Moon	10:00 p.m.	Saturday, December 6
<i>How Far is Far?</i>	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.	December 12-13, 19-20
CLOSED		December 22 – January 4

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