



Lake Afton Public Observatory

OR: 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: Dec. 15, 2014

RE: Lake Afton Public Observatory – New programs for winter, 2015.

Gazing at Jupiter, the Moon and Other Wonders of the Winter Sky

On dark clear nights during the winter months - January, February, and March – the sky offers a host of beautiful heavenly objects to observe. The planet Jupiter, faint clouds of glowing gas, star clusters, and even distant galaxies await visitors to the Lake Afton Public Observatory during the program *“Wonders of the Winter Sky”*. It will be presented on the evenings of Jan. 9-10 and 16-17; Feb. 6-7, 13-14 and 20-21; and March 6-7, 13-14 and 20-21.

On those winter nights when the moon is visible in the evening sky, the Observatory will present *“Gazing at Jupiter and the Moon”*. Observatory visitors will explore Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar system and see the different colored cloud bands in its atmosphere and up to four of its many moons. Visitors will also get to gaze upon our Moon’s deep craters, high mountains and smooth plains. *“Gazing at Jupiter and the Moon”* will be presented on the evenings of Jan. 23-24 and 30-31; Feb. 27-28; and March 27-28.

The Observatory also has numerous exhibits that complement the observing programs. Visitors can learn how astronomers determine the temperature and composition of stars; explore Jupiter’s many interesting features; discover why the Moon goes through different phases; and find out how astronomers use different portions of the electromagnetic spectrum (from radio waves to ultraviolet light and x-rays) to learn about celestial objects. At other exhibits visitors can make a telescope or test their astronomy knowledge to try to fuel and launch the Space Shuttle. Small telescopes and binoculars outside give people a chance to observe stars and planets on their own.

The Observatory also features a photography program each month where anyone with a 35mm single-lens reflex camera (a camera with a removable lens) can take celestial photographs using the Observatory’s telescope as a giant telephoto lens. At 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 24, prior to that evening’s regular program, the object of the photography

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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

program will be the crescent moon. Next, at 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 21, the photography program will feature one of the most beautiful objects in our galaxy, the Orion Nebula. Then, at 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 21, the astrophotography program will focus on the largest planet in our solar system, Jupiter.

Please note that for the astrophotography programs your camera must have a manual override mode and you should be familiar enough with your camera to change ISO settings and exposure times. It is also highly recommended that you bring a cable release.

If you don't have a 35mm SLR camera, just bring a USB flash drive with you to the Observatory. The Observatory staff will help you use the Observatory's digital SLR camera to take your pictures. Your pictures will then be transferred 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 on Friday and Saturday evenings beginning Jan. 9. During January and February, Observatory hours are from 7:30-10:00 p.m.; and in March, from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. Admission to the Observatory is \$6 for adults and \$4 for children ages 6-12; children under 6 are admitted free. We also have a special family rate where 2 adults and their immediate minor children or grandchildren get in for just \$18.00. For program information, you can "like" 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 Jan. 5 – March 31, 2015

The Observatory will be closed for the holidays through January 4

Program	January	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Wonders of the Winter Sky</i>	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.	Jan. 9-10, 16-17
<i>Gazing at Jupiter and the Moon</i>	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.	Jan. 23-24, 30-31
Photography: Crescent Moon	6:00 p.m.	Saturday, Jan. 24
Program	February	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Wonders of the Winter Sky</i>	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.	Feb. 6-7, 13-14, 20-21
<i>Gazing at Jupiter and the Moon</i>	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.	Feb. 27-28
Photography: Orion Nebula	10:00 p.m.	Saturday, Feb. 21
Program	March	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Wonders of the Winter Sky</i>	8:00 – 10:00 p.m.	March 6-7, 13-14, 20-21
<i>Gazing at Jupiter and the Moon</i>	8:00 – 10:00 p.m.	March 27-28
Photography: Jupiter	10:00 p.m.	Saturday, March 21

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