



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: April 22, 2013

RE: Lake Afton Public Observatory Programs for May - August, 2013.

Black Holes and Saturn Featured in Summer Observatory Programs

“Black Holes in Space” will be one of the programs presented by the Lake Afton Public Observatory from May through August. Visit the Observatory to learn how astronomers expose the mysteries surrounding these massive gravity wells even though they cannot be directly observed. During the program you will have the opportunity to observe Saturn and its beautiful ring system; a red supergiant star that will probably become a black hole when it dies; a multiple star system which illustrates one of the ways that astronomers find black holes; a globular cluster of stars which may contain a massive black hole and a spiral galaxy that contains a super-massive black hole at its core. While you are observing these objects, the Observatory staff will talk about the many mysteries surrounding black holes. *“Black Holes in Space”* will be presented from 9:00 to 11:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings, May 3-4, 10-11, 24-25, 31-June 1, 7-8, 28-29, July 5-6, 26-27, August 2-3, 9-10, 23-24, and 30-31.

If you would rather observe and learn about objects a bit closer to home, the Lake Afton Public Observatory will also be featuring *“Moons, Rings and Other Things”*. This is a great chance for you to come out to the Observatory and use the big 16-inch diameter telescope to get a close look at our nearest celestial neighbor, the Moon, with its craters and smooth plains; Saturn with its beautiful ring system and many moons and a distant star with planets of its own. *“Moons, Rings and Other Things”* will be presented from 9:00 to 11:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings, May 17-18, June 14-15, 21-22, July 12-13, 19-20, and August 16-17

In addition, the Observatory has numerous exhibits that complement these programs. In the case of black holes you can explore their different parts and learn about their strange properties. You can also discover Saturn’s many interesting features and how its appearance changes over its 29 year long orbit around the sun. At other exhibits you can make a telescope, explore the properties of light, touch a rock from space, and use a computer to go on a scavenger hunt through the solar system or find a space pirate’s base. Small telescopes and binoculars are available outside so you can observe astronomical objects on your own.

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

Would you like to take pictures of the Moon, Saturn or the Milky Way? Each month, on a selected Saturday evening after the regular program, the Observatory features astrophotography programs where anyone with a 35mm single-lens reflex (SLR) camera (a camera with a removable lens) can take celestial photographs.

On Saturday, May 18th and June 15th at 11:00 pm the astrophotography programs will focus their attention on the beautiful ringed planet, Saturn. Then, on Saturday, July 13th at 11:00 pm, the program will feature our nearest celestial neighbor, the Moon. For these photography programs it is recommended that your camera have the ability to shoot color pictures at ISO 400, 800 or 1600. Your camera will be attached to the 16-inch telescope, using it as a giant telephoto lens.

On Saturday, August 10th at 11:00 pm the Observatory features an astrophotography program where you will use your camera and telephoto lens to capture a striking image of the Milky Way. For this program, you will need to bring a cable release and telephoto lens, in addition to your camera.

Note that if you do not have an SLR camera, that's ok too. Bring a USB flash drive with you and the Observatory will let you use their digital SLR camera to take your astronomy photographs. When you have finished, your pictures will be transferred to your flash drive for you to take home and enjoy.

Opening Times and Admission

The Lake Afton Public Observatory is open to the public every Friday and Saturday evening. During the summer months from May through August, the Observatory is open from 9:00-11:00 pm. Admission is just \$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 parents and their immediate minor children or grandchildren get in for just \$15.00.

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 the 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). Current program information is also available on the Observatory's website at <http://webs.wichita.edu/lapo> and you may want to "friend" the Lake Afton Public Observatory on facebook.

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.

Public Program Schedule May 1 – August 31, 2013

Program	May	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Black Holes in Space</i>	9:00-11:00 pm	May 3-4, 10-11, 24-25, 31
Mother's Day Weekend	9:00-11:00 pm	May 10-11
<i>Moons, Rings & Other Things</i>	9:00-11:00 pm	May 17-18
Bring Your Own Telescope	9:00 pm	Friday, May 17
Photography: Saturn	11:00 pm	Saturday, May 18
Program	June	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Black Holes in Space</i>	9:00-11:00 pm	June 1, 7-8, 28-29
<i>Moons, Rings & Other Things</i>	9:00-11:00 pm	June 14-15, 21-22
Father's Day Weekend	9:00-11:00 pm	June 14-15
Photography: Saturn	11:00 pm	Saturday, June 15
Bring Your Own Telescope	9:00 pm	Friday, June 21
Program	July	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Black Holes in Space</i>	9:00-11:00 pm	July 5-6, 26-27
<i>Moons, Rings & Other Things</i>	9:00-11:00 pm	July 12-13, 19-20
Photography: Gibbous Moon	11:00 pm	Saturday, July 13
Bring Your Own Telescope	9:00 pm	Friday, July 19
Program	August	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Black Holes in Space</i>	9:00-11:00 pm	August 2-3, 9-10, 23-24, 30-31
Photography: Summer Milky Way	11:00 pm	Saturday, August 10
Perseid Meteor Shower	12:00-3:00 am	Tuesday, August 13
<i>Moons, Rings & Other Things</i>	9:00-11:00 pm	August 16-17
Bring Your Own Telescope	9:00 pm	Friday, August 16