



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: March 31, 2014

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

Pick Your Object and Science & Imagination

With so many beautiful objects to view in the evening skies, sometimes it is difficult for the staff of the observatory to decide what to look at. So we have decided to let our visitors help us out. In addition to looking at Mars, Jupiter or Saturn, and a cluster of stars, Observatory visitors also get to vote on an additional celestial object that they would like to observe. “*Celestial Favorites*” will be presented on Friday and Saturday evenings of April 18-19, and 25-26; May 16-17, 23-24, and 30-31 and June 13-14, 20-21 and 27-28.

The idea of space travel, visiting exotic distant worlds and encountering strange intelligent beings has fired man’s imagination for generations. Now science fiction comes to the Lake Afton Public Observatory this spring in the program “*Worlds of Science and Imagination.*” Visitors will use the Observatory’s 16-inch telescope to look at the Moon, Mars, Jupiter or Saturn and a multiple star system as Observatory staff discusses the science and the fiction surrounding them. “*Worlds of Science and Imagination*” will be presented on April. 4-5, and 11-12; May 2-3, and 9-10; and June 6-7

The Observatory has numerous exhibits that complement their observing programs. One of the new exhibits examines the science and the fiction surrounding worlds beyond our reach but not our imagination. Other exhibits show the many interesting features of Mars; how the orbits of Earth and Mars affect how close the two come every 25 months; and how and where we are looking for life on Mars and other planets. Other exhibits show you how to make a 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.

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 10:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 19th and again at 11:00 pm on Saturday, May 3rd, the photography program will feature the mysterious red planet, Mars. Then, on Saturday, June 14st at 11:00 p.m. the astrophotography program will focus on the beautiful ringed planet, Saturn.

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 settings and exposure times. For photographing bright planetary objects like Mars and Saturn, you will need an ISO setting of 400 or 800 and a cable release is recommended.

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 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 print.

Opening Times and Admission

The Lake Afton Public Observatory is open to the public on Friday and Saturday evenings. In April, Observatory hours are from 8:30-10:30 p.m.; then, from May through August, Observatory hours are from 9:00 to 11:00 p.m. Admission to the Observatory is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children ages 6-12; children under 6 are admitted free. We also have a special family rate where 2 adults and their immediate children or grandchildren get in for just \$15.00. For 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 April – June, 2014

Program	April	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Worlds of Science and Imagination</i>	8:30 – 10:30 p.m.	April 4-5, 11-12
Total Lunar Eclipse	12:30 – 4:30 a.m.	Tuesday, April 15
<i>Celestial Favorites</i>	8:30 – 10:30 p.m.	April 18-19, 25-26
Photography: Mars	10:30 p.m.	Saturday, April 19
Program	May	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Worlds of Science and Imagination</i>	9:00 – 11:00 p.m.	May 2-3, 9-10
Photography: Mars	11:00 p.m.	Saturday, May 3
Mothers Day Weekend	9:00 – 11:00 p.m.	Fri. & Sat., May 9-10
Bring Your Own Telescope	9:00 – 11:00 p.m.	Friday, May 16
<i>Celestial Favorites</i>	9:00 – 11:00 p.m.	May 16-17, 23-24, 30,31
Program	June	Fridays and Saturdays
<i>Worlds of Science and Imagination</i>	9:00 – 11:00 p.m.	June 6-7
<i>Celestial Favorites</i>	9:00 – 11:00 p.m.	June 13-14, 20-21, 27-28
Fathers Day Weekend	9:00 – 11:00 p.m.	Fri. & Sat. June 13-14
Photography: Saturn	11:00 p.m.	Saturday, June 14
Bring Your Own Telescope	9:00 – 11:00 p.m.	Friday, June 20

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