

# Merrillville Community Planetarium

## Planetarium News

September 18, 2009

### 2009: The International Year of Astronomy

In 1609, the Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei turned a telescope towards the heavens and recorded the first detailed observations of the sky with the new device. In honor of the 400th anniversary of the first astronomical observations with a telescope, the United Nations has declared 2009 to be the International Year of Astronomy (IYA).

As part of IYA, a group of astronomical and educational organizations have sponsored the production of a low-cost telescope kit. Called the *Galileoscope*, the telescope has an aperture of 50 mm (2 inches) and a supplied eyepiece that provides a magnification of 25. The telescope assembled from the kit is an excellent choice for amateur astronomers and is higher in quality than department store telescopes costing four or five times more. More information on the telescope can be found at [www.galileoscope.org](http://www.galileoscope.org).

We have a limited supply of *Galileoscopes* available in the planetarium's Gift Shop for \$20. Our Gift Shop is open at each public show or call the planetarium (650-5486) to make an appointment.

### "Art for All Time"

Not all planetarium shows have to be about astronomy. "Art for All Time" traces the history of art from the earliest cave paintings to modern art. The program was written and produced by art teacher Maryann Foster. Maryann previously produced the planetarium show "Van Gogh Sees the Stars". "Art for All Time" will be our winter public program and is available for group showings.

### 20th Anniversary of the Launch of Hubble

The Hubble Space Telescope was launched in April 1990 aboard the space shuttle *Discovery*. Within months of its launch, scientists came to a grim conclusion: the main mirror of the telescope had been polished to the wrong specifications, resulting in degraded scientific data. Hubble, however, had been designed to be serviced by astronauts aboard the space shuttle. NASA engineers began developing a plan to return the space telescope to its original specifications.

In December 1993, the shuttle *Endeavour* carried seven astronauts on a mission to save Hubble. Five spacewalks later, the space telescope had been repaired. Since then, there have been four additional servicing missions and Hubble has become the premier scientific instrument of our time.

Our spring public program in April 2010 will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Hubble's launch. We'll learn about the servicing missions and how Hubble has improved our understanding of our solar system, the stars, and the universe.

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## **MoonWitch**

The Merrillville Community Planetarium presents *MoonWitch*, a public program beginning on October 9 and continuing through October 31. The show will be presented on Friday, October 9, 16, 23, and 30, and Saturday, October 24 and 31 at 7:30 p.m. Additional showings may be added if needed. The planetarium opens for seating 30 minutes before the show begins. No one will be admitted after the program starts.

MoonWitch is a program for families about the moon and its changing appearance in the sky. While trick-or-treating on Halloween, Diane is frightened by stories told by her older brother of a “moonwitch”. After returning home, Diane’s mom and dad explain the nature of the moon. Following the recorded program, the planetarium will show the planets, stars, and constellations of autumn. The planetarium’s Gift Shop will be open and, weather permitting, an outdoor observing session will be offered following the program.

Admission to public programs is \$3.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children. Seating is limited and should be reserved by calling (219) 650-5486 or visiting the planetarium’s web site at **[www.mcpstars.org](http://www.mcpstars.org)**. Large groups can arrange for a private show by calling the Planetarium Director at (219) 650-5486.

This is our first public program for the 2009-2010 school year. Our next public show will be “Art for All Time” in January 2010. For more information on the planetarium and its programming, visit **[www.mcpstars.org](http://www.mcpstars.org)**. The planetarium is located in Clifford Pierce Middle School at 199 East 70th Avenue in Merrillville, Indiana. Please park and enter on the west side of the building.

**Merrillville Community Planetarium**  
**Public Planetarium Programs**  
2009-2010 School Year



All programs start at 7:30 p.m. The planetarium opens for seating 30 minutes before show time. No one is admitted after the program starts. Programs last from 60 to 90 minutes. Admission to public programs is \$3.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children. Seating is limited and should be reserved by calling (219) 650-5486 or visiting [www.mcpstars.org](http://www.mcpstars.org). Tickets are available at the door. Large groups can arrange for a private show by calling the Planetarium Director at (219) 650-5486.

The planetarium's Gift Shop is open before and after each show. Weather permitting, an outdoor observing session is offered following each program. The planetarium is located in Clifford Pierce Middle School at 199 East 70th Avenue in Merrillville, Indiana. Please park and enter on the west side of the building.

**MoonWitch**

Friday, October 9, 16, 23, 30  
Saturday, October 24, 31

While trick-or-treating on Halloween, Diane is frightened by stories told by her older brother of a "moon-witch". After returning home, Diane's mom and dad explain the nature of the moon and its changing appearance in the sky. Following the recorded program, the planetarium will show the skies of autumn.

**Art for All Time**

Friday, January 8, 15, 22, 29  
Saturday, January 23, 30

As wanderers on this planet, we are struck by the beauty of the world around us. "Art for All Time" is a new program that explores how humans have captured this beauty in paintings throughout history. Explore this world of art in the midst of the winter blues and add some color to your palette with this unusual show.

**Through the Eyes of Hubble**

Friday, April 9, 16, 23, 30  
Saturday, April 24, May 1

Since its launch in April 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope has been one of the most important astronomical instruments available to astronomers. This program, produced in cooperation with the Space Telescope Science Institute, celebrates 20 years of discoveries made by Hubble.

**The Summer Sky**

Friday, July 9, 16, 23, 30  
Saturday, July 24, 31

The warm nights of summer can be a wonderful time to explore the night sky. Learn about the bright stars and constellations visible during the summer. "The Summer Sky" will also show you how to find the planets Venus, Mars, and Saturn in the sky just after sunset.

Merrillville Community Planetarium  
 Clifford Pierce Middle School  
 199 East 70th Avenue  
 Merrillville, Indiana 46410

**School and Group Programs**  
 September 11, 2009

School groups (from pre-school to college), Boy and Girl Scouts, civic organizations, and church groups are all invited to visit the planetarium. There is a group admission fee of \$65 per show (additional charge for full dome shows) and the planetarium can seat up to 64 visitors. Group programs may be scheduled during the school day, after school, evenings, weekends, and summer. Most programs last about an hour (shorter for very young children). Please allow additional time to visit our gift shop. Call the Planetarium Director at (219) 650-5486 or visit our website at [www.mcpstars.org](http://www.mcpstars.org).

*We are constantly updating our programs and adding new shows. Please call for the current availability of programs.*

<i>program title</i>	<i>grade level</i>	<i>program description</i>	<i>guide</i>
<b>Introduction to the Planetarium</b>	kdg & 1st	Introduces the planetarium and the day and night sky	yes
<b>How Do We Explore Space?</b>	1st	Exploring space by using our eyes, telescopes, and spacecraft	yes
<b>Earth Is a Planet</b>	1st - 2nd	Earth as a planet: the atmosphere, water, land, and life	yes
<b>Exploring the Sky</b>	1st - 5th	Stars, planets, moon, constellations; earns badge for young scouts	
<b>Wilbear's Adventure</b>	1st - 3rd	Wilbear is a teddy bear who learns about the history & science of flight	
<b>Larry Cat in Space</b>	1st - adult	A family show about a cat that follows its owner to the moon	yes
<b>The Sun and Earth</b>	2nd	Stars; Earth orbits the sun; cause of day and night, seasons	yes
<b>MoonWitch</b>	2nd - adult	After hearing about a "MoonWitch", a young girl learns about the moon	
<b>Current Sky and Solar System</b>			
<b>Current Sky and Solar System</b>	3rd - adult	Constellations; sky motion; a trip to the North Pole; tour of the planets	yes
<b>The Sun's Family</b>	3rd - 4th	Covers the sun, planets, moons, asteroids, and comets	yes
<b>The Moon</b>	3rd - 4th	Basic information about the moon, phases, and eclipses	yes
<b>Flying the Space Shuttle</b>	3rd - 4th	How the shuttle works and what it does in space; historic missions	
<b>Adventures Along the Spectrum</b>	3rd - 5th	Professor Photon explains light and the electromagnetic spectrum	
<b>The Water Planet</b>	4th - 5th	The atmosphere, water, land, and life of Earth; basic geology	
<b>Our Star, the Sun</b>	4th - 5th	About stars and the sun; how the sun affects our planet	yes
<b>Satellites and Space Probes</b>	4th - 5th	Types of satellites; rockets; space probes sent to the planets	yes
<b>Dawn of the Space Age</b>	4th - adult	Historic moments from Sputnik to the Shuttle <i>(full dome show - additional fee)</i>	
<b>Man and the Moon</b>			
<b>Man and the Moon, part 1</b>	5th - 6th	Information learned about the moon prior to spaceflight	yes
<b>Man and the Moon, part 2</b>	5th - 6th	New knowledge about the moon from lunar probes and astronauts	yes
<b>The Inner Solar System</b>	5th - 6th	Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, and the asteroid belt	
<b>The Outer Solar System</b>	5th - 6th	Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, and comets	

*continued*

<i>program title</i>	<i>grade level</i>	<i>program description</i>	<i>guide</i>
<b>Destination Mars!</b>	5th - adult	Follow astronauts on a journey to explore Mars based on NASA plans	
<b>RingWorld</b>	5th - adult	The Cassini space probe explores Saturn, its rings, and its moons	
<b>The Star Gazer</b>	5th - adult	Astronomer James Kaler shares his knowledge and enthusiasm for stars	
<b>Africa: Mysteries in Art</b>	5th - adult	The art, history, and role of the sky in various cultures in Africa.	
<b>Art for All Time</b>	5th - adult	Explore how humans have painted the beauty of the world throughout history.	
<b>Eclipse: Dance of Shadow and Light</b>	6th - adult	Solar & lunar eclipses in history; cause of eclipses; safe viewing	
<b>A Comet Called Halley</b>	6th - adult	The history & science of comets; results of Halley's 1986 visit	
<b>Comet: From Ice to Fire</b>	6th - adult	Comets in history; the nature and study of comets; recent comets.	
<b>Learning About Stars</b>	6th - adult	The winter sky; brightness, color, composition, and how stars evolve	
<b>Galaxies and the Universe</b>	6th - adult	The fall sky; the Milky Way & Andromeda Galaxies; types of galaxies	
<b>Galaxies</b>	6th - adult	A journey from our Milky Way "neighborhood" to the most distant galaxies	
<b>Life Beyond Earth</b>	6th - adult	How planets form & life begins; life elsewhere; methods of contact	yes
<b>Exploring Our Universe</b>	6th - adult	How humans' view of the universe has changed throughout history	
<b>More Than Meets the Eye</b>	6th - adult	Backyard astronomy: objects visible with eyes, binoculars, telescopes	
<b>The Endless Horizon</b>	6th - adult	Human exploration of the oceans, continents, and outer space	
<b>The Wright Way to Fly</b>	6th - adult	The story of human flight from Icarus to the Wright Brothers	
<b>All Systems Go!</b>	6th - adult	The history of NASA and America's space program from Sputnik to the shuttle	
<b>Apollo 11: First Landing on the Moon</b>	6th - adult	A detailed account of the first landing on the moon in 1969	
<b>Magellan: Report from Venus</b>	7th - adult	Results from the Magellan probe which used radar to map Venus	
<b>The Mars Show</b>	7th - adult	Historic views, recent Mars probes, and future exploration	
<b>The Voyager Encounters</b>	7th - adult	The planets, moons, & rings of the outer solar system	
<b>Cosmic Catastrophes</b>	7th - adult	Causes of mass extinctions: supernovas, cosmic impacts, human effects	
<b>The Life and Death of Stars</b>	7th - adult	The evolution of stars as traced in the constellations of winter	
<b>Mercury: America's First Men in Space</b>	7th - adult	Early space race with the Soviet Union; flights of Shepard & Glenn	
<b>Twins in Space: The Gemini Program</b>	7th - adult	The Gemini Program tested spaceflight operations needed to land on the moon	
<b>Van Gogh Sees the Stars</b>	7th - adult	The life & art of Vincent Van Gogh; how Van Gogh was influenced by the sky	
<b>Through the Eyes of Hubble</b>	8th - adult	The discoveries made by Hubble since being successfully repaired	
<b>Humanities &amp; the Stars: Greeks</b>	8th - adult	The stars, planets, & universe as portrayed in Greek mythology	
<b>The Days of the Dead</b>	8th - adult	Traces the history & art of this Mexican festival from the ancient Aztecs to today	
<b>The Dawn of Astronomy</b>	8th - adult	Ancient astronomy; building and use of pyramids and Stonehenge	