Lake Afton Public Observatory

2010 Public Programs

Observatory Hours

The Observatory is open to the public on Friday and Saturday evenings. Observing through the telescope begins shortly after the doors open. Public program times are given below, but please note that they are subject to change. Call 316-WSU-STAR (316-978-7827) for information on specific programs and times.

January 8 - February 28	7:30-10:00 p.m.
March 1 - 31	8:00-10:00 p.m.
April 1 - April 30	8:30-10:30 p.m.
May 1 - August 31	9:00-11:00 p.m.
September 1 - 30	8:00-10:00 p.m.
October 1 - Dec. 18	7:30-10:00 p.m.
December 19 - January 2	CLOSED

Program Cancellations

An Observatory program will automatically be canceled if there is a severe thunderstorm warning or tornado warning anywhere in Sedgwick county during the hour prior to the start of a program. Programs will also be canceled if travel conditions are hazardous. If possible, the recorded program information at 316-WSU-STAR will be changed to reflect program cancellations.

Admission

Admission is $4 for persons 13 and older, $3 for children ages 6-12, and free for children under the age of 6. We also have a family rate of $12.00 for Mom, Dad and their immediate children. (Please note that credit and debit cards are not accepted.) Reservations are not necessary. Call 316-978-3191 during normal office hours for group rates. Admission charges, program times, and program topics are subject to change. Call 316-WSU-STAR (316-978-7827) for current information.

Public Programs

Each program consists of observing three or four objects though the Observatory's 16-inch telescope. These objects are chosen with a particular theme that ties them together. Of course if it is cloudy the program objects cannot be seen, although the Observatory's exhibits and displays are available.

Life Story of a Star

January 8-9, 15-16
February 5-6, 12-13
March 5-6, 12-13

Stars are born, live out their lives, and die. During this program you can use the observatory's 16-inch telescope to take a look at examples of the many stages in a star's life. We will also be looking at Mars as it makes its closest approach to Earth since December, 2007.

Colonizing Space

January 22-23, 29-30
February 19-20, 26-27
March 19-20, 26-27

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live on the Moon, Mars, or an Earth-like planet orbiting another star? During this program, we will examine these objects through the Observatory's 16-inch telescope and discuss what it will take for man to achieve these goals.

Big, Bigger and Biggest

April 2-3, 9-10, 30
May 1, 7-8, 14-15, 28-29
June 4-5, 11-12

It should not come as any surprise that, when compared to other objects in the universe, Earth is rather small. During this program, we will be looking at Venus (beginning in May), Saturn, a giant star, a cluster of stars and another galaxy to get a better idea of just how small Earth really is.

Craters and Clouds

April 16-17, 23-24
May 21-22
June 18-19, 25-26

Observe the rocky surface of Earth's nearest neighbor, the Moon. Then, with the Observatory's 16-inch telescope, compare the Moon to the cloud-enshrouded planets Venus (beginning in May) and Saturn.

Hubble's Universe

July 2-3, 9-10, 30-31
August 6-7, 13-14, 27-28
September 3-4, 10-11

The Hubble Space Telescope has been in orbit for 19 years. Join us as we review some of the telescope's discoveries as we look at Saturn, clouds of interstellar gas, clusters of stars a spiral galaxy and a star with planets orbiting it through the Observatory's telescopes.

Reflections of the Moon

July 16-17, 23-24
August 20-21
September 17-18, 24-25

Sunlight reflecting off the surface of the Moon shows us craters, mountains and smooth dark Maria. Join us as we explore this harsh landscape through the Observatory's telescopes. We will also take a look at Neptune and Saturn (through the end of July).

How Far is Far?

October 1-2, 8-9, 29-30
November 5-6, 26-27
December 3-4

Planets and stars are only a bit more than a stone's throw away, right? During this program we will observe Jupiter, a multiple star, a cluster of stars, a nebula and a nearby galaxy as we discuss just how far away they really are and how we determine these distances.

The Moon and Gas Giants

October 15-16, 22-23
November 12-13, 19-20
December 10-11, 17-18

Compare the clouds of Jupiter, Neptune and Uranus to the craters on the Moon as you look at them through the Observatory's telescopes. Also discover the similarities and differences between our Moon and the moons of these gas giant planets.

Observatory programs are subject to change. Call 316-978-7827 to confirm dates and times.

Photography Programs

Have you ever wanted to take astronomical photographs of the planets, Moon, or stars? If so, join us for our special photography programs.

Bring your 35 mm single-lens reflex camera (the type with a removable lens) to take astronomical photographs using the Observatory's telescope. **[*Note that Automatic 35 mm cameras without a manual override cannot be used to take astronomical photos.*]**

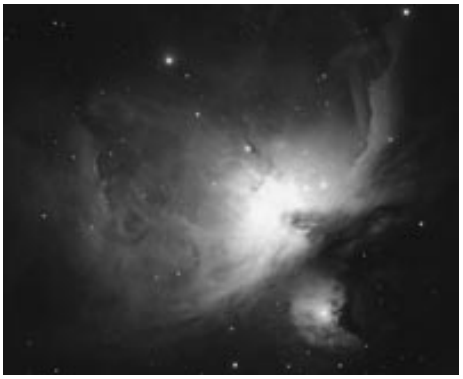
If you do not have the proper camera, bring a USB flash drive instead. After you use the Observatory's digital SLR to take your pictures, we will transfer them to your flash drive for you to take home and print.

Object	Time and Date
Mars	10:00 p.m., Jan 23
Mars	10:00 p.m., Feb 6
Orion Nebula (M42)[1]	10:00 p.m., Mar 13
Saturn	10:30 p.m., Apr 17
Saturn	11:00 p.m., May 15
FQ Moon	11:00 p.m., Jun 19
FQ Moon	11:00 p.m., Jul 17
Summer Milky Way [2]	11:00 p.m., Aug 7
Jupiter	10:00 p.m., Sep 18
Jupiter	10:00 p.m., Oct 16
Andromeda (M31)[1]	10:00 p.m., Nov 6
Pleiades (M45)[1]	10:00 p.m., Dec 11

[1]ISO 800 or faster speed film, **telephoto lens**, and cable release are required.

[2]ISO 800 or faster speed film, **a tripod**, 50mm lense, and cable release are required.

For all other programs ISO 400 or 800 color film and a cable release are recommended.



Orion Nebula (M42)

Exhibits

Only part of the world of astronomy can be seen through a telescope. Satellites bring us close-up views of distant planets and their moons. Computers help astronomers unravel the lives of stars. These ideas and more are brought down to Earth by the Observatory's interactive exhibits and displays.

You can make your own telescope, travel through the solar system on a scavenger hunt, explore the properties of light, examine rocks from both Mars and the Moon, learn to use a small telescope and much, much, more**.**

School Programs

Tuesday and Thursday evenings as well as Wednesday mornings and afternoons are available for school groups by reservation only. For information about school programs, school resource materials, or making a reservation, contact the Observatory office at (316) 978-3191 during normal business hours**.**

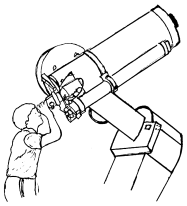
Cloudy Night Activities

It is a fact of life that there will be cloudy nights. While the telescope can't see through clouds, there is still much to do at the Observatory. You can:

- receive a tour of the telescope and an explanation of how it works,
- use a computer to view images of objects you would have seen that evening had it been clear and to discover how those objects are related,
- explore the Observatory's hands-on astronomy exhibits**.**

Current Sky Information

For information on events taking place in the sky call 316-WSU-STAR and choose option number three**.**



Contact Us

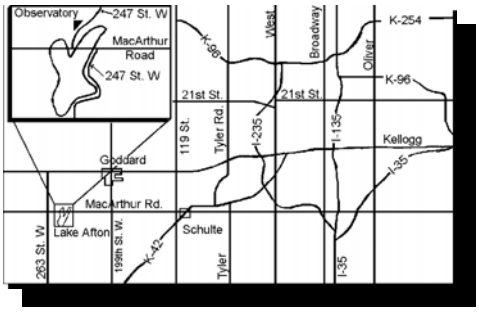
Program information can be found at:
316-WSU-STAR
(316-978-7827)

For inquiries and reservations call:
316-978-3191
during normal office hours

Our Internet address is:
www.wichita.edu/lapo

Location

The Observatory is located approximately twenty 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 MacArthur; west from Wichita on U.S. 54 to 199th St. West in Goddard, then south three miles to MacArthur and then three miles west; or southwest on K-42 to the stoplight at MacArthur Road and then nine miles west (turn right) on MacArthur



Notice of Nondiscrimination
Wichita State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies: Director, Office of Affirmative Action, Wichita State University, 1845 Fairmount, Wichita, Kansas 67260-0145; telephone 316- 978-3371.

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The Lake Afton Public Observatory is supported primarily by Wichita State University and operated by the WSU Fairmount Center for Science and Mathematics Education. Additional support is provided by Sedgwick County.