

Western Nevada College Foundation

July 18, 2015

Western Nevada College weekly star parties offer more than glimpse of heavens



Every Saturday evening as night falls over Carson City, the sky begins to glow with celestial light and star-gazing enthusiasts gather at the Jack C. Davis Observatory, located on the Western Nevada College campus, for Star Parties — social gatherings designed to offer educational lectures and viewing of celestial and planetary bodies.

Along the way, guests are invited to wander through the Planetary Walkway, a quarter-mile long path linking the campus to the Observatory, to view sandstone sculptures featuring carved images and information about each planet.

Hosted by the Western Nevada Astronomical Society, Star Parties encourage learning, discussion and viewing of the skies over Carson City from both inside and outside the Observatory. Nestled on the eastern edge of the Sierra Nevada, the 2,800 square foot facility has three telescopes inside the building and a small radio telescope outside.

A fourth telescope for observing the sun, including solar prominences ejecting off the edges of the sun, is located in the robo-dome outside the facility.

All of the Observatory's telescopes are equipped with cameras and computers, and are connected to large overhead television screens so groups can easily and comfortably view the scolliertars.

“The observatory is a place for learners of all ages to view the universe, learn about science, and share in the enthusiasm that our volunteers exhibit about the many wonderful objects in our night skies,” said Dr. Thomas Herring, observatory director. The Saturday night star parties are intended to help people begin their own explorations in outer space. Due to the continuing support of WNC, WNAS, and the local community we are able to bring the universe right to Carson City at no cost to visitors.”

The observatory also hosts a Campbell Scientific research-grade weather station, where weather data are collected and analyzed and published online by the Desert Research Institute in Reno.

The Observatory is open to the public on Saturday evenings year round from dusk until 11 p.m. at 2699 Van Patten Avenue in Carson City. For more information, please contact Mike Thomas at 775-857-3033 or mnetomas@sbcglobal.net or Dr. Thomas Herring at 775-445-3240 (weekends only).

To learn how to donate to the Western Nevada College Foundation contact Katie Leao, <mailto:katie.leao@wnc.edu>.

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