

Astronomical Highlights this Spring

Evening Planets

Saturn graces our evening sky during these three months. Look for it in the constellation Leo. Telescopes reveal that its famous rings are currently seen nearly edge on. The other evening planet is Mercury. During 2009, the best evening opportunity for viewing Mercury is mid-to-late April. It is at greatest elongation on April 26. What is greatest elongation?

Greatest elongation occurs when the angle between the Sun and either Mercury or Venus is largest as seen from Earth. The time around greatest elongation is the best time to view these planets. As Mercury is close to the Sun, this largest angle is still small, between 18 and 28 degrees. So, Mercury is only visible during evening or morning twilight. It is never seen in a dark sky.

Look for Mercury in the west to northwest about 30 minutes to an

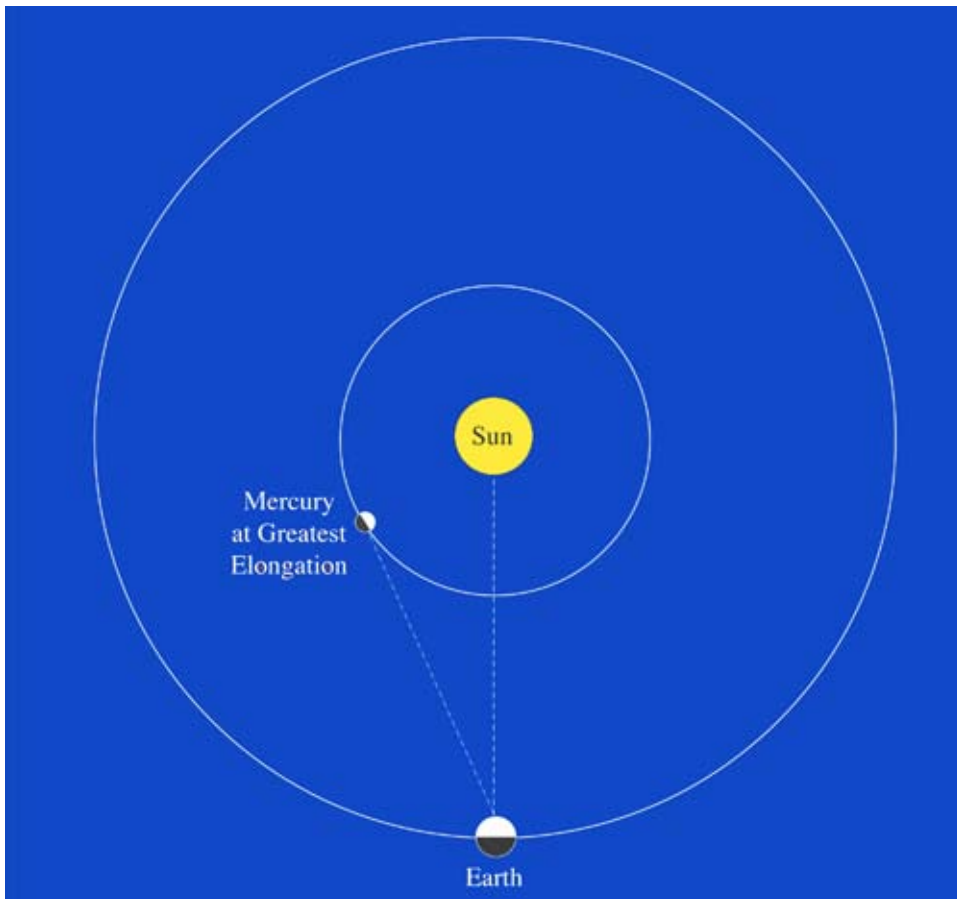
hour after sunset. Binoculars can be a great help in searching for the planet in the twilight. On April 26, Mercury will be about five degrees below a thin crescent Moon. This also happens to be the date when Mercury is at greatest elongation.

Meteor Showers

The Lyrid meteor shower peaks on April 22. Lyrid meteors can be bright. Expect about 10-20 meteors per hour. Best viewing time is between midnight and dawn on April 22.

While the Eta Aquarid meteor shower peaks on May 6, meteors should be visible on the days before and after the peak, May 5 and 7. The best viewing time for this shower will be an hour or two before dawn, after the Moon has set. Observers can anticipate seeing about 10-15 meteors per hour.

The summer solstice occurs at 11:46 p.m. MDT on June 20.



The relative positions of Earth, Sun and Mercury at the time of Mercury's greatest elongation.

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Director's Corner

We have lost a giant in our community and an incredible friend to Clark Planetarium. Larry H. Miller, who served as Chairman of our Board since our opening in 2003, generously shared with us his leadership, keen business insight, tremendous financial support and, most important of all, his time and attention.

Larry's mantra was "Go about doing good until there is too much good in the world." He cared deeply about children and their future and believed in Clark Planetarium's programs and mission "to create and present enlightening experiences that inspire wonder in learning about space and science."

Larry was a one-of-a-kind friend to the Clark Planetarium, and we will miss his vision and leadership as our Board Chair.

Who's ready for the arrival of spring – the universal antidote to the "it's been a long cold winter" blues? I know I am! In astronomical terms, spring begins with the arrival of the Vernal Equinox at 5:44 a.m. on Friday, March 20, 2009 when the plane of Earth's equator intersects the path of Earth's orbit around the Sun. Ah... Daylight! Warmth! Weeds in the garden!

Another sure sign of spring is the surge in school kids visiting the planetarium. It's a thrill for me to walk through our lobby and see busloads of energetic kids

and teachers streaming through our doors on their way to see our exhibits and educational programs in either the Hansen Dome or ATK IMAX® Theatres. It's also rewarding to see audiences emerging from our theatres having seen our newest programs, *Under the Sea 3D* and *Saturn: Jewel of the Heavens*, with big smiles on their faces. Who says science education can't be fun?

This year also marks the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first use of a telescope and the birth of modern astronomy, and this year has been designated the "International Year of Astronomy." I hope that you will take advantage of the opportunities available this year to participate in the astronomy events at the planetarium and in our community, including our "First Light" Star Party on Friday, April 24, 2009 at Wheeler Farm and on National Astronomy Day, Saturday, May 2, 2009.

Please feel free to drop me a note or provide us feedback through our visitor kiosks in the planetarium if you have a new idea or would like to offer us suggestions. We value you as a member and want to make sure that you're satisfied with our programs.

Seth Jarvis

Annual Golf Tournament to Benefit School Programs



Enjoy a morning of golf and support Clark Planetarium's education programs at our 5th Annual Golf Tournament Tuesday, June 23, 2009 at Old Mill Golf Course in Salt Lake City. This four-person scramble tournament, with a 7:30 a.m. shotgun start, offers participants great camaraderie and networking with many businesses along the Wasatch Front. There will be fun games, friendly competition, giveaways at each hole followed by an awards luncheon. Register with a team for \$500 or as an individual at \$125 and enjoy a fun day of golf benefiting Clark Planetarium education programs. To register or for more information, call Cynthia Lyman at 801-456-4970.

Clark Planetarium Memberships make great gifts for any occasion.

Fighter Pilot Returns

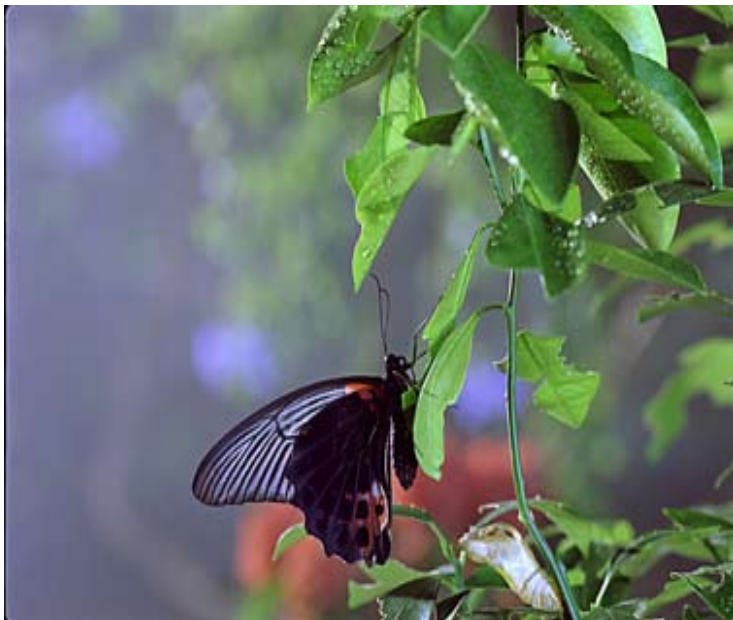
If you've not yet seen *Fighter Pilot: Operation Red Flag*, you're missing the sights and sounds of two weeks in the life of an F-15 Eagle pilot. You'll be on the edge of your seat as you get a behind-the-scenes look into what it takes to organize a modern air force combat mission. Strap yourself in for a thrilling ride in an F-15 Eagle with Captain John Stratton as Red Flag puts both man and machine through a grueling series of combat training maneuvers. You'll feel like you're right in the cockpit as you follow aerial sequences.

Red Flag is the international training exercise for air forces of allied countries, where many of the world's best pilots meet for the most challenging flying of their careers. Red Flag is the final training for pilots and their aircrews before being sent into actual combat. Follow a young pilot as he makes his way through this extraordinary event held in the desert of Nevada in these complex, challenging and dangerous exercises. *Fighter Pilot* starts in the ATK IMAX® Theatre on Monday, June 1, 2009.



Bugs! 3D A Rainforest Adventure

Bugs are bizarre, beautiful, and an endless source of fascination. *BUGS! 3D* will magnify the miniscule world of insects and explore the miracle of their success. From metamorphosis to mastery, predator to prey and community to concealment, extraordinary large-format 3D images will bring audiences face-to-face with this amazing universe of creatures, where raindrops fall like hand grenades, a leaf weighs more than a car, and a blade of grass soars high into the clouds. Insects are colorful and diverse. They range from the beautiful to



the bizarre. *Bugs! 3D* invites us to explore a truly hidden world. Using cutting-edge macroscopic technology and a lively soundtrack, be introduced to a cast of insect characters who will fascinate the entire family. *Bugs! 3D* will show in the ATK IMAX® Theatre beginning Friday, June 19, 2009.

Astronomy Day

Join us Saturday, May 2, 2009 for a day filled with astronomy-related activities starting at 12 noon at Clark Planetarium. There will be science demonstrations, rides on the lunar gravity simulator, Science on a Sphere demonstrations, a drawing for a telescope, children's space sticker activity, and information about different astronomical societies and programs along the Wasatch Front. Mike Murray, Clark Planetarium's Program Manager, will present a "How to Use a Telescope" workshop in the Hansen Dome Theatre at 4:30 p.m. In celebration of Astronomy Day, all astronomy shows in the Hansen Dome Theatre on May 2 from 12:30 to 6:45 p.m. will be \$1. Tickets must be purchased in person the day of the event.

Area Star Parties

(Weather permitting at approximately 8:30 p.m.)

May 1: Harmon's in Midvale (7755 S. 700 E.)

May 2: Stansbury Park Observatory Complex (download directions at <http://slas.us/maps/SPOCMAP.HTM>)

Under the Sea 3D continues to play in the ATK IMAX Theatre.



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Clark Planetarium Member Connections

Spring 2009

Scout Workshops This Spring

Boy Scout Merit Badge Workshops

May 9, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Complete all the requirements for the Astronomy Merit Badge! Take an in-depth look at our closest star, the Sun, and our nearest neighbor, the Moon, before moving out to the distant stars in the night sky. You'll learn to identify bright stars, constellations, the zodiac and the visible planets. We'll show you how to find the planets for an entire year! Learn about exciting careers in astronomy and explore the uses and inner workings of telescopes.

Junior Girl Scout Sky Search Badge Workshop

April 25, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Make and learn to use a star chart to help find stars and constellations for an entire year. Hear tales of some of the most prominent seasonal constellations. Locate visible planets and find your directions at night.

Cost and Ticket Information

Cost for workshops are \$8 per scout, \$4 per adult. Prepayment is required. Tickets are available online at www.clarkplanetarium.org or at Clark Planetarium's ticket counter. For additional information, contact Rob Morris at 801-707-9593 or email rmorris@slco.org.

Eco-Friendly Toys

Planet Fun Clark Planetarium Store now has a new eco-friendly or "green" section with products made of recycled materials. The toys include "tonka-type" construction vehicles along with plush bunnies made from organic cloth with prices ranging from \$15 to \$30. Be sure to check out our new fun and "green" section.



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Concessions Coupon

Purchase any 1 Combo and receive 50% off one of
our delicious Red Barron Pizza's!
Not valid with any other promotion or member discount.