

Mars Landing Event at the Planetarium Draws Record Crowd

Is there life on Mars? Apparently this is a hot question for Louisvillians who gathered to watch the live broadcast of the Phoenix Mars Lander as it touched down on an icy polar cap of the red planet on May 25, 2008. There was standing-room only at the planetarium with over 300 people viewing this historic event.

UofL planetary scientist, Kunio Sayanagi, who has close ties to the University of Arizona's Lunar and Planetary Laboratory where the Phoenix mission is managed, was on hand to provide commentary and background information about the mission.

Spectators at the planetarium cheered at the successful touchdown and expressed wonder and awe at the precision of the mission. Bill Pike, reporter for the Courier-Journal, quoted attendee Kevin Brayer in his May 26, 2008 article, "Spectacular! It's hard to believe they could land something so precisely on Mars - Mars."

"This is an exciting event for anyone who is curious about space, current NASA missions, or the search for life on Mars," said Rachel Connolly, the Planetarium's director. "It's a great way to engage the public."



UofL was one of just a few sites around the country that featured a live viewing of the Phoenix mission. Be sure to check our website for future NASA broadcasts at the planetarium - the best seat in the universe!



Mission Monday Program Series Kicks off with the Mars Phoenix Lander!

The excitement and enthusiasm for the Phoenix Mars Lander event was the impetus for the Gheens

Science Hall & Rauch Planetarium's newest program: Mission Mondays.

The Mission Monday program highlights active space missions on select Mondays throughout the year. The program brings audiences up to date with current exploration and research beyond our home planet.

The first Mission Monday was July 21. Kunio Sayanagi, postdoctoral fellow in the University of Louisville's Comparative Planetology Lab, discussed NASA's Mars exploration and research plan and brought us up-to-date with the Mars Phoenix mission featuring new video and imagery from the mission.

In Spring 2009, Mission Mondays will focus on global warming and the environment. Be sure to check our website for up-to-date programming information: <http://louisville.edu/planetarium/>.

"The Planets" Debuts at the Planetarium

The planetarium debuted its first new show in three years this past summer. 'The Planets' provides an in-depth look at each planet in our solar system and is narrated by Kate Mulgrew (Star Trek: Voyager captain). The show is specifically designed to immerse the audience in current images from NASA missions, and viewers will feel they are traveling through space as each planet is explored.

Message from the Director

In the past year the Gheens Science Hall & Rauch Planetarium (GSH&RP) has experienced tremendous change and growth. As the new director, I want to welcome you to the new GSH&RP with a renewed sense that you are a citizen of the cosmos.

Our role, as your community planetarium, is to keep you in touch with our changing understanding of the universe through innovative program offerings. Being a part of the University of Louisville and the College of Education and Human Development allows us to connect you to researchers in our community who are on the forefront of new findings. This newsletter features some of the ways we are building these connections. I hope you will continue to stay engaged by becoming a member of the planetarium, and sharing this with others interested in the global picture.

Through our new programming and partnerships, we hope you will gain a better understanding of the Earth in the greater context of its cosmic neighborhood. Astronomy is the science that gives a culture its cosmic perspective. And, ultimately, our desire to look out into space stems from the love of our home planet - this tiny rock going around an average star in a spiral galaxy that is part of the vast universe we call home.

Welcome to the new GSH&RP, we hope you will become a part of our growing community.

Rachel Connolly,
Director, Gheens Science Hall &
Rauch Planetarium

Summer Camp is an Adventure for Kids

In July, the planetarium hosted its first annual summer camp series for children entering grades two through five this fall. The Space Adventure Camp features activities ranging from building hand-held telescopes to building and testing a Mars Lander. The camps balance work and play with teamwork and individual activities.

"Learning can be a really fun experience for kids when they are given the creative freedom and resources to explore their own ideas," stated Rachel Connolly, planetarium director.

Campers had a lot to say about their experiences too.

"What I like most about space camp is

that it expands my imagination and I learn new things," said DeMairs, while Ryan remarked, "I liked the dome the best. It feels like you're moving when you're really not. I also like learning about other universes and the gas giants like Jupiter. That is my favorite."

Connolly and her staff are already planning for next year's space camps. They hope to expand the number of sessions to accommodate an increasing amount of applications. "This year's camps filled very quickly and we had so many children say they wanted to return next year. Many of their parents also commented on how much their children enjoyed the camp activities and could not wait to come back," said Connolly.



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What's going on in our night skies during the months ahead? See the list below for details. For monthly updates, see our website at www.louisville.edu/planetarium.

2008

- 10/1: Mars & Venus very near the Moon
- 10/22: Mercury visible low in the Eastern sky at dawn
- 11/18: Leonid meteor shower
- 12/1: Jupiter & Venus very near Moon
- 12/14: Geminid meteor shower
- 12/21: Winter Solstice, longest night of the year

2009

- 1/4: Earth closest to Sun in its orbit (Earth perigee)
- 2/23: Jupiter and Mars very near Moon
- 3/20: Spring Equinox, equal length of day and night
- 4/22: Lyrid meteor shower
- 6/21: Summer Solstice, longest day of the year

Special Programming & Events

Fright Light Parties



Join in the spook-tacular fun at the Gheens Science Hall & Rauch Planetarium with pumpkin bowling, gourd tossing and a hair-raising Halloween laser show. Fright Light parties at the planetarium will be held:

Saturday, October 25, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
 Tuesday, October 28, 6 – 9 p.m.

Special admission price: \$5 per person.

Costumes are welcome!

Holiday Laser Parties

Take a break from the rush of the holiday season by coming to the planetarium for one of our Holiday Laser Parties in December.

Bring the kids and relax in our comfy theater chairs as music of the holiday season plays to beautiful dancing lasers. Join in holiday family activities before or after the show. Party dates are:

Saturday, December 6, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
 Saturday, December 13, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Don't miss the fun!



Spring Break Trolley Hop

During Spring Break 2008, the GSH&RP partnered with the Speed Art Museum, the Louisville Free Public Library, and the Crane House Asia Institute for the first



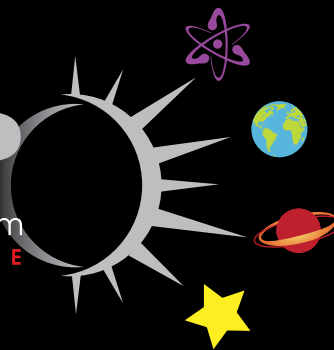
ever Trolley Hop for Kids. In this day full of special activities and events, the GSH&RP offered free show admission to children who presented their library card. The event was a tremendous success, with over 100 attendees, and there are plans to expand the event for Spring Break 2009.



Gheens Science Hall and
Rauch Planetarium
University of Louisville
Louisville, KY 40292

FALL / WINTER
2008

GSH&RP
Gheens Science Hall & Rauch Planetarium
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE



Giving

If you would like to make a donation to the planetarium, or discuss a naming opportunity, contact Paula Campbell at 502-852-0566.

E-mail: paula.campbell@louisville.edu

*"There is nothing so far removed
from us to be beyond our reach,
or so far hidden that we cannot
discover it."*

— Rene Descartes



Contact Information

The Gheens Science Hall and Rauch Planetarium
University of Louisville
Belknap Campus
Louisville, KY 40292

Office phone: 502-852-6664

Fax: 502-852-0831

E-mail: planet@louisville.edu

Web site: louisville.edu/planetarium

For directions to the planetarium, go to:
<http://louisville.edu/planetarium/visit/directions-to-rauch-planetarium.html>

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