

## Astronomy Lectures, Events and Activities Fall Semester 2008

Southern California is a wonderful place to learn about astronomy as there are a number of observatories to visit, lectures to hear and other astronomy related events that are open to the public. Here is a list of some upcoming events for Fall 2008.

1. Von Karman Lecture Series. Put on by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) this monthly lecture series is a fascinating way to learn about the latest interplanetary and astronomical research being done at JPL. The lectures are given by the astronomers and scientists involved in the research projects. The lectures are held on Thursday evenings at JPL and the lectures repeat on Friday evening at Pasadena City College (PCC). The JPL lectures are held in the Von Karman Auditorium located on the campus of JPL at 4800 Oak Grove Dr. Pasadena. The lectures at Pasadena City College are held in the Vosloh Forum Auditorium at PCC, 1570 E. Colorado Blvd, Pasadena. For more information call (818) 354-0112, or visit <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/psol/lectures.cfm>. The lectures start at 7:00 pm and are usually over by 8:15 or 8:30 pm. **There is no charge to attend the lectures.**

**Sept. 18 & 19 Topic:** [California's "Big One" and the San Andreas](#) California's future includes preparation for a great earthquake that could hit southern California on the San Andreas Fault.

**Oct. 16 & 17 Topic:** [New Wheels on Mars: The Mars Science Laboratory](#) NASA's next rover mission to Mars will be twice as long and five times as heavy as the Mars Exploration Rovers.

**Nov. 13 & 14 Topic:** [Looking Through Space in the Infrared](#) Infrared Astronomy is responsible for some of the most revealing and interesting views of the Universe to date.

**Dec. 11 & 12 Topic:** [Dark Energy & the Expansion of the Universe](#) Evidence that the expansion of the Universe is accelerating points to "Dark Energy" as the cause of this rapid expansion.

2. Mt. Wilson Observatory Association Lecture Series. This lecture series takes place on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month (except for December). The lectures are held in the Alta Dena Public Library which is located at 600 E. Mariposa St. in Alta Dena. The lectures begin at 2:30 pm and last for about 1 hour or so. Refreshments are served at 2:00 pm. The September lecture (Sunday September 28) will be given by JPL Principal Scientist Dr. Rosaly Lopes and is titled 'Alien Volcanoes'. More details are at: <http://mwoa.org> **There is no charge to attend the lectures!**
3. Pacific Astronomy and Telescope Show. This show takes place on Saturday, September 13 from 9 am - 5 pm and on Sunday, September 14 from 9 am - 3 pm at the Pasadena Convention Center (300 E. Green St, Pasadena). The show will have presentations related to observing, imaging, and astronomy by leading figures in the field as well as a large variety of vendors displaying equipment, software, and many other astronomy-related products for both beginners and more experienced enthusiasts. For more information see <http://www.rtmcastronomyexpo.org/PATS.htm> **The cost is \$21 per day to attend the show.**
4. Starry Nights Festival. The Starry Nights Festival is an annual astronomy festival held in Yucca Valley (about 120 miles east of Los Angeles). The festival consists of star parties, lectures, a raffle, and a twilight reception on Saturday. This year the Starry Nights Festival will start with a star party on Friday October 3 from 7:30 – 10:00 pm, and then there will be lectures during the afternoon with another star party in the evening on Saturday October 4. For more information see: <http://www.hidesertnaturemuseum.org/pdf/StarryNights.pdf> **There is no charge to attend the Starry Nights Festival!**
5. Mt. Wilson Observatory Free Walking Tours. Mt. Wilson Observatory was one of the leading observatories in the world for over 30 years starting in the 1920's. Today it is still very active in astronomical research, solar studies and educational programs. The docent guided weekend walking tours of the Observatory will continue through the last weekend of November (except if the U.S. Forest Service closes things for a while during the late-summer fire season). The tours start at 1:00pm on Saturdays and Sundays at the Skyline Park Pavilion overlooking the big parking lot and last about two hours. These guided tours are open to all and require no reservations; just show up. The observatory is located along the Angeles Crest Highway (highway 2) about 45 minutes drive from Los Angeles. Please see <http://mwoa.org/tour.html> for more information and directions to the observatory. **There is no charge for the tour!**

6. Star Party. This semester the LACC Physics and Astronomy department will hold its star party on Saturday November 1, 2008 at Red Box Gap (intersection of the Angeles Crest Highway and Mt. Wilson Observatory Rd). The star party will take place from sunset onwards. All astronomy students are invited! Details and directions will be given in class. **There is no charge to attend the star party!**
7. PBS Special Film 'The Journey to Palomar'. On Monday evening, November 10, a PBS special film titled 'The Journey to Palomar' will air for the first time. Don't miss this fascinating story of how the 200 inch Hale Telescope located at Mt. Palomar came to be built. Here's a website with some details:  
<http://www.journeytopalomar.org/>
8. Griffith Observatory and Planetarium. The recently renovated Griffith Observatory is one of the finest public observatories in the country. With an extensive exhibit area, the planetarium, the Leonard Nimoy Event Horizon Theatre, a gift shop and cafe not to mention a large refracting telescope that is open for viewing on clear nights, the observatory is both an educational and inspirational place to visit. The observatory is located just a few miles north of LACC off of Vermont Ave, (2800 E. Observatory Rd is the address). Hours of operation are Tuesday through Friday 12:00 noon – 10:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am – 10:00 pm. Planetarium shows are scheduled regularly throughout the day, and on clear nights the 12 inch Zeiss refracting telescope is open for public viewing. The observatory website is: <http://www.griffithobservatory.org> **There is no charge to visit the observatory, however planetarium show tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students.**