

International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA09)

DATEBOOK - In and Around Ridgefield, Connecticut

JANUARY

Spectacular Saturn with astronomer Dr. Heidi B. Hammel
Sunday, January 11, 2 p.m.
Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield

IYA 2009 Exhibit
January 2009
New Milford Town Hall, New Milford, CT

Lunar Samples on Display
Wednesday, January 21, 2009, 6:30 p.m.
New Milford Public Library, New Milford, CT

Lunar Samples on Display
Saturday, January 31, 2009, 1:00 p.m.
Ridgefield Recreation Center, Ridgefield, CT

Space Shuttle Exhibit
January 18th to February 14th, 2009
New Milford Public Library, New Milford, CT

FEBRUARY

Public Viewing with the 20-inch telescope at the WCSU Observatory
Monday, February 2, 5:30 p.m.
Western Connecticut State University Westside Campus, Danbury, CT
Sky attractions: Venus, Moon, Pleiades, Orion Nebula.

Second Saturday Stars
Saturday, February 14, 7 p.m.
McCarthy Observatory, New Milford, CT
Twenty Hours Until Impact: The 2008 TC3 Event, followed by telescopic viewing if clear.
Asteroid "2008 TC3" exploded in the Earth's atmosphere in October 2008. The McCarthy Observatory in New Milford, CT, was one of the few facilities to capture telescopic images of this doomed rock before its demise in the skies over Africa.

Great Image Unveiling
Wednesday, February 26, 2 p.m.
Sarah Noble Intermediate School, New Milford, CT
Following the official "unveiling" as NASA calls it, the murals will be at the New Milford Library through March 2, with a special public event on Saturday February 28 from 12- 2 pm. The murals will then travel throughout the western Connecticut area.

Astronomy at New Pond Farm, with the Ridgefield Discovery Center
Saturday, February 28, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
New Pond Farm, Redding

Participants will be able to observe the crescent Moon, Venus, Saturn, possibly Comet Lulin, and the bright stars of winter, including brilliant Sirius, Procyon, Aldebaran, Betelgeuse and Capella. All ages are welcome; reservations should be made by calling New Pond Farm at 938-2117.

MARCH

Public Viewing with the 20-inch telescope at the WCSU Observatory
 Wednesday, March 4, 6:30 p.m.
 Western Connecticut State University Westside Campus, Danbury, CT
Sky attractions: Moon, Orion Nebula, Beehive Cluster, Saturn.

Second Saturday Stars

Saturday, March 14, 7 p.m.
 McCarthy Observatory, New Milford
The Scale of the Solar System, followed by telescopic viewing if clear

Star Gazers

Wednesdays March 18, 25, April 1, 8, 22 and 29, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.
 Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield
weekly after-school hands-on education series for grades 1 - 3, visit the Ridgefield Library Children's Department to sign up.

Globe at Night, presented by The Discovery Center

Friday, March 28, 7:30 p.m.
 Lake Windwing, Ridgefield
Join thousands of people around the world to observe the nighttime sky and learn more about light pollution. We'll record the brightness of the night sky in the constellation Orion, then reporting our results to <http://www.globe.gov/GaN/>. This program is free for Discovery Center members, \$5 for non-members. To register for this program contact the Discovery Center at 203-438-1063. Co-sponsored with the Ridgefield Parks & Rec Dept.

Western Connecticut Junior Orchestra

Sunday, 29 March, 4 p.m.,
 Jesse Lee Church, 104 Main St., Ridgefield
The concert will feature astronomically-themed music, as well as a "young artist" show. A musical highlight will be the premier of "Dancing with a Star," a piece specially composed by Loretta Lazaris for this event.

Music, Mythology and Math

Monday, March 30, 7 p.m.
 Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield
Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra Music Director Gerald Steichen will discuss the connections between music, mythology and math along with the orchestra's upcoming multi-media concert on April.

APRIL

RIDGEFIELD ASTRONOMY DAYS

Ridgefield's Selectmen have designated April 2 – 5 "Ridgefield Astronomy Days" in celebration of the world-wide "100 Hours of Astronomy" initiative which aims to get as many people as possible looking through a telescope over this time. Many events are happening in and around Ridgefield to support the "Global Star Party."

Kick off Event: The Last Mission to Hubble with astronomer Dr. Heidi B. Hammel
Wednesday, April 1, 7 p.m.
Ridgefield Library, 472 Main St., Ridgefield

Public Viewing with the 20-inch telescope at the WCSU Observatory
Thursday, April 2, 7:30 p.m.
Western Connecticut State University Westside Campus, Danbury, CT
Sky attractions: Moon, Orion Nebula, Saturn.

100 Hours of Astronomy Open House at the McCarthy Observatory
Thursday, April 2, Friday, April 3, Saturday, April 4 and Sunday, April 5, beginning at 7:30 p.m.
McCarthy Observatory, New Milford

Sidewalk Astronomy on Main Street
Thursday, April 2, 6:30 – 9 p.m. (rain/cloud date April 3)
Main Street, Ridgefield
Ridgefield High School astronomy students, led by JR Condosta, will work with local astronomy enthusiast Rich Fabbri to set up telescopes right on Main Street. The Moon and Saturn should be visible if the weather cooperates. Co-sponsored by the Ridgefield Discovery Center.

Film Screening: 400 Years of the Telescope: A Journey of Science, Technology and Thought
Thursday, April 2, 7 – 8 p.m.
Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield
Must-see documentary about the history of the telescope and its profound impact on science and society. Followed by telescope viewing on the Library lawn thanks to Ridgefield High School astronomy students

Film Screening: 400 Years of the Telescope: A Journey of Science, Technology and Thought
Friday, April 3, 7 – 8 p.m.
Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield
Must-see documentary about the history of the telescope and its profound impact on science and society. Followed by telescope viewing on the Library lawn thanks to Ridgefield High School astronomy students

Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra
Saturday, 4 April, 8 p.m.
Anne Richardson Auditorium, Ridgefield High School, Ridgefield
The concert will feature a special multimedia presentation of “The Planets” by Gustav Holst, and will be followed by an on-site Star Party hosted by volunteers for the Ridgefield Discovery Center. Members of the Ridgefield Chorale and the Western Connecticut Youth Orchestra will also join the Symphony. Call the RSO office at 438-3889 or visit www.ridgefieldsymphony.org for tickets

Ridgefield Crossings Book Discussion – Galileo’s Daughter by Dava Sobel
Tuesday, April 7, 2 p.m.
Ridgefield Crossings, Ridgefield, CT
For residents only.

Tuesday Evening Nonfictioneers Book Discussion – The Planets by Dava Sobel
Tuesday, April 7, 7 p.m.

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield, CT

Exhibit: "Visions of the Universe: Four Centuries of Discovery"

April 11 to June 11, during Library open hours

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield

The exhibit is presented by the Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, Maryland; the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and the American Library Association, Chicago, Illinois, through funding from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The Library is one of only 40 nationwide to receive this prestigious exhibit and the only one in Connecticut. Don't miss it!

Second Saturday Stars

The Space Shuttle, followed by telescopic viewing if clear

Saturday, April 11, 8 p.m.

McCarthy Observatory, New Milford, CT

McCarthy Observatory is home to an actual Space Shuttle Tire, exhibited outside the observatory dome. The tire, on extended loan from NASA, flew on the shuttle that serviced the Hubble Space Telescope in 1997.

Out of this World Star Lab presented by The Children's Museum for Grades 2 – 6

(Co-sponsored by the Ridgefield Library and the Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club)

Tuesday, April 14, 9:30 a.m.

Boys and Girls Club members, register at the Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club.

Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club, Ridgefield, CT

Out of this World Star Lab presented by The Children's Museum for Grades 2 – 6

(Co-sponsored by the Ridgefield Library and the Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club)

Tuesday, April 14, 11 a.m.

Register at the Library (203)438-228 for this session of the Star Lab.

Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club, Ridgefield, CT

Register for the 11 a.m. session by calling or visiting the Ridgefield Library's Children's Department.

Introduction to the Universe with Bob Crelin (There Once Was a Sky Full of Stars)

Thursday, April 16, 11 a.m. - noon

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield, CT

Author Bob Crelin who wrote "There Once Was a Sky Full of Stars" will introduce kids ages 5 and up to the wonders of the universe.

Exhibit Reception: "Visions of the Universe: Four Centuries of Discovery"

Sunday, April 19, 5 – 6:30 p.m.

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield

The exhibit is presented by the Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, Maryland; the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and the American Library Association, Chicago, Illinois, through funding from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The Library is one of only 40 nationwide to receive this prestigious exhibit and the only one in Connecticut. Don't miss it! The exhibit runs from April 11 to June 11, during Library open hours

Field Trip to the McCarthy Observatory in New Milford

Monday, April 20, 8 p.m. – 10 p.m.

McCarthy Observatory, New Milford, CT (transportation will not be provided)

Call the Ridgefield Library at 438-2282 to register and for more details

Critics' Circle Book Group – *Two Moons* by Thomas Mallon

Tuesday, April 21, 7 p.m.

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield, CT

Field Trip to the McCarthy Observatory in New Milford

Wednesday, April 22, 8 p.m. – 10 p.m.

McCarthy Observatory, New Milford, CT (transportation will not be provided)

Call the Ridgefield Library at 438-2282 to register and for more details

AM Book Group – *The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell

Wednesday, April 22, 10 a.m.

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield, CT

Founders Hall Book Group – *Galileo's Daughter* by Dava Sobel

Thursday, April 23, 2 p.m.

Founders Hall, Ridgefield, CT

For members only

Portraits in Motion Presentation: *Galileo the Starry Messenger* with actor Mike Francis

Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m.

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield, CT

A family program suitable for all ages

Author Presentation with Dava Sobel (*Galileo's Daughter, Longitude, The Planets*)

Wednesday, April 29, 7 p.m.

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield, CT

Rise and Shine Breakfast with Dr. Heidi Hammel

Thursday, April 30, 7:30 a.m.

Community Center, Ridgefield, CT

Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce members \$25, Non-members \$35

MAY

Public Viewing with the 20-inch telescope at the WCSU Observatory

Friday, May 1, 8:30 p.m.

Western Connecticut State University Westside Campus, Danbury, CT

Sky attractions: Moon, Saturn, double star Alcor and Mizar, globular cluster M13.

The Ridgefield Chorale

Everything's Coming Up Broadway!

Saturday, May 2, 7 p.m.

East Ridge Middle School, Ridgefield

The piece "The Age of Aquarius" (from the Broadway musical Hair) will be dedicated to the Ridgefield International Year of Astronomy 2009 celebration.

Reading is a Family Affair

For children in grades 3 and up with a parent. Please register at the Children's Department and pick up a free copy of the book

Wednesday, May 6, 6 - 7:30 p.m. - Pizza and drinks served

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield

Inspiring Girls in Science - The Donofrio Technology Series

Thursday, May 7, 6:30 p.m. (date and time TBC)

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield, CT

A panel of local scientists who have worked on telescopes such as the Hubble and Chandra will talk about their exciting careers to kids in grades 3 and up

Second Saturday Stars

The History of the Universe in 24 Hours, followed by telescopic viewing if clear

Saturday, May 9, 8 p.m.

McCarthy Observatory, New Milford, CT

Exhibit - Starry Night: Paintings Inspired by Van Gogh and other Impressionist Painters

May 11 - 28 during Library open hours

Saturday, May 16, 2 – 4 p.m., Artists' Reception

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield, CT

Art exhibit by children in the Ridgefield Community Kindergarten Enrichment Classes

Poetry and the Stars - Poetry discussion led by Dr. Alan Holder

Friday, May 15, 1 p.m.

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield, CT

JUNE

Author Presentation by Jim Bell

Thursday, June 4, 7 p.m.

Ridgefield Library, Ridgefield, CT

Planetary scientist and Cornell Astronomy Professor Jim Bell was in charge of the photography on the Mars Rover missions. He is the author of "Postcards from Mars," and "Mars 3D - A Rover's Eye View of the Red Planet."

Second Saturday Stars

Astronomy Break-throughs and Bloopers, followed by telescopic viewing if clear

Saturday, June 13, 8 p.m.

McCarthy Observatory, New Milford, CT

JULY

Second Saturday Stars

40th Anniversary of Apollo on the Moon, followed by telescopic viewing if clear

Saturday, July 11, 8 p.m.

McCarthy Observatory, New Milford, CT

Ridgefield Sale-A-Bration Scale-model Solar System

Saturday, July 18

Main Street, Ridgefield, CT

Local volunteers will demonstrate the scale of the Solar System along Ridgefield's Main Street during the annual Sale-a-bration! Several special activities are being planning to accompany this event.

Ridgefield Star Park – Official Opening

Saturday July 25, 8 p.m. (rain date Sunday, July 26 at 8 p.m.)

Onalfo Field – Prospect Ridge Road

(Just north of the Ice Rink)

The Ridgefield Parks and Recreation Department will be host to a celebration of the opening of this newest of Ridgefield's facilities. Key participants in planning and development of the park facility and an astronomy program for both young and old will be on hand. A feature of the program will be an observational session managed by the Discovery Center. All are welcome. Bring a lounge lawn chair or blanket, a telescope, binoculars or just an unaided eye and a lively curiosity.

AUGUST

Rocket Ridgefield

Monday-Friday, August 3-7, 9:30-12:30

Ridgefield Recreation Center, Ridgefield, CT

A hands-on camp for younger campers (ages 6-8) celebrating The International Year of Astronomy 2009 in Ridgefield. Our Ridgefield Rocket will take us back in time to explore the early days of the U. S. Space Program. We will discover what it is like to live and work in space aboard the space shuttle. Finally, we will take off for a fascinating voyage through the solar system visiting each of the planets and learn why astronomers have reclassified Pluto as a dwarf planet. Secure your helmets, buckle up your space belts and join us for a week of out of this world fun! Fee for this activity is \$245 to the Ridgefield Recreation Center.

Second Saturday Stars

Aboriginal Astronomy in the Southern Hemisphere, followed by telescopic viewing if clear

Saturday, August 8, 8 p.m.

McCarthy Observatory, New Milford, CT

Expedition Space

Monday-Friday, August 10-14, 9:30-12:30

Ridgefield Recreation Center, Ridgefield, CT

A hands-on camp for older kids (ages 8-12) celebrating The International Year of Astronomy 2009 in Ridgefield. During our week of Space Camp, we will explore astronomy through the ages including the ideas of ancient cultures and astronomers such as Galileo and Hawking. Our investigations for the week will include the exploration of our planets in our solar system, designs of robotic planetary rovers, and the detection of black holes and extrasolar planets. Join us for a week of fascinating fun and cutting-edge astronomy that's out of this world. Fee for this activity is \$245 to the Ridgefield Recreation Center.

MORE EXCITING EVENTS are in the planning stages. Details to come...

Opening and dedication of the Ridgefield Star Park

School Field Trips to visit the Visions of the Universe Exhibit at the Library

In-school presentations by astronomer Dr. Heidi Hammel to third graders

Telescope building workshops in the fall

For more information about IYA09 activities visit www.starpark.org or www.ridgefieldlibrary.org or call the organization sponsoring the event. For Ridgefield Library programs call (203) 438-2282.