

Tessmann Spectator imagine imagine

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In memory of Robert N. Wimbush

The Tessmann Planetarium Experience



*Only \$3.00 per seat!
Space is limited,
reservations required!*

*Call for scheduled weekday show
dates. Selected dates are available
from September through May.
Also, ask about our special
Summer programs.*

Call us:

*For Reservations and Information,
call the Planetarium at
(714) 564-6356
on Tuesday and Thursday between
10 AM and 1 PM Or leave a message.
We do return your calls!*

What's inside:

Thank you Don and Cheri
New Staff Members
A Tale of Two Comets

Spring 2008

The Tessmann Planetarium is an exciting field trip for thousands of students across Southern California. Annually, about 19,000 students, grades K through 12, are treated to The Tessmann The Tessmann Planetarium is an exciting field trip for thousands of students across Southern California. Annually, about 19,000 students, grades K through 12, are treated to interactive learning experiences provided by the GOTO Chronos Space Simulator, the Bowen Technovation system and our expert and engaging show presenters.

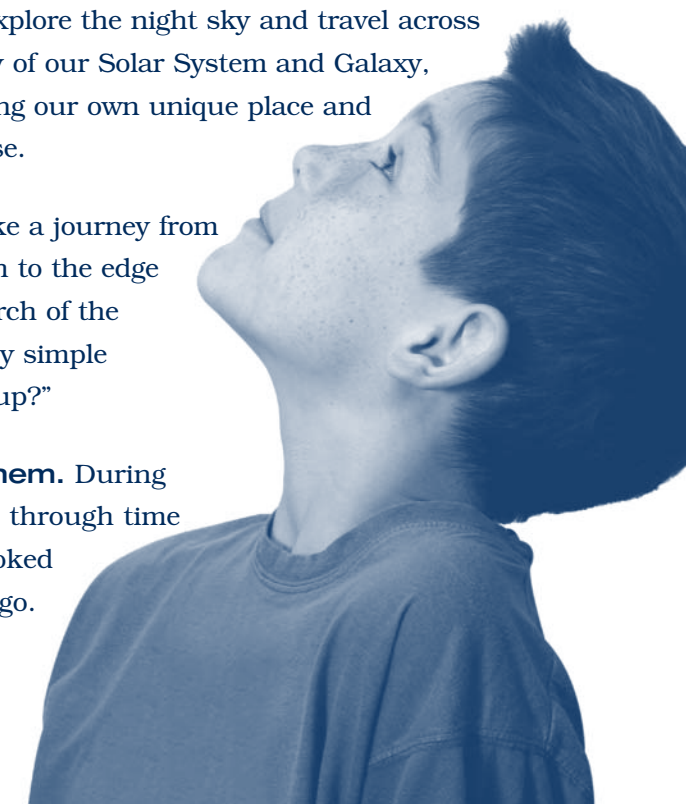
Join us in the largest operating planetarium in Orange County in exploring the mysteries of the Universe under our dome. The planetarium offers three regular shows, based on basic astronomical questions, and one seasonal show:

How Rare is Earth? An engaging introduction of physical concepts used in astronomy. Take a tour of our Solar System and learn to appreciate how rare conditions are on our planet.

Where Are You? Explore the night sky and travel across the magnificent reality of our Solar System and Galaxy, all the while discovering our own unique place and address in the universe.

How Far is Up? Take a journey from the center of the Earth to the edge of the Universe in search of the answer to a deceptively simple question, "How far is up?"

The Star of Bethlehem. During December, take a trip through time to see how the sky looked two thousand years ago.



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Don and Cheri Retire

In 2007, Tessmann Planetarium's well-loved program director, Don Prescott, retired. Don began as a volunteer in 1997. He had previously worked in management at MacDonnell Douglas. Don soon became the program director for the planetarium and was a driving force in obtaining a \$1.5 million grant from NASA that was split between the Discovery Science Center and Tessmann. By 2003, new shows were being presented at the renovated planetarium.



Show attendance increased under Don's directorship from 7,700 student a year to over 19,000 students a year. Don will be well-remembered for his popular "How Far is Up?" show.



Don's wife Cheri got involved in the planetarium in 2000 as a reservationist and brought customer service and administration duties to a new level.

Don is retiring to a full-time career as a writer and enjoying life in general. Both he and Cheri will be missed for their enormous contributions to the planetarium and SAC.

**Thank you
Don and Cheri!**

Tessmann Welcomes New and Returning Staff Members

In early 2008, Don Prescott briefly returned to Tessmann to train his successor, Bob Menn. Bob was a preschool teacher for several years during the 1970's as he pursued his Masters Degree. He then worked for the next 25 years as a marketing and technical writer around Orange County at several companies, including Odetics in Anaheim. Among Bob's accomplishments is the development of a video department for Meade Instruments, a telescope manufacturing company. He is also one of the co-founders of the Meade 4M community and helped it grow to almost 40,000 astronomical enthusiasts. He produced and edited internet radio shows for 4M contributors such as Tessmann presenter, Sheryl Johnson, and Astronomical Society of the Pacific board member, Scott Roberts.

Bob will take over Don's show "How Far is Up?" and, over time, will develop new planetarium shows.

Jo Lewis, who retired from SAC last year, took over the reservationist duties from Cheri last fall and is very enthusiastic about her new position. Jo has worked at SAC for over 25 years at New Horizons, Public Affairs and the Human Services and Technology divisions.

Sheryl Johnson continues in her role of presenter, performing her popular "Where Are We?" show. In her personal life, Sheryl also puts on star parties at schools around the county and jogs for up to 10 miles a day.

Dr. Steve Eastmond continues as Planetarium Director, performing two shows, "How Rare is Earth," and "The Star of Bethlehem" during December. Dr. Eastmond is also faculty president and an Astronomy professor at SAC.

2009

International Year of Astronomy

The United Nations has declared 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the first astronomical use of a telescope by Galileo. Galileo's actions triggered a massive scientific revolution which has continued to the present.

100 countries have signed up to take part in the celebrations and astronomical outreach. Scott Roberts, board member of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, shared his thoughts about 2009: "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to promote scientific literacy and astronomical education. This event has the capability to re-ignite the passion for teaching science and astronomy in schools and at every age level across the country and the world."

The expressed goal of the International Astronomical League (IAU) and UNESCO, initiators of the Year of Astronomy movement, is to get everyone on the planet to look through a telescope during 2009. It is hoped that the search for our cosmic origins will further global cooperation and help the citizens of our planet rediscover our common heritage.

Roberts sums up the effort, "Although there are lot of organized events planned for 2009, everyone needs to get involved, especially at the grass roots level. Pull those 60mm telescopes out of your closets and garages and dust them off. Set them up in your neighborhood and aim them at the sky. Invite your friends, family and neighbors and share the experience."

The Tessmann planetarium is a supporter of the International Year of Astronomy.

Observers Corner

2007: A Tale of Two Comets

Two extraordinary comets set the world's astronomical communities abuzz in 2007.

One of the most spectacular comets in decades lit up the night sky shortly after New Years 2007. Unfortunately for observers in the Northern Hemisphere, comet McNaught didn't display its best face until it rounded the Sun and entered the skies "down under."

Comet McNaught reached a brightness level of -6.0 and was even visible with the naked eye during daylight hours. In February, the spacecraft Ulysses flew, unplanned, through the tail of the comet and detected 03+ ions (oxygen atoms with a positive charge).

In May, another comet, designated 17P/Holmes, rendezvoused with the Sun and seemed to be a dim and uninteresting object. However all that changed in October, when Holmes unexpectedly brightened by a factor of one million! The comet was easily spotted with binoculars or small telescopes under city lights and by the naked eye under dark skies. The cause of this historic outburst has yet to be determined.

As astronomers began to research comet Holmes, they discovered that this was the second time this remarkable object had flared dramatically: Records revealed that in 1892, the comet brightened by a factor of 500,000.

Many images of both comets can be found on the internet.

The following people contributed to this issue of the Spectator: Carol Comeau, Steve Eastmond, Penny Perkins and Bob Menn.

