



Mt. Lion Observatory at
Fort Roberdeau
Public Program Offerings
by James Krug, Observatory Director



The Mt. Lion Observatory at Fort Roberdeau hosts public events on the 2nd Friday of every month, weather permitting. Visitors are encouraged to monitor the Facebook pages of Fort Roberdeau and the Neil Armstrong Planetarium leading up to each event in case of weather cancellation. Dates cancelled due to weather will not be made up, but the future calendar may change to re-schedule a popular event.



Open Sky Watch Nights for Astronomy Enthusiasts

Visitors to the Observatory's grand opening expressed interest in using the dark, expansive area behind the Fort for their own telescope observing sessions.

The mowed field surrounding the Observatory behind Fort Roberdeau is available to the public from 8:00PM until 11:00PM on the following nights in 2018-2019:

Friday, September 14th
Friday, January 11th (2019)
Friday, May 10th

Friday, November 9th
Friday, March 8th
Friday, July 12th

The cost is \$2.00/adult and \$1.00/student, paid when guests arrive. Geared towards experienced amateur astronomers, these nights are not structured events, but even guests without telescopes are welcome to learn from those willing to share. Starlight Astronomy Club members may be present, and the Mt. Lion Observatory itself may be open, depending upon operator availability.

Telescope owners may arrive early to set up, as long as they pay the small admission cost once the evening begins.



Mt. Lion Observatory Public Events

Themed educational events are hosted every other month, and offer the public a wide variety of astronomy experiences guided by qualified instructors, guest presenters, and amateur astronomy enthusiasts. What will the dark skies of Sinking Valley hold for you?

These events are held from 8:00PM-11:00PM- unless otherwise indicated- and guests are free to come and go throughout the evening.

**Saturday, October 13th: Fort Roberdeau Haunted Trail and Fort!
Volume 2: "Aliens vs. Colonists"
Cost: \$5.00/adult or \$20.00/carload
6:30PM-10:00PM (special time)**



We'll take a one-month break from our night sky study for the return of Fort Roberdeau's popular historical haunted house! Our 2017 debut brought over 1,200 guests to the Fort, and captured

us a Pennsylvania *Excellence in Parks & Recreation Award*. Visit the Fort for a frightfully good time, with family-friendly, all-ages trails, Trick-or-Treat amongst the Fort cabins, and a scarier walk for only the bravest among you. Join us to see if fearless Colonists can protect the land from a surprise alien invasion.

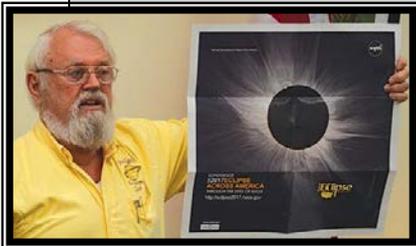


Friday, December 14th: Moon Over the Solstice
Host: Mr. Tim Gleason, Eberly College of Science,
Office of Science Outreach, Penn State University
Cost: \$2.00/adult, \$1.00/student



Our normally-picturesque early winter skies will be hindered by the brightness of a waxing crescent Moon, but that won't stop us! Spend the week leading up to the "shortest day of the year" learning the causes of solstices and the seasons, and features that can be observed on the Moon, before heading into the Mt. Lion Observatory to see for yourself! Our intro presentation will take place on a projector screen around the warmth and ambiance of a bonfire inside the Fort.

Friday, February 22nd, 2019: Mountain Pies and Night Skies
Host: Mr. Tom Kasner, President, Starlight Astronomy Club
Cost: \$4.00/adult, \$3.00 student



The heart of February brings with it our most breathtaking views of the skies of winter! Warm up inside the Fort around campfires. Toast pizza or cheese mountain pies, or bring your own toppings, and finish

with a classic S'more. Then bundle up and trek out to the Observatory, as we'll star hop through darkened skies containing stellar nurseries, star clusters, and even the exploded remains of a once-massive star.

**Note: Due to a scheduling conflict, this is the only event NOT held on the 2nd Friday of the month.*



Friday, April 12th: Exploring the Night Sky- with Lasers!

Host: Dr. Lanika Ruzhitskaya, Director of Science

Outreach and Astronomy, St. Francis University

Cost: \$10.00/adult (includes laser), \$1.00/student



Some of the best night sky exploration is done with your own two eyes, and bright lasers are invaluable in directing your guests' attention to specific spots above. Participants will learn the do's and don'ts of safe astronomy laser use, identify easy-to-find patterns on the sky, and keep their laser at evening's end for backyard astronomy sessions of their own!



Enjoy "Yuri's Night"- the anniversary of Russian Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's maiden voyage as the first human in outer space (1961)- with this star-themed evening.

Friday, June 14th: "One" Year Anniversary Celebration

Host: Fort Roberdeau and Neil Armstrong Planetarium

Cost: Free!



Celebrate Fort Roberdeau and the one-year anniversary of the Mt. Lion Observatory with a start-of-summer astronomy party like no other. *Rogue One* will be shown on an outdoor movie screen, and guests can make their way to telescope platforms or venture inside the Observatory as the skies grow dark. The conclusion of the movie will give way to live music and refreshments as we

kick off summer and celebrate one year of observing the night sky with our friends in Sinking Valley.

Friday, August 9th, 2019: The Simple Joys of Dobsonian Astronomy
Host: Mr. Rick Imler, Planetarium Director, Hollidaysburg Area High School, and Mr. Fred Marshack, Professor of Earth & Planetary Sciences at Santa Barbara City College (ret.)
Cost: \$2.00/adult, \$1.00/student



From astronomy novices to lifelong enthusiasts, everyone can appreciate the ease and reliability of Dobsonian-style telescopes. These often large "light buckets" offer great light gathering power for affordable prices, are relatively rugged, and ensure an evening of observing almost right out of the box!

Guests will explore different variations of Dobsonian telescopes in the open field outside of the Observatory, and receive facts and price sheets for those interested in making their first telescope purchases.

