



For Immediate Release

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Classical Novae

Explore the Universe's H-Bomb at a safe distance

Hilo, Hawai'i –Dr. Jim Lyke, W. M. Keck Observatory, will take the Maunakea Skies program audience and explore the “Universe’s H-Bomb” in his talk entitled, *Classical Novae: H-bombs at a Safe Distance*. Join him for an extraordinary topic in this month’s program at 'Imiloa Astronomy Center on Saturday, July 17, at 7 p.m. in the planetarium.

Classical novae are bright “new stars” that suddenly appear in the night sky and disappear almost as quickly. From observations, we have deduced that classical novae are the result of a thermonuclear explosion on a white dwarf star that ejects large amounts of matter into our Galaxy. Some classical novae stay bright for several years which allow the use of powerful ground-based observatories, like Keck and its adaptive optics (AO) system, to measure the expansion and composition of these explosions. Dr. Lyke will show recent observations of classical novae from Keck and describe new insights on the nature of these “bombs in the sky”.

Maunakea Skies programs host Richard Crowe, University of Hawai'i at Hilo professor of physics and astronomy, will also take the audience on a tour of the night time sky for July and show some of the observational highlights of the Summer night-time skies over Hawai'i, before Dr. Lyke's talk.

Dr. Lyke is a support astronomer at the W. M. Keck Observatory. There, he helps keep the astronomical instruments working and he helps visiting astronomers get the best data possible. He has been with Keck since 2003. Jim was raised near Rochester, Minnesota. His interest in astronomy began when Halley's Comet returned to the night sky

in 1986. A second-year college class in astronomy showed Jim that the night sky was not only beautiful, but scientifically interesting as well. Jim holds a Ph. D. in Astrophysics from the University of Minnesota where he did his thesis work on classical novae and learned how telescopes and instruments work in the real world.

The monthly “Maunakea Skies” planetarium presentations are held on the third Saturday of each month, and replaces the Center’s previous “Directors’ Lecture Series” held for the International Year of Astronomy in 2009. Presented in ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center’s 120-seat planetarium, admission is \$5 for ‘Imiloa members and \$8 for non-members. Pre-purchase tickets at the ‘Imiloa front desk or by phone at (808) 969-9704; Visa and MasterCard accepted.

‘Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai‘i is located at 600 ‘Imiloa Place in Hilo, off Komohana and Nowelo Streets at the UH-Hilo Science and Technology Park. For more information, go to www.imiloahawaii.org, or call (808) 969-9703.

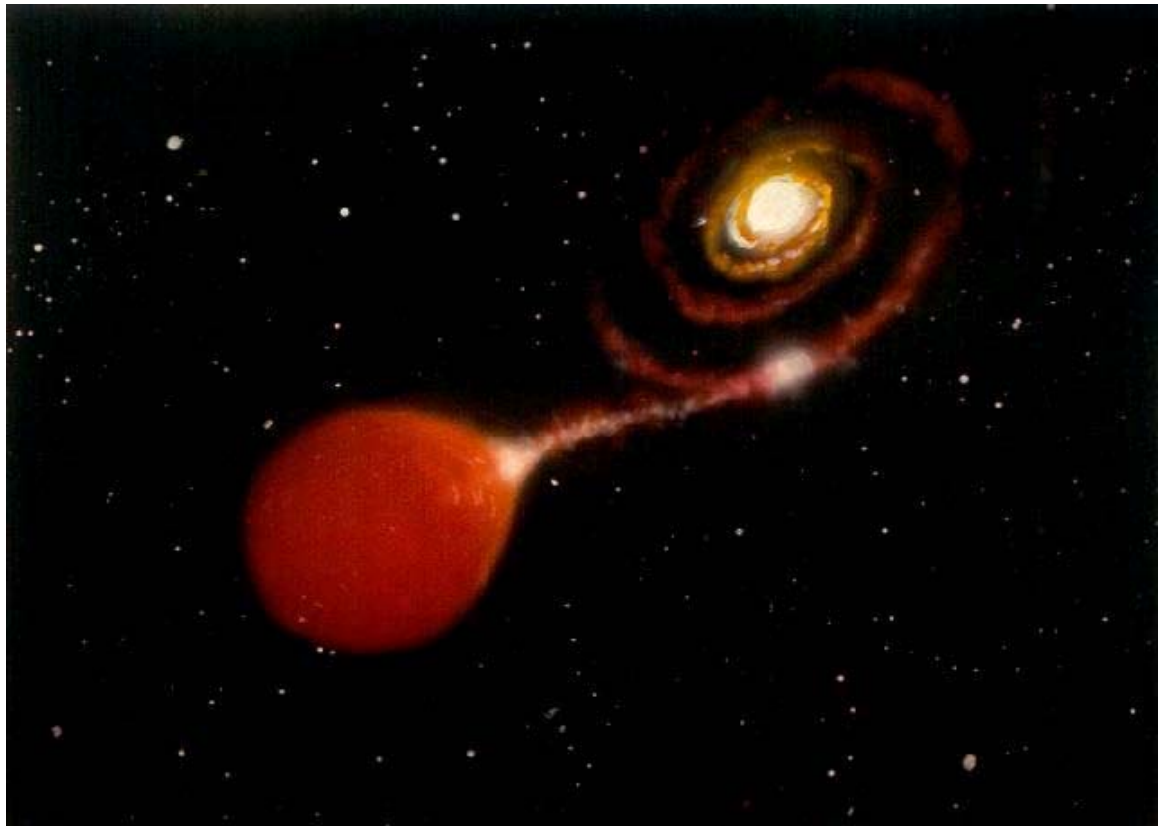


Figure 1 Artist rendering of a nova system by Dana Berry

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