



For Immediate Release

February 9, 2009

Media Contact: Jeff Harman
‘Imiloa Astronomy Center
808-969-9705
jharman@imiloahawaii.org

Vincent Recinto
‘Imiloa Astronomy Center
808-969-9714
vrecinto@imiloahawaii.org

3D Thursday Nights at ‘Imiloa
3D Hitchhikers Guide to the Universe

Hilo, Hawai'i - Put on your 3D glasses on Thursday nights and take an amazing virtual journey into the Universe in the 'Imiloa planetarium. 'Imiloa Astronomy Center brings back its popular Thursday evening program "A 3D Hitchhikers Guide to the Universe," for a six-week run starting April 8 at 7:30 pm. This time focusing on new 3D digital universe datasets from Maunakea and other observatories. This program is a limited run, ending Thursday May 13.

Laatsch will utilize the newly updated software and datasets in the planetarium to take the audience on a journey through the solar system, exploring planets, their moons, asteroids and Oort cloud. Continuing outward visiting other star systems with planets, explore the Milky Way Galaxy and its components. Finally journeying into inter galactic space exploring galaxies, and traveling to the farthest extent that our astronomical instruments are able to show us. This virtual 3D flight through the cosmos will awe and inspire audiences with the wonders of exploration.

The program highlights the newest datasets and discoveries in astronomy from numerous sources. The show is presented in stunning 3D making audiences feel as if they can reach out and touch the universe.

The 3D Hitchhikers Guide to the Universe program will be offered weekly, starting on April 8, on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. through May 13, 2010. Admission is \$10 for non-members, special member discounts apply. Pre-purchase tickets available at the 'Imiloa front desk or by phone, Visa and MasterCard accepted, call (808) 969-9703.

Shawn Laatsch serves as an executive officer in the International Planetarium Society, the world's largest organization of planetarium professionals and is actively involved in astronomy and science education outreach, and is a NASA JPL Solar System Ambassador. He is the lead on a multinational planetarium program called Two Small Pieces of Glass which currently is in distribution around the globe for the International Year of Astronomy in 2009. Prior to his positions at 'Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai'i, he served as the director of the Gheen's Science Hall & Rauch Planetarium at the University of Louisville and the Arthur Storer Planetarium in Prince Frederick, Maryland. In 1998 he was inducted as an International Planetarium Society Fellow for his

work in promoting astronomy education.

Over the past 25 years he has been actively involved in planetarium program development and astronomy education in museum, university, and K-12 settings. He has taught astronomy at the University of Louisville, East Carolina University, and Pitt Community College. He has a passion for cultural and historical astronomy.

Audience may wish to add dinner to their evening at 'Imiloa's Sky Garden Restaurant, open Thursday nights for dinner starting at 5 p.m. The restaurant, which specializes in Chinese cuisine in the evenings, is also open on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights.

Opened in 2006, 'Imiloa Astronomy Center celebrates both Hawaiian culture and Maunakea astronomy. Through its exhibits and program, 'Imiloa strives to share inspiring examples of science and culture together advancing knowledge, understanding and opportunity. The Center is a part of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo.

'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 <http://www.imiloahawaii.org>, or call (808) 969-9703.