



‘IMILOA
Astronomy Center of Hawai‘i

MEDIA INFORMATION

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The Milky Way in 3D

Take a 3D Journey through our Cosmic Address

Hilo, Hawai‘i – ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center brings back its popular Thursday evening program “*A 3D Hitchhikers Guide to the Universe*,” this time focusing on the Milky Way Galaxy: Exploring our Cosmic Address, for a six-week run starting August 5, 2010. The live planetarium program, hosted by Shawn Laatsch, ‘Imiloa planetarium manager, uses the 3D stereoscopic projection capability in the ‘Imiloa planetarium to “fly” participants out into space on a unique and engaging tour of our home galaxy, the Milky Way.

The program will be offered weekly, starting on August 5, on Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m. through September 9.

Laatsch describes the evening program as: “Jumping off Earth and exploring the local neighborhood of our solar system, including planets and their moons, seeing our place amongst the stars, and finding our cosmic address in the Milky Way Galaxy.” Wearing the special 3D glasses, audience members will take a journey outward to visit other star systems with planets, fly through the Orion Nebula, explore open and globular clusters, and even peek into the center of our galaxy. Two new Milky Way datasets will be shared in this program.

“This will be a grand voyage through time and space utilizing new imagery from the Maunakea Observatories, highlighting their latest discoveries,” said Laatsch. This program promises to entertain and educate the audience with imagery that can be seen only in Hilo, at the ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center’s planetarium.

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 education. During 2009 he led the project to create Two Small Pieces of Glass planetarium program for the International Year of Astronomy. That program was distributed to more than 500 planetaria around the globe and translated into 15 languages. In 2008 he was awarded the Service Award – IPS's highest honor – for service to the planetarium field in promoting astronomy education around the globe. He has been an invited guest lecturer at the Eugidenes Planetarium in Athens Greece, Planetarium Hamburg in Germany, Argo School of Astronomy in Moscow, Russia, and at the Committee on Space Research meeting in Beijing, China.

Over the past 26 years he has been actively involved in planetarium program development and astronomy education in museum, university, and K-12 settings. He is a NASA JPL Solar System Ambassador and has taught astronomy at the University of Louisville, East Carolina University, and Pitt Community College. He has a passion for cultural and historical astronomy.

The 'Imiloa Bank of Hawai'i Museum Store will be open during these evening shows, as will the Sky Garden Restaurant. The exhibit hall will not be open to the public.

The "*3D Hitchhikers Guide to the Milky Way Galaxy*" live planetarium program will be presented in 'Imiloa Astronomy Center's 120-seat planetarium at 7:00 p.m. Admission is \$8 for members and \$10 for non-members. Pre-purchase tickets available at the 'Imiloa front desk or by phone, Visa and MasterCard accepted, call (808) 969-9704.

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 www.imiloahawaii.org, or call (808) 969-9700.



Figure 1 Shawn Laatsch at the planetarium controls

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