



'IMILOA
Astronomy Center of Hawai'i

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Maunakea Skies-Celestial Highlight of 2010
'Imiloa returns the popular monthly program

Hilo, Hawai'i – The popular monthly “Maunakea Skies” planetarium program returns to 'Imiloa Astronomy Center, a part of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, starting Saturday, January 16, 2010 at 7 p.m. Host Shawn Laatsch, planetarium manager, will kick off the 2010 “Maunakea Skies” series with *Celestial Highlights of 2010*.

Celestial Highlights of 2010 will take audiences on a tour of things to see in the upcoming year exploring planetary alignments, solar and lunar eclipses, meteor showers, and much more. Some special topics include Mars at its best in February, Saturn's rings opening up for a spectacular view, the July total solar eclipse passing through Rapa Nui, and the total lunar eclipse in December.

Laatsch will share how to observe these celestial phenomena with your unaided eye and also discuss the use of binoculars and simple telescopes. In addition, he will look back at some of the major astronomical discoveries of 2009 made by the Maunakea Observatories such as Gemini's first photo of an exoplanet, gas flows at the center of the Milky Way as seen by the JCMT, and numerous others.

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. The format begins with the traditional tour of the night sky featuring stars, constellations and planets visible with the unaided eye. Following this a special guest presenter from one of the Maunakea observatories will share the latest research in astronomy using the true 3D stereo planetarium technology to “fly out” and explore these discoveries. Imagine traveling to planets, zipping through star clusters and nebulae, and exploring galaxies far beyond our own.



The monthly program is presented in ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center’s 120-seat planetarium at 7:00 p.m. 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.

Shawn Laatsch has worked in the planetarium field for more than 25 years and has a passionate interest in cultural and modern astronomy. Laatsch has taught astronomy classes, led a school outreach programs, and created numerous planetarium programs. Previously, Laatsch directed planetariums in Kentucky and North Carolina. He currently serves as an executive officer of the International Planetarium Society

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.

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