



**CARNEGIE
SCIENCE
CENTER**

One of the four Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh

MEDIA ALERT

For Immediate Release

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BLAST INTO OUTER SPACE WITH SPACE OUT! ASTRONOMY WEEKEND
CARNEGIE SCIENCE CENTER'S WEEKEND OF ASTRONOMICAL PROGRAMMING
TO DELIGHT VISITORS OF ALL AGES MARCH 26–27

PITTSBURGH, March 16, 2011— Carnegie Science Center will celebrate outer space with astronomical programming during Space Out! Astronomy Weekend on Saturday, March 26, and Sunday, March 27. Out-of-this-world programs, activities, and special events will engage sky-watchers of all ages.

Buhl Digital Planetarium & Observatory staff, members of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh (AAP), and the Kiski Astronomers will offer a wide variety of interactive experiences, from learning how to navigate among the stars and getting up-close to the latest and greatest telescopes, to observing meteorites and Moon rocks, and catching up on the latest astronomical news. For those looking to continue their search of the sky at home, the Explore Store will display a selection of telescopes for sale, with knowledgeable staff on hand to answer questions.

“Astronomy is always fascinating, whether you’re a child or an adult, an amateur or an expert,” says Dan Malerbo, education coordinator of the Buhl Digital Planetarium & Observatory. “Each year, the Space Out! Astronomy Weekend gives us a chance to present some of the newest space-related discoveries and theories to the general public. It’s a great way to celebrate the advances that are being made in the fields of astronomy, space exploration, and technology.”

Space Out! Astronomy Weekend kicks off with an [Astronomy Sleepover](#) on Friday, March 25. The sleepover invites kids ages 6–12 and their grown-ups to experience a night full of astronomy-related activities.

The two-day event will feature dozens of tables and activities, including lunar displays, real moon rocks, NASA’s Educational Resource Center, Video Astronomy for Beginners, and Astronomy Sketching. Make-and-take crafts include sundials, constellations, star clocks, and Mars soil. There’s an activity or program for every level of interest in astronomy, from novice to expert, and everything in between.

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Highlights include:

Safe Solar Observing

Saturday and Sunday, noon–3 pm

Join the experts as they show you the proper techniques for safe ways to observe the sun.

Examine sunspots and other solar phenomena. *Weather permitting.*

Observatory Sky Watch

Friday and Saturday, 8:30–10 pm

Meet at first floor information desk.

Step out above the city lights in our rooftop observatory and use our 16-inch telescope to see amazing celestial objects as if they were only a few feet away. Just \$1 per person. *Weather permitting.*

Studying Extreme Environments in Preparation for the Search for Microbial Life

Beyond the Earth

Saturday, 2 pm

Buhl Digital Planetarium

Geared towards visitors ages 10 and up, this talk covers the search for signs of life on the early Earth, in extreme environments, and in extraterrestrial settings. Dr. Christopher House, Director of Penn State's Astrobiology Research Center, discusses several interesting planets and moons that could, in principle, harbor microbial life. As we prepare to explore the subsurface aquifers of Mars, the oceans of Europa and Enceladus, and the lakes of Titan, extreme environments on Earth offer examples of unusual microbial life.

Stargazing, Myths, and Ancient Folklore

Saturday, 3 pm

Buhl Digital Planetarium

In a talk geared toward the whole family, Larry McHenry, from the Kiski Astronomers, presents an introduction to the constellations and their human interpretations over the ages. Discover where the constellations came from and their meanings, along with some of the ancient myths and folklore of the night sky.

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For those who want to delve deeper into the science of space, Dr. Andrew Zentner will discuss *The Search for Dark Matter* on Saturday, March 26, at 1 pm in the Buhl Digital Planetarium. Zentner will describe the evidence for dark matter, the prevailing ideas for what dark matter may be, and the multi-pronged effort to create or identify the dark matter.

As always, the Buhl Digital Planetarium will feature *Stars Over Pittsburgh*, *Two Small Pieces of Glass*, and *IBEX: Search for the Edge of the Solar System*. The youngest astronomers and their families will enjoy the planetarium the shows *The Sky Above Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* and *One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure*.

The Omnimax film *Hubble* will be shown Saturday and Sunday at 12:15 pm and 3:15 pm, plus at 9 pm on Saturday evening, at the Rangos Omnimax Theater—Pittsburgh's biggest screen.

"It is our mission to bring the world's science to Pittsburgh. Many times, we find that the people who are making the greatest advances are right in our own backyard," says Malerbo. "These special programs provide an opportunity to present scientists who are using math, technology, engineering, and many other fields to conduct research and invent new scientific tools. We can show our visitors that science is really an interdisciplinary field."

For a complete schedule of the weekend's activities, visit our [web site](#).

Carnegie Science Center's Space Out! Astronomy Weekend is presented in partnership with the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh and is sponsored in part by WISH 99.7 and Fantastic Sams Hair Salons.

About Carnegie Science Center

Carnegie Science Center brings the world of science alive for visitors of all ages. One of the four Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, the Science Center features hands-on exhibits, three live demonstration theaters, a four-story Omnimax theater, Highmark SportsWorks[®], an interactive full-dome digital planetarium, a Cold War-era submarine moored on Pittsburgh's Ohio River, the world's largest and most comprehensive robotics exhibition, and a world-renowned model railroad display. Carnegie Science Center is located at One Allegheny Avenue on Pittsburgh's North Shore next to Heinz Field. Visit CarnegieScienceCenter.org, or call 412.237.3400 for more information.

About Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh

Founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1895, Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh is a collection of four distinctive museums dedicated to exploration through art and science: Carnegie Museum of Art, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Carnegie Science Center, and The Andy Warhol Museum. . In 2009, the museums reached more than 1.2 million people through exhibitions, educational programs, outreach activities, and special events.

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