

SANDRA F. PRITCHARD MATHER PLANETARIUM NEWS

2016-2017 Season

The Mather Planetarium at West Chester University



Greetings! I hope everyone has been enjoying the warm summer weather. It's hard to believe that the new season at the Mather Planetarium starts in just a few weeks. We continue to keep busy with changes but the one with perhaps the biggest impact on our visitors is that show tickets will soon be available for purchase on-line! Tickets for the first show go on sale August 12. We have the dates for the live shows set up and the movies dates will be coming soon. We look forward to seeing you under the dome!

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<http://www.wcupa.edu/planetarium>

*"The bright sun was extinguish'd, and
the stars did wander darkling in the
eternal space."*

- George Gordon Byron

Live Shows for the 2016-2017 Season

September 2, 2016 – We Are Star Stuff

October 14, 2016 – Star Clusters, Stellar Siblings

November 4, 2016 – Raining Stars

December 2, 2016 – Dethroning the Earth

January 27, 2017 – Mars & Venus: Our
Planetary Neighbors

February 24, 2017 – A Star Is Born

March 31, 2017 – A Universe of Galaxies

April 28, 2017 – A Total Solar Eclipse

Movie shows will be added to the schedule soon. Check our website for updates.

New and Improved

How can we possibly improve things at the Mather Planetarium, you ask? It's already so great, you say? Well, we're not ones to argue but we are continuing to make changes – big and small – in an effort to make sure your visit is the best.

Hallway

Our wall of shooting stars, created by Dr. John Baker (retired chair of WCU's Department of Art & Design), is now completed. The stars are available for purchase and will be engraved with the name or message of your choice. Put your name – or your whole family – in the stars!



Exterior Entrance

We continue to work with our wonderful donor Helga Knox - WCU class of 1979 - to beautify the exterior entrance. In the next few weeks a mosaic will be added around the exterior door. Rhoda Kahler, the artist who created the mosaic

on the E. O. Bull Center, will be adorning our building with a fantastic space-themed work. It should be in place before the first show of the season.

Later this fall we will be installing a sculpture in the garden area directly across from the planetarium entrance. Local artist Dave Beck is creating a kinetic sculpture that is sure to be both beautiful and engaging.

Tickets

There is good news and not-so-good news with the show tickets. The good news is that the folks at SSI, who handle tickets sales for us, have added an on-line system. This means that you can purchase tickets on the web (see the URL on the front page). The wonderful ladies at the ticket office will still be available to answer questions and take orders over the phone but now you can purchase tickets even when the office is closed.

The not-so-good news is that, after 5 years, we are increasing the price of the tickets. This increase is to cover the cost of the on-line system. Tickets will now be \$6 per person, a one dollar increase. Lap children (ages 5 and under) are still free. We make every effort to keep the cost low and we hope that no one will find this increase too much of a burden. Thank you for all of your support!



The programs in the Mather Planetarium are made possible by generous donations from the community. To learn more about how you can support our educational and public activities please contact Dr. Karen Schwarz at (610) 436-2788, kschwarz@wcupa.edu.



Looking Up: Aquila

One of the highlights of the summer sky is the Summer Triangle (described in newsletter Issue #9, Aug. 2015). The constellation Aquila - specifically the star Altair - occupies the southern corner of the triangle.

According to Greek mythology, Aquila is the eagle that carried Zeus' thunderbolts. Illustrations of Aquila typically show a young boy below the eagle, sometimes in the eagle's grasp. There are two different stories about this boy.

One explanation of the boy involves the former constellation Antinous, created in the year 132 by the emperor Hadrian. An oracle told Hadrian that only the death of someone dear to him would save him from a great danger. The oracle's prediction came true when the youth Antinous died while saving Hadrian from drowning in the Nile. To honor Antinous, Hadrian created the constellation.

Another story identifies the boy as Ganymede. Described as the most beautiful of mortals, Ganymede was abducted by Zeus, in the form of an eagle, and taken to Olympus to serve as cupbearer to the gods. Here he was granted eternal youth and immortality.

The figure Antinous was merged with Aquila when modern astronomers formalized the constellations in the early 1900's. The presence of an eagle in both stories makes it easy to see how the stories were merged, although the eagle represents different things each story.

While most people don't easily see an eagle in the pattern, the bright star Altair is hard to miss. Altair is the brightest star in the constellation, depicted as the eye of the eagle in the image above, and the 12th brightest star in the sky.