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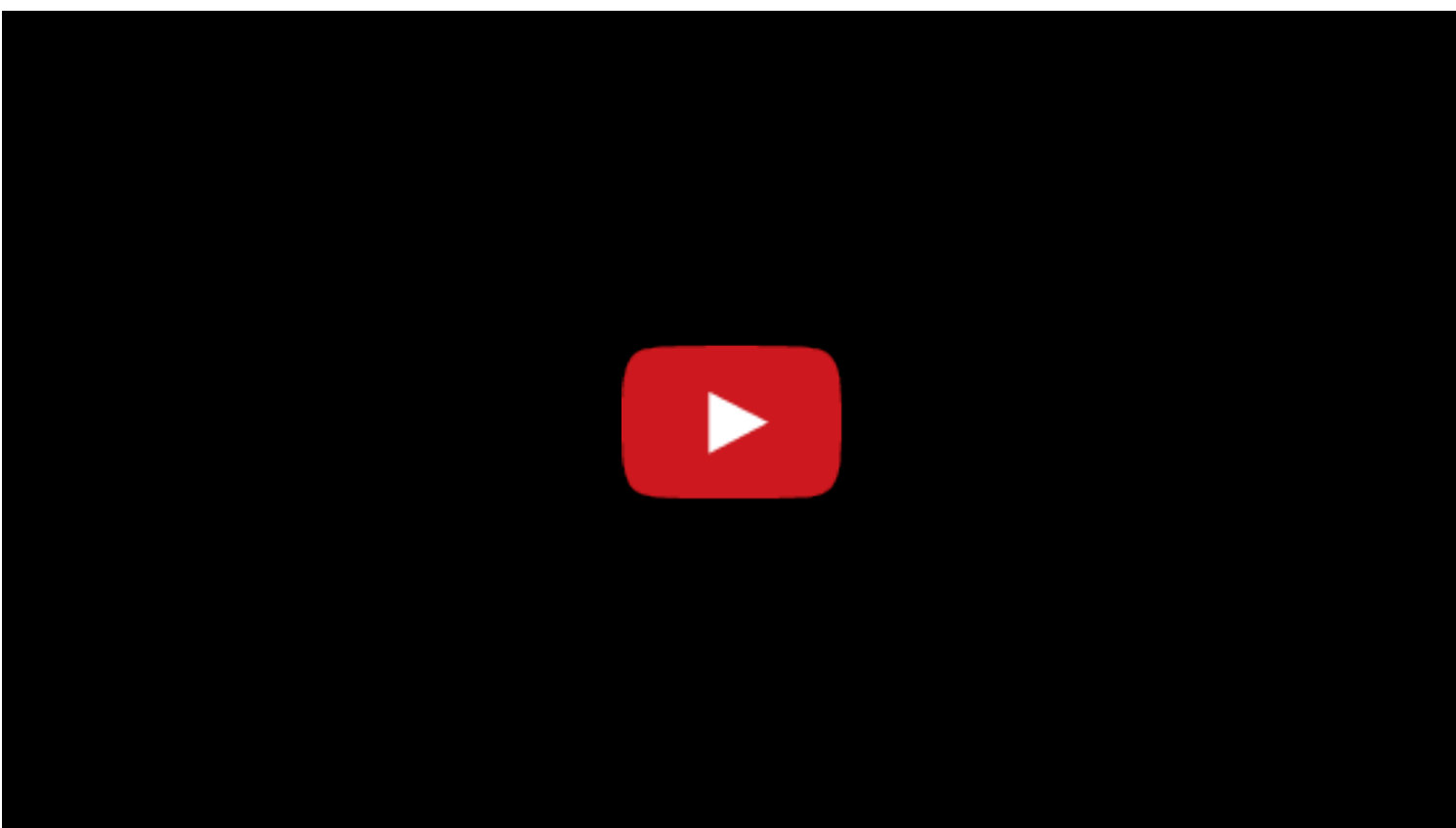
Blog

2012 Astronomy in Michiana

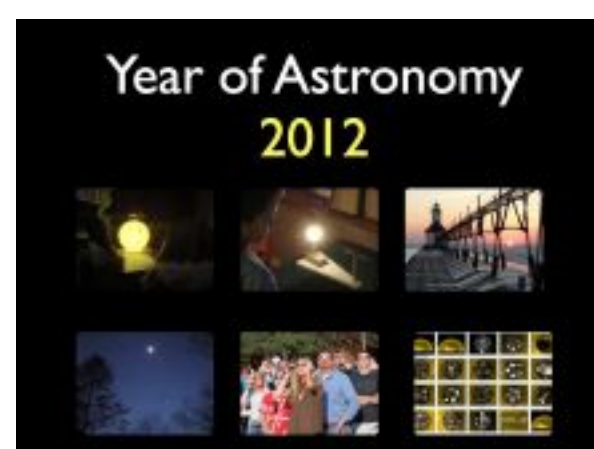
Posted by admin on December 4, 2012

A Year of Highlights

The compilation of images at <http://youtu.be/JQD0Rt6c97U> features highlights of 2012 astronomy in Michiana, including the 2012 transit of Venus, YMCA AstroCamp, Michiana Astronomical Society events, new media, and public outreach.



Astronomy enthusiasts near the Michigan-Indiana border (dubbed Michiana) collaborated extensively in 2012 to bring the excitement and majesty of the heavens to the public. The transit of Venus was the year's key event, with a [summary of the community outreach](#) conveyed in the linked, image-intensive prezzi [Transit of Venus Across the Sun](#). The local Transit of Venus preparations, dubbed TROVE, involved businesses, schools, libraries, clubs, associations, and dedicated volunteers. Images on the video are from Transit of Venus art exhibits, observing sites, TROVE treasure hunt, ToV videos, the Transit of Venus Time Keg, and more. Details about each are at www.transitofvenus.org.



Meanwhile, many other astronomy-related events were underfoot. Among the the rapidly cycling images in the video [2012 Astronomy in Michiana](#) are snapshots from other programs, many of which were spearheaded or supported by members of the Michiana Astronomical Society (MAS).

The MAS hosts an annual Michiana Star Party, at which observers from around the region set up scopes, tents, and campers for two nights of stargazing and dark-sky fellowship. The 2013 Star Party is slated for May 10-12.

The [AstroCamp](#) program shown in the video lacks my nighttime pictures this year, mainly because I got too busy enjoying the starry nights with the campers. Of course, AstroCampers were using the scopes and gear to learn the night sky and to find deep-sky objects. In 2012 we launched a new AstroCamp website at www.astrocamp.us, at which you can find links to more photos from this year and past years alike. Registration is now open for the July 7-13, 2013, AstroCamp session.

Who are those people in front of the sundial at Jordan Hall of Science? Keith Davis, Director of Notre Dame's Digital Visualization Theater, hosted the second [Live Interactive Planetarium Symposium](#) (LIPS), which brought to Michiana a talented group of planetarium professionals who thrive on dynamic programs.

Early in the the video are some images from a dark-sky workshop sponsored by the National Optical Astronomy Observatory that I attended. A key activity at the workshop, held at the National Science Teachers Association National Conference in Indianapolis, was a light shielding demonstration that had originally been developed locally for the [Let There Be Night](#) program at PHM schools in 2009.



The [Michiana Astronomical Society](#) meets every third Monday of the month (excluding December and May), with most meetings featuring a guest speaker on astronomy-based themes. Sample images from 2012 show topics ranging from the Higgs Boson to model rockets. MAS members appear often in Michiana astronomy ventures--they bring their own equipment to complement AstroCamp's collection; they set up scopes on sidewalks for passers-by; they give workshops on how to purchase and to use a telescope; and they visit schools, parks, and clubs to present stellar programs. Afterward, the group enjoys gathering socially to talk shop or simply to enjoy each other's company.

We wound down the year by presenting a family program at the Eddy Street Commons "Holiday Happenings." With a crowd revved up by the arrival of Santa Clause, MAS members set up telescopes, discussed astronomy topics, and presented a short show in a Starlab that suggested how Santa finds his way among the stars using the Big Dipper to target Polaris, the North Star.

The astronomy community in Michiana consists of kindred spirits with a zeal to share astronomy and telescopic highlights with the public, young and old alike. Unfortunately, the year ended with the loss of a longtime advocate for telescope making and observing. Rev. James C. Fahey, C.S.C., passed away November 30, 2012. A talented machinist and telescope maker, Father Jim most recently converted an old and unusable behemoth of a telescope owned by the MAS into an elegant truss-tube dobsonian-mounted gem. In the video [2012 Astronomy in Michiana](#), look for Jim and his handiwork interspersed from start to finish.

The year 2012 has been most memorable for astronomy on a local level. Thanks to all the people--friends, family, astro colleagues, and participating families and individuals--who have encouraged members of the community to look skyward. The firmament truly is magnificent and needs to be shared.

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