

You can get closer to the stars at Standeford Observatory

On clear Thursday nights in November

On clear Thursday nights during the next month, get to know the Ring Nebula, the Wild Duck Cluster, the Swan Nebula, the Double Cluster in Perseus, the Dumbbell Nebula and many other star clusters at Standeford Observatory.

Published in *The Free Press*, Mankato, MN, 10/30/2007

Free Press photo by Pat Christman



If you come to the Standeford or Andreas observatory, you may catch the Ring Nebula, the Wild Duck Cluster, the Swan Nebula, the Double Cluster in Perseus, the Dumbbell Nebula, the Andromeda Galaxy and other celestial phenomena.

MSU's observatories open to the public for glimpses of the heavens. During the next month, on clear Thursday nights, do yourself a favor and get to know the Ring Nebula, the Wild Duck Cluster, the Swan Nebula, the Double Cluster in Perseus, the Dumbbell Nebula, the Andromeda Galaxy, numerous globular clusters, and a host of colorful binary stars. It's possible at Minnesota State University's Standeford Observatory where, on Thursday nights, the public is invited to come and experience the heavens through the eye of a powerful telescope.

The Standeford Observatory — the smaller of the two campus observatories — is home to a variety of telescopes, most of which are available for the public to use.

MSU's Astronomy Department Web site says that the observatory's dome was gifted to the university by Leo V. Standeford — a professor of astronomy at MSU from 1968 to 1981 — and placed on top of the Trafton Science Center.

The dome later was moved to its current location near the Gage residence halls, a more suitable place for observing.

The larger and more luxurious Andreas Observatory is also open to the public, but only one night each month. It is named for Lowell and Nadine Andreas of Mankato, and was established in 1990 to provide the MSU astronomy program with a modern observing facility.

The principal telescope at Andreas is a 0.5-meter (20-inch), $f/13.5$ Cassegrain telescope. This computercontrolled telescope has several hundred pre-programmed objects available for easy access during public viewing sessions.

What: The public is invited to visit Standeford Observatory on clear Thursday evenings during November.

Hours: It will be open from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. If the sky is not sufficiently clear at observing time, the public viewing session will be not be held.

Parking: Visitors should park at the southern end of Gage parking lot No. 1 and walk through the pedestrian gate. Follow the road south to the observatory. Visitors with special needs should contact the Accessibility Resources at 389-2825.

If weather makes viewing uncertain, call Standeford Observatory (389-6208) during the evening to inquire about sky conditions. A sign on the gate at the end of Lot 1 will indicate whether the observatory is open.

Call 389-5912 to inquire about the availability of the Andreas Observatory.