STAR PARTY

October 19th, 2012
7-9:30 pm
STAR PARTY SPEAKERS

DR. STEVE HOWELL

*Project Scientist – NASA Kepler Space Mission*

The Kepler Mission was launched in 2009 with a goal to discover planets orbiting other stars (known as “exoplanets”) using the transit technique. To date, Kepler has discovered over 3,000 exoplanets, including many hundreds which are similar to the Earth in size. Steve is a distinguished astronomer with over 25 years of experience. He has been a university professor, built instruments for ground-based telescopes and the NASA Space Shuttle, worked at Kitt Peak National Observatory, and currently works for NASA’s most scientifically and publicly visible mission, Kepler. He is the author of over 500 scientific publications, popular and technical articles, and eight books on astronomy and astronomical instrumentation. He is also involved with scientific education for kids. He currently lives in Redwood City, CA where he loves to hike, prepare gourmet meals, and play blues music.

DR. RYAN THEULE

*Dean, Canyon Country Campus*

As Dean, Ryan is responsible for general operations and leadership at the Canyon Country Campus, which opened in August 2007 and serves over 5,200 students a semester in both general education and specialized programs. Ryan earned a BA and MA in History from Stanford University, an MA in Communications & Culture from Trinity International University, and completed a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from USC.

MR. OMAR TORRES

*Dean of Math, Science and Engineering, College of the Canyons*

As the Dean of Math, Sciences, and Engineering Division at College of the Canyons, Omar oversees the instructional programming in these disciplines at both the Valencia and Canyon Country Campus. He also assists with planning outreach events including the popular Canyon Country Campus Star Parties, community workshops to promote the Emerging Technologies program, and the annual Speakers Symposium series. Omar earned a BS in Chemistry at Texas A&M University and an MS in Inorganic Chemistry at the University of California, Los Angeles.

MS. TERESA CIARDI

*Lead Faculty, Physical Science and Astronomy, College of the Canyons*

Teresa’s passion is to bring science into the everyday lives of students, to open their world to the wonders that surround them. She teaches both physical science and astronomy courses, and leads these programs. Teresa is also the advisor for the Astronomy & Physics Club and is actively involved in the CCC Star Party. Teresa earned her B.A. in Physics and Astronomy from Boston University and her M.S. in Physics from the University of Wyoming.
SPECIAL THANKS to College of the Canyons’ Physics and Astronomy Club for their assistance with the program and telescopes, facilitated by their advisor, Teresa Ciardi. Special thanks as well to Dr. David Ciardi, Professional Astronomer, Kepler Science Team, and the Local Astronomy Groups of Santa Clarita and Burbank for their continuing support of the Star Party programs.

STAR PARTY PROGRAM

• WELCOME AND CAMPUS OVERVIEW............... RYAN THEULE

• MATH, SCIENCE, & ENGINEERING AT COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS. ............... OMAR TORRES

• SCIENCE DEMONSTRATION: AN INTERACTIVE SCALE MODEL OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM. ............ TERESA CIARDI

• STAR PARTY PRESENTATION: THE NASA KEPLER MISSION AND RECENT EXOPLANET DISCOVERIES. . STEVE HOWELL

• TELESCOPE VIEWING

NEPTUNE AND URANUS OVERVIEW: Few people realize that both Uranus and Neptune have ring systems. In fact, all of the giant planets have a ring system and a relatively large number of moons. Uranus has 27 moons and Neptune has 13 moons. At a distance from the Sun of 1.8 billion miles and 2.8 billion miles, Uranus and Neptune are extremely cold at about −350 ºF. It takes 84 years for Uranus to complete one orbit, which means one hemisphere is in daylight for a very long time, while the other hemisphere is in darkness. It takes about 165 years for Neptune to complete one orbit, which means a human would never have a birthday on Neptune. The strongest winds ever recorded in our solar system were on Neptune, with a wind speed of 1,200 mph! Neptune was discovered using one of the many techniques astronomers now use to find planets around other stars. The gravitational effects of Neptune were observed to alter Uranus’s orbit, assisting in the discovery of Neptune. Similarly, astronomers can “see” the gravitational effects of large exoplanets as they tug on a star. The gravitational tugging causes the star to “wobble” about a center of gravity point. A star will change position slightly when a large planet (like Uranus or Neptune) pulls the star a little to one side and then the other. Smaller planets, like Earth, are detected when they transit (cross in front) of the star. The Kepler mission “watches” for the transits of exoplanets.
A SPECIAL THANKS FOR SUPPORTING STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS:
A portion of food sales from this event have been donated by the Canyons Café—operated by Lamppost Pizza—to support the Ram Manvi Scholarship Fund. Dr. Manvi was the former Dean of Math, Science and Engineering at College of the Canyons and was instrumental in launching the campus’ initial Star Party event in 2009. Additional information is available through the COC Foundation.

ABOUT THE SANTA CLARITA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT:
The Santa Clarita Community College District serves a 367-square-mile service area in northern Los Angeles County. College of the Canyons, the single college within the District, serves more than 23,000 students per semester on campuses in Valencia, Canyon Country and online.

Located on a modern 153.4-acre campus in Valencia and 70-acre site in Canyon Country, the college offers classes during traditional fall and spring semesters, as well as summer sessions and five-week winter inter-sessions. Currently, 70 associate degrees and 80 certificate programs are offered.

College of the Canyons has maintained its status over the years as one of the largest employers in the Santa Clarita Valley and is a vital, enduring, cultural, educational and economic force in the region.

DR. DIANNE G. VAN HOOK, CHANCELLOR

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