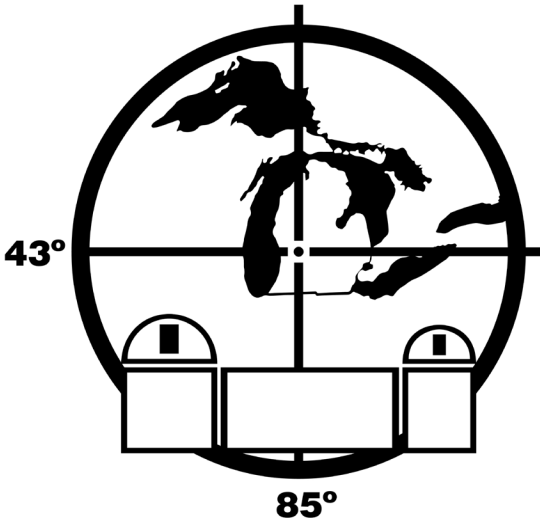


Grand Rapids Amateur Astronomical
Association & James C. Veen Observatory

2023

Meeting and Activities Guide



3308 Kissing Rock Ave SE
Lowell, MI 49331



www.graaa.org



616-897-7065



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ABOUT THE GRAAA

GRAAA's Mission Statement: "To promote community interest and participation in astronomy through outreach, education, and research"

The **Grand Rapids Amateur Astronomical Association** is a non-profit group of astronomy enthusiasts of all ages and backgrounds, drawn to a common interest in the wonders of the universe. Founded in 1955, the GRAAA is an eclectic mix of individuals and families. A variety of activities are offered, allowing members to select a level of participation appropriate to their interests and available time.

Program meetings are held from 7:00pm to 9:00pm, usually (but not always) on the 3rd Thursday evening of January through May and September through November. All GRAAA activities this year will take place at either the Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM) or at the Association's James C. Veen Observatory (see details under "Calendar"). There is ample free parking in the Museum's parking ramp and at the Observatory. Meetings and other GRAAA activities provide opportunities to hear presentations by astronomy specialists, to learn new ways to enjoy a fascinating hobby, and to share information with fellow amateur astronomers. Guests and public are always welcome at meetings and other special events. **Keep this guide in a safe place for reference, and check the GRAAA website periodically for any changes or updates to events. Scan the QR code at the bottom of this page for a direct link.**

SPECIAL EVENTS are noted in **bold** capital letters, and provide unique opportunities to hear noted speakers and to participate in observing sessions and outreach events. They traditionally include two social events: the annual Star-be-que picnic at the Veen Observatory, this year on June 17th, and the Holiday dinner party on December 14th.

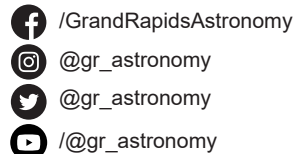
The James C. Veen Observatory, named after a co-founder and first president of GRAAA, is the crown jewel of the Association. It is a fully equipped education and sky observing center housing three major telescopes: one easily operated with minimal experience, one suitable for advanced observing and astrophotography, and a fully robotic instrument for imaging and research. Members can personally use these telescopes following an orientation class. Members are also encouraged to assist at Public Observing Nights at the Veen Observatory. Upcoming dates are listed on the calendar found in this guide, on the back cover for easy reference, and online.

Visit the Association's website (graaa.org) to learn more and to find a membership application to submit online or download and print for mailing. Also online are more complete descriptions of upcoming activities, including updates and virtual meeting links when applicable. You can follow GRAAA on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. You are invited to contact any of the Board Members listed at the end of the calendar to learn more. Find out how you too can become involved in a fascinating and gratifying hobby, and also how you can share your enthusiasm with others as a member of the Grand Rapids Amateur Astronomical Association.

Scan QR code to
view upcoming
GRAAA events:



Find GRAAA on
social media:



CALENDAR OF MEETINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS

PUBLIC AND GUESTS WELCOME

JANUARY

- 19 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
Highlights of the Winter Sky and "Big Astronomy." Join Chaffee Planetarium Manager Jack Daleske and other planetarium staff for a three-part presentation. First, highlights of the winter sky, including the locations of telescopic objects of interest; then a quick excursion to Chile to see highlights of the sky visible only from below the equator; followed by the acclaimed full-dome show *Big Astronomy*. The show illustrates the work of giant telescopes either in operation or planned in the southern hemisphere. Free parking in Museum parking ramp with ticket validation.

FEBRUARY

- 11 **Saturday, 11:00am - SPECIAL EVENT at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
Reaching for Your Own Stars: A Recipe to Succeed in Life, featuring Jose Hernandez, NASA Astronaut (Ret.). He flew aboard the Space Shuttle and was chief of Materials and Processes at Johnson Space Center. This event is part of *Roger That!*, a celebration of astronaut Roger B. Chaffee hosted by the Museum and GVSU. Reserve free tickets at grpm.org.
- 16 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
Highlights of British Astronomy, with GRAAA's Jack McCarthy. In Autumn of 2022, Jack toured significant astronomical sites in England, including Herschel's 17th century home and museum (standing where Herschel discovered Uranus), the ruins of Stonehenge, and the fabled Royal Greenwich Observatory. Jack, a skilled storyteller, has tales to share and pictures to show, including amazing views of the Aurora Borealis taken from shipboard near the Arctic Circle.

MARCH

- 11 **Saturday, 8:00pm - SPECIAL EVENT at Veen Observatory**
Exploring the Winter Sky. Just before Daylight Saving Time brings a return to later sunsets, join in a winter "freeze out" star party. Bundle up and join us for a tour of winter sky objects with observatory and personal telescopes.
- 16 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
Plan Now to See the Great 2024 Total Solar Eclipse, with Chaffee Planetarium Curator Emeritus Dave DeBruyn and WZZM Chief Meteorologist George Lessens. Dave will illustrate aspects and path of "Nature's Greatest Spectacle," while George will discuss viewing prospects across the United States. A timely and informative presentation, open free to the public.

APRIL

- 20 Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Annual Report to Members (virtual)**
GRAAA Today and Tomorrow – A Report to the Membership, presented virtually. GRAAA officers and key committee members will summarize their activities and upcoming plans. Members are urged to join in for this annual opportunity to hear about plans and challenges, to voice their comments and questions, and to offer suggestions to improve our Association. Virtual meeting link will be sent to members via email prior to the event.
- 26 Wednesday, 7:30pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
A Quarter Century of Solar System Exploration, a Personal View, with Dr. Brent Bos. This can't-miss program is rescheduled from October 2022. The award-winning NASA scientist, originally from West Michigan, has spoken to GRAAA in the past about projects he has been involved with over many years, including Mars Pathfinder, Phoenix, and OSIRIS-REx. Now, he will give us perspective on his "favorite things" encountered along a path of discovery inspired by a trip to the Chaffee Planetarium as a second grader.
- 29 Saturday, 8:30pm-11:30pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
International Astronomy Day and Michigan Statewide Astronomy Night coincide with the first Public Observing Night of the season. Veen facilities are open cloudy or clear with free admission for this event only. Co-hosted by the Grand Rapids Public Museum, there will be special activities, tours, followed by telescopic observing if skies are clear. Educational facilities throughout Michigan are participating in this effort to promote astronomy sponsored by Michigan State University. Featured objects: Moon, Mars, Venus.

MAY

- 13 Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Public Observing Nights only take place if skies are clear. Check weather status by 6:30pm on graaa.org, Facebook event, or call 616-897-7065 for phone message. Featured objects will be Venus, Mars, Star Clusters, and Galaxies.
- 18 Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
You and Your Backyard Telescope – Exploring the Summer Sky. Using the Chaffee Planetarium sky and simple telescopes for demonstration, experienced GRAAA observers offer tips for use of various backyard telescopes and highlight deep sky objects that are good targets for novice observers in light-polluted skies. A telescope tune-up clinic will follow, so bring your personal scope for expert adjustment and assistance.
- 27 Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Moon, Venus, Star Clusters.

JUNE

- 10 Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Public Observing Nights only take place if skies are clear. Check weather status by 6:30pm on graaa.org, Facebook event, or call 616-897-7065 for phone message. Featured objects will be Venus, Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies.
- 17 Saturday, 6:30pm - SPECIAL EVENT at Veen Observatory**
Star-be-que, the annual GRAAA picnic potluck comes this year with a wonderful new pavilion and expanded picnic facilities at the observatory. Bring your favorite item to grill and a side dish to pass. Then enjoy socializing with fellow GRAAA members, with a special program to follow and observing after dark if skies are clear.
- 24 * Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Moon, Venus, Star Clusters. **Telescope Clinic** at 8:00pm, free with paid admission. Additional telescope clinics on July 22 and August 26. Note: Those arriving after 8:30pm may not receive service.

JULY

- 08 Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Nebulas, Star Clusters, Galaxies.
- 22 * Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Moon, Star Clusters, Nebulas. **Telescope Clinic** at 8:00pm, free with paid admission. Additional telescope clinic on August 26.

AUGUST

- 12 Saturday, 9:00pm-4:30am - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Perseid Meteor Shower, Saturn, Jupiter, Star Clusters, Nebulas. **Observatory open all night; bring lawn chairs or blanket and a picnic lunch to enjoy a night under the stars.**
- 26 * Saturday, 9:00pm-11:30pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Moon, Saturn, Star Clusters. **Telescope Clinic** at 8:00pm, free with paid admission.

SEPTEMBER

- 09 Saturday, 8:30pm-11:00pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Saturn, Neptune, Star Clusters, Nebulas.
- 16 Saturday, 8:00pm - SPECIAL EVENT at Veen Observatory**
A Night at Veen specifically for GRAAA and Grand Rapids Public Museum members. Enjoy tours and a special program followed by observing of highlights of the early Autumn sky with observatory and personal telescopes if skies are clear.

SEPTEMBER (continued)

- 21 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
When We Return, with space enthusiast and former NASA historian Glen E. Swanson. Glen will describe NASA's plans to bring humans back to the Moon and prepare them to go on to Mars. He will also compare that effort to the equally challenging days of Apollo. A timely subject to be sure.
- 23 **Saturday, 8:30pm-11:00pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Public Observing Nights only take place if skies are clear. Check weather status by 6:30pm on graaa.org, Facebook event, or call 616-897-7065 for phone message. Featured objects will be the Moon, Saturn, Neptune, and Star Clusters.

OCTOBER

- 07 **Saturday, 7:30pm-10:00pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, Star Clusters, Galaxies.
- 14 **Saturday, 7:30pm-10:00pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, Star Clusters, Galaxies.
- 19 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
Making a Habitable World, with Dr. Edwin Bergin, Chair of the Department of Astronomy at the University of Michigan and Webb Space Telescope scientist. Dr. Bergin will present this year's Marron Memorial Lecture. How are planets born and do they form with substances for life like water and organics? Professor Bergin will illustrate the subject with images from the Webb and Atacama Large Array in Chile. This highly recommended program, like all GRAAA meetings, is open to the public.
- 21 **Saturday, 7:30pm-10:00pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, Star Clusters.

NOVEMBER

- 04 **Saturday, 7:30pm-10:00pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Final Public Night of 2023. Clear skies only. Featured objects: Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, Nebulas, Galaxies.
- 16 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
The Star of Bethlehem, Casting New Light on an Old Mystery, with Chaffee Planetarium Curator Emeritus Dave DeBruyn. Join Dave as he uses planetarium technology to turn the clock back to Biblical times to search the sky of that era for phenomena that might have played a part in the story of the Magi. This is a subject that has intrigued scholars and historians for centuries, and some new theories have recently emerged.

DECEMBER

- 14 Thursday, 6:30pm - SPECIAL EVENT at Boulder Creek Golf Club**
Annual Member-Family Holiday Dinner Party, celebrating Christmas, the Winter Solstice, Hanukkah, and other festivals of the season. Make merry with fellow GRAAA members and their families and be treated to a special program. *Be aware that online pre-registration and advance payment at graaa.org are required.* More details will be announced in an email prior to the event.
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2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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RETAIN THIS GUIDE IN A SAFE PLACE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE!

JAMES C. VEEN OBSERVATORY
3308 Kissing Rock Ave SE, Lowell Township, 49331

Public Observing Nights take place only if skies are clear. Status updates at graaa.org, Facebook, and recorded message at 616-897-7065 by 6:30pm on date of event. **Note:** Later arrival recommended for darker sky, May-August.

2023 Saturday night dates, times, and observing highlights:

Apr. 29	8:30 - 11:30	SWAN & International Astronomy Day: Moon, Mars, Venus
May 13	9:30 - 12:00	Venus, Mars, Star Clusters, Galaxies
May 27	9:30 - 12:00	Moon, Venus, Star Clusters
June 10	9:30 - 12:00	Venus, Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies
June 24 *	9:30 - 12:00	Moon, Venus, Star Clusters
July 08	9:30 - 12:00	Nebulas, Star Clusters, Galaxies
July 22 *	9:30 - 12:00	Moon, Star Clusters, Nebulas
Aug. 12	9:00 - 4:30	All Night Perseid Meteor Watch, Saturn, Jupiter
Aug. 26 *	9:00 - 11:30	Moon, Saturn, Star Clusters
Sept. 09	8:30 - 11:00	Saturn, Neptune, Star Clusters, Nebulas
Sept. 23	8:30 - 11:00	Moon, Saturn, Neptune, Star Clusters
Oct. 07	7:30 - 10:00	Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, Star Clusters, Galaxies
Oct. 14	7:30 - 10:00	Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, Star Clusters, Galaxies
Oct. 21	7:30 - 10:00	Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, Star Clusters
Nov. 04	7:30 - 10:00	Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, Nebulas, Galaxies

* **Telescope Clinics** take place promptly at 8:00pm on June 24, July 22, and August 26 if skies are clear and observatory is open. Free with paid admission. Bring your personal telescope for expert alignment and assistance with use. Those arriving after 8:30 may not receive service due to time constraints.

PUBLIC ADMISSION

Adults	\$5
Under 18	\$2
Under 5	FREE
GRAAA & GRPM members	FREE

Cash preferred, also accept credit cards and checks (payable to GRAAA).
Visit graaa.org for location, map, group tour information, photos, and more.

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM | *Be curious.*

The GRAAA and Veen Observatory receive annual financial and administrative support from the Grand Rapids Public Museum.
www.grpm.org