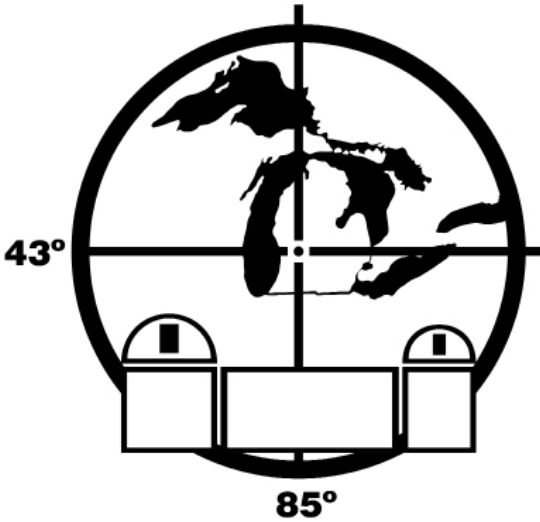


**Grand Rapids Amateur Astronomical
Association & James C. Veen Observatory**

2024

Meeting and Activities Guide



3308 Kissing Rock Ave SE
Lowell, MI 49331



www.graaa.org



616-897-7065



[/GrandRapidsAstronomy](https://www.facebook.com/GrandRapidsAstronomy)



[@gr_astronomy](https://www.instagram.com/gr_astronomy)



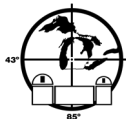
[/@gr_astronomy](https://www.youtube.com/@gr_astronomy)



[graaa.org/discord](https://www.graaa.org/discord)

ABOUT THE GRAAA

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



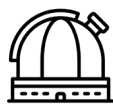
The Grand Rapids Amateur Astronomical Association is a non-profit (501-c3) group of astronomy enthusiasts of all ages and backgrounds, drawn together by a common interest in the wonders of the universe. A variety of opportunities are provided, and you can find specific activities of interest at graaa.org/events and in this Program Guide. Learn how you can become a member at graaa.org/membership.



Program meetings: Monthly on the third Thursday of January–May and September–November, 7–9pm at the Grand Rapids Public Museum or Veen Observatory (details and exceptions are found under “Calendar” and updates are posted at graaa.org/events). There is ample parking in the Museum parking ramp, free for members. Guests and public are welcome.



Special Events and “Popups” provide unique opportunities, including noted speakers, special interest discussions, impromptu observing opportunities, and more. Look for alerts through GRAAA social media, Discord, and text alerts (see below).



The James C. Veen Observatory, named after a co-founder and first president of GRAAA, is the crown jewel of the Association. Learn more about this remarkable facility and procedures to gain access for personal use of its multiple telescopes at graaa.org/veen.



Public Observing Nights at Veen (2024 schedule on back cover): Volunteer to assist with these events, which take place roughly every two weeks. Gain experience with the observatory’s facilities and make wonderful new friends while helping GRAAA meet its outreach and financial goals.



GRAAA on social media: We have an active presence on Instagram at [@gr_astronomy](https://www.instagram.com/gr_astronomy), Facebook at [facebook.com/GrandRapidsAstronomy](https://www.facebook.com/GrandRapidsAstronomy), and our “GRAAA Community” Facebook group.



GRAAA Education and YouTube channel: View archived presentations and informative guides to amateur astronomy at graaa.org/education and [youtube.com/@gr_astronomy](https://www.youtube.com/@gr_astronomy). Also check out online articles by GRAAA contributors at graaa.org/blog.



NASA Night Sky Network: GRAAA is a partner in these periodic online presentations by noted astronomers and space science specialists. Learn more at nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov.



GRAAA Discord server: Join our online community to connect with and learn from fellow GRAAA members at graaa.org/discord.



Email and text alerts: Members are automatically added to GRAAA’s email list, plus you can sign up for text alerts by texting [@gr_astro](https://www.instagram.com/gr_astro) to 81010. Receive text notifications directly to your phone about transient sky events, GRAAA popups, meeting reminders, and other useful information.

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS

PUBLIC AND GUESTS WELCOME

JANUARY

- 18 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
“The Sky Overhead in 2024, from Northern Lights to the Great Eclipse.”
Join Chaffee Planetarium staff for a three-part presentation. First, highlights of the winter sky, including the locations of telescopic objects of interest; then a simulation of the aurora and an explanation of why 2024 may be an unusually active year for this elusive phenomenon; finally, a realtime and authentic representation of April’s total solar eclipse. See the bright planets and stars that will appear and experience the ambiance you should be looking for if you plan to view the real thing in April. Free parking in Museum parking ramp is available for GRAAA members with ticket validation. Pre-registration is encouraged.

FEBRUARY

- 15 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
These Are My Favorite Things, an informal discussion and demonstration facilitated by longtime GRAAA observing experts Greg Comegys and Mike Murphy. Greg and Mike have decades of experience observing with a variety of optical systems and attachments, and lots of tips for how you too can get the most out of your observing from both backyard and observatory. Attendees with their own special gadgets or recommendations are encouraged to participate in a discussion or even to demonstrate their “favorite things.”
- 17 **Saturday, 11:00am - SPECIAL EVENT at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
Human Factors in Spaceflight, featuring Dr. Robert Satcher, retired NASA astronaut and prominent surgeon and chemical engineer. Initially considered a niche field for astronauts, space medicine is evolving as an academic discipline, and is crucial for establishing human presence on the Moon, Mars, and beyond. Despite challenges, the prospect of one day performing surgery in space is considered feasible with existing technology. The growing space economy further supports the promising future of space medicine tied to ongoing technological innovation. This event is part of “*Roger That!*,” the annual celebration of Roger B. Chaffee, sponsored by GVSU. Pre-registration at grpm.org/rogerthat is recommended to ensure admission.

MARCH

- 21 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
Women’s Voices in Astronomical Discovery, presented by longtime GRAAA member Mark McIntosh. Now retired, Mark worked as a photojournalist for both WOOD and WZZM TV, and prior to that was a production specialist at Abrams Planetarium at MSU. Following an overview of women’s contributions to astronomy long ago, he will turn to those of more recent history, concentrating on the work of Caroline Herschel, Maria Mitchell, and others. They made significant contributions, despite some being looked upon only as human “computers” by their male contemporaries. This is a fitting program for Women’s History Month.

APRIL

- 12 **Friday, 8:30pm-11:30pm - SPECIAL EVENT at Veen Observatory**
Statewide Astronomy Night (SWAN) Public Observing Event. Join staff of the Chaffee Planetarium and members of GRAAA for a night of free stargazing, observatory tours, and more. Space activities will be facilitated by educators from GVSU and the Museum, and snacks will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Activities and tours will be available rain or shine; telescope viewing will only be possible if skies are clear. Educational facilities throughout Michigan are participating in this annual effort to promote astronomy, sponsored by Michigan State University.
- 18 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Annual Report to Members**
GRAAA Today and Tomorrow—A Report to the Membership, via Zoom. GRAAA officers and key committee members will summarize their recent activities and future plans. Members are urged to join virtually for this annual opportunity to not only hear about upcoming plans and challenges, but also to offer comments and suggestions that will improve *your* Association.
- 25 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
Reports from Under the Shadow, presented by various GRAAA members who successfully witnessed the April 8th solar eclipse. There should be an impressive array of images as well as adventure stories from all over the country. Don't miss what could be an enlightening montage. Look for an email in mid-April with a request to send your images to have your stories included in this presentation. (Note: this regular program meeting will take place on the 4th Thursday, this month only.)

MAY

- 04 **Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
First Public Night of the year. Public Observing Nights only take place if skies are clear. Check weather status by 6:30pm on graaa.org, Facebook, Discord, or call 616-897-7065 for phone message. Featured objects will be various deep sky objects.
- 16 **Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
Michigan Dark Skies, A Resource Essential to Life as We Know It, presented by Dr. Sally Oey, Professor of Astronomy at the University of Michigan. Dr. Oey notes that a natural, star-studded sky is only accessible to a fraction of the world's people, and that ignorance is causing accelerating degradation of this precious resource. As a strong proponent for preserving dark skies for both astronomers and public, Dr. Oey will explain how light pollution can be a serious threat to the environment, health, and safety, and how to combat the problem.
- 18 **Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
International Astronomy Day. Clear skies only. Featured objects: Gibbous Moon and various deep sky objects.

JUNE

- 01 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, Discord, or call 616-897-7065 for phone message. Featured objects will be various deep sky objects.
- 15 * Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Quarter Moon and various deep sky objects. **Telescope Clinic** at 8:00pm, free with paid admission. Additional telescope clinics on July 13 and August 10. (Note: Those arriving after 8:30pm may not receive service.)
- 22 Saturday, 6:30pm - SPECIAL EVENT at Veen Observatory**
Star-be-que, the annual GRAAA picnic potluck this year will bring the official opening of the new Thomas Strikwerda Observing Facility at Veen. Bring your favorite item to grill and a side dish to pass. Then enjoy socializing with fellow GRAAA members and guests, with observing after dark if skies are clear.
- 29 Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: various deep sky objects.

JULY

- 13 * Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Quarter Moon and various deep sky objects. **Telescope Clinic** at 8:00pm, free with paid admission. Additional telescope clinic on August 10. (Note: Those arriving after 8:30pm may not receive service.)
- 27 Saturday, 9:30pm-Midnight - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: various deep sky objects.

AUGUST

- 10 * Saturday, 9:00pm-11:30pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Quarter Moon and various deep sky objects. **Telescope Clinic** at 8:00pm, free with paid admission. (Note: Those arriving after 8:30pm may not receive service.)
- 24 Saturday, 9:00pm-11:30pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: various deep sky objects, Saturn late.

SEPTEMBER

- 14 Saturday, 8:30pm-11:00pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Gibbous Moon, Saturn, and various deep sky objects.

SEPTEMBER (continued)

- 19 Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Aquinas College**
To the Moon—What We Know and Why Go Back, presented by Solar System specialist Dr. Nicolle Zellner of Albion College. Dr. Zellner is the 2021 winner of the Carl Sagan Medal for Excellence in Public Communication in Planetary Science and the ideal presenter for observance of the 30th anniversary of Ralph Baldwin Observatory at Aquinas, named after the Grand Rapids astronomer/businessman who wrote groundbreaking books about the nature of the Moon. Seventy years later, and fifty years after the last Apollo mission, Dr. Zellner will review that history and how a closer look at the Moon's impact history poses new questions. There is a new insight into lunar and planet formation, and impetus for humans to return.
- 28 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, Discord, or call 616-897-7065 for phone message. Featured objects will be Saturn and various deep sky objects.

OCTOBER

- 12 Saturday, 7:30pm-10:00pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Gibbous Moon, Saturn, Venus, and various deep sky objects.
- 17 Thursday, 7:00pm - GRAAA Meets at Grand Rapids Public Museum**
Why We Throw DARTs, presented by Dr. Seth Jacobson, a planetary specialist from Michigan State University who participated in NASA's successful Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) in 2022. Dr. Jacobson will demonstrate that asteroids are not merely piles of rubble, but are reshaped by radiation and even split apart to form new ones. He will also show how alteration of the orbit of one member of an asteroid pair could one day provide insight into how to avert Earth's collision with a threatening body. Science fiction from the film *Don't Look Up* becomes reality in this year's James Marron Memorial Event.
- 26 Saturday, 7:30pm-10:00pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Clear skies only. Featured objects: Saturn, Venus, Neptune, and various deep sky objects.

NOVEMBER

- 02 Saturday, 7:30pm-10:00pm - Veen Observatory Public Night**
Final Public Night of the year. Clear skies only. Featured objects: Saturn, Venus, Neptune, and various deep sky objects.
- 21 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, which has intrigued scholars for centuries.

DECEMBER

- 12 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.
-

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

President: Chris Miller	616-481-5933
chris.j.miller@comcast.net	
Vice President: Tom Good	616-617-6964
riversideraconteur@gmail.com	
Secretary: Emily Hromi	330-958-4648
emilyhromi@gmail.com	
Treasurer: Jim Foerch	616-560-1045
jsfoerch@gmail.com	

Directors

Curt Blakeslee	616-773-8887
norock@gmail.com	
Joe Branc	616-460-2280
joebranc@hotmail.com	
Marc Daneman	616-450-0110
marcdaneman@cs.com	
Jack McCarthy	616-560-3017
jm0506@comcast.net	
Mark McIntosh	616-204-2831
mark.mcintosh39@gmail.com	
Trisha Purpura	616-755-5770
tlpurpura@yahoo.com	
Julia Trongo	231-740-4126
jpetrie79@gmail.com	

Other Services

Public & Member Services: Dave DeBruyn	616-558-9242
ddebruyn@grpm.org	
Webmaster: Emily Hromi	330-958-4648
emilyhromi@gmail.com	

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, Discord, and recorded phone message at 616-897-7065 posted no later than 6:30pm on date of event. **Note:** Later arrival recommended for darker sky, May through August.

2024 Saturday night dates, times, and observing highlights:

May 04	9:30 - 12:00	Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies
May 18	9:30 - 12:00	International Astronomy Day; Gibbous Moon
June 01	9:30 - 12:00	Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies
June 15 *	9:30 - 12:00	Quarter Moon, Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies
June 29	9:30 - 12:00	Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies
July 13 *	9:30 - 12:00	Quarter Moon, Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies
July 27	9:30 - 12:00	Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies
Aug. 10 *	9:00 - 11:30	Quarter Moon, Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies
Aug. 24	9:00 - 11:30	Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies, Saturn late
Sept. 14	8:30 - 11:00	Gibbous Moon, Saturn, Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies
Sept. 28	8:30 - 11:00	Saturn, Star Clusters, Nebulas, Galaxies
Oct. 12	7:30 - 10:00	Gibbous Moon, Saturn, Venus, Star Clusters, Galaxies
Oct. 26	7:30 - 10:00	Saturn, Venus, Neptune, Star Clusters, Nebulas Galaxies
Nov. 02	7:30 - 10:00	Saturn, Venus, Neptune, Star Clusters, Nebulas Galaxies

* **Telescope Clinics** take place promptly at 8:00pm on June 15, July 13, and August 10 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	\$3
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, galleries, 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