



DISCOVERY PLACE
NATURE

Planetarium

Opening January 14, 2017

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NEWS RELEASE

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New Planetarium to Open at Discovery Place Nature on Saturday, January 14, 2017 Grand opening celebration will offer hourly sky shows on new digital projector system

CHARLOTTE - Discovery Place is over the moon to announce a new digital planetarium will open at Discovery Place Nature on Saturday, January 14, 2017, offering shows every hour on the hour from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. for the grand opening.

The new digital planetarium is housed in the Museum's original Charlotte A. Kelly Planetarium. The dome has been retrofitted with a new Digitarium® Zeta Portable planetarium system which projects images of stars, planets and constellations to simulate the night sky.

The Museum will offer two types of planetarium experiences: multimedia video presentations and seasonal star shows. Multimedia shows are full-dome video adventures that explore astronomy topics such as moon landings, space travel, solar phenomena and the inner workings of the telescope through narrated CGI and animated stories. Seasonal star shows will take you on a narrated tour of the Queen City sky in winter, spring summer or fall. Learn to identify stars, planets and constellations visible to the naked eye and how to orient yourself using celestial guideposts.

Groups and classes can also book live star show experiences that are presented by a Discovery Place Nature educator to explore the stars, planets and other celestial bodies in the night sky. For example, the class Charlotte Stars and Stories allows students to experience traditional star gazing, learn how to find constellations and hear ancient stories about the sky.

"Gone are the days of analog star projectors with accompanying slide shows," said Kaylan Petrie, Director of STEM experiences for Discovery Place. "With digital domes, you can expect a visually stimulating star experience with simulations of flying to the moon, experiencing constellations from various cultures and observing our galaxy from the outside in."

The new digital planetarium is Discovery Place Nature's second planetarium experience. The original planetarium was built in 1964 to house a small star ball planetarium projector that was donated to the Museum. It was decommissioned in the 1980s and later transformed into the Nature Dome to accommodate Grandpa Tree, an animatronic talking tree that shared stories with children about local wildlife.



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Starting Saturday, January 14, 2017, guests can enjoy daily planetarium shows at Discovery Place Nature. During the grand opening celebration, Discovery Place Nature will show Winter Sky and the multimedia film Back to the Moon for Good at 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., noon, 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. Each show runs approximately 15-25 minutes for up to 45 guests per viewing. Planetarium shows are included with Museum admission and are ideal for families with children Grades K - 5. Bench and floor seating are available around the dome. All planetarium shows are first come, first serve. For a full planetarium show schedule, see below:

Normal Operating Show Schedule (January - May 2017)

MONDAYS	TUESDAYS - FRIDAYS	SATURDAYS	SUNDAYS
Closed	1:00 p.m. 3:00 p.m.	10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m. 1:30 p.m. 3:30 p.m. 3:30 p.m.	12:30 p.m.

Admission to Discovery Place Nature is \$8 per person and free for Members and children younger than 2, plus any sales and use tax. Guests may purchase tickets online at nature.discoveryplace.org, via phone at 704.372.6261 x300 or in person at the Museum.

About Discovery Place Nature

Founded in 1946 as the Children's Nature Museum, Discovery Place Nature has been a staple in Charlotte's education and cultural community for 70 years. The Museum conjures curiosity and activates the imagination through educational experiences that help us connect to the natural world. Guests can walk among free-flying butterflies in Butterfly Pavilion, encourage imaginative play in Fort Wild - an outdoor in a creative environment, take a family trek through the 100-year-old trees on the Paw Paw Nature Trail and explore the stars in the new digital planetarium. For more information, visit nature.discoveryplace.org or call 704.372.6261 x300.

About Discovery Place

Discovery Place provides ever-changing, entertaining facilities that engage people in the active exploration of science, technology and nature. Through four distinct museum experiences at Discovery Place Science, Discovery Place Nature and Discovery Place Kids, interactive educational programming, professional development training and community outreach initiatives, Discovery Place has been able to provide the Carolinas with top ranking STEM education for 70 years.

For more information about Discovery Place, call 704.372.6261 x300, visit discoveryplace.org or connect with Discovery Place on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Discovery Place is supported, in part, with funding from the Arts & Science Council.



Opening Weekend Show Schedule

Saturday, January 14

9:00 a.m.	Discovery Place Nature opens
10:00 a.m.	Winter Sky
11:00 a.m.	Winter Sky
Noon	Back to the Moon for Good
1:00 p.m.	Winter Sky
2:00 p.m.	Winter Sky
3:00 p.m.	Back to the Moon for Good
5:00 p.m.	Discovery Place Nature closes

Sunday, January 15

Noon	Discovery Place Nature opens
1:00 p.m.	Winter Sky
2:00 p.m.	Winter Sky
3:00 p.m.	Back to the Moon for Good
5:00 p.m.	Discovery Place Nature closes

Monday, January 16 - special holiday opening

9:00 a.m.	Discovery Place Nature opens
10:00 a.m.	Winter Sky
Noon	Back to the Moon for Good
1:00 p.m.	Winter Sky
3:00 p.m.	Back to the Moon for Good
4:00 p.m.	Discovery Place Nature closes

Normal Operating Show Schedule (January - May 2017)

MONDAYS	TUESDAYS - FRIDAYS	SATURDAYS	SUNDAYS
Closed	1:00 p.m.	10:00 a.m.	12:30 p.m.
	3:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	1:30 p.m.
		3:30 p.m.	3:30 p.m.

A History of Discovery Place Planetariums

- 1946** Discovery Place Nature is founded by a group of dedicated citizens and opens in a one-room house on Cecil Street.
- 1951** Through a unique public-private partnership with the parks commission, a permanent home for Discovery Place Nature is constructed on a plot adjacent to Freedom Park.
- 1964** A \$56,000 planetarium addition was built to house a small star ball planetarium projector that was donated to the Museum. The new wing is named the Spitz Planetarium. Professional astronomer Charlotte Kelly is named as Discovery Place Nature's first planetarium director. Most local patrons know her as "the star lady" of Charlotte.
- 1969** Charlotte Kelly retires from Discovery Place Nature and the planetarium is renamed The Charlotte A. Kelly Planetarium in her honor.
- 1980** The star ball planetarium projector is decommissioned at Discovery Place Nature.
- 1995** Discovery Place Science offers a new planetarium experience with more seating and wider visibility in the new Charlotte Observer IMAX Dome Theatre. Discovery Place Nature's planetarium dome is transformed into The Nature Dome to house Grandpa Tree, a new animatronic talking tree that shares stories with children about local wildlife.
- 2001** Discovery Place Science discontinues planetarium shows due to dwindling public interest. Discovery Place still offers the StarLab, an inflatable and portable planetarium offering, for Outreach educational programs.
- 2016** Grandpa Tree retires from Discovery Place Nature and plans are made to retrofit The Nature Dome back into a planetarium.
- 2017** Discovery Place Nature opens a new digital planetarium in the refurbished Nature Dome.



What's Happening In The Sky in 2017

August 21 - Total Solar Eclipse

On August 21, 2017, many Americans from Oregon to South Carolina will get to witness a total solar eclipse - the point where the Moon covers the entire disk of the Sun. While partial solar eclipses are fairly regular, a total solar eclipse is rarely seen in the United States. Charlotte, NC is just on the outskirts of the eclipse's path, so only a tiny sliver of the sun will peak from behind the moon, with maximum coverage happening around 2:40 p.m. on August 21. Remember - don't stare directly into the sun! There are safe ways to watch a solar eclipse with special protective eye gear and tools like pinhole projections.

What's Happening In The Sky in January?

January 4

Earth at Perihelion: Earth will be at perihelion, the closest point to the sun in our yearly orbit, at 91,404,322 miles away. Charlotte, NC will reach perihelion at 9:17 a.m. The word "perihelion" comes from ancient Greek, where peri means close and helios means the Sun.

January 12

Full Moon: Each month, the moon reaches its fullest lunar phase where the whole surface of the moon is illuminated by the sun and seen from Earth. Each full moon has a name that dates back to early Native American tribes that kept track of the seasons by giving specific names to each recurring full Moon. This month's moon is the Wolf Moon.

The Wolf Moon was named for the nearby wolf packs that would howl hungrily outside of Native American villages each January. This moon is also sometimes called the Old Moon and the Moon After Yule.

January 12

Venus at Sunset: Venus, the second planet from the sun, will be very visible in the western sky shortly after sunset. This position is called the Greatest Eastern Elongation, where Venus is at its highest point above the horizon in the evening sky at about 47 degrees away from the Sun.

January 19 - Mercury at Sunrise: Mercury, the closest planet to the sun, will be very visible in the eastern sky just before sunrise. This position is called the Greatest Western Elongation, where Mercury is at its highest point above the horizon in the morning sky at about 24 degrees away from the Sun.



Film Overview

Seasonal Stargazing: Winter Sky

Explore our night sky as never before! Winter Sky will take you on a trip through the night sky with stories, constellations, star patterns, galaxies and nebulae, showing the newest discoveries in the night sky during the winter months. Explore constellations such as Canis Major, Cassiopeia and Orion, while identifying

Back to the Moon for Good

Immerse yourself in a race to return to the Moon 40 years after the historic Apollo landings. See how a competition among privately funded international teams is ushering in a new era of lunar exploration. Learn about the Moon's resources and discover what humanity's future on the Moon might hold. Narrated by Tim Allen, the award-winning 24-minute Google Lunar XPRIZE full-dome planetarium show, Back To The Moon For Good, chronicles teams around the world competing for the largest international incentivized prize in history, by landing a robotic spacecraft on the Moon. To win the \$30 million Google Lunar XPRIZE, a team must land a robotic spacecraft on the Moon, navigate 500 meters over the lunar surface, and send video, images and data back to Earth. This global competition is designed to spark imagination and inspire a renewed commitment to space exploration, not by governments or countries - but by the citizens of the world.

Title: Back To The Moon For Good

Format: Full-dome Planetarium Show

Production of: XPRIZE Foundation

Produced by: NSC Creative

Distributed by: NSC Creative

Major Funding: Google

Music: Rhian Sheehan

Writer: Ryan Wyatt

Narrator: Tim Allen

Executive Producers: Robert K. Weiss and Alexandra Hall

Show Producer: Max Crow

Show Director: Paul Mowbray

Show Length: 25 minutes

International Release Date: November 2013

Website: <https://www.googlelunarxprize.org/domeshow>



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