



Steward Observatory Newsletter

March News



Sharper image: U of A-built instrument reveals pictures of 'baby planets'

The instrument, dubbed Magellan Adaptive Optics Xtreme, or MagAO-X, observed two young planets orbiting PDS 70, a very young 5 million-year-old star in the constellation Centaurus, 370 light-years from Earth.

"This is a really great breakthrough in technology," said **Laird Close**, a professor of astronomy at **Steward Observatory** in the U of A **College of Science** adding that the images surpass the resolution of space telescopes, including the 2.4-meter Hubble Space Telescope and the James Webb Space Telescope. [Learn more](#)



Steward Observatory astronomer Erika Hamden named to Arizona Space Commission

University of Arizona astronomer [Erika Hamden](#) will serve as an inaugural member of the Arizona Space Commission, where she will advise Gov. Katie Hobbs in advancing Arizona's role in aerospace and space sciences.

"Dr. Hamden is an admirable scientist, communicator and ambassador for astronomy," said University of Arizona President Suresh Garimella. [Learn more](#)



Peter Behroozi ranked among most cited researchers in the world

Peter Behroozi, an associate professor works in [computational astrophysics](#). His research involves simulating universes for millions of physical models. He uses computational statistics to study the connections between dark matter halo assembly, galaxy formation and the growth of supermassive black holes.

His research is specifically effective for its ability to combine disparate observations into a consistent model of the universe. Behroozi's work has been cited 15,234 throughout his career, making him one of the most highly cited researchers in his field. [Learn more](#)



Highest Presidential Honor Bestowed on Steward Observatory Astronomers, Highlighting the Department's Preeminence in Theory, Data and Computation

Earlier this month, Steward Observatory professors **Gurtina Besla** and **Kaitlin Kratter** both received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE)—they are two of only 400 scientists and engineers across the nation honored by former President Biden for their innovative research.

[Learn more](#)



Astronomy has lost one of its most passionate chasers of total solar eclipses with the passing of astronomer Glenn Schneider

Astronomy lost one of its most passionate chasers of total solar eclipses with the passing of astronomer Glenn Schneider on February 5th. He succumbed to Lewy body dementia, a progressive brain disorder, at age 69. [Learn more](#)

Things to do!



March 6 Starts this years exciting College of Science Lecture Series!

Doors open at Centennial Hall at 6:15 p.m. The lecture presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. The lectures will be livestreamed and recorded on YouTube. [More information](#)

The last lecture will be **March 27** with Astronomy's Daniel Apai and Chris Impey - *Cosmic Conversations: Communicating with the Unknown*



Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association's Annual Tucson Astronomy Festival - Saturday March 22

Come join in the fun!

Location Brandi Fenton Memorial Park. 3 PM - 9 PM

Telescopes will be out from 3 pm to 6:30 pm for solar viewing and then again from 7:30pm to 9pm for evening viewing. [More information](#)

Astronomy Public Outreach Programs

Public Evening Lecture Series

Spring Semester 2025

Friday, March 7

The Accelerating, Expanding Universe: Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and Einstein's Cosmological Constant

Dr. Bharat Ratra, Kansas State University

This lecture is in collaboration with Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association (TAAA)

Monday, March 17

Using Tree Ring Data to Find Solar Explosions

Dr. Irina Panyushkina, Laboratory of Tree Ring Research

Monday, March 31

Science with Extremely Large Telescopes: Direct Imaging of Active Galactic Nuclei

Dr. Jacob Isbell, Steward Observatory

Monday, April 14

The Explosive Life of Massive Stellar Binaries

Dr. Mathieu Renzo, Steward Observatory

Location: Steward Observatory Lecture Hall N210

Doors open at 7:00 pm and Lectures begin at 7:30 pm MST

Nearest parking 2nd Street or Cherry Ave Garage

Telescope viewing follows at 8:30 PM - Weather Permitting

Watch via **ZOOM** link <https://arizona.zoom.us/j/4470189357>

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If you miss a lecture -- [view the video here](#)

Monday, February 17

[\*Volcanoes, Coronae, and the Dynamic Surface of Venus\*](#)

Dr. Wesley Tucker, Lunar & Planetary Laboratory

Monday, February 3

[\*The Discovery of Pulsars: A Guide to Unidentified Blinking Objects\*](#)

Maria Mutz, Dept. of Physics

[Astronomy Colloquia](#)

### **Space Drafts: Astronomy Lectures**

The events listed above are off campus astronomy activities we want you to be aware of and enjoy, if interested. These events are not part of the Department of Astronomy or Steward Observatory public outreach. [Learn more](#)

### **Public Mirror Lab Tours**

#### **Tickets are now available through June 2025**

This 90-minute tour provides a unique opportunity to learn how we produce the largest (8.4 meters / 27ft)

and most advanced telescope mirrors in the world. We hope to see you soon! [More information](#)

### **Mt Lemmon SkyNights StarGazing Program.**

SkyNights is a 5 hour astronomy program on the summit of Mt. Lemmon. Your experience begins with a scenic drive up this Sky Island mountain which is a unique trip by its self. This will be followed by spectacular sunset phenomenon and then on to stargazing using the Shulman 32" and Phillips 24" telescopes which are the largest public viewing telescopes in

southern Arizona. No prior astronomical knowledge is required—just bring your enthusiasm and prepare to be amazed! This is a fun program for curious minds aged 7 and up. Come discover the wonders of the Universe with us!

[More information](#)

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### Friends of Steward Observatory



Image credit: SH2 106 also known as the **Celestial Snow Angel**, is an emission nebula and a star formation region in the constellation Cygnus. By Adam Block, Mt. Lemmon SkyCenter

[Your donation](#) provides astronomy students the chance to grow their skills, experience discovery and build the confidence necessary to take on the challenging problems of the future. These opportunities are priceless, but providing them requires funding.

Our students are extremely grateful for your investment in Astronomy.

To a student, every dollar is important. Your donation goes directly to help support our innovative students in the form of scholarships and summer research project needs. Students are working on cutting-edge research to enhance our knowledge and understanding of the universe.

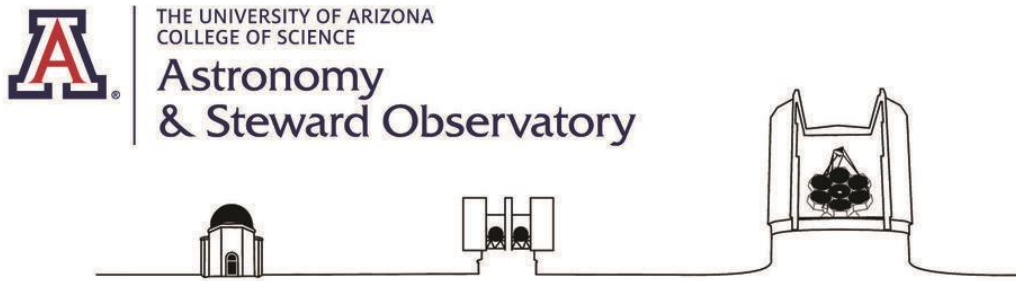
These students are the next-generation of scientists who will be making the great discoveries in the future. Student success builds our world-class astronomy program that continues to stand out from our peers and expands Arizona's

research horizons.

**Your donation is tax deductible!**

**Supporting the next-generation of science and discovery is the best reward.**

[Learn more](#)



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[Have a Friend Sign up For Our Monthly Astronomy Newsletter](#)

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For more information or questions contact:

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