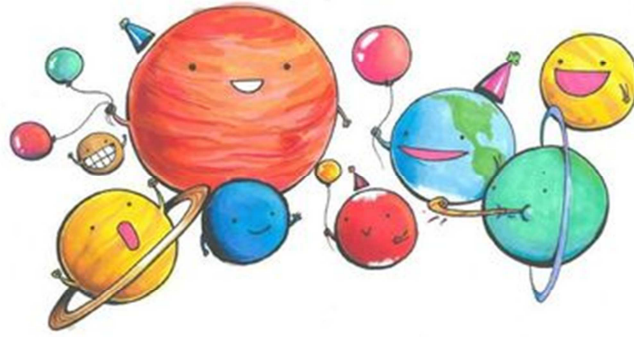




**A QUICK REFERENCE
ON STAR PARTY
ETIQUETTE**

HOW DO YOU ORGANIZE
A SPACE PARTY ?



YOU PLANET.

md

How can I become involved in attending star parties?

Join the MHAA Meet Up Group! (All activities and star parties are set up through there and you can easily RSVP through the website) To be accounted for during star parties your vehicle license plate is required upon RSVP.

What is it like to attend a star party?

It is best to arrive before sunset to the designated location. This allows time for safe parking, people to set up their telescopes, and everyone to get situated.

You are not required to bring a telescope, but if you have one, or ordinary binoculars bring them. Someone will probably be willing to help you set up your telescope if you are a first-timer.

If you are new, introduce yourself, and ask if there are club officers or someone in charge. They can probably arrange for a sky tour to orient you to the night sky. Amateur astronomers are a friendly lot and most are eager to share their knowledge, eager to help you with your equipment and eager to have you look through their telescope. No need to be shy!!!!

Park Based on your Observing Plan!!!

If you are unable to get to the location before dark, it is important you are considerate of others with your headlights. Turn off your headlights and interior lights.

You should park your vehicle facing towards the exit, to avoid having to backup using backup lights. If you plan on leaving early, you should park close to the exit. If you come to a star party without a telescope park some distance away from the observing site to save room for those with heavy equipment to carry.

Once it is dark enough there is extreme viewing taking place!!! This is when some rules come into play...

1. No white lights after dusk (you can use a red flashlight)

It can take about 30 minutes for the eye to truly become dark adapted and that it can be destroyed by a single flash of light.

One can use nail polish or automobile taillight repair tape (several layers) to make a suitable light.

Be especially careful, with even dim red light around astrophotographers. You do not want to ruin a photograph that may take hours to make. You can usually identify them by 1) massive tripods, 2) attached laptop computers, and 3) enough wiring attached to their telescopes and equipment to consume the entire yearly copper output of Bolivia.

No flash photography. Even a cell phone may use a white light for range finding.

2. Never touch anyone else's equipment without permission

This kind of discussion and chit-chat is expected at star parties, particularly from visitors; don't feel that you are imposing on them. Most star party attendees will "make the rounds" at least once during the night to see what others are looking at and what kind of equipment they brought; feel free to join in.

A few folk may be involved with intensive or time-critical observations, and may indicate they do not wish to be bothered. Please be respectful of their wishes. Once the observing is underway, feel free to go from scope to scope and talk with everyone. They'll be more than happy to let you look through their scopes, and will also be glad to talk about the telescope, what they're looking at and anything else that interests you.

3. Be safe (with walking around & with your equipment)

Keep pets away from the equipment. Even the best trained pet can become distracted and accidentally knock over equipment. Best to leave your pets at home.

4. Avoid loud and boisterous behavior. (Star-gazing is a quiet, peaceful activity. So keep noise to a minimum)

Although many people like to have music while they observe, many do not, or their tastes may be different from yours. You may be asked to turn music off if it annoys others.

5. Dress properly! (bring enough warm clothes)

Plan on it being 20 degrees colder than indicated. Also bring warm beverages and snacks. Alcoholic beverages are not recommended, as they interfere with your ability to observe.

6. Be responsible (for your equipment, for your guests, and for your behavior)

We welcome young people to star parties. A star party may be just the sort of event the lights a young person's interest in astronomy and science. Children below third grade usually cannot see anything through a telescope due to a number of factors, and will often get cranky past their bedtime. You may want to bring a sleeping bag so they can sleep in the car. Children should be strictly supervised at all times.

If you need to smoke then please do so away from the viewing equipment and others. Just because you're outdoors doesn't mean your smoke isn't annoying. Remember smoke sticks to glass.

Finally, lest you think we're all a bunch of lawyers, here are a few more (contributed by Jay Freeman):

Flame throwers and fifty-caliber stray light eliminators should be equipped with glare shields. Owners of LX-200s must offer coffee to passers-by who mistake the noise of their slewing motors for that of an espresso machine. Hack saws should be checked at the door. (If you cannot find the door, please remain outside of it.) Bears have right of first refusal on anyone's night lunch, except when the observer is very hungry. Abandoned cookies should not be presumed up for grabs, unless nobody is looking. Refrain from pointing out the failings of your neighbor's telescope until your own optics are safely covered.

You can check us out at:

<http://www.meetup.com/mhastro/>

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/mhastro/info>