



\$4-Million, State-of-the-Art Vanderbilt Planetarium Reopens to Public on March 15

Audiences Will See Astonishing NASA Imagery, New Programs

CENTERPORT, NY (January 30, 2013) – The Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum will reopen its renovated, \$4-million planetarium to the public on Friday, March 15, with all-new shows at 8:00 and 9:00 p.m. A private reception for donors and supporters will be held on Thursday, March 14. The planetarium’s winter-spring schedule features shows on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. (See admission prices and show schedule below.)

Audiences will see not only new shows produced by planetariums in Britain, China and the United States, but also extraordinary NASA imagery recorded by the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter and other satellites. The ultra-high-definition video can take the audience on jaw-dropping journeys to the outer reaches of the Universe.

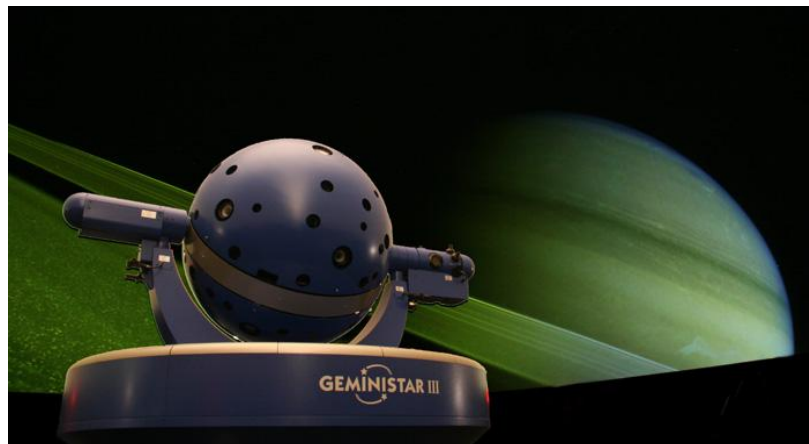


Photo by Evan Reinheimer

The planetarium console operator is effectively the pilot and controls the speed and direction of each flight:

Konica Minolta GeminiStar III system projects an image of Saturn onto Planetarium dome

- On one flight, Earth can be seen from faraway in space – with the bright, concentrated lights of America’s huge metropolitan regions clearly visible. Then the trip can take the audience to Long Island or to anywhere else on the planet.
- One journey can take viewers from high above Mars down to the lunar surface, to a closeup of a lunar-exploration vehicle, then around the vehicle.
- Three new shows (with others to debut during the coming year) will appeal to a range of ages, from young children to adults. (See details below.) These shows, too, take the audience on breathtaking flights to the stars.

The Vanderbilt Planetarium's advanced Konica Minolta GeminiStar III system – including the Infinium-L star projector, full-dome video and surround-sound – offers audiences a spectacular, immersive experience.

“We're very excited,” said Ronald Beattie, president of the Vanderbilt's Board of Trustees. “It's a new day at the Vanderbilt – our planetarium is now one of the finest and most advanced in the country. Visitors will be amazed at the imagery produced by cutting-edge technology. Our world-class planetarium will become a must-visit destination for local residents and regional visitors.

“The best part is that Long Islanders who grew up visiting the Vanderbilt Planetarium with their science classes and scout troops will now have a completely fresh and thrilling adventure. And many will be bringing their children or grandchildren for the first time.”

Suffolk County provided \$3.9-million in financing. The most significant private support– a gift of \$100,000 – came from William Rogers, a longtime member of the Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees, and his wife, Mollie Rogers.

“We are especially grateful to Bill and Mollie Rogers,” said Lance Reinheimer, interim executive director of the Vanderbilt. “They not only passionately support the museum and its education programs, but also believe strongly in its future and its enduring value to Long Island.” The planetarium theater is named the William and Mollie Rogers Theater.

Suffolk County built the planetarium in 1971 as a way to produce operating income to supplement the museum's original Vanderbilt trust fund. The planetarium – also a testimony to William K. Vanderbilt II's keen interest in science and astronomy and his use of celestial navigation while traveling the oceans – coincides with the science-education aspect of the museum's mission.

In addition to technological and infrastructural improvements, enhancements include ergonomically designed seating, new carpeting, an on-line digital ticketing and reservation system, and a refurbished museum gift shop. The Vanderbilt's goal for the renewed facility is to substantially increase attendance and admissions revenue.

The renovation design allows the star projector to retract out of audience sight lines. This feature, along with removable rows of seating, will provide flexibility for the Rogers Theater to be a venue for lectures, performing arts and large-group meetings. Flexible theater space will allow the museum to expand its audiences, visibility and regional appeal, and will broaden its ability to generate income.

Planetarium Show Schedule – Spring 2013

March 15 – April 14

Friday Evening

8:00 – Long Island Skies; 9:00 – Stars

Observatory – Viewing of the night sky (weather permitting) on Friday only, 9:00-10:00 (free with show ticket; \$3.00 without show ticket)

Saturday

12:00 – One World, One Sky; 1:00 – Solar System Odyssey; 2:00 – Stars; 3:00 – One World, One Sky; 4:00 – Solar System Odyssey

Saturday Evening

8:00 – Solar System Odyssey; 9:00 – Stars

Sunday

12:00 – One World, One Sky; 1:00 – Solar System Odyssey; 2:00 – Stars; 3:00 – One World, One Sky; 4:00 – Solar System Odyssey

Planetarium Schedule – Spring 2013

April 15 – June 16: The planetarium will be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Shows on Friday, 8:00, 9:00 p.m.; Saturday, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 8:00, 9:00 p.m.; Sunday 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00. The planetarium is closed *Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday*.

Planetarium Schedule – Summer 2013

June 17 – Labor Day, September 2: The planetarium will be open Tuesday through Sunday, with shows at 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00 and 4:00, in addition to Friday and Saturday evening shows at 8:00 and 9:00. *The planetarium will be closed on Monday.*

Planetarium Programs

The Vanderbilt Planetarium features all-new programming for children, adults and families. Additional new shows from Sky-Skan, a noted programming creator, will debut throughout the planetarium's inaugural year. Here are details on the planetarium's current new shows:

Stars

(Adults and families)

Every star has a story. Some are as old as time, faint and almost forgotten. Others burn bright and end their lives in powerful explosions. New stars are created every day, born of vast clouds of gas and dust. Through every phase of their existence, stars release the energy that powers the Universe. Journey to the farthest reaches of the galaxy and experience both the awesome beauty and destructive power of *Stars*.

The stunning animation – highlighted by astronauts, spacecraft, telescopes, nebulae, clusters, and more – was created at the National Space Centre in Leicester, England, produced by Sudekum Planetarium and NSC Creative, and narrated by actor Mark Hamill. The Nashville Symphony Orchestra performed part of the soundtrack.

One World, One Sky

(Children)

Elmo and Big Bird live in the United States and Hu Hu Zhu lives far away in China, but they discovered that they see the same stars at night. Produced by Sesame Workshop, the Beijing and Adler planetariums, and Liberty Science Center. Major funding was provided by the National Science Foundation.

Solar System Odyssey

(Age 10 and older)

Take a futuristic journey through the Solar System. With Earth's resources being rapidly depleted, a tycoon sends hero Jack Larson on a mission to discover a new home to colonize. This character-driven show is for middle-school field trip groups and aligns with science curriculum objectives. This is an original production of the University of North Carolina Morehead Planetarium and Science Center. Primary grant funding was provided by NASA.

Long Island Skies

This live presentation for the whole family, developed by the Vanderbilt Planetarium staff, uses the star projector to its fullest capabilities. The program introduces the brilliant night sky that can be

seen on Long Island from everyone's backyard, including seasonal constellations, stars and deep-sky objects. Following the program, and weather permitting, the planetarium staff will open the Observatory. To enhance what they have just learned, visitors can look through the 16-inch Cassegrain telescope to observe the objects discussed during the show.

Planetarium Admission

During the day, visitors to the Planetarium pay general museum admission (\$7 for adults, \$6 for students with IDs and seniors 62 and older, and \$3 for children 12 and under), plus \$5 each for a Planetarium show. Since the museum is closed in the evening, no general museum admission is charged – visitors pay only for Planetarium show tickets: \$9 for adults, \$8 for students with IDs and seniors 62 and older, and \$7 for children 12 and under.