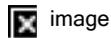


Media Relations

August 21, 2013

Author Dava Sobel Headlines New England Fall Astronomy at UNH Sept. 13-14



Award-winning author and playwright Dava Sobel delivers the keynote address at the New England Fall Astronomy Festival at the University of New Hampshire Friday, Sept. 13, 2013. Credit: Mia Berg.

DURHAM, N.H. – Award-winning author and playwright Dava Sobel will kick off the third New England Fall Astronomy Festival at the University of New Hampshire Friday, Sept. 13, 2013. Sobel, author of “The Planets,” “Galileo’s Daughter” and “Longitude,” will deliver a free keynote lecture on the subject of her latest book and play, “A More Perfect Heaven: How Copernicus Revolutionized the Cosmos,” at 7:15 p.m. on the grounds of the UNH Observatory (Spinney Lane in Durham, on the western edge of campus).

The festival, hosted by the UNH Physics Department in conjunction with the New Hampshire Astronomical Society and other astronomy clubs throughout the region, continues through Saturday evening, Sept. 14 with star-gazing, astronomy-related activities, and science talks geared to the public. The festival is free and open to all, with many activities targeted to children and families.

“After all the amazing success and fun we’ve had with the festival the past two years, we couldn’t stop,” says event organizer and UNH Observatory manager Ian Cohen, a Ph.D. student in physics at UNH. “We’re ecstatic to have Dava Sobel join us this year.”

“The entire astronomical community from throughout New England drives this event, helping us introduce astronomy to families around the region,” adds John Gianforte, an instructor of astronomy at UNH and lecturer at Granite State College and an organizer of the festival.

Sobel will sign books following her talk Friday night, then participants can stay to star-gaze at the UNH Observatory and with telescopes provided by the region’s dedicated amateur astronomers.

NEFAF gates open at 10 a.m. Saturday for a day of family astronomy-related activities. Sobel will be on hand throughout the day, and UNH researchers and astronomy experts will discuss a range of astronomy topics of particular interest to young scientists. Activities include hands-on science, astronomy games, and model rocket building and launching (participants can buy and create their own rockets from FlisKits). Star-gazing resumes Saturday evening, and meals and snacks will be available for purchase both days.

Patrons can meet Sobel at a fundraising reception Friday evening (5:30 – 7 p.m.) at the Elliott Alumni Center on campus. For information and tickets, which cost \$50 each or \$80 per couple and include hors d’oeuvres, beer, wine, and reserved seating for her talk, go to <http://nefaf2013reception.eventbrite.com/>

More details and program updates are at physics.unh.edu/observatory/NEFAF or on the festival's Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/NEFAF.UNH>).

In addition to the UNH physics department and the New Hampshire Astronomical Society, the New England Fall Astronomy Festival is sponsored by the Offices of the President at UNH, the Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans and Space at UNH, the NH Space Grant Consortium, BAE Systems, Beswick Engineering, Silverttech, Inc., Exeter Events and Tents, and Science Distance Learning.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

Photographs available to download:

<http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2013/08/images/miaberg'sdavasobel-9265.jpeg>

Caption: Award-winning author and playwright Dava Sobel delivers the keynote address at the New England Fall Astronomy Festival at the University of New Hampshire Friday, Sept. 13, 2013.

Credit: Mia Berg

<http://unh.edu/news/releases/2012/sept/astronomy.jpg>

Caption: At the New England Fall Astronomy Festival at UNH, New Hampshire Astronomical Society members bring a fleet of telescopes to introduce astronomers of all ages to observing the sun and stars. Inside the dome is the Observatory's 14-inch reflector. Credit: Kristi Donohue, EOS.

http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2013/08/images/nefaf_2012_e_image_by_loni_anderson-3378.jpg

Caption: A young astronomer-to-be looks at the Sun through a solar telescope at the 2012 New England Fall Astronomy Festival. Credit: Loni Anderson.

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