

Detecting Near Earth Objects with ATLAS: the Asteroid Terrestrial Impact Last Alert System

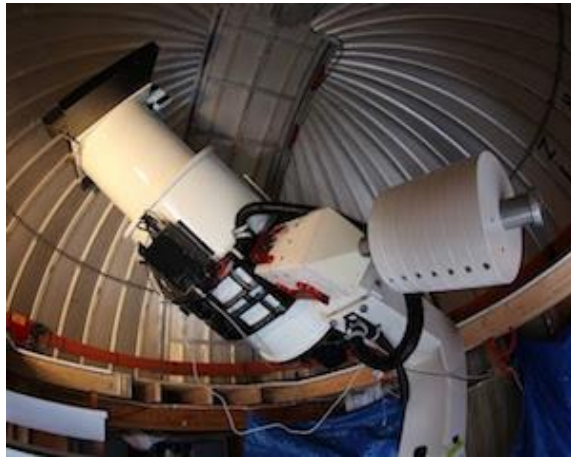
Bill Haddon, PhD, FOTO President

Taylor Observatory, Saturday, Feb 24, 2018 7:30PM

7:30 LECTURE : Bill Haddon

8:30 PLANETARIUM: Full Dome Show “Firefall” followed by tutorial on constellations Orion, the Hunter and Lepus, the Rabbit. Eduardo Alatorre

9:00-10:30 TELESCOPE VIEWING, emphasizing Orion and Lepus (Taylor staff)



Abstract: Objects passing near Earth from “outer space”, whether comets, asteroids or meteors, have fascinated and often frightened earth’s residents for millennia. Nearly all of these Near Earth Objects (NEO’s) originate in the solar system, but in 2017 astronomers detected, for the first time, an object that originated elsewhere in our Milky Way galaxy. Recent observations of NEO’s are utilizing an advanced detection system in Hawaii called the Asteroid Terrestrial-impact Last Alert System (ATLAS). The mission of ATLAS is to protect or at least warn earthlings of potentially damaging impacts such as the Chelyabinsk meteor impact in Russia in 2013, which injured 1500 residents. Had ATLAS been operational, even this relatively small 20m diameter asteroid could have been detected a day in advance of its impact in Russia. As a default of its asteroid observations, ATLAS has already made first sightings of several comets. ATLAS is a NASA-funded resource and ATLAS data are available to the public at <https://fallingstar.com>

Telescope observing: In clear weather we’ll enjoy telescopic views of the constellations Orion and Lepus, possibly viewing Hind’s Crimson Star and other stellar delights on the new Taylor Observatory Star Deck.

Location: Taylor Observatory, 5725 Oak Hills Lane, Kelseyville, CA 95451.

Admission: \$5.00 adults, free to Lake Co. K-12 students. Additional donations in support of Lake County STEM education are encouraged. Visit “Friends of Taylor Observatory” on Facebook. Taylor Observatory phone (707) 262-4121