



COLLEGE OF SCIENCE
George Mason University®

Co-hosted with



George Mason Space Day 2025

EXPLORING OUR GALAXY AND BEYOND

Saturday, September 20 • 1 to 7 p.m.
Johnson Center, Dewberry Hall, Fairfax, VA

**Pre-registered check-in and on site
registration opens at 12:30 p.m.**

Event Schedule:
science.gmu.edu/MasonSpaceDay

George Mason Space Day • September 20, 2025

Johnson Center, Dewberry Hall

- 12:30 p.m. **Doors open for Opening Remarks, Astronaut Keynote**
(Seats are on a first-come, first-served basis.) Please be seated in Dewberry Hall by 1 p.m.
- 1 p.m. **Opening remarks: Cody W. Edwards, College of Science Dean**
Gabriele Belle, Associate Professor, Physics and Astronomy
- 1:15 p.m. **Keynote: "The Road to Space," Captain Robert L. "Hoot" Gibson, USN, Retired Astronaut**
A meet and greet will take place in the Gold room immediately following Captain Robert L. "Hoot" Gibson's talk.*Exit the right side of Dewberry Hall where a queue will form for all interested in autographs and photos with the astronaut.*

Lightning Talks • Johnson Center Cinema

Each talk will provide a high level overview about their noted topic followed by brief audience Q&A. Pick and choose your lectures of interest and be sure to visit our vendors and participating organizations. See opposite page for the full list. For your convenience, 10-minute breaks are scheduled throughout the Lightning Talks.

- 2:35 p.m. **Keynote: "A Journey Through the Stars - A Message from the Universe"**
Eliad Peretz, Landolt Mission Deputy Principal Investigator;
Heliophysics Division at Goddard Space Flight Center
- 3:20 p.m. **"Citizen Science"** Rob Parks, Director of George Mason Observatory
Assistant Professor, Physics and Astronomy, College of Science
- 3:40 p.m. **"Light Pollution Reconsidered"** Eileen Kraigie, Founder of Dark Sky Friends and Tom Reinert,
Board Member & Former President, International Dark-Sky Association
- 4 p.m. Break
- 4:10 p.m. **"The Language of the Stars"** Anamaria Berea,
Associate Professor, Computational and Data Sciences, College of Science
- 4:30 p.m. **"How can AI help us get to Mars?"** Steve Dam, President and Founder of SPEC Innovations
- 4:50 p.m. **"Illuminating the Dark (Matter) with Computer Simulations"**
Ferah Munshi, Assistant Professor, Physics and Astronomy, College of Science
- 5:10 p.m. Break
- 5:20 p.m. **"Preparing For Flight: The NASA Landolt Mission at Mason"**
Peter Plavchan, Landolt Mission Principal Investigator;
Professor, Physics and Astronomy, College of Science
- 5:40 p.m. **"Space Weather Impacts on Electric Power Grid"**
Bob Weigel, Professor, Physics and Astronomy, College of Science
- 6 p.m. **"Pioneering High School Liquid Fuel Rocketry"** Caelus Rocketry
- 6:20 p.m. **"Leadership in the Modern Space Age Will Not Survive the Political Stalemate"**
Hina Kazmi, Adjunct Faculty, Schar School of Policy and Government
- 6:40 p.m. **Closing and raffle drawing**
All registered attendees need to be present to receive a prize and will receive a raffle ticket at the door for a chance to win one of several available prizes (i.e. signed mission patch by Captain Robert L. "Hoot" Gibson, new telescope, books about astronomy and sky viewing, and more.) Tickets will be drawn after the last speakers at approximately 6:40 p.m.

A special thanks to our committee:

Gabriele Belle, (Chair), S Falgiano, Natasha Gilliam, Li Ping Hsiao, Audrey Kelaher, (Co-Chair)
Zander Leon, Tracy Mason, (Co-Chair), Peter Pachowicz, Peter Plavchan, Rob Parks (Co-Chair),
Laura M Powers, Steven Robeson, Franklin Van Valkenburg

George Mason Space Day • Exhibit and Activities (by floor)

Throughout the day, exhibits will be open in the Dewberry Hall lower-level lobby.

On the lower level, participants can sign up in advance at registration for walking tours of the George Mason Observatory, a tour of the Radio Dish, or to reserve a spot at our Mason Planetarium shows. The tour registration desk is located to the right of the main registration desk.

Outside Activities • Johnson Center South Plaza *(weather permitting)*

Bottle rocket launches and other activities

3 to 7 p.m.

Johnson Center Outside South Plaza

Sun viewing with telescope

3 to 7 p.m.

Johnson Center Outside South Plaza

Lower-Level • Johnson Center

Vendors and Exhibits | 1 to 7 p.m.

Johnson Center, Dewberry Hall Lobby

Visit participating organizations for information, games, and giveaways. *(Vendor Listing below).*

Lightning Talks | 2:35 to 7 p.m.

Johnson Center Cinema

Mason Observatory Tours | 3 to 7 p.m.

Meet at Lower Level Johnson Center,

by the George Mason Radio Station

(Tours start every 20 minutes and last 25 minutes.)

Paper Plane Contest | 3 to 7 p.m.

George Mason Observatory Showcase *(link up with a George Mason Observatory tour for guidance to the showcase)*

Radio Dish Tours | 3 to 7 p.m.

Meet at Lower Level Johnson Center,
by the George Mason Radio Station

(Tours start every 40 minutes and last 30 minutes.)

Tours and the Planetarium have a limited number of timed tickets. They fill up quickly so plan your day accordingly.

First Floor

Activities for the kids | 3 to 7 p.m.

Johnson Center Atrium

- Angular Momentum Stool
- Arts and Crafts
- Gravity Table
- Light Pollution
- Spectral Tubes

Mason Planetarium Shows | 3 to 7 p.m.

Johnson Center Atrium *(Shows will start every 20 minutes and last 15 minutes.)*

Where to Eat?

During the event, food will be available for purchase at several Johnson Center and other eateries.

These include:

Chipotle	10:45 a.m. to 10 p.m.
FLIP Kitchen	11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Halal Guys	11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Ike's Dining Hall	Open 24/7
Market-Johnson Center	11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Panera Bread	11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
South Dining Hall	8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Vendors and Participating Organizations

Because Science
Caelus Rocketry
College of Engineering and Computing
College of Science
Dark Sky Friends
Fairfax County Park Authority
Flight Adventure Park
Friends of the Observatory
George Mason AIAA Chapter
George Mason Chemistry Club
George Mason Department of Physics and Astronomy
George Mason Engineering

George Mason Planetary Geology
George Mason Physics and Astronomy Society
George Mason Space Weather Group
High Power Rocketry
Northern Virginia Astronomy Club (NOVAC)
Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation
Northrop Grumman
Smithsonian Associates
Smithsonian Explainers Program
SPEC Innovations
ZWO

Event Map & Parking



Children and minors in attendance: All minors MUST be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian at all times.

Our Sponsors

Interstellar Sponsors (\$5,000)

Dark Sky Friends
DarkSky NOVA
Northrop Grumman

Interplanetary Sponsor (\$3,000)

BAE Systems

Cis-Lunar Sponsor (\$1,000)

Northern Virginia Astronomy Club (NOVAC)
ZWO



Share your feedback on George Mason Space Day 2025

Whether you attended today's event, volunteered your time, were a community or university partner, or supported our event at any level, please let us know what you enjoyed and what we can improve.

Thank you for joining us. See you next year for the
Fifth Annual George Mason Space Day on
Saturday, September 26, 2026.