Twenty Years of Experience With the University of Arkansas Planetarium

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20 Years of Experience With the University of Arkansas Planetarium

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ABSTRACT

The Model A-1 Spitz planetarium was placed in operation at the University of Arkansas in 1954. It was moved to its present location in 1972 and has continued to have a much expanded use. More than 8,000 persons attended demonstrations between 1 August 1972 and 31 March 1974. Approximately one third of these were University students in classes and laboratories; the remaining two thirds were accounted for by school and other youth groups and the public demonstrations.

The four Christmas Programs in December 1972 and December 1973 were recent high points in the public demonstrations. The early morning planetarium field trips operated 10 November 1973 and 8 December 1973 to view the Comet Kohoutek and the transit of Mercury drew more than 200 people to the first session and at least 50 to the second.

Our experience at the University of Arkansas, verified by other experience nationwide, has proved the effectiveness of the device as a teaching aid in astronomy and related sciences. Furthermore, we have verified the very steady and genuine interest which the planetarium engenders among school groups and public groups.

LITERATURE CITED


Table I. University of Arkansas Planetarium Attendance, 1969-71, 1972-74

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<td>University laboratory students</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>1269</td>
<td>1242</td>
<td>1230</td>
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<tr>
<td>School &amp; youth groups</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>1290</td>
<td>1503</td>
<td>2032</td>
<td>2040</td>
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<td>Public demonstrations</td>
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<td>966</td>
<td>1040</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Approx. 300</td>
<td>Approx. 1443</td>
<td>3738</td>
<td>4314</td>
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</table>

* Planetarium not in operation 1971-72.
* 1 July 1973 to 31 March 1974 only.
* Elementary students account for about 55% of this group or more than 20% of the total, and many children bring their parents to the public demonstrations later.