

- [Home](#)
- [Blog » »](#)
- [Projects » »](#)
- [Chuck Stuff » »](#)
- [Contact](#)

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[Home](#) > [Blog](#) > Life Around the Smallest Stars

Blog

Life Around the Smallest Stars

Posted by admin on April 15, 2014



The M-dwarf Opportunity

Recent results from NASA's Kepler space mission show that the smallest stars in the universe, the so-called M-dwarfs, have a propensity to form planets similar in size to the Earth. At the regular meeting of the [Michiana Astronomical Society Inc.](#) (MAS) on Monday, April 21, 2014, astronomer [Justin Crepp](#) will explain why M-dwarfs provide a unique opportunity for detecting terrestrial planets located in the habitable zone, and how forth-coming astronomical telescopes and instruments will allow us to study nearby worlds similar to our own in unprecedented detail.

A front page [article](#) on April 18 in the South Bend Tribune notes Dr. Crepp had a role in the discovery of a newly-announced habitable zone planet.

The MAS meets at 7:00 p.m. EDT in the Lions Room of the Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Library at 209 Lincolnway East in downtown Mishawaka, IN. Dr. Crepp's talk will begin by 7:30 p.m.

Dr. Crepp is the Freimann Assistant Professor of Physics at University of Notre Dame, with NASA awarding him an Early Career Fellowship in 2013. In his research he studies exoplanets, which are planets orbiting distant stars, many of which are detected by the NASA Kepler spacecraft using the transit method.

Per the Notre Dame website, he also *"uses the Doppler method to measure the radial velocity 'wobble' of stars as they gravitationally interact with their planets. Dr. Crepp is the co-discoverer of more than 30 extrasolar planets. He is currently building a precision spectrometer that will detect Earth-like planets orbiting in the habitable zone of the closest and lowest-mass stars in the galaxy: the M-dwarfs.*



Prior to working at Notre Dame, Dr. Crepp was a senior postdoctoral scholar at the California Institute of Technology. He received a PhD in astronomy from the University of Florida in 2008, and a bachelor's degree in physics from Penn State in 2003."



[Michiana Astronomical Society Inc.](#) (MAS) is a leading provider of astronomy education and public outreach in northern Indiana. Celebrating it's 40th anniversary in 2014, MAS encourages astronomy and telescope use among its members and the public alike. Its monthly meetings, on most third-Mondays of the month, are free and open to the public.

The MAS will host its sixth annual [Michiana Star Party](#) on May 30-June 1, 2014, at the Dr. T.K. Lawless Park in Vandalia, MI. [Register now](#) to join observers with telescopes under the dark stars.

[« Previous](#)

[Next »](#)

▼ 2014

- ▶ October
- ▶ September
- ▶ August
- ▶ July

- ▶ May
- ▼ April
 - [Life Around the Smallest Stars](#)
- ▶ March
- ▶ February
- ▶ January
- ▶ 2013
- ▶ 2012

Tags

Update April 18

A front page [article](#) in the South Bend Tribune notes Dr. Crepp had role in discovery of newly-announced habitable zone planet.

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