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Underway in 2014

AstroCamp is underway this week. We're under the stars (including the sun), and blissfully away from internet. During the optional Open Program at Camp Eberhart, resident astronomer Darren Drake targeted planets near the sun. Never seen a gibbous Mercury midday before! The AstroCamp kids learned how to use Dobsonian-mount telescopes and planishperes; walked off (or ran) a 1 ten-billionth scale of the solar system from Dave's House; held meteorites that came from the origins of the solar system; collimated reflector telescopes, and used gelatin and lasers to show how lenses work.

As twilight deepens, we're watching constellations and asterisms reveal themselves until the sky is speckled with starlight. Some of the kids are observing Saturn and its moons with 8-inch reflectors. Others are imaging Saturn using the Enyeart computer-driven telescopes at night. They're finding double stars and galaxies and star clusters and nebulae. Tuesday night we gazed concurrently at stars, fireflies, and distant lightning. The lore of ancient astronomers is competing with the tale of Freddy the Fish around the campfire. You never know where the kids will take their interests. The intrepid ones who stayed up late on Wednesday even saw the faint Quasar Markarian 205 next to the spiral galaxy NGC 4319. That's right, a quasar!

There's more on tap, but we can't tell all that goes on at AstroCamp. Some of it depends on where the interests of the campers and staff take it. We'll post photos afterward (not many from night, since the best astronomy happens in the dark). If you want to get in on the action next year as either a camper or AstroCamp counselor, pencil in July 12-18, 2015, on your calendar. Camp Eberhart will soon confirm the dates and accept registrations at an early-bird rate.

Thanks, parents, for giving your kids a stargazing experience like no other.

Posted by chuck at [1:52 PM on July 24, 2014](#)

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