

# Studying the heavens

Students use campus observatory to gaze at autumn celestial events

BY BURGUNDY RAMSEY  
Staff Reporter

More than four light-years from the Earth, the closest star besides the sun — Proxima Centauri — shines for all to see. It's hard to be familiar with anything that far away, but one club at Truman is trying to help.

Stargazers Astronomy Club is made up of approximately 15 active members with one main goal: They want to educate the campus and community about what they see in the sky each night. To accomplish this, Stargazers will be hosting open houses this semester at the campus observatory, located at the University Farm.

"We are just an ordinary student organization that offers the manpower behind doing the open houses," said senior Chad Williamson, vice president of Star Gazers. "Dr. Beaky is in charge of all things astronomy at Truman, and he's also the faculty adviser for our organization, so that's kind of the link between Stargazers and the observatory. It's



## Autumn sky happenings

### Meteor Showers

Orionids Oct. 21  
Leonids Nov. 17  
Geminids Dec. 13

Lunar Eclipse Dec. 20

more about the night sky. "I came in wanting to figure out what the constellations were," Condon said. "I figured I'd be taught this stuff, but instead they're setting it up like we're teaching it, so we have to learn it immediately."

Like a lot of the visitors at the open house, it was Condon's first time visiting the observatory.

"I actually didn't even come to an open house last year, so this is my first time, period," Condon said. "It's been really cool seeing stuff for the first time, too."

The next open house will be from 8 to 10 p.m. Oct. 13. The rest of the dates for open houses for fall semester are listed online at [observatory.truman.edu](http://observatory.truman.edu), along with directions to the University Farm complex. For those who can't make it to the observatory this fall, there are several things to look up in the sky.

Right now, Jupiter can be seen brightly and will be visible all fall. There are also two meteor showers coming up. The Leonids will be visible around Nov. 17 and the Geminids will appear in December. Beaky said there also will be a total lunar eclipse the night of Dec. 20.

Stargazers' website is currently under construction, but they hope to have their site up and running with current information soon.

kind of a symbiotic relationship. Stargazers gets to use all of the telescopes and come out here, and the observatory gets publicity and things which is useful for grants and the research that's done out here."

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Matthew Beaky  
Stargazers adviser

the summer months. "We look at asteroids and stars that vary [in] brightness, and variable stars and almost anything that's interesting to us," said Matthew Beaky, physics professor and Stargazers adviser. "But we try to focus on variable stars and asteroids."

During the school year, the astronomy class uses the observatory for its lab work. The Stargazers provide the community the only opportunity to use the facility.

observatory, with more than 350 visitors just this summer.

"This summer alone we had eight different events with groups," Beaky said. "We had two public nights and different events like Taiwan at Truman."

For many people, the observatory is the only place around to see the night sky with such high-powered equipment. It usually houses a 14-inch telescope, meaning the mirror inside is 14 inches in diameter, in the main dome. There also is an 8-inch telescope housed in

a smaller research dome. Beaky said both are completely robotic and can be controlled remotely. Recently, both were struck by lightning and currently are undergoing repair. A spare telescope is being used in their place. Stargazers also uses smaller telescopes normally used for the astronomy labs during their open house nights.

Stargazers not only teaches visitors about the stars, but it's also a learning experience for the members. Sophomore Ian Condon joined Stargazers this year, wanting to learn

servatory is used mainly for research, especially during

# SAB sponsors improv group on Family Day

Baby Wants Candy creates musical in Baldwin Auditorium

BY CHARUNDI PANAGODA  
Staff Reporter

Truman students and their parents packed Baldwin Auditorium Saturday afternoon, eagerly waiting to see the musical improv group Baby Wants Candy.

Hailing from Chicago, Baby Wants Candy performed a completely improvised musical to the audience-generated performance "SAW 58." Accompanied by piano music, the group constructed a musical-comedy about a town haunted by serial murders on Halloween — staying true to the title — inspired by the popular horror movie franchise but not directly parodying it.

The performance began with the song "We Are All Going To Die" and continued with the struggles of an overly mothered 16-year-old boy, the tomboy daughter of the town's serial killer and the sheriff who fails to solve the murders for more than 50 years. It was entirely original, with no reenactments from any known musicals.

"I really like how they could change their character so quickly,"

freshman Alaina Kramer said. "I loved the show. It was amazing. They were very good actors and very good improvisers. They did a really good job. I would go see them again."

The Baby Wants Candy performance was one of the events sponsored by the Student Activities Board for the Family Day weekend. Funded by the Student Activities fee, the event was free for Truman students with University ID.

SAB sponsors events that appeal to a broader audience so that both Truman students and their parents can enjoy them, said Sarah Graham, special events chair for SAB.

"SAB does Family Day events, a tradition we've done annually," she said. "It's something that we'd like to do to contribute to the University and give students something to bring their parents to and kind of showcase what SAB is all about, what Truman's all about and the fun you can have here."

Truman parent Abby Sydlow drove from St. Louis to participate in Family Day events. She said she wasn't disappointed.

"The SAB does a good job of getting a lot of good acts, I think, from what I hear," Sydlow said. "This is really good and really clever. We were only able to stay

for a part of it last time and we're staying overnight this time, so we've been doing a little more of the activities than we did last year. It's a lot of fun."

SAB aims to sponsor a different event each year. In the past, they've sponsored hypnotists and magicians. "This year is a little different than normal, but I think it went over really well," Graham said.

Baby Wants Candy was chosen from the many performers at the national convention for the National Association for Campus Activities. SAB members attend NACA each year to bring the best and most affordable performances to Truman, Graham said.

"Kirksville's not exactly always the most exciting place in the world. So, by offering something that kids can bring their parents to, it welcomes people."

Sarah Graham  
SAB Special Events Chair



Chicago improv group entertained families with their impromptu horror musical Saturday.

"People who saw [Baby Wants Candy] thought they were hilarious and it would be something awesome for Truman students," she said. "Kirksville's not exactly always the most exciting place in the world. So, by offering something that kids can bring their parents to, it welcomes people. And in between lunch, dinner and all the football games, it gives you something to do."

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