



Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Announcement of Fifth Annual Star Party at Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

Cornish, NH: On Saturday September 13, 2013, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site will host our fifth annual Star Party in partnership with the Springfield Telescope Makers (STM) of the Stellafane Observatory in Springfield, Vermont. The event will be held at Saint-Gaudens NHS in Cornish, New Hampshire.

At 8:00 pm, a talk about the history of astronomy in the Upper Connecticut River Valley will be offered outdoors (weather permitting) in the Shaw Memorial hedge room (bring a blanket or towel for sitting on the grass). Following the talk, members of the Springfield Telescope Makers will have a variety of telescopes, many of them handmade, set up on the grounds at the park and will be aiming them at a variety of deep-sky objects such as galaxies, nebulae, star clusters and planets for visitors to explore and enjoy.

“We are very excited to be hosting this Star Party for the fifth year. Though the northeast United States is one of the most light-polluted areas of the country, residents of the Upper Valley are very fortunate to have wonderful dark skies with hundreds of visible stars to enjoy” said park superintendent Rick Kendall. “We hope that this night sky viewing event at the park reveals some of the hidden gems in the dark skies above us that are with us every night but that can only be seen through a telescope. The Springfield Telescope Makers are an outstanding local resource for night sky issues and we are very happy to be continuing this partnership with them for the last four years.”

In the event of rain or heavy clouds, the night sky viewing will be rescheduled for Sunday, September 14. To find out if the event is going forward as scheduled, contact the park at (603) 675-2175 ext. 106. Updates will also be posted on the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site Facebook page.

Attending a night sky viewing event comes with some etiquette conventions that may be unfamiliar to first-time attendees but which enhance viewing conditions for everyone. Most importantly, bright, white lights are discouraged at night sky viewing events; bright lights ruin your night vision and the night vision of those around you. Attendees are encouraged to acquire and bring a red-light flashlight or a flashlight with a red lens or with a red piece of plastic covering the bulb. The park will have a limited number of red glow sticks for those without a red flashlight. Even with red lenses, use your light sparingly; on a clear night, your eyes will adjust quickly to the dark conditions. It is also important to remember that telescopes are expensive and that many of the telescopes at this event are hand-crafted and difficult to replace. Please follow the instructions of the STM member staffing the scope you are looking through. And finally, ask lots of questions. The amateur astronomers who are bringing their telescopes to this event love the night sky and sharing it with others.

The Springfield Telescope Makers is a club founded by amateur telescope maker Russell Porter in 1923. The club is devoted to promoting the practice of crafting high-quality telescopes by amateur astronomers. The club owns and maintains the Stellafane Observatory on Breezy Hill in Springfield, Vermont, at which it offers free mirror-grinding workshops in the winter months and hosts the annual Stellafane Convention of amateur telescope builders and night sky enthusiasts in the summer. More information about the Springfield Telescope Makers, the Stellafane Observatory and the Stellafane Convention can be found at www.stellafane.org.

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site is located off NH Route 12A, just north of the Cornish-Windsor covered bridge. The park preserves the home, studios and grounds of the famed American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens and displays the largest collection of original Saint-Gaudens artwork in the world. The park also boasts some wonderful dark night skies. The park is open daily through October 31. For more information, write: Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, 139 Saint-Gaudens Road, Cornish, NH 03745; phone: (603) 675-2175 x 106; or visit the park's website: www.nps.gov/saga.