

Public Talk & Sky Viewing Evening

The Astrophysics and Cosmology Research Unit (ACRU)
School of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science

cordially invites you to attend a talk entitled

Mission Kepler and the hunt for extrasolar planets

by Kenda Knowles

DATE: 29 October 2013 TIME: 6.00 for 6.30 pm

VENUE: Science and Technology Education Centre, Building H1, Westville Campus

The talk will be followed by a night sky viewing, weather permitting

ABSTRACT: "Are we alone in the Universe?" This is one of the earliest and most intriguing questions asked by mankind. In 2009 NASA launched Kepler, the first spacecraft capable of beginning to solve this mystery. The main purpose of Kepler is to determine if Earth-sized planets with the potential for life as we know it are common or rare. I will discuss how Kepler goes about achieving this goal, mentioning some of the exciting discoveries it has made to date. I will also comment on the malfunction that occurred this year, causing many to worry about the mission's future.

Biography: Kenda Knowles is a postgraduate student at UKZN, working towards her doctorate in astrophysics and cosmology. Her thesis focuses on galaxy clusters, in particular, in understanding the rare diffuse radio emission that can be found in some merging clusters. Kenda graduated summa cum laude with first a BSc in Computational Physics and then a Honours degree in physics from UKZN Pietermaritzburg. She then moved to Cape Town to start her Masters at UCT, discontinuing in favour of a research Masters at UKZN in Westville. During the course of her postgraduate studies she has worked with the SKA SA project, being involved with the commissioning science of KAT-7.

ENQUIRIES : Prashina Budree on 031-260 8077 or e-mail budreep@ukzn.ac.za Website : <http://www.acru.ukzn.ac.za/>



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