

Stargazing in Huntsville/Lake of Bays

“As warmer weather arrives in Huntsville/Lake of Bays the brilliant stars of summer begin to position themselves in the overhead skies. For beginning stargazers the trio of stars that form the Summer Triangle remains the symbol of the season and there is no brighter or easier star to find than brilliant Vega. Anchoring one of the corners of the Summer Triangle, blue-white Vega is the lead star of the constellation Lyra -the harp. Relatively nearby at 25 light years, it shines so brightly because it is three times the size of our sun and produces 50 times as much light. Vega is a young giant at only 400 million years of age. In 1983 astronomers discovered a disk of dusty material whirling around the star that may indicate the early stages of evolution of a new planetary system.” www.theweathernetwork.com You can check out The Weather Network’s on-line stargazing report, pick up an astronomy book and then lay back on a clear night and try to pick out the constellations yourself. But, there is an easier way to view the wonders of the universe right here in Huntsville/Lake of Bays. The Echo Valley Observatory (owned by Delta Grandview Resort) is Canada’s first, and Ontario's largest, resort-based astronomical observatory. It is situated at one of the highest points in the region in Lake of Bays Township.

Veiled in pristine darkness away from star-dimming light pollution, the Echo Valley Observatory is perfectly situated for deep sky viewing. Using top of the line equipment, including an equatorial mounted 16 foot LX200 Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope, you’ll have the chance to glimpse planets, nebulas and galaxies. (Visit www.deltahotels.com and follow the links to Grandview Resort and the Echo Valley observatory for pricing and reservations information.)

A two-hour plus presentation is guided an astronomer who lives and works at the site. The show starts with a lecture on cosmology and continues on the observatory’s outdoor deck culminating in a deep sky viewing session through the observatory’s telescope. Dress warmly for those cooler evenings.

(Go to The Canadian Astronomical Society’s web site <http://www.cascaeducation.ca/files/index.html> for information on getting started as a stargazer.)