

**Subject:**Update from Lowell - December 9, 2020  
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**To:**[localgroup@lowell.edu](mailto:localgroup@lowell.edu)

Good morning everyone,

Here's the current news from Lowell.

Note for all, especially new mailing list members: see <http://www.lowell.edu/local-updates> for the latest documents as well as the text of the previous biweekly updates.

### **Section 17**

- It appears virtually assured that the Section 17 bill S.242 will not be considered until the next Congress, likely with Senator Kelly as sponsor. We will be working with his staff after the holidays on the "observatory purposes" language, which we will share with everyone on this list and on our website. Bottom line: nothing will be happening on this front until after New Year's Day.

### **Astronomy Discovery Center**

- No change from two weeks ago.

### **Lowell operational status**

- As noted in the last update, we have extended our evening Premium Access programs into the late afternoon, to take advantage of all the attention on this month's Jupiter-Saturn conjunction. (J&S are so bright it's possible to view them even before sunset!) These programs have been selling out, but are still just very small groups of 10 or fewer and are entirely outdoors. Given the present pandemic wave, I am assuming we'll be at Spring Break 2021 at the very earliest before we get to CDC Phase 2.
- We're keeping security in place Thu-Sat from 5-11 PM at the overlook. Things have been pretty calm.

### **Of possible interest**

- Tomorrow (December 10) at 9:00 AM MST, my guest on our Thursday "Cosmic Coffee" livestream will be Dr. Dave Engelthaler, director of TGen North here in Flagstaff. We'll be talking all things Covid: state of the pandemic, state of the vaccines, prognosis for return to normal next year, conditions here in Flag and northern Arizona. You can tune in live or watch it later at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLNzHODoU\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLNzHODoU_A). Viewers who log in with their Google account can ask Q&A live on the YouTube chat, and we'll answer as many questions as we can. We're lucky to have a resource like

Dave and TGen here in Flag, and I hope this stream will be informative and useful for everyone.

- Weather permitting, we will run a livestream of the closest approach of Jupiter and Saturn from the Giovale Open Deck Observatory from 5-7 PM on December 21 - right on the solstice! Yours Truly will be emcee. :-) Watch our YouTube channel for the link if you'd like to tune in.

I hope everyone is staying well!

Best regards,

Jeff Hall  
Director  
Lowell Observatory