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For Immediate Release

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**Adler Planetarium Invites Public to Exceptional Telescope
Viewing During *Planet Party***

Sky watching in late March provides an exciting opportunity to view five planets visible to the unaided eye. Between March 24 and March 27, the planets Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn can all be seen across the evening sky at the same time. In response, the Adler Planetarium will be hosting telescope viewing events.

“This rare occurrence is especially valuable. As we observe these planets, it’s exciting to know that our crafts are exploring two of them up close,” said Adler astronomer Mark Hammergren, PhD. “The rovers are on Mars and the *Cassini* craft is approaching Saturn. It’s an unparalleled exploration of our Solar System.”

This is the last time all five planets will be easily seen together until 2016, and they will not be so close together again until 2040.

To celebrate the wonder of these viewing opportunities, the Adler is hosting *Planet Party* from 6 to 10 PM each night from Wednesday, March 24 through Saturday, March 27. Highlights include:

Wednesday, March 24: the thin crescent Moon will appear very near the brilliant planet Venus—a gorgeous sight.

Thursday, March 25: the Moon will appear even closer to the planet Mars,

only as far away in the sky as the width of the Moon. Although Mars is a pale ghost compared to its appearance last August, it is still visible as a middling bright "star," and the pairing should be obvious.

For the evening observation events Adler astronomers, educators and volunteers will conduct outdoor telescope viewings. Live *Planet Party* shows in the Adler's Sky Theater, and viewing of Jupiter and Saturn through the 20-inch Doane Observatory telescope will be available. All telescope viewing will be dependent on weather conditions, but the live sky show will take place rain or shine.

Prior to the evening events, guests are encouraged to visit the museum during the day to receive additional information on each of the visible planets. The special Mars Rocks! admission package features a live *Mars Now* sky show (updated weekly) and a presentation of *Future Frontiers*, which explores the scientific and human aspects of the current mission to Mars. The upper level of the Planetarium also features a Solar System exhibit that provides an informative introduction to each of the planets.

While Mars has been the major focus of study and exploration since the landings of the *Spirit* and *Opportunity* rovers in January, Saturn will soon be in the spotlight when the spacecraft *Cassini* arrives in July. After the *Planet Party*, would-be astronomers should stay tuned to the Adler Planetarium for full details of this next big space mission.

Museum Hours

Monday-Friday 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Sat-Sun 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Far Out Fridays take place on the first Friday of each month, and feature special programs during extended hours from 5 PM to 10 PM.

Regular Admission Fees

Adults \$7; Seniors \$6; Children 4-17 \$4. Sky shows are an additional charge.

Visit www.adlerplanetarium.org or call (312) 922-STAR.

The Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum, America's first planetarium, has inspired more than 35 million visitors since its opening in

1930. Nine state-of-the-art exhibition galleries located in the stunning Sky Pavilion present modern space exploration and the history of astronomy. The world's first StarRider Theater, the most technologically advanced, audience-interactive planetarium, features virtual flights through the cosmos. The Adler's mission to present the human quest to better understand the Universe is led by our scientists and historians, working at the forefront of research in astronomy and its fascinating history.

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