



**NEWS RELEASE**  
**North Olympic Library System**  
**2210 South Peabody Street**  
**Port Angeles, WA 98362**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: July 29, 2016  
Contact: Paige Belfry, Customer Service Specialist, Port Angeles Main Library  
360.417.8500; PBelfry@nols.org  
Re: “Things Are Looking Up” Astronomy Series at NOLS

This August the North Olympic Library System (NOLS) is offering a collection of astronomy-inspired events to fuel your curiosity and wonder about outer space. The “Things Are Looking Up!” astronomy series will feature a hands-on opportunity to learn how to use the new Library telescopes, a free film screening of “The Martian” starring Matt Damon, and fascinating discussions about space exploration with NASA Ambassador Ron Hobbs.

**Telescopes 101:** Learn how to use the new NOLS telescopes—available for checkout beginning August 9—under the expert guidance of the Olympic Astronomical Society’s own John Goar at 6:30pm on Monday, August 8 at the Port Angeles Main Library. With a telescope in-hand, John will show you how to use these powerful tools and share tips for beginning and experienced viewers. The presentation will highlight the best summer sky targets on the Peninsula, and will be followed by a Q&A session for attendees to take advantage of John’s expertise and extensive astronomy background.

For seven consecutive years, educator John Goar has led night sky observation programs that are free and open to the public as a volunteer at Hurricane Ridge in Olympic National Park. More information about these programs can be found at [www.olympictelelescope.com](http://www.olympictelelescope.com).

**Free film screening:** The 2015 film “The Martian” starring Matt Damon will be screened at 5pm on Monday, August 22 at the Port Angeles Main Library. The film is based on the novel by Andy Weir, who extensively researched real NASA technologies in his startlingly realistic depiction of a future mission to Mars. The story centers on American astronaut Mark Watney, a clever and resourceful NASA botanist and mechanical engineer whose approach to survival is rooted in science and humor.

**Mars and “The Martian”:** Join NASA Ambassador Ron Hobbs for a discussion of the real space technology that was employed in the making of “The Martian,” as well as recent discoveries about the red planet, at 6:30pm on Tuesday, August 23 at the Port Angeles Main Library. The discussion will focus on how the work of NASA and other agencies extends into the film’s fictional setting in the 2030s, when astronauts are regularly traveling to Mars and living on its surface. This talk will also review some of the exciting new revelations about Mars, and, weather permitting, offer participants an opportunity to view the planet through a telescope.

Ron Hobbs is currently an instructor for Bellevue College’s TELOS education program for retirees. His extensive speaking background has focused on topics as diverse as herbal medicine, public health, mountaineering, and astronomy. His life-long interest in the exploration of space led him to his current volunteer position for NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory as a Solar System Ambassador.

**We Are All Explorers!** NASA Ambassador Ron Hobbs will offer opportunities to engage your inner explorer at 6:30pm on Monday, August 22 at the Forks Library and again at 6:30pm on Wednesday, August 24 at the Sequim Branch Library. Since its beginning 240 years ago, the United States has been the “Exploration Nation,” and for the past fifty-plus years, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has led explorations into the Solar System. Now the internet age allows citizens to participate in that exploration, from just enjoying the views to processing the pictures, to contributing “citizen science.” Hobbs’ talk will review some of the current NASA missions and ways in which everyone can ride along on the adventure.

**Additional information**

The “Things Are Looking Up” astronomy series is free and open to the public, and has been made possible by generous donations from Friends of the Library groups and Forks Elks Lodge #2524. The Port Angeles Main Library is located at 2210 South Peabody Street in Port Angeles. The Forks Branch Library is located at 171 South Forks Avenue in Forks. The Sequim Branch Library is located at 630 North Sequim Avenue in Sequim. To learn more about these programs, visit [www.nols.org](http://www.nols.org) and select “Events,” call the Port Angeles Main Library at 360.417.8500, or send an email to Discover@nols.org.

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