

Star Guide: Defining your cosmos

By Tony Berendsen

What's your Cosmos?

"Cosmos often simply means 'universe.' But the word is generally used to suggest an orderly or harmonious universe, as it was originally used by Pythagoras in the 6th century B.C." – Webster's dictionary.

All of us are traveling together on this planet orbiting a star once a year within the Milky Way galaxy. Our planet is small, the Earth is only one-millionth of the size of our star, and although one yearly orbit seems like a long period of time for us, it is a wink of the eye in time compared to the orbital period of our star around the galaxy; about 250 million years.

Each of us experience life uniquely, and so all of us interpret the cosmos differently.



Hubble's 25th anniversary image of the Westerlund 2 Cluster. Photo/NASA

This week I asked a couple people at the UNR about their cosmos:

Dan Ruby, director of the Fleischmann Planetarium, said, "Space is unimaginably big, containing more than we can comprehend. As our knowledge of the cosmos grows, our share of understanding shrinks. Thinking about our place in space doesn't make me feel small or insignificant; in fact, the opposite is true—studying the vast universe beyond the thin envelope of Earth's atmosphere makes me feel like an integral part of it, and I'm excited about the prospect of having a lifetime of new things to learn."

Nasim Emadi, student of mechanical engineering at UNR: "The cosmos is where we live in the large scale, but I am concerned about my day-to-day life here on earth, I don't think about the cosmos very much."

Those are two very contrasting statements about the cosmos. Our sense of place in the cosmos is affected by the many aspects of our lives; how and where we were educated, our

religion, our culture, our family values, even significant moments in our lives.

How do you define your part in the cosmos?

In the next Star Guide I will feature 10 statements of "What is your Cosmos" from the readers of Star Guide. If you would like to have your perception of the cosmos published in the article, please send a short statement (one or two sentences only, with your full name and occupation) to tony@tahoestartours.com.

In return, I'll include my perception of the cosmos in step with the words of contemporary poet Galway Kinnell who was quoted, "To me, poetry is somebody standing up, so to speak, and saying, with as little concealment as possible, what it is for him or her to be on earth at this moment."

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