

Monthly Report

April 2021

In April, most of my non presentation time was spent preparing and writing a grant proposal for the Michigan Space Grant Consortium - Virtual Learning Program. As this was my first time ever writing an official grant, I had to do a lot of reading about the grant specifics, as well as information about how to write a grant. The whole process was a bit confusing and a little overwhelming, and even after submitting the grant, I still find myself unsure of whether or not I wrote it within the grant's specific requirements. Awarded or not, my hope is that my proposal is judged based on its merits and not the clerical errors that may turn up.

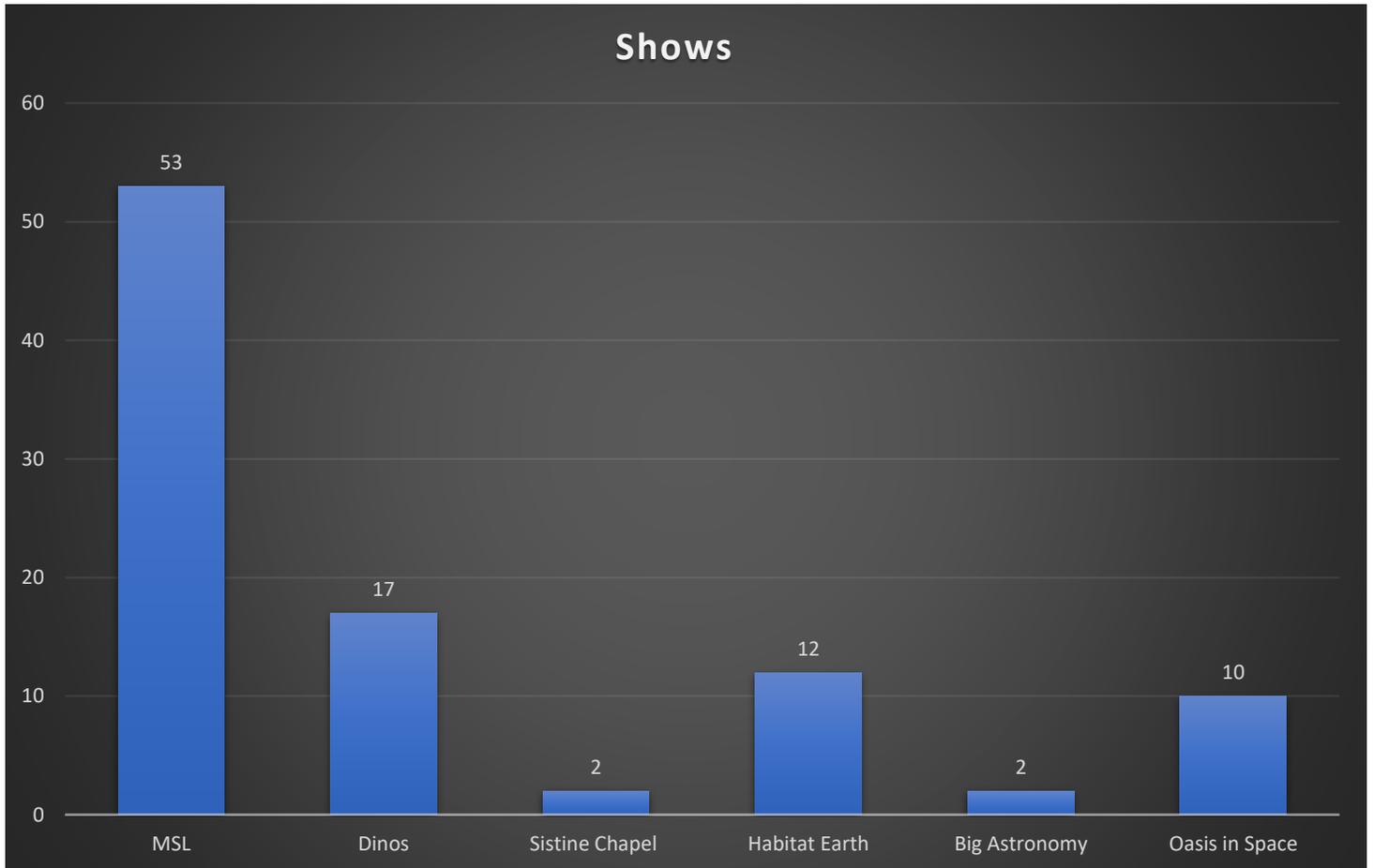
The proposal itself is based on acquiring a new computerized telescope called the Unistellar eVscope. The reason why I want to acquire one of these telescopes is because of their capability for bringing astronomical observing to our local area. It is already known through using my analog telescope that we can livestream the telescope's view to the internet, but without a computerized tracker, certain objects are beyond my ability to properly observe, due to how small they are in the sky. This telescope will not only give us a superior view of nighttime objects that traditional telescopes cannot, but it will also give us the ability to view them throughout the evening, or even just for an extended period of time. With over 4,000 objects in the eVscopes database, there are a lot of opportunities for us to easily share the night sky with the world.

The last aspect of the grant I wanted to make a reality is to involve Alpena High School, and the entire county's home school system in creating an educational program where students can use the telescope with guidance to collect data on astronomical objects and use information, they learn in class to analyze and study any nighttime object of their choice. For the grant writing process, I had to reach out and obtain letters of support for this program from John Caplis, AHS's astronomy teacher, and he is excited and on board with this plan if we are awarded funds via this grant.

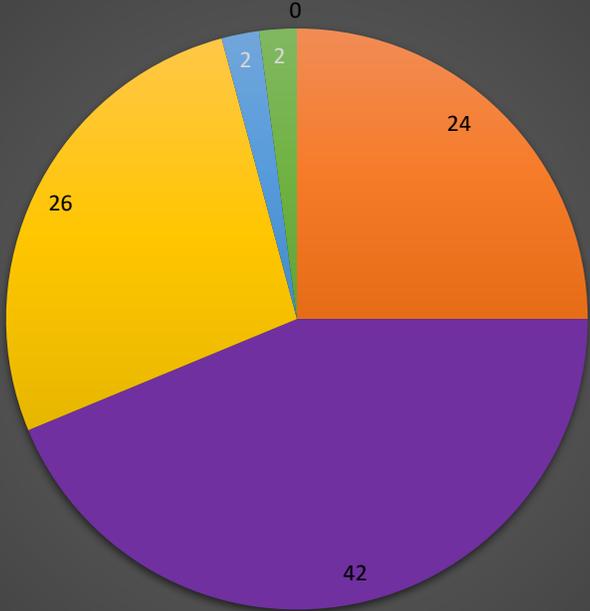
More information on this aspect of the grant, and the grant in general can be seen in the actual proposal, which can be emailed out to anyone interested in reading it.

Another Item I worked on in April is my attempt at bringing a new fulldome video to the planetarium. There were 3 videos I was interested in acquiring, but ultimately The Birth of Planet Earth won out due to content and pricing. This movie will make a great addition to our fulldome library and is likely to be a popular title over the summer for tourists who are used to larger and more grandiose attractions. This video also contains information on newly supported theories about planetary formation and gives an up-to-date view on how the solar system forms, making it an ideal attraction for school field trips.

Attendance this month was slow and sparse, due to our closing at the beginning of the month, and the general public's caution over attending a public event during a large spike in Corona Virus cases. If a spike of this magnitude happens again this year, I would strongly recommend closing the planetarium temporarily, especially if we are seeing large attendance numbers.

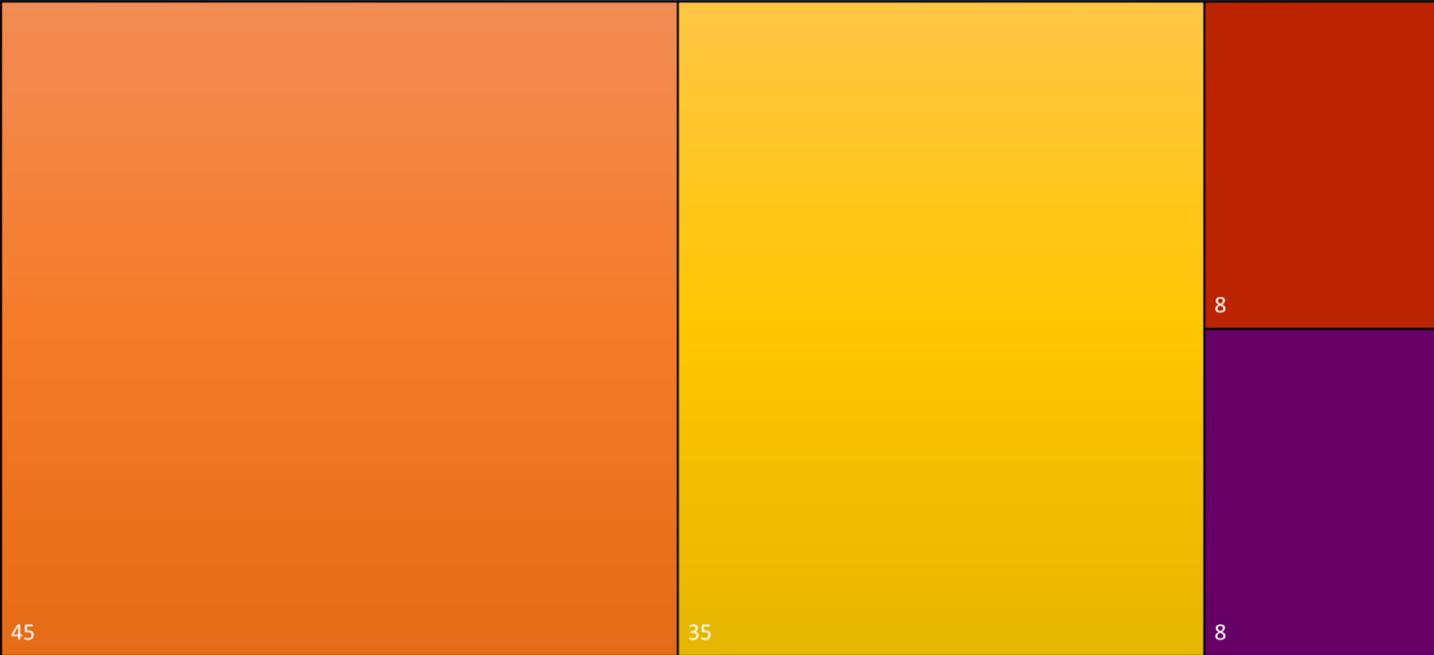


Showtimes



10:00 AM 11:30 AM 1:00 PM 3:00 PM 12:00 1:30

ATTENDANCE



Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday