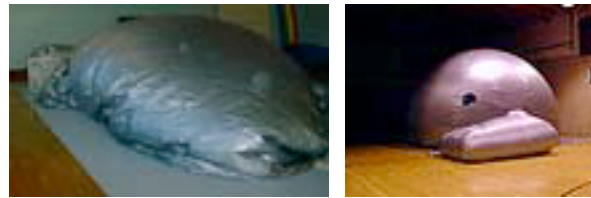




When the planetarium arrives in the morning, it's simply a van full of boxes, cases, and duffle bags. It takes about an hour to transform it into a real planetarium.



But soon, it seems to come alive. Kid's love to watch the dome inflate. "It looks like a dinosaur." "It looks like a whale." "Jiffy-Pop!" "An igloo!" "Do we jump on it?"



There are many comments. The dome is soon inflated to full size and quietly awaits the arrival of the first class. Northern Stars has two domes that schools can choose from, a 16 foot diameter dome that can hold 30 students, or the 22 foot diameter Super Dome that can hold 60-70 students. Each school can pick the dome that fits their needs best.



Everyone is amazed that the whole dome is inflated by just two window fans. The fans run continuously, keeping the dome inflated and providing fresh air to those inside.



Soon the kids arrive and it's time to line up to go inside.

After a few opening remarks, the adventure begins. The topics range from the night sky to the solar system, weather to mythology, dinosaurs to geography.



Oceanography to space travel, radio astronomy to telescopes, the possible topics is quite varied. Sometimes we even view objects in 3-D. John Meader, Northern Stars Planetarium Director, will be your guide.

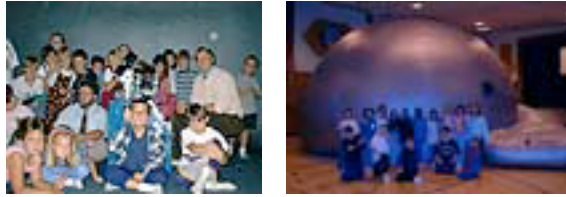


He sits in the center of the star theater at his console, with which he operates slides projectors, more than two dozen special effects, a video projector, a star projector and an incredible sound system.



The console controls all that is seen on the dome. Atop the console sits Matilda, the star projector. While only a machine, as many kids find out, Matilda definitely has a personality. She creates the beautifully simulated night sky. She can show us the night

sky as seen from anywhere between the equator and the north pole for any time of the year.



When the show is over and all questions have been addressed, it's common for groups to have their class picture taken either inside the dome or just outside.

It's an hour of great learning and fun. We love getting your letters too!

