

Hope in the heavens year round

THE SKY'S
THE LIMIT



NEEL ROBERTS

Many of us rack up a list of New Year's resolutions only to break them before the first week of January. While I do like to set goals, I never got too much into this promise-making fad, as it seems to be a sure-fire way for set up failure.

Yet I'm amazed how many insist on falling for this vicious cycle when they're really not committed. Personally, I'd rather look back at the previous year and give thanks for all that came my way whether it was good or challenging.

One of the most memorable commentaries in 2009 I heard was a sermon given by the late Dr. Adrian Rogers on the 19th Psalm. To this date, King David (the writer of this Old Testament passage), is by far considered one of the greatest rulers not only of the old Jewish state but the world.

Three thousand years

ago while David was looking up at a pitch black Israeli sky, the Spirit prompted him to the write, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge." (Psalm 19:1-2). What does this mean? Basically the scripture was trying to teach David that our creator's handy work is way beyond any challenge we can conceive.

By observing his celestial candelabra we can be assured the hope he offers us is 100 per cent trustworthy.

Many of us experienced financial challenges last year because of a sagging economy, and while things maybe looking up for 2010, the night sky remains as reliable as the day it was made.

It's sheerly impossible to completely escape the problems of our planet, so one of my rituals is waking up in the middle of the night and checking out the stars on my farm while sipping a piping hot cup of tea. Words cannot express the amazement one grasps from the gallery in the sky, but I must say I can relate (and

you can also) to what David experienced in 1,000 B.C.!

Sky watch for the next month —

Mars closest to Earth

The red planet will be closest to Earth on Jan. 29. It will follow the moon the whole night, so it's not hard to find. Contrary to any email rumours, Mars will not be as large as the moon!

Comet Wild (81P)

It will be visible all month, but it's best seen this Thursday near Saturn in the eastern sky after midnight, to dawn. You will need binoculars for this.

Also, check out www.whatsuptonight.net, www.astronomy.com, www.space.com and www.nasa.gov. They have much more detailed information and great stuff for kids, all for free!

Public events for the next month —

A two-part Telescope User's Course is being held at The Telus World of Science, 701 11 St. S.W., Calgary (the parking lot entrance is off 11 Street S.W.) with astronomer Alan Dyer on Jan. 19 and Jan. 26, from 7-10 p.m. The cost is \$40 per person. For details,

check out www.astronomycalgary.com/events/info/239 or call Cassandra McAuley at 403-268-8302.

The Full Moon Winter Star Party and Open House is being held at the Rothney Astrophysical Observatory, two kilometres south of Highway 22 and 22X intersection, on Jan. 30, from 8-11 p.m. The guest speaker for the night will be Dr. Alfredo Lauro from the U of C who will talk about light and optics. The cost is \$20 per person. For more information, check out <http://www.astronomycalgary.com/events/info/193> or call Jennifer Howse at 403-931-2366.

Happy 2010!

Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada — the country's leading astronomy club founded in 1849 with more than 4,000 members and 29 centres across Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at 403-485-2683, Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com. The members meet once a month in various places in southern Alberta and you can check them out at www.calgary.rasc.ca/