

Our Universe; The Wonder of it all

Turning 103 years young in February of the New Year, legendary Gospel singer George Beverly Shea has already left many legacies in the music industry while still active in the business. Given many are lucky to make the 80th birthday mark; Shea is well past that just in his career alone. The Grammy Award, Canadian born vocalist is well respected by even the contemporary hip hop entertainers of today for his impressive profession and dedication to his faith including his over 65 years with Dr. Billy Graham. One of his most popular songs called “The Wonder of it All” composed in 1955 has the following opening lines:

“There's the wonder of sunset at evening, The wonder as sunrise I see” and “There's the wonder of springtime and harvest, The sky, the stars, the sun”. The closing verse in one of them is “But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul is the wonder that God loves me.”

3000 years ago, King David stood on top of Mount Moriah (where the Doom of the Rock is today) and wrote Psalm 8 as he stared into the night sky. Most people don't know that the Psalms are actually the Jewish Hymn book and verses 3-4 spell out “³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?” Of course these two men have never met, but their words have a strong correlation. Both speak of a amorous creator whom not only made the Heavens and Earth but his love is greatest for its human inhabitants namely you and me. CS Lewis one of the greatest academics of the last century renounced his atheism and evolutionistic beliefs after an honest, intensive study of the Holy Scriptures. Known as the “apologist to the skeptics”, he summarizes his transformation by concluding “Conversion requires an alteration of the will, and an alteration which, in the last resort, does not occur without the intervention of the supernatural.”

Sky watch for the next month:

- 1 **Spica crowns rising Moon-** Look in the SEE horizon Tuesday, January 16th just before 02:00 am and the bright spot rising with the moon will follow it into the morning as it fades into the daylight in the SW.
- 2 **Double shadow and satellite on Jupiter-** On Monday January 10th, check out the double moon pass starting at 20:00 and earlier that afternoon from 14:00 you'll see a double shadow from the sunlight.
- 3 **Quadrantid Meteor Shower-** Peaks Tuesday January 03rd night going into the 04th morning with an average fall of 40 meteors per hour. Best viewing time is 2:30 am to dawn in the Bootes constellation (NEE).
- 4 **Comet Levy closest to Earth-** After dusk on Friday, January 20th look halfway up in to the SSE with a good set of binos and check it out all night as that's when it's closest to Earth.

Public Events for the next month:

Friday the 13th Monthly Public Stargazing at the Trek Center- Check out our stargazing event for 2012 which also happens to be on Friday the 13th courtesy of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Calgary) starting at 18:30. Brief indoor presentation in the “bridge section” followed by telescope and binocular demonstrations outside (weather permitting). All welcome, no charge and refreshments provided. Experts will be on hand to explain the heavens, teach scoping skills and help you develop your knowledge of our sky. For further information, contact the Trek Center at (403) 485-2994 and the website www.vulcantourism.com will be updated regularly!

Happy New Year and the best for 2012 and beyond!

Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada-the nation's leading astronomy club founded in 1849 with over 4,000 members and 29 centers 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/Canada and you can check them out at www.calgary.rasc.ca!