

Friendly dogs love stargazing meetings

Don't leave Fido home the next time folks gather around telescopes. Dogs are not only good pets and keep the cat burglar away but they are also quite the hit at astronomy meetings.

Yes, they might get bored during the indoor lecture, but that all changes once everybody heads out for the practical stuff. Some will try to chase the hubcaps off cars while others roll in the mud if the kids aren't pulling their tails. I even saw a recycle minded one eating the cow doo-doo since we were meeting in a rancher's pasture.

But no doubt, they are a blast and can even turn into entertainment if the clouds blow in. It can be tricky getting them to look through the telescope. The pups will usually lick it while the older ones fog



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The Sky's the Limit

up the lenses, but the odd one will try being human about it and show interest — for a whole five seconds. Let me put it this way: it's like trying to get them to watch TV, so let that sink in. Overall, they just love the company and make a good experience even better.

So, what's their favourite celestial object? You got it, Sirius the dog star right out of the constellation Canis Major. Now doesn't that just figure?

Sky watch

Eta Aquarids meteor shower shoots 10-20 meteors per hour between the evening of Friday, May 5 and before dawn on Saturday. The waxing gibbous moon will set before sunrise, with the prime time for viewing the meteor shower at about 4 a.m. in the southeast-east.

On Friday, May 12, the moon will rise at about 11 p.m., followed by Saturn after midnight.

There are too many mega Jupiter double shadow transits to list for May — you can look up the details online for May 12, 15, 19, 22, 26, 28 and 29.

On Monday, May 22, before dawn, look east at about 4:20 a.m. as Venus rises with a crescent moon, followed before sunrise by Mercury.

Public events

Our monthly stargazing session takes place on Friday, May 12, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Special guest speaker Dr. Gordon Freeman will give a detailed talk on "Canada's Stonehenge, the Majorville Medicine Wheel" located an hour northeast of Vulcan near the Bow River.

Freeman's talk will be followed by stargazing outside.

For more information, phone Vulcan Tourism at 403-485-2994 or visit www.vulcantourism.com.

Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at 403-485-2683 and Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com.