

# **New SW Ring Road shedding too much light for Calgary's Rothney Observatory**

Human beings are naturally gravitated to light but astronomy is one of the exceptions to the rule. The 2012 PBS documentary "The City Dark" well explains that disappearing night skies are detrimental to all living on Earth. While some light is necessary, the less the better. That's what motivated multi generation rancher Sandy Cross to donate a quarter section of land near Priddis to start the Rothney observatory almost 50 years ago. Archived maps from the City of Calgary confirmed the south built area ended around Anderson Road making the proposed area seemed like a trip to the country; Eamon's campground on Crowchild Trail which opened in 1949 was the same deal. Entrepreneur Roy Wyatt Eamon must have had a clear view of the milky way that city dwellers flocked to camp under for the weekend.

As the 1966 Tran Canada highway expansion made its way to the Rocky Mountains, it's lights faded the night sky around the time Eamon's closed. Some communities like Bon Accord, 25 miles North of Edmonton have bucked the trend. Favored by the International Dark Sky Community as the only Canadian town to naturally qualify, longtime resident and geologist Rudy Borkovic describes it's "Dark Sky Celebration" as amazing; especially when the Northern Lights shows up. At current growth rates, Metropolitan Calgary's deep south may come down as far as High River and beyond in 50 years given highway 23/2A is also known as 530<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Blackie's highway 799 RR272 is also marked 264<sup>th</sup> street. If we extrapolate past progress, the Rothney observatory is inevitably doomed to lose the dark sky it inherited in the 1970's. Vulcan, currently not a dark sky community, needs wise up like Bon Accord, or disappear into the bright sky by the end like Eamon's did over 50 years ago by of this century!

## **Sky watch for the next month:**

- 1 **"Spock Days" Full Moon-** on Friday, June 09<sup>th</sup> look SEE as it rises over the Trek Center we'll have on display at our meeting.
- 2 **Saturn at Opposition-** Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup> is the best time in a decade to view its rings in a maximum tilt of 27 degrees towards the Earth before and after sunrise/set.
- 3 **New Moon Delight-** On Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup> the Moon will not be visible in the night sky and is the best time to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star all night.
- 4 **Longest Day of the Year/Full Moon-** Sunday, June 20<sup>th</sup> is officially the summer solstice at 22:24 pm MDT and we will have 16 hours and 30 minutes of actual daylight. Sun officially rises at 05:22 am and sets at 21:42 with high noon at 13:38.

## **Public Events for the next month:**

**Monthly Public Stargazing at the Trek Center-** Mark down Friday, June 09<sup>th</sup> at 19:30 on your calendar and join us at the Trek Center for our monthly stargazing. Special "25<sup>th</sup> Spock Days Anniversary" indoor presentation on the "summer sky" followed by scoping the skies with the 11" telescope outside and much more. Refreshment provided, all welcome and no charge. Held

the second Friday of monthly at 19:30. For further information contact the Trek center at (403) 485-2994, [www.vulcantourism.com](http://www.vulcantourism.com).

**Royal Astronomical Society of Calgary Spock Days Float-** Have you ever wanted to be in a parade float? We've been doing this for over 8 years and it's always a blast! We invite you to join us for the 1 hour ride through Vulcan. Lots of fun and all welcome Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, at 08:30 am. Float departs at 10:00 am and usually last about an hour. Bring candy if you wish to throw out to the audience but not necessary.

### **Happy Father's Day and Welcome to Summer!**

*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)560-6574, [Neel\\_Roberts@ptccanada.com](mailto:Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com). The members meet the second Friday monthly at the Trek Center at 19:30 and you find out about membership at <http://calgary.rasc.ca/vulcan2017.htm>.*