

## *Spock Wants You in Vulcan*

*by Neel Roberts*



Stardate 23-04-2010 made history in the world last spring as actor Leonard Nimoy told a live audience in the town of Vulcan, Alberta on a Friday afternoon, “I’ve been away for years and it’s about time I came home”. At the same time, millions around the world saw it live on TV, internet or the next Saturday morning on the front page of their newspapers. It was the only time the small agricultural community became world famous and now they have one more reason for you to visit.

Starting in 2011, the Vulcan Tourism group struck an agreement with RASC Calgary to host monthly meetings at the Star Trek Center located at the entrance of the town off highway #23 (halfway to Lethbridge from Calgary). An 11’ Celestron scope moved into the museum after New Year’s Day and had its premiere on Wednesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>. Over 2 dozen, mostly kids younger than 12, kicked off the series of events via viewing a brief presentation on the Moon in the “bridge section (turned movie house for these occasions)” of the center, courtesy of Starry Night software. Surprising they gave a large round of applause at the end and when asked what they thought, the roar of “AWESOME” was the unanimous response!

Guests were warmed up with delicacies of hot chocolate, coffee, and “oven fresh” baked pastries courtesy of Trish’s Treats, the local café. After that, they braved the cold to view the rising full Moon, Jupiter with its moons and Orion with its Nebula. Despite the -20 wind chill, many stayed out for a couple of hours to see what they could while clouds moved in and out. Aaron Grant, the local scout leader was excited at the opportunity for his boys to earn a badge in astronomy. “It’s great because this is now a local way the kids can earn a badge towards astronomy”. Many other locals like Ben Heide of BCC Hardware, who did computer and electronic work, are eager about this project. Men and women from all

backgrounds and experience have simply pitched in to get going for the development and they can be proud of the successful launch.

RASC member Ken Hartung and Karl Iverson were proactively operating the telescope and more while helping the cubs earn that emblem. Former RASC Calgary president Roland Dechesne has also been helping behind the scenes. He brings years of experience in running a national astronomy club and Dechesne has not only helped design the new logo but is mustering up interest from RASC for resources to promote the permanent Vulcan happening. While this is a bit different from what he’s use to, it should gain quite a following.

Tourism co-ordinator Catherine Pooley is amazed at the quick response she received considering how young the idea is. She had just posted the concept on the internet and within one day a Calgary school showed interest. Alan Dyer of the Telus World of Science responded immediately by placing the occurrence on their calendar of events ([www.astronomycalgary.com](http://www.astronomycalgary.com)) where lots of city people surf. Dyer, who is well connected in the astronomy industry, was delighted to post the happening on all other networks like Twitter and has pledged his future support. 10 year old Will Smith had been looking forward to it all week and when he finally came, he said it was “Totally cool to see the moons of Jupiter”. His 9 year old sister Rachel and her buddy CJ were always in line at the telescope especially when it came to the Orion Nebula. “We can’t wait till the next time” they both agreed while hugging an organizer in gratitude.

The Trek center plans to have the next meeting on the Friday Family day long weekend of February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 19:00 for 1-2 hours. Presentation will start with a brief discussion followed by observing with telescopes and binoculars supplied. This month’s feature will be Betelgeuse AKA the Valentine’s star. The Trek center plans to post the proceedings on their website and the **Vulcan Advocate** already publishes a monthly astronomy column called “*Sky’s the Limit*” which will have details of their events. There’s no cost, refreshments are supplied with full facilities and all are welcome. For further information contact the Trek Center at (403) 485-2994 or check out the RASC webpage for Vulcan: <http://calgary.rasc/vulcan2011.htm> for **Vulcan**. Come and see for yourself why they say Vulcan is “Simply out of this World”!

Next event:  
February 18