

Summer meteor shower campout weekend

This year the annual Perseids Meteor shower peak happens to fall on the weekend of Aug. 12-14 and is a great excuse to head to a campsite.

With the moon setting after midnight, it'll be an overnight treat until dawn. Flaunted as the most beloved, regular astronomical event of the year in the northern Hemisphere, this celestial event gains popularity having been around since the time of Christ.

Tracing its origins from the oriental Far East, some Roman Catholics refer to the Perseids as the "tears of St. Lawrence", since Aug. 10 is the date of his death.

Fireballs start after dark and best bet is to look in the northeast part of the sky and the zenith, the point in sky directly above you. The shower event is the result of comet 109P/Swift-Tuttle trailing debris which has been seen since BC and last observed in 1992, but unfortunately not scheduled to return until 2126.

The Perseids is a backyard or outing success because not only is the weather still warm and mosquitoes mostly gone, but requires no equipment such as telescopes or astronomical apparatus unless you want to start your astrophotography hobby.

If you're looking for a private, dark sky for the weekend, check out Maycroft just off Highway 22, the cowboy trail for a real western experience like our ancestors did centuries ago.

Sky watch for the next month:

- Annual Perseids Meteor Shower — Peak starts Friday, Aug. 12 to Sunday, Aug. 14 with estimated rate of 60 to 100 meteors per hour. Best view is starting at 11 p.m. facing the N.E. in the constellation of Perseas (www.skymaps.com has free star charts which will help you find it) until dawn. For further



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information check out:

<http://www.chiff.com/science/perseids.htm> which has a complete video guide.

- Saturn, Mars and Antares in line — Tuesday, Aug. 23 after sunset in south these three will be vertical until they set around midnight.

- Moon in Hyades star Cluster — Thursday, Aug. 25 before dawn until sunrise.

- Milky Way Brilliance — This is an excellent month to view our home galaxy without freezing. Best time is after 11 p.m. until dawn.

Public Events for the next month:

Monthly Friday night stargazing at the Trek Center. Mark down Friday, Aug. 12 at

7:30 p.m. on your calendar and join us at the Trek Center for our monthly Star Gazing. We will try and show you the rings of Saturn during daylight (yes, this is possible with the scope we have) followed by a short indoor presentation on the Perseids meteor shower weather pending. Experts on hand the second Friday monthly at 7:30 p.m. 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 meteor shower viewing and keep reaching for the sky.

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 more than 4,000 members and 29 centers across Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at 403-560-6574 or email: Neel_Roberts@ptc.canada.com. The members meet once a month at the Trek Center in Vulcan the second Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. and you can check them out at: <http://calgary.rasc.ca/vulcan2016.htm>.



Photos by Neel Roberts

Larry McNish, RASC Calgary's web designer, demonstrates taking photographs through the telescope which is a popular feature. Below, taken last year, this Blue Moon (which means two full moons in the same month; nothing to do with the colour) from July 31, 2015 actually reflected it on the circumference.



Devan Daniels tourism manager, sitting on the ledge third from the left, chills over a hot cup of coffee. We are sad he is leaving after three years in Vulcan.