

Love is a 'total' solar eclipse near home

Yes, 2017 is the year North Americans finally get a cross country total solar eclipse after a 45-year wait.

Given 1972 was the last main one, no surprise many haven't seen one.

Mark Monday, Aug. 21 at around 10:25 MST for about two minutes of darkness in the morning depending on your location. The night sky is so dark, you can actually see many of the stars given there'll be no light pollution, therefore many cities will see a variety of celestial objects for the first time.

Unfortunately Canada will not get the total affect and you'll have to travel to the United States for the maximum benefit. Check out the website at: <http://www.eclipse2017.org/> for a list of places to spot it and more information.

I am planning a group trip to a small location an hour north of Boise, Idaho leaving Saturday, Aug. 19, overnighing Sunday and returning after the eclipse.

Accommodations are already extremely tight and expected to be totally sold out soon. The next one is April 8, 2024 (a seven-year wait), 2033, 2044 (yes, in Alberta) and 2045.

More to come as the date approaches.

Sky watch for the next month:

- Penumbral Lunar Eclipse — Look N.E.E. Friday, Feb. 10 as the Moon will rise in an eclipsed state until around 8 p.m.

- Betelgeuse — The Valentine's star is visible Valentine's Day, Monday, Feb. 14 starting in the south sky from dusk until setting in the west after 2 a.m. Impress your date by showing



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them the easy to find red pulsating star which is Orion's shoulder.

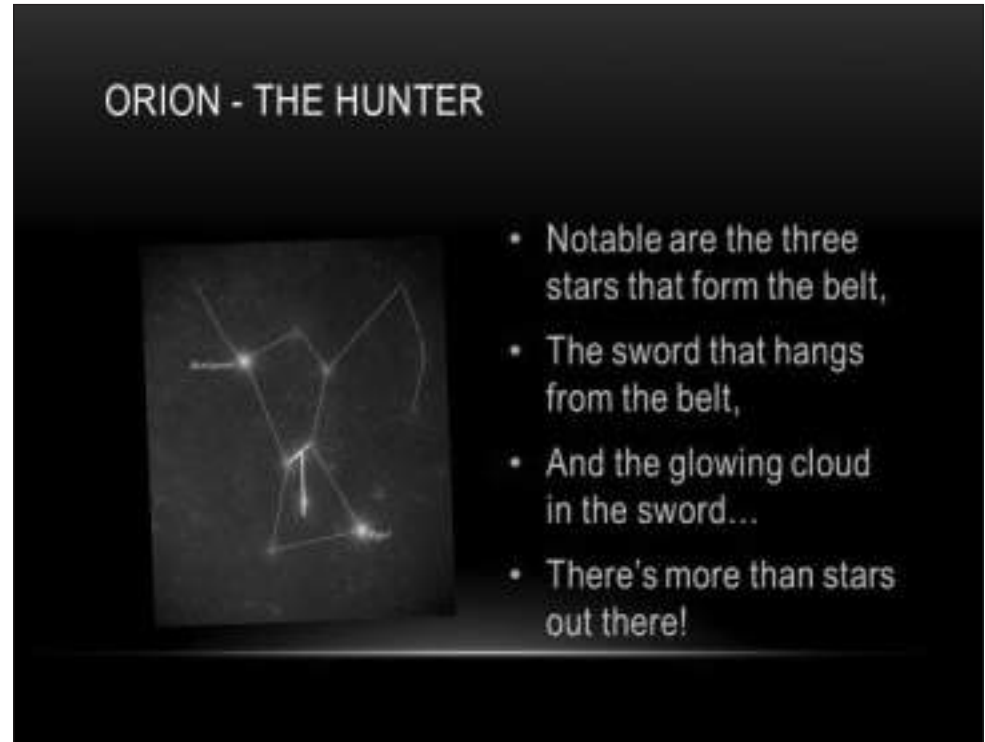
- Bright Venus — That glaring object in the early western evening sky is not a plane, but Venus at its peak brilliance on Friday, Feb. 17 until it sets around 9:30 p.m.

- Zodiacal Light — Is a faint, roughly triangular, whitish glow seen in the night sky extended up from the vicinity of the sun along the ecliptic or zodiac. Discovered by the

astronomer Giovanni Domenico Cassini in 1683 and later explained by Nicolas Fatio de Duillier in 1684, it's trying to find and the best time is from Monday, February 13th for 2 weeks in the West after evening.

Public Events for the next month:

Monthly Public Stargazing at the Trek Center. Join us Friday, Feb. 10 and learn about the Valentine's Star Betelgeuse and more courtesy of the RASC (Calgary) starting at 7:30 p.m. Brief indoor presentation followed by stargazing by the 11-inch telescope and binocular outside (weather permitting). All welcome, no charge and refreshments provided. 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.



Photos contributed by Neel Roberts

Slides from Roland Dechesne's indoor presentation illustrates Orion and the Valentine star which is very visible Feb. 14 all night.

For further information, contact the Trek Center at 403-485-2994 and the website www.vulcantourism.com will be updated regularly.

Happy Valentines and stargazing.

Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC) — the nation's leading astronomy club founded in 1849 with

more than 5,000 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 the second Friday monthly at the Trek Center in Vulcan at 7:30 p.m. and you can check them out at <http://calgary.rasc.ca/vulcan2017.htm>.



John Usborne looks through the binos to get a closer look at the Valentine Star Betelgeuse.