

Top Gun astronomer shows you the ropes at Spock Days

Have you ever wanted to be taught by the best of the best? Mark Friday, June 12 on your calendar and learn the skies from author and speaker Alan Dyer.

Having written several books and equipped with an information loaded website (<http://amazingsky.ca>), Dyer has been a student of the sky since he can remember. A resident of southern Alberta, he has given presentations for decades and this year Vulcan is privileged to host him Friday at the Trek Center when Spock Days kick off.

Last year the RASC Calgary successfully held an astronomy evening with several presentations. This year they are raising the bar as Dyer will attempt to share decades of experience in one evening.

The RASC Calgary in co-operation with Vulcan Tourism have steadily been improving the Stargazing evenings that started in December 2010 with technology and guest speakers in specific areas. Several telescopes and visual aids will be outside and you are welcome to bring your own binoculars, etc.

Extended daylight hours allows participants to snap pictures with their smartphones of Venus, Jupiter and Saturn with the rings perfectly visible which makes



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Trek Center.

- Longest Day of the Year — Sunday, June 21 is officially the summer solstice at 10:38 a.m. MDT and we will have 15 hours and 40 minutes of actual daylight. Sun officially rises at 5:23 a.m. and sets at 9:43 p.m. with high noon at 1:33 p.m. for a total of 16 hours, 19 minutes of daylight.

Public Events for the next month:

- Monthly Public Stargazing at the Trek Center. Mark down Friday, June 12 at 7:30 p.m. on your calendar and join us at the Trek Center for our monthly Star Gazing. We will be the feature attraction instead of the usually meet and greet at Spock Days and plan to be there most of the evening. Short indoor presentations followed by scoping the skies with the 11-inch telescope outside and much more. Refreshment provided, all welcome and no charge. Held the second Friday of monthly at 7:30 p.m. For further information contact the Trek center at 403-485-2994 or online at: 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 more than six years and it's always a blast. We invite you to join us for the one-hour ride through Vulcan. A lot of fun and all welcome Saturday, June 13, at 8:30 a.m. Float departs at 10 a.m. and usually last about an hour. Bring candy if you wish to throw out to the audience, but it is not necessary.

Spock Days unique and well worth it.

Sky watch for the next month:

- Thin Crescent Moon pulls up Mercury — Sunday, June 14 look NEE before sunrise around 5:15 a.m. as Mercury seems to follow the Moon up.

- Venus and Jupiter near conjunction — Sunday, June 30 in the west after sundown, this will be the brightest object in the sky besides the Moon before they set around midnight. Makes a great smartphone photo object through the scope.

- Venus next to Bee Hive Cluster M44 — Friday, June 12 in the West at sundown until after midnight, both are naked eye objects and we will point this out at the



Photos by Neel Roberts

Neel Roberts, Karl Ivarson Jr. and Roland Dechesne in front of the RASC Calgary 20-inch mobile telescope which was the largest on wheels in the province for some time. Below, Whitney Schmidt of Calgary dressed up in full Star Trek gear ready to board the RASC Calgary float with her family for the Spock Days parade.

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 more than 4,000 members and 29 centers across Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at 403-560-6574, or e-mail him at: Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com. The members meet the second Friday monthly at the Trek Center at 7:30 p.m. and you find out about membership at www.calgary.rasc.ca.



Ann Morse and daughter Emily of Vulcan are frequent riders on the Spock Days float which the RASC Calgary has had for more than six years.