

Canada's Stonehenge; a Vulcan County treasure

Vulcan may have made world news about *Star Trek* many times since Leonard Nimoy's visit, but the county holds a little-talked about gem estimated to be about 5,000 years old.

Known locally as the "Majorville Medicine Wheel" it is actually an ancient calendar believed to be built as a sun temple by the then-indigenous Oxbow People.

Visible on Google Earth at about N50 35' 94"/W112 24' 36" (email me if you want an accurate map) it is accessible via prairie road about 25 kilometres almost straight east of Milo just before the Bow River.

Professor Emeritus Gordon R. Freeman of the University of Alberta has spent much of his career studying this and other similar objects.

In his 2009 book, *Canada's Stonehenge* (www.canadastonehenge.com) he goes into great detail how the decades-old controversy about Stonehenge containing a calendar.

Surprising new discoveries at the site display the beautiful ancient 4,300-year-old solar and lunar calendars for the first time in history.

When I checked out the site a few years ago in the summer, it was fenced off by the Alberta government as a heritage location since 2010, but is always open to visitors. Best time to go is late spring to early fall when conditions are dry. Roads are not maintained and a four-wheel drive is recommended.

Many make a picnic day out of it and for archeology/history buffs, it's a dream come true made right here at home.

Sky watch for the next month:

- Crescent Moon between Jupiter and Regulus — on Friday, July 8 look west after sunset for this trio



Neel ROBERTS

YOUR UNIVERSE



RASC Calgary member Wade Williamson of Calgary often visits the Vulcan meetings sets up a few scopes.

Photos by Neel Roberts

until they set around midnight.

- Saturn between Moon and Mars — on Saturday, July 16 after sunset, look south for these three as they cross the night sky until dawn.

- Jupiter, Mercury, Venus sunset — Friday, July 29 these planets will follow the sun until they are all down by 10:30 p.m.

- Delta Aquarids Meteor Shower Peak — on Thursday, July 28 look in the southern sky a few hours before dawn as it expected debris from comet 96P Machholz will fall at a rate of 15-20 per hour. With a slender, waning crescent moon, it will be easy to enjoy.

Public Events for the next month:

Monthly Friday night stargazing at the Trek Center. Mark down Friday, July 8 at 7:30 p.m. on your calendar and join us at the Trek Center for our monthly Star Gazing kicking off the Vul-Con weekend. Topic is the 'summer sky'. Short indoor presentation followed by scoping the skies with the 11-inch telescope outside and opportunity to snap your own pictures of celestial objects with your smartphone through the scope. Refreshments provided, all are

welcome and no charge. Held the second Friday monthly at 7:30 p.m. For further info. contact the Trek center at 403-485-2994, www.vulcantourism.com.

RASC Annual Star-B-Q July 8-10. Join us for some good times and great viewing under wonderfully dark skies. \$20 per vehicle and Saturday buffet is \$21 per person. All weekend camping at Eccles Ranch Observatory just north of Caroline, Alta. For further information contact Roland Dechesne at 403-510-4330 or email: Roland.Dechesne@cnrl.com. The website is: <http://calgary.rasc.ca/starbq.htm>.

Happy long days of summer 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 centres across Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at 403-560-6574 or email: 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.



Specially made by Diane Smith of Vulcan, Star Trek cookies are one of the treats featured for breaks.



CURATOLO