

Because the days ahead are worth living for

The New Year gives all of us a chance to start again whether we have done well or terribly. Are you one of those New Year's resolution junkies who always falls for the same old trap? It doesn't take you long to realize the actual bet is to see how long it takes you to give up and go back to the comfortable routine of the last 364 days. Have you considered getting to know the sky better this year? Believe it or not, most rarely lose interest in that because it's the mystery and wonder of the heavens that keeps the sky gazers motivated — whether you have several degrees in astrophysics or are simply curious about a constellation. One of the most memorable Star Trek shows of the '60s illustrating this imaginary foresight was an episode called *City on the Edge of Forever*. Sex symbol Joan Collins played the unconventional roll of a social worker, Edith Keeler, preaching to homeless refugees and here is what she envisioned:

"Now I don't pretend to tell you how to find happiness and love, when every day is just a struggle to survive. But I do insist that you do survive, because the days



Neel Roberts
The Sky's the Limit

and the years ahead are worth living for. One day, soon, man is going to be able to harness incredible energies, maybe even the atom, energies that could ultimately hurl us to other worlds in....in some sort of spaceship. And the men that reach out into space will be able to find ways to feed the hungry millions of the world and to cure their diseases. They will be able to find a way to give each man hope and a common future. And those are the days worth living for..."

Whether you're a Trekkie or not, you have to admit some of that has actually come to pass not long after that. It was only two short years later after the show aired that Apollo 11 landed in 1969 and Buzz Aldrin transmitted his famous words, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." So my message goes out to those who have had the hardest

of times and nothing but setbacks, let me repeat, "the days ahead are worth living for!"

Sky watch for the next month

Pleiades will follow the Moon's setting on Jan. 15. Look in the northwest-west horizon at about 4:30 a.m. as M45 crowns the moon on the way down by 5 a.m.

There will be a double shadow and satellite on Jupiter on Jan. 10. Check out the double moon pass at 9 p.m. and earlier that afternoon from 2 p.m. you'll see a double shadow from the sunlight.

The Quadrantid meteor shower peaks on Jan. 3 and 4 with an average fall of 40 meteors per hour. Best viewing time is 2:30 a.m. to dawn in the Bootes constellation in the northeast-east.

Check out a partial solar eclipse live on Jan. 4 at eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse.html. It will peak at 1:51 a.m. our time starting in northern Africa and ending in mid Asia.

Public events for the next month

The new year at the Tourism and Trek Station will ring in with a brand new monthly event. The Royal Astronomical Society

of Calgary will host regular stargazing occasions around the middle of each month starting with an indoor presentation in the "bridge section" of the Trek Station, followed by telescope and binocular demonstrations outside (weather permitting). Everyone is welcome at no charge, and refreshments are provided. Experts will be on hand to explain the heavens, teach scoping skills and help you to develop your knowledge of the sky. Whether you have several PhDs or are just enquiring, these evenings will be fun for all. Just bring your curious self. Different topics will be covered each month, and there will be the chance to build a network of cosmos allies. For more information, contact the Trek Station at 403-485-2994, or visit website www.vulcantourism.com — it will be updated regularly!

Happy New Year and the best for 2011 and beyond!

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