

# Astronomers "love" what they do

Many people in the workforce hate what they do. Personally, not enjoying what I do has been a very rare thing in my life because I refuse to involve myself in any occupation which is dissatisfying. It is no surprise I pursued stargazing at an early age because it didn't take me long to find out that astronomers totally love what they do. Check it out for yourself if you don't believe me, but my guess is that these professionals are so taken by the grandeur of what's out there that it's unthinkable to dislike or run out of discoveries. Scientists have identified at best five per cent of what exists in the known universe, and explorers are astonished at the secrets that are continually revealed. Yesterday's fiction becomes today's fact, and tomorrow dreams are always the agenda. I doubt we'll ever even get acquainted with a significant minority of the cosmos, but this Valentine's when you and your sweetheart encompass the mysteries of love, take the time to add the wonders of



**Neel Roberts**  
**The Sky's the Limit**

the night sky. Whether it's a moon-light walk or the Valentine's Star, Betelgeuse, the driving passion for romance is infinite!  
**Sky watch for the next month**

The moon dating the Seven Sisters takes place from dusk on Feb. 11. You can follow the Pleiades (M45), which will crown the moon until it sets in the northwest at about 3 a.m.

Venus has always been an easy morning star to catch, but Pluto is practically impossible to find without a good telescope. If you're looking south-southeast on Feb. 5 at about 5:30 a.m., Pluto will be rising just next to Venus and will follow it all day unlit. They both set that afternoon in the southwest.

Betelgeuse, the

Valentine's Day star, is visible Feb. 14 starting in the south-southeast sky from dusk and sets in the west at 3:30 a.m.

As mentioned in previous articles, Zodiacal Light is a faint, roughly triangular, whitish glow seen in the night sky that extends up from the vicinity of the sun along the ecliptic or zodiac. It's hard to find, but this year there will be several opportunities to get a glimpse. The best time is from Feb. 20 for two weeks in the northwest, after twilight.

**Public events for the next month**

The Saturday Observer's Night at the Telescope Farm is being hosted by All Star Telescope, just outside Didsbury, on March 5, starting at 8 p.m. and going until midnight. Refreshments will be served, and everything is provided at no charge. I am planning to attend, and you are welcome to caravan with a group I am assembling leaving Vulcan at about 4:30 p.m., weather permitting. We stop for

a Chinese buffet before heading to the celestial farm for the evening. For more information, contact Ken From at 866-310-8844 or go to <http://www.all-startelescope.com/index.php/Observer-Nights.html>.

Did you join us last month for stargazing at the Trek Station? We had a great start to what will be a monthly event, so don't hesitate to get involved. We'll check out the full moon rising on Feb. 18 at 7:30 p.m. with the Valentine star and much more, weather permitting. There will be a short indoor presentation followed by stargazing. Treats and refreshments are provided free of charge and all are welcome. For further information, contact the Trek Station at 403-485-2994 and the website [www.vulcantourism.com](http://www.vulcantourism.com).

*Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. He welcomes your questions and comments at 403-485-2683 and [Neel\\_Roberts@ptccanada.com](mailto:Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com).*