

Ancients long awaited “the” star of hope

Stargazing in BC times was by no means a hobby but a profession which largely affected the planting of crops and sailing of cargo ships in the night sky. A “pro” stargazer similarly to today’s weather reporters was not only well respected and paid top rate but also often worked alongside the rulers to determine important policies.

The Magi of the New Testament are thought to be professional stargazers from ancient Babylon.

Even though the Babylonian empire was conquered centuries before hand, they kept their ear to the ground throughout the generations waiting for the star to appear in the heavens before setting out to Israel 2,000 years ago.

Today the days of prophetic signs in the sky are well past us as the promised Messiah Jesus has arrived and the anniversary of his birth is celebrated by Christians each year at this time.



Neel Roberts
The Sky’s the Limit

Sky watch for the next month

A moon, Jupiter and Regulus triangle takes place Thursday, Dec. 11 after sundown. Look west to see these three for much of the evening.

On Christmas Eve, don’t miss a delightful chance to see Mars and the moon just after sunset. Look for the red planet to be just south of our moon.

Check out the Geminid and Ursid Meteor Shower. We actually have two mild meteor showers this month of which Geminid peaks Saturday, Dec. 13 just after midnight on a bright, waxing, gibbous moon that will interfere with the Geminids throughout most of the peak night and

the Ursid shower Monday, Dec. 22 after sundown when earth moves through the centre of the dust trail left behind by the comet until the moon comes out at 10 p.m. For more on all meteor showers check out the International Meteor Organization at www.imo.net/calendar/2015.

The Winter Solstice arrives on Sunday, Dec. 21. It is officially the shortest day of the year at 4:03 p.m. in the afternoon. This occurs when the sun reaches its most southerly declination of -23.5 degrees and likewise the North Pole is tilted 23.5 degrees away from the sun. Depending on the Gregorian calendar, the December solstice occurs annually on a day between Dec. 20 and Dec. 23. On this date, all places above a latitude of 66.5 degrees north are now in darkness, while locations below a latitude of 66.5 degrees south receive 24 hours of daylight.

Public events for the next month

Monthly Public

Stargazing at the Trek Center- Friday, Dec. 12 starting at 7:30 p.m. It’s the last stargazing session of the year, so check us out if you haven’t. We’ll be celebrating our fourth anniversary of the RASC Calgary at the Trek Center with cake and refreshments. Short indoor presentation on “Christmas in the sky” followed by stargazing through the 11” Celestron Telescope. Treats and refreshments provided free of charge and all welcome. Experts on hand the 2nd Friday of the month at 19:30 to explain the heavens, teach scoping skills and help you develop your knowledge of our sky. For further information, contact the Trek Station at 403-485-2994 or visit 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 403-560-6574 and at Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com.