

A lot to see in the night skies in August

Look to the skies this month to see the following activity:

- Waxing moon near Mars and Saturn. On Sunday, Aug. 31 (Labour Day long weekend) just after sunset in the SSW those two bright objects near the moon are Saturn and Mars which will set by 11 p.m. in the SWW.
- Venus and Jupiter near M44 Beehive Cluster. Tuesday, Aug. 19 before dawn, look NEE at 5 a.m. as these three rise with the sun.
- Milky Way Brilliance. This is an excellent month to view our home galaxy without freezing. Best time is after 11 p.m. until dawn.
- Annual Perseids Meteor Shower. Peak starts Aug. 11-13 with estimated rate of 60 to 100 meteors



Professional chef Sean Poole flame broils a few burgers for stargazers. Vulcan's Trek center usually provides refreshments free of charge.

per hour. Best view is starting at 11 p.m. facing the N.E. in the constellation of Perseas (www.skymaps.com has free star charts which will help you find it) until dawn. August Perseids Meteor Shower needs no visual aids.

For further information check out <http://www.chiff.com/science/perseids.htm> which has a complete video guide.

Public Events for the next month:

Monthly Friday night stargazing at the Vulcan Trek Center. Mark down Friday, Aug. 9 at 7:30 p.m. on your calendar and join us at the Trek Center for our monthly Star Gazing. We will try and show you the rings of Saturn during daylight (yes, this is possible with the scope we have) followed by a short indoor presentation on the cosmos (weather pending). Experts on hand the second Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m. to explain the heavens, teach scoping skills and help you develop your knowledge of our sky.

For further information, contact the Trek Center at 403-485-2994 or the website: www.vulcantourism.com will be updated regularly.

Happy meteor shower viewing 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 over 4,000 members and 29 centres across Canada. Questions and comments welcome at 403-485-2683 or email: Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com. The members meet the second Friday, once a month at the Trek Center in Vulcan Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. and you can check them out at www.calgary.rasc.ca.



Photos contributed

Thirteen-year-old Will Smith passes out after being taken by the vast amount of meteors falling from the sky. This is actually the best way to see them during the peak days. Below, Will with his 12-year-old sister Rachel and brother Greg, seven, line up next to the 11-inch Celestron Telescope which is in regular use at Vulcan's Trek Center.

