

NASA discovers brightest galaxy in space

In the spring of 2015, NASA announced its Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer (WISE) spacecraft found what's believed to be today's most luminous galaxy in the universe.

Estimated at more than 12.5 billion light years away, it's on the edge of the known 13.5-billion light year universe. Burning at more than 300 trillion suns bright, the cluster made the record and belongs to a new classification of objects dubbed "extremely luminous infrared galaxies (ELIRGs)".

WISE has been finding more of these unique galaxies since 2010 using infrared technology. By scanning the whole sky with more diligence than ever before, WISE has captured uncommon cosmic examples not possible before.

Despite this breakthrough for the better, Chao-Wei Tsai of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California explains, "We found in a related study with WISE that as many as half of the most luminous galaxies only show up well in infrared light."

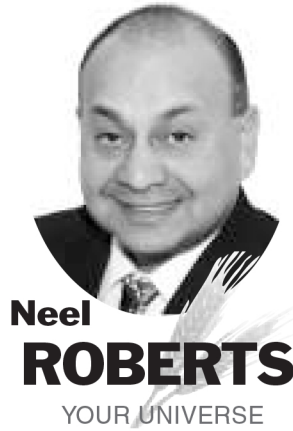
While man took another step forward, I agree we're just at the beginning of how big creation gets. To put that into perspective, in Galileo's time (1564-1642), 3,000 know stars were acknowledged while his telescope increased that by a factor of 10 to 30,000 and today it's 200,000,000.

Sky watch for the next month:

- Jupiter North of Moon — On Sunday after supper look at the Moon around 6:44 p.m. and Jupiter will follow it on top until dawn.

- Aldebaran Comes out from behind Moon at dusk — On Sunday April 10 at supper time, look at the Moon before 6:20 p.m. and you'll see Aldebaran creep out from behind as night falls.

- Moon, Mars, Saturn and Antares midnight Quasi-conjunction — On Monday, April 25 going into Tuesday,



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April 26 these four will rise in the southeast around midnight not setting until sunrise.

- Lyrids Meteor Shower — also known as April shooting stars produced by dust particles left behind by comet C/1861 G1 Thatcher discovered in 1861 will peak before dawn in the morning on Friday, April 22. Look east into the constellation of Lyra near Vega and you should be able to catch 10 to 20 meteors per hour on average with rare surges of up to 100, but the Full Moon glare will reduce viewing.

Public Events for the next month

Special 50th Star Trek Anniversary Stargazing at the Trek Center — Check out our stargazing event courtesy of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Calgary)

starting at 7:30 p.m., Friday, April 8. Brief indoor presentation on "Star Trek and the Stars" followed special presentation by Vulcan Tourism then observing through our resident 11-inch Celestron telescope. All welcome, no charge and refreshments provided. Come early as space fills up by show time.

Experts on hand the second Friday monthly 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 online at: www.vulcantourism.com.

Happy spring and warmer days.

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 centers across Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at 403-560-6574, or emailing: 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 online at: <http://calgary.rasc.ca/vulcan2016.htm>.



Photos by Neel Roberts

Above: Karl Ivarson Jr. lines up the 11-inch telescope as it gets used a lot for the evening meetings.

Below: A mother watches over her son who is peeping into the 11-inch Celestron Telescope.

