Milky Way and stars are nature's night lights; not the moon

By Neel Roberts

Many songs and poems have been written about a Moon light night but not enough goes to the stars which are always out. Why? Simply because the Moon is very noticeable, but it is not always up as it can be sometimes a daytime object. Stars on the other hand are "always" up. Yes, even during the day you maybe able to catch the bright ones like Vega and Sirius if it is clear and opposite the Sun. However, go out to a dark sky area (check out https://www.cleardarksky.com/maps/lp/large_light_pollution_map.html) where there's a lake and the darkest areas on the map, that's your best chance. On a still night you can not only see the sky reflected in the water, but the night light casts shadows. Before compasses were invented, sailors navigated ships via the stars while farmers used the constellations to plant and harvest crops. In the Old Testament Genesis 1:16, we learn "the lesser light to rule the night" refers to the stars and not the Moon or Sun. A good, local candidate to catch this is Waterton Lakes. Dark Sky Guides is a local touring company that specializes in the night sky and while many tourists do come out, Alberta natives are no strangers. A rare catch of this is a lifetime event you'll tell others for generations. Check them out at https://darkskyguides.ca before the snow flies!

https://mymodernmet.com/daniel-kordan-uyuni-salt-flats/, https://darkskyguides.ca/entries/faqs/5d7b689e-7276-4843-88f1-51b6957e2360

Sky watch for the next month: Download this month's sky free chart at http://whatsouttonight.com/Resources/2020SepSkyWOT.pdf

1. Spica near Mercury- Tuesday, September 22nd after sunset look SWW at around 19:30 to catch this before they set at 19:55.
2. Saturn & Jupiter day shots- Friday September 25th, look SEE near the Moon with good binos or a scope and see them in daylight.
3. Fall Equinox- On Tuesday, September 22nd at 07:30 am the summer's officially over.
4. Zodiacal Light- is a faint, roughly triangular, whitish glow seen in the night sky extended up from the vicinity of the sun along the ecliptic or zodiac. Discovered by the astronomer Giovanni Domenico Cassini in 1683 and later explained by Nicolas Fatio de Duillier in 1684, it's trying to find, and the best time is from Monday, September 14th for 2 weeks in the east morning twilight.

Public Events for the next month:

Special workshop at Calgary's Rothney Observatory near Priddis- Mark down Friday, September 25th from 19:30 to 22:30 for "Shooting Stars". In this 4-hour workshop Alan reviews:

- Choosing cameras, lenses, and accessories such as sky trackers
- Best practices in the field for getting great astro-images
- Then … the basic steps to processing those images in Adobe Camera Raw or Lightroom, and Photoshop.

The entrance fee $50 per person and tickets can be bought at https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/shooting-stars-2020-tickets-88934953841. For further information, contact Jennifer Howse at jhowse@phas.ucalgary.ca, (403) 931-2366. Their website https://www.ucalgary.ca/rao/ is updated regularly.

Happy Fall and shorter days!

Neel Roberts is a local astronomer in Southern Alberta and welcomes your comment at Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com, Tel: (403) 560-6574. Check out his work at www.ptccanada.com.