



You too can be an astro photographer

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Have you ever tried to capture the night sky in pictures? Ten of thousands around the world each evening do so in various ways. Whether you're a first timer with a basic phone or own a high-end observatory loaded with the latest equipment, there's a variety of ways you can get in on the action. With technology today, anybody can get started and with all types of free astronomy/photography apps, etc. there's no reason why you can't. I'm no pro, but I've done this several times with scopes, binos and even

without visual aids. Though a 11" Celestron scope with just a Samsung Galaxy Note 10, I was able to snap a "day" shot of Saturn and the rings came out amazingly clear.

In a recent (November 2021) Skynews (<https://skynews.ca>) article, Kerry-Ann Lecky Hepburn of the Niagara Region, Ontario, owner of <https://www.weatherandsky.com> outlines her lifelong passion of astrophotography. Since the 1986 passing of Haley's comet, she's been building an impressive collection of night sky shots from around the world. There's too many to list but the ones from the hottest place on Earth, Death Valley, California, the mysterious "sailing stones" are poster material. Included is one from the Icefields Highway of Banff National Park featuring a starry rainbow. Check out her website or Instagram at <http://www.instagram.com/weatherandsky> for the collection and contact information on her workshops, licensing info, etc. Wade Williams of the RASC Calgary (<https://calgary.rasc.ca/wp>) recently took some rare shots with his iPhone 12 near Maycroft, Alberta last mid October. With no visual aids, editing or complex

settings, he was able to capture a unique “day” photo of the Big Dipper, Ursa Major. I was not able to find anything like it online, so it’s a trophy!

Want to raise the bar and get your own remote sky cam? All Sky Cams (<https://allskycams.com>) is one of many companies which gives you the capability to stargaze in the comfort of your own home while capturing meteor showers, Northern Lights and more. Calgary’s Rothney <https://cam01.sci.ucalgary.ca/timelapse/allsky/> is one of many observatories anybody can remote into for free to meteor shower watch. This opens the door to all the networking possibilities down the road. For those who have their own weather stations online with such services as <https://ambientweather.net>, <https://www.wunderground.com> and more, you know what I’m talking about. It’s on my “to do” list for 2022 to get my own sky cam but I think by the end of the decade, its popularity will be near par with the personal weather station networks. Yes, you too can be an Astro photographer; THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

Sky watch for the next month: Download this month’s sky free chart at <http://whatsouttonight.com/Resources/2022FebSkyWOT.pdf>

Sky watch for the next month:

I. **Venus brightest before dawn-** Look SEE Saturday, February 12th at 05:25 am

as it will be at magnitude -4.6, the brightest object in the sky besides the Moon.

II. **Betelgeuse-** the Valentine’s star is visible Valentine’s Day, Monday, February 14th starting in the SE from dusk until setting in the West after 2:30 am. Impress your date by showing them the easy to find red pulsating star which is Orion’s shoulder.

I. **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, its best time is from Friday, February 18th for 2 weeks and Sunday, March 20th for 2 weeks in the West after evening.

II. **Venus, Mars and Moon at dawn-** before sunrise on Sunday February 27th look SE for this trio before the Sun shines on them.

Happy Valentines and stargazing!

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

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