

Our Night Sky for December 31st

As you listen to this essay it is a few hours into 2024. In fact, there are 8750 hours remaining in 2024. This year is a leap year and it has an extra day. This is because of the difference between the accepted calculation of our standard calendar and the astronomical calculation of a sidereal day which is about four minutes shorter.

So Happy New Year on this first day of 2024. And all the best to you in the slightly inaccurate days ahead.

Many people think of astronomy as lovely pictures from a space telescope, but in fact astronomy touches many sciences. One of them is helping keep our planet on time.

But astronomy includes almost all the sciences, from math to chemistry, geology and even biology. Exo biology and the search for non terrestrial signs of life has become a key player in the search for indications of life signs beyond our planet. We have even brought back samples from the debris left over in comets from the assembly of our solar system more than four billion years ago.

A local astronomer is part of a global supernova search team and has discovered two supernovae in a nearby galaxy using our telescope at the Prince George observatory. The internet has opened research, it is no longer limited to large well funded organizations, but it now includes local astronomers who's first interest is Our Night Sky