

Astronomy In The Two Dales

July

At the time of writing , we still do not know if we are IN or OUT. All I know is that I live IN the solar system and everything else is OUT there in deep space and can stay there , thank you very much.

So what is going on IN the solar system , well the moon is new on the 4th and full on the 19th , which is good news , as the Delta Aquarid meteor shower peaks on the nights of the 28th and 29th . This is a low level meteor shower , with 10 – 20 meteors per hour , best viewed before dawn looking in a southerly direction.

On the 4th the Juno probe arrives at the planet Jupiter , it`s mission is to “ Understand origin and evolution of Jupiter, look for solid planetary core, map magnetic field, measure water and ammonia in deep atmosphere, observe auroras. “ all this before the probe runs out of juice and NASA crash the probe into Jupiter.

There will be an interesting view in the sky , as around the middle of the month , Saturn , Mars , the moon and the star Antares will form a square in the southern sky.

Meanwhile , OUT there , the quest for life beyond our little world goes on. We , as humans , are a carbon based life form , but the planet we live on is mostly composed of iron and silica . New research has revealed that when planets first formed in the early life of the universe they had a high carbon content , so planets of graphite , carbide or diamond would have been the scene for the creation of life forms.

These planets would be orbiting a very rare type of star called a carbon-enhanced metal-poor star , formed when heavy elements were not widely dispersed throughout the universe .These stars can be considered as anaemic as they have only 100,000th the iron that our sun has , though scientists believe that life from these planets will still be carbon based.

From a distance, these carbon planets would be difficult to tell apart from more Earth-like worlds as their masses and physical sizes would be similar. Astronomers would have to examine their atmospheres for signs of their true nature , looking for gases like carbon monoxide and methane that would envelop these unusual worlds.

So , some where on a planet of solid diamond , in an atmosphere smelling of rotten eggs , carbon based life may be making important decisions and from their perspective it is us who are OUT there.

The Starman
Reeth Informal Astronomy Group
Reethastro.org