Once in a lifetime Halloween blue moon to delight SouthCoast sky gazers

For those skywatchers who have been enjoying the celestial events of 2020, you may recall that we've been treated to a number of shows this year: we had a Wolf's Moon in January, a rare Pink Supermoon at the beginning of April, Mars reached its opposition on October 13th making it appear much larger and brighter in the sky, and the first full moon for October was a Harvest moon.

We've all heard the saying "once in a blue moon." Well, that "once" has arrived in the form of a Blue Moon which will also qualify as a Hunter's Moon since it has landed in October. A Hunter's Moon is called so because its brightness will assist hunters in finding game that have plumped up for the coming winter.

While there are times when a moon will have a blue haze to it, this blue moon itself will not. This blue moon simply refers to any month that has a second full moon – something happens about once every 3 years.

What makes this blue moon special and rare is that not only is it the second full moon in one month, but it is a "micromoon" (when a full moon coincides with apogee, the point in the Moon's orbit farthest away from Earth) and it lands on Halloween. The last time a blue moon landed on a Halloween was in 1944. If you miss this one you will have to wait until 2039.

There is something special about celestial events that remind us to have perspective – we are a "small" being on a planet compared to a vast and immense universe. Sometimes we inflate our problems to be bigger than they are and watching the skies

is a way to remember that some things are bigger. If anything, it provides a few moments of time when we can gaze in wonder and forget the woes of the world if only for a short time.

And with the way 2020 has unfolded – a worldwide pandemic, California and Australia's wildfires, murder hornets, a chemical explosion in Beirut, the death of George Floyd and Gigi and Kobe Bryant, and many other depressing news – we could all use a respite even if it's just a momentary distraction and appreciation ofa tiny, passing lunar show.