

# Astronomy fills his world

## USM lecturer indulges in passion for such magazines

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**PENANG:** His teenage curiosity on the possibility that intelligent life other than human beings exists in the universe prompted him to become an avid reader of astronomy magazines.

Filling up his study and his work place at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) here now are stacks of these magazines collected over the past 27 years.

Astronomy enthusiast and USM Astronomy and Atmospheric Science Research Unit lecturer Dr Chong Hon Yew said his interest in astronomy started when he was in secondary school.

"Back in the 1960s, there was no Internet access and all the information had to come from books and magazines," he said.

He subscribed to the monthly *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy* magazines in 1980 when he started working at the university.

"They were imported from the United States," he said. "It was about \$12 in the early days but now it is priced at RM32 for *Sky & Telescope* and RM32.90 for *Astronomy*."



Unable to decide which magazine was his favourite, Chong said "each issue is as interesting as the other because they focused on different topics."

He said he regretted that some of his magazines went missing after lending them to friends and students.

The man who described himself to be "as excited as the one going to space" said he had been looking forward to the historic moment when Malaysia's first astronaut would be launched into space.

"The event will be an inspiration for young people, especially those who are keen on astronomy," he said.



**Prized possessions:** Dr Chong with his collection of astronomy magazines, *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy* which he has been buying for the past 27 years. — CHIN CHENG YEANG / The Star