

Service Award Nominations

Donald Town has served as the national Representative of the Belleville Centre for close to a decade. He also sits on the Society's constitution committee. But more than that, he has never let family commitments and a work schedule that regularly includes 60 hour weeks prevent him from performing those duties in a manner that can only be described as exemplary. Don has rarely failed to find the time to participate enthusiastically in matters of the society at both the Centre and national levels. I am certain that anyone who has attended, or read the minutes of national council meetings will recognize his name.

As president of the Belleville Centre, I must confess that Don's steadfast attention to society matters at the national level, in addition to allowing me to concentrate on centre activities, has served to cover up my own admitted short comings in this area. I am certain that, however unintentional, I have been the unwitting recipient of credit for Don's hard work that goes on largely unseen by most members.

In addition to his work above and beyond the call as national rep., Don is always the first with his hand in the air when the call goes out for volunteers to support Centre events, Public observing or other forms of public outreach. Each of these individual acts also tend to go largely unnoticed until one stops to consider their frequency.

I would very much like to see Don receive some much-deserved recognition in the form of the Service Award for his hard work and dedication to the achievement of the society's mission statement and the success of the Belleville Centre.

Greg Lisk, Belleville Centre President

Randy Boddam, Belleville Centre

Betty Robinson has been a RASC member for over 30 years, having joined Toronto Centre in 1981. Betty immediately used her editorial skills to manage the production of their newsletter, *Scope*, for four years. She ensured that the newsletter was a comprehensive report of the activities of the centre, including lists of new members, topics for upcoming meetings, upcoming public outreach events, and the requisite documents for the Annual Meeting. She wrote content, laid out the copy, and oversaw and participated in the effort to physically prepare over 1000 copies for mailing.

She also took on roles on the Toronto Centre Council, as secretary from 1984 to 1987, and National Council Representative for the 1982-83 years.

She transferred to the Mississauga Centre in 2006, and served on Council for the first year, helping to get the new Centre processes started and producing the first Mississauga Centre newsletter. Through the following years, Betty regularly attended the twice-monthly meetings, helping out as and whenever required. Betty rejoined Council in early 2016 and revived the dormant newsletter; five issues have been produced to date. Betty also assists with the selling of raffle tickets and calendars at the Centre's meetings, and is our resident cake-baker for Centre celebratory events, such as our 10th anniversary.

She also edits Centre communications sent out to our members.

On the National level, besides her stint as National Council Representative, Betty served as a copy editor for the *Observer's Handbook*, from 2002 to 2009 and again in 2012 and 2017. Given the size and the comprehensiveness of the Handbook, her work in the background—her attention to detail and stress on clarity of the written word—contributes significantly to the professional appearance and reputation of the Handbook.

We, the undersigned, hereby nominate Betty Robinson for the Service Award of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

Leslie Strike, Past President, Mississauga Centre

Valerie Connery, Member, Mississauga Centre

Eric Briggs

Eric Briggs has been an active member of the RASC and Toronto Centre since 1997. Over the past 20 years, he has been involved in many aspects of the Toronto Centre; most notably on Council as the Recorder from 2008 – 2009, Secretary from 2009 to 2016, and Editor of SCOPE from 2009 to the present.

Eric shares his enthusiasm and knowledge of astronomy through his many presentations at the Toronto Centre Recreational Astronomy Night meetings, where his topics included astrophotography sampling, observing from Mount Wilson, tracking and observing satellites through a telescope and asteroid imaging. One of the regular features at these meetings is “The Sky this Month” which Eric has presented 32 times from 2005 to 2009.

A prolific volunteer on behalf of both the Toronto Centre and the National Society, Eric has participated at numerous events and venues such as the [Toronto] Hobby Show, the David Dunlap Observatory where he was also the co-editor of DDO Doings, Ontario Science Centre Star Parties, Science Rendezvous, and the Carr Astronomical Observatory. Over the years, Eric has video recorded the Toronto Centre’s meetings to make them available for members not able to attend in person, he has digitized many historical RASC documents both for the Toronto Centre and the National Society and is a regular contributor to the various Toronto Centre Listservs, social media outlets, and the National RASCals. On behalf of the RASC National Society, Eric is the Curator of “Asteroids with a Canadian Connection,” and can be counted on as a key resource for knowledge on RASC historical events and notable members.

Eric is active in astronomical pursuits outside of the RASC, as a member of the Puckett supernova search team with 10 supernova discoveries co-attributed to him, as a frequent contributing member to IOTA, the International Occultation Timing Association, and professionally with Spitz Inc. Planetariums.

Tony Horvatin, on behalf of the Toronto Centre Council

Katrina Ince-Lum

Katrina Ince-Lum joined the RASC Toronto Centre in 2000 and continues to volunteer her time in a diverse array of areas for the Society. Her passion has always been to encourage others, especially the youth, to discover and develop an interest in astronomy, whether it is with her fellow members or with the general public.

Katrina served as a member of the Toronto Centre Council from 2006 – 2008 and was the Centre's prime organizer for the monthly public solar-observing sessions held monthly at the Ontario Science Centre for many years. In 2008, when Toronto hosted the General Assembly, she was a key member of the event planning team, and was a very visible volunteer who helped ensure a successful weekend for all participants. Katrina volunteers at the Carr Astronomical Observatory both as a site Supervisor and at work parties, and has been a regular fixture during public outreach events at the David Dunlap Observatory and Ontario Science Centre. During the Transit of Mercury in 2016, Katrina broadcasted live over the Internet video of the event from the Carr Astronomical Observatory for the world to see.

Katrina is an avid contributor on social media and is one of the founding volunteers for the Toronto Centre's various Twitter and Facebook pages. She also posts regularly on her own social media accounts, directing her denizen of followers to the RASC and the Toronto Centre, and informing readers of current astronomical events. In a spectacular public relations win, Katrina convinced astronaut Chris Hadfield and the Canadian Space Agency to transport within the *Space Shuttle* to the *International Space Station* a sticker bearing the RASC Seal. Commander Hadfield posed for a picture with the Seal in the Cupola and emailed it back to Katrina.

In recognition of Katrina's continuous service to the RASC Toronto Centre, she was awarded the H.A. Winearls Award in 2008 (also called the President's award) for service to the Centre and the Ostrander-Ramsay Award in 2012 for astronomical writing. In 2016, Katrina was honoured by the Ontario government with the 10-year Ontario Volunteer Service Award, a prestigious award granted for her service to the RASC.

Further afield, Katrina enjoys astronomy-themed travel, and has brought other astronomy enthusiasts with her to the Kennedy Space Centre for *Space Shuttle* launches, the Sudbury Neutrino Observatory, Algonquin Radio Observatory, NEAF (the Northeast Astronomy Forum) and to Australia for OzSky Star Safari, where she has helped many "Northerners" discover the wonders of the southern sky.

Tony Horvatin, on behalf of the Toronto Centre Council

[JSE – She is also one of the three Special Projects Program Trustees.]

Randall Rosenfeld

Eight years ago, Randall Rosenfeld approached the History Committee with a proposal to use materials in the RASC Archives to prepare an exhibit for the 2008 GA of astronomical art and artifacts. Before long, Randall became a member of the History Committee and he agreed to become the Society's archivist in 2008 and chairman of the committee in 2011. His training as a mediaeval scholar gave him credibility in archival practices that no one else on the committee could claim. He produced usage policies and an archive disaster protocol in 2008 that reflected practices of various national archives. When our leadership decided that the Society would no longer maintain its library, it was Randall who managed to save it from oblivion by finding a home for it at the National Museum of Science and Technology. Without question, he is the most productive member of the History Committee and he is an inspiring leader. His ideas for projects that would relate our astronomical history and heritage have included "Canada and the Stars" for IYA2009, a cooperative program among several committees relating to the 2012 transit of Venus, cooperation with CASCA, and so on. He has revolutionized the committee's operation so that it is now a very active one with a much larger membership. With the help of Walter MacDonald, Randall has given the history of the Society, its publications, and archives, an impressive presence on the web that attracts many users. He has successfully encouraged and personally made valuable contributions to our collection; his "reports" for the National Council belie their title since they are more like beautifully composed and illustrated articles. His regular contributions to the *Journal* are examples of his scholarship and wit, which are widely read and enjoyed. Randall's connections to historians outside the Society have raised our profile as an organization. His ability as a writer has been recognized outside the Society through his prize-winning entries in the Boeing Griffith Observer Writing Contest.

Aside from his expertise as Archivist and chair of the History Committee, Randall has a breadth of understanding of the Society's mandate and operation. One example was very evident in his role as chair of the Membership and Promotion Committee. Whatever Randall undertakes, he carries out with thoughtfulness, thoroughness, and utmost modesty.

Society Past President James Edgar writes that he is the epitome of a member who serves the Society well. He is dedicated, engaged, creative, thorough, and clever. No part of what he does is left to chance—not only is he all of the above, his rapier wit and great humour enlighten whatever challenge he takes on.

As for his accomplishments, he is highly deserving of the Society's Service Award for his dedication to the committees he has worked on or chaired; most recently he chairs the History Committee. In addition, his work as the Society's Archivist is second to none.

Dr. Chris Gainor, Society 1st Vice-President, reports that he has known Randall for the past six years while serving on the History Committee, and enthusiastically agrees that Randall is a strong promoter of the committee and, incidentally, of all its members. He has helped all of us with our work as historians. That's on top of the more than 40 articles he has written about the history of astronomy in Canada and the history of the RASC, along with many speaking engagements.

Randall has also become a strong voice for unattached members of the RASC. While our Society has strong traditions of governance through our Centres, we also have had a durable tradition of unattached members, and Randall has become the most prominent representative of the RASC's unattached members.

As well, Randall spearheaded the RASC's early work on the issue of laser pointers, including liaison work with Transport Canada.

He has also entertained RASC members and others with his own "music of the spheres," based upon the music of William Herschel and other historical astronomers.

Randall was the recipient of the 2012 Simon Newcomb Award, and the RASC's President's Award. Asteroid 283990 was named Randallrosenfeld (2004 SG2) in his honour. He is a member of the Heritage Committee of the Canadian Astronomical Society/Société Canadienne d'Astronomie (CASCA), and is a member of several professional early music ensembles.

To summarize, Randall is a member who has gone above and beyond in his service to the Society. He has leveraged his professional skills to the benefit of the Society in a number of areas, membership and promotion, history and archives, and National Council Representative for unattached members. He is more than deserving of this award.

Dr. Randall Boddam MD, FRCPC, Director

James Edgar, Past President

The RASC Ottawa Centre will be hosting the General Assembly in Ottawa in July 2017. We would be honoured if three of our outstanding members were recognized for their outstanding contribution to the Centre by receiving a National Service Award.

Chris Teron, Ottawa Centre
Gordon Webster, Ottawa Centre President

Simon Hanmer

Simon joined the Ottawa Centre and has been a valuable member since 2000. He recently retired from a long career as a senior geologist at the Geological Survey of Canada. In 2013, he was recognized by the Geological Society of Canada for his “sustained dedicated service to the Canadian earth science community” with the prestigious J. Willis Ambrose Medal.

Simon has combined his professional career as a geologist with his interest in astronomy into a passion for the geology of the solar system bodies. Since 2001, he has been one of the Centre’s most prolific and popular speakers. He has made 46 presentations to the Centre’s monthly meetings on the geology of meteorites, the planets and their moons. A common theme to his talks has been to display the latest stunning images of these bodies from NASA and the ESA and explain the geology in the images in a very scientific and understandable way to the audience. He has documented many of his presentations in articles published on the Centre’s web site and in its newsletter, AstroNotes.

The Ottawa Centre has given Simon awards for the Best AstroNotes Article in 2002 and 2003, the Best Presentation to a monthly meeting in 2010 and 2011, and the Ottawa Service Award in 2016.

The members and Council of the Ottawa Centre enthusiastically nominate Simon for a National Service Award.

Geological Society of Canada—J. Willis Ambrose Medal Citation

Simon Hanmer is awarded the Geological Association of Canada’s J. Willis Ambrose Medal for his sustained dedicated service to the Canadian Earth Science community. As a senior scientist at the Geological Survey of Canada and GAC Councillor, Dr. Hanmer has been a tireless advocate for Canadian Earth Sciences and has been effective at both scientific and political levels in catalyzing positive change in the community on a national scale.

Simon’s vision of productive working relationships among the federal, provincial and territorial geological surveys took form as the Cooperative Geological Mapping Strategies (2000-2003), at a time of decreasing funding for public geoscience at both the federal and local jurisdictional levels. CGMS received widespread support from the community and

forged a path for successful national-scale collaborations, including the well-funded Targeted Geoscience Initiatives III and Geo-mapping for Energy and Minerals programs. The success of these programs is a tribute to Simon's premise that working collectively, organizations can achieve more than is possible as individual entities. Although striking in significance, mobilizing public geoscience for the benefit of Canadians is only part of Simon's legacy.

Simon played a lead role in engineering the creation of the Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences. Recognizing that the Canadian Geoscience Council was not achieving its goal of unifying and representing Canadian Earth Science organizations nationally and internationally, Simon used his influence and persuasive logic to generate new enthusiasm and a way forward that became CFES. Simon's leadership in defining and achieving collective goals has guided the community to a sustainable position of strength.

In a still higher sphere of influence, Simon served as GAC representative on the Partnership Group for Science and Engineering, which speaks for 50,000 Canadian scientists and engineers. Recognizing Simon's leadership abilities, PAGSE appointed Simon as Chair, during which time he contributed to building stronger science-policy linkages among national science and engineering organizations, industry and government.

Most recently, Simon led the successful delivery of the 2011 Ottawa GAC-MAC annual meeting in his capacity as General Chair. The extraordinary success of this event in terms of participation, sponsorship, and media coverage was largely due to Simon's indefatigable drive and enthusiasm to inspire volunteer efforts from the entire community.

The Earth Science community is in a more robust position today as a result of Simon's dedicated efforts in both stimulating collaborative approaches, and informing decision-makers about the relevance and importance of our science. Because of all of the above, we enthusiastically submit to the GAC that Dr. Hanmer is most deserving of the J. Willis Ambrose Medal.

Michael Moghadam

Mike joined the Ottawa Centre in 2003 and immediately started to make his mark in the field of public education and outreach. While he held the formal role of Outreach Director in 2009-2011, he has been the driving force in outreach for over a decade. His work includes the public star parties every month in summer held at the Carp Public Library / Diefenbunker and routinely attended by hundreds of interested public. He has organized astronomy workshops for members and the public, the Centre's participation in Natural Resources Canada's Science FunFest, the International Year of Astronomy events in 2009. Recently, he co-organized the daytime Transit of Venus event on Parliament Hill with federal Science Minister Kirsty Duncan, Transport Minister Marc Garneau, and 2,500 other people attending.

In addition to his outreach work, Mike served as Meeting Chair in 2014-2015 and successfully brought in many external guest speakers. He was just elected as Vice President for 2017.

The Ottawa Centre would be honoured if Mike's contributions to the Centre were recognized with a National Service Award.

Charles O'Dale

Chuck likes to show his long involvement in the Ottawa Centre by showing his young face in the group photo from the 1973 General Assembly in Ottawa, and most GAs in Ottawa since.

Chuck has served the Ottawa Centre as Meeting Chair in 2005-2006, President in 2007-2008, National Council Representative in 2009-2011, SmartScope Director in 2011, and Webmaster from 2012 to now.

Notwithstanding these important roles, Ottawa members know Chuck best for a different reason. Chuck loves to combine his three hobbies of astronomy, flying and geology into one, which he titles as "Big Holes in the Ground". He has flown his small plane (C-GOZM or GO ZooM) to almost every meteorite crater in Canada from east to west to the high Arctic, as well as many in the US and as far south as Arecibo in Puerto Rico. He has documented his aerial and ground explorations, the science and the identification of these craters (and craters-not) in 43 presentations to monthly meetings in Ottawa since 2001, on the Centre's web site and in numerous articles in AstroNotes. He likes to finish his talks with a favourite quote from Isaac Asimov – "How bright and beautiful a comet is as it flies past our planet ... provided it does fly PAST it."

Brian Pihak is the one who introduced me to the RASC back in 1999. His passion and enthusiasm for astronomy was captivating. I inquired about a round chunk of glass sitting on a shelf at his office and he explained all about the telescope he was going to build. The outreach began... He encouraged me to come out to a meeting that night. I've been a member ever since. Brian has been a friend since the early 80s but astronomy has made us really great friends. He is a mentor to all our members, his memory is amazing and his will to teach people of all ages never stops. In his 23 years in the RASC Brian has held most positions on our executive, serving as National Representative and on many more committees. He and Stan Sammy swapped the roles of Vice-President and President so many times in the 2000s that I lost count.

Brian and Stan have taught a great number of grade 6 astronomy lessons at schools across the region, many public star nights, and given audio/video presentations to Scouts, Girl Guides, the Niagara Parks Commission, Heartland Forest, multiple museums, and more groups and clubs. Brian's ability to create a new Powerpoint presentation with only a few hours' notice is legendary. With every slide comes facts, more facts and humour. His ability to deliver it clearly to all age groups is beautiful to watch and admire. Even our cloudy public starnights are a success because of Brian's talks. We in the Niagara Centre are lucky to have such a dedicated and devoted member like Dr. Brian Pihack.

Stan Sammy joined the Niagara Centre in 2000. Some of his co-workers were members and convinced him to join the club. Stan is a quick learner, an avid photographer and a very devoted member. He jumped in with both feet and became an executive member within a few years. His retirement hobby became a passion and he wanted to share it with others. That's where Stan began with outreach, and he organized various public events, created flyers and brochures, ran workshops, and has gone to many schools and clubs for A/V presentations. Stan has held various roles with the Niagara Centre, including Public Events Coordinator, President and Vice President. Stan is a joy to be around and has also become a great friend.

Brian and Stan are two outstanding gentlemen, they are true ambassadors for the RASC and the Niagara Centre. Their outreach in teaching and recruitment for the club and the understanding of astronomy and science is a force to contend with. They are wonderful role models for all.

Stan Sammy and Brian Pihack deserve this recognition, not just because of how much work they do, but because they both excel at it and they love to do it. With or without an award, what they do is important to them. They have always exceeded the expectations of the board and general membership at everything they do for the club. They are knowledgeable and passionate about the hobby and are the best ambassadors that any club could ask for. Nothing is ever "half done". They have never wavered from their commitments even when dealing with issues that have happened in their lives outside of the club. It has been a complete and utter pleasure participating on the Board with them and we look forward to continuing that relationship in the years to come.

- Dan Frigault and members of the Niagara Centre

Gerry Smerchanski is a bit of a legend around Southern Manitoba for his indefatigable efforts to spread a love of astronomy within the community. He does so largely unheralded: most of the presentations that he makes in the schools and to community groups are largely unknown to the Winnipeg Centre except by rumour, comment from the public, or from other members who helped him out. That those community efforts are widespread and numerous is apparent from the comments we receive and the reputation he enjoys within the community and local media.

Gerry's forte is his Binocular Sky Tour in which he leads the audience through the night's astronomical delights using an encyclopedic knowledge of star names, constellations, and stories and equipped with nothing more than a laser pointer and a small binocular. Broken cloud? Not a problem, as he dives between the gaps to point out treasures in the minutes they are visible. The beauty of his tours is not as much his knowledge, but the way that he helps everyone to understand that you do not need expensive equipment, only the binoculars you probably already own. Many new members to RASC can be directly attributed to his Bino tours while many others have an ongoing and greater appreciation of the night sky and our galaxy.

Gerry has a charming presentation manner, which combined with his 6-foot-plus stature, hippy locks, and absent-minded professor look, disarms the audience before he leads them through the skyways to a new experience in night viewing. He has an answer for every question from the audience that not only helps them to understand astronomy, but also diverts him and them down other entertaining pathways.

Gerry is a frequent contributor to Winnipeg Centre meetings with his participation in the Beginner's Sessions that start each of our monthly gatherings. He is a stalwart at public presentations at Spruce Woods Provincial Park, at Bird's Hill Park, and at the Nature Conservancy site south of Winnipeg. He has been a member of the team from the Winnipeg Centre helping Riding Mountain National Park, Spruce Woods Park, and the Nature Conservancy's Weston Family Tall Grass Prairie Interpretive Centre obtain Dark Sky status, projects that will soon be implemented. As a result of the efforts of Gerry and others from the Centre, Spruce Woods now has a telescope to use and a dedicated student astronomer to teach about astronomy during the summer season.

Gerry seldom talks about himself and his activities unless pressed and then only minimally. He is a favourite son of the Winnipeg Centre, never without a moment to help with a problem, or share an amusing anecdote, or consume a jug of beer. We are pleased to submit his name on behalf of the Winnipeg Centre.

Jay Anderson

Dennis Lyons