



Dear Friends,

What a year 2020 has been! As it comes to a close, I wanted to reflect on my first full year at RASC and ponder a bit on what 2021 has in store for us. Top of mind of course, are the many adaptations the National Office and Centres have made, and are continuing to make, as we collectively adjust to staying safe during the pandemic.

Virtual programming and meetings have been initiated including our first online AGM and GA. Although hosting online Star Parties, webinars and speaker series may not be able to completely replace in-person get togethers, the huge web attendance at various events demonstrates our Society's ongoing commitment to getting together and share our love of space. We have even seen evidence of increased participation in some areas, for example we had record attendance at our AGM this year! General public interest in our field has also grown substantially over this past year as families seeking new hobbies and activities have discovered astronomy. RASC's YouTube posts have had over 20,000 views, extraordinary growth since the spring and creation of new online content. It's too soon to announce 2020 statistics but at the time of this writing, we're incredibly proud to share that more than 600 new members joined this year.

You'll probably have heard that a new member database is in development, scheduled to be operational **early in 2021**. All of us at National are looking forward to the many efficiencies and enhancements offered by the new software and anticipate Centres will also enjoy easier access to member information and various reports. The system will also replace our aging listservs with new communications tools that are much easier to operate, offer users a variety of ways to interact, and are significantly more secure.

Member access to two years of Robotic Telescope data has just been announced on the e-store! This allows participants to create beautiful images from the data gathered on comets, galaxies and nebulae. We hope you'll explore and try this new astronomical offering.

Due to property redevelopment, National Office must vacate its location by December 31, 2021. This offers an exciting opportunity to find a facility that will accommodate the Dorner Telescope Museum as well as serve head office requirements. Planning sessions with museum specialists and real estate professionals are scheduled in the new year.

Thank you for being a RASC member! Innovative enrollment, retention and renewal strategies are being developed, implemented and shared with Centres. If you're able, please consider sharing your passion for astronomy by purchasing a gift membership for a friend, family member, or colleague. Contact Adela Zyfi to make arrangements at mempub@rasc.ca or call 519-783-1529.

Finally, as a charity, RASC depends on individual donations and grants to provide valued astronomy programs and services not covered by membership dues. Please support the Society with your gift.

Kindly [click here](#) to donate or contact Lisa Di Veto at ldiveto@rasc.ca or 519-754-1803 to enroll in monthly giving, make a gift of shares or arrange a legacy gift.

This has been an exciting first year as Executive Director of RASC and I welcome and invite your communications. Please contact me at phil@rasc.ca or my cell phone at 647-588-2336. All of us at the Society; board, staff and volunteers, are grateful for your membership and support!

Sincerely,

Phil