



ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

Photo: Scott Barrie



December 14 to December 20, 2020 RASC Weekly: Insider's Guide to the Galaxy and the Star of Bethlehem!

Tuesday, December 15, 2020 - 15:30 to 17:00 EST
Insider's Guide to the Galaxy: Observing With Binoculars!

Everyone associates telescopes with astronomy, but did you know you can do some incredible observing with binoculars, and sometimes they may even be the better instrument to observe with? Even better, binoculars are commonly found in forgotten parts of the house, and can be more financially accessible than telescopes. Join us as we talk about how to observe using binos, and the best binocular targets.

[Register for the Insider's Guide to the Galaxy](#)

Friday, December 18, 2020 - 20:30 EST
Star of Bethlehem: the New Discoveries and Solution



Hosted by Dr. Bradley E. Schaefer (LSU), the event navigates the nature of the star of Bethlehem. As we gear up to observe the best "great conjunction" for centuries, popular seasonal speculation abounds about whether the Star of Bethlehem could have been a similar event. For millennia the status of that story—true event, pious fiction, or something in between has generated keen and competing theories as to its nature. Could it have been an astronomical event? Recent work, and a major gathering of scholars at Leiden has ushered in a major advance on the question.

Join us for the next RASC History webinar on the Star of Bethlehem, with our guest Dr. Bradley E. Schaefer, of Louisiana State University, who will review the various theories which have been advanced about the Star in the past, and the novel theory of Dr. Michael Molnar of Rutgers, which has received wide critical support.

Dr. Schaefer, is a respected historian of astronomy, who played a role in the Leiden conference. In his work as an astrophysicist, he was a member of the Supernova Cosmology Project, which discovered the accelerating expansion rate of the universe, and the discovery of Dark Energy, for which he received a share of the Gruber Prize for Cosmology in 2007, and the Breakthrough Prize for Fundamental Physics in 2015.

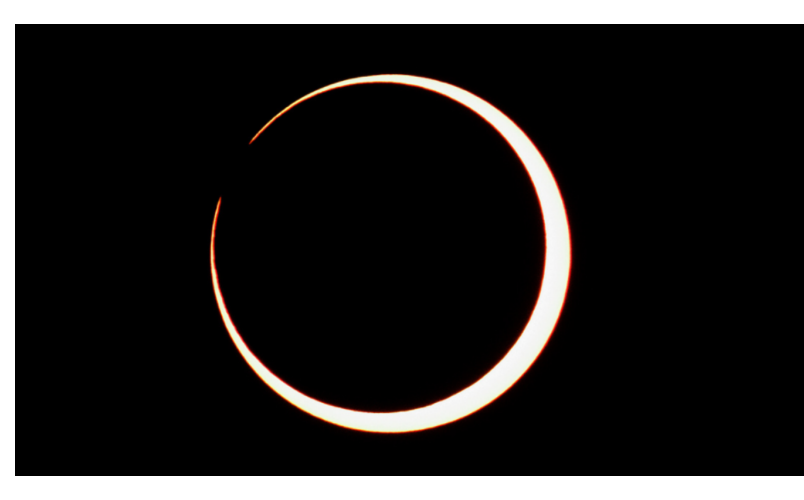
[Register for the Star of Bethlehem Webinar](#)

Astro-image of the Week Scott Barrie

We are featuring winners of RASC's AstroImaging Certificate. Winners will be featured in the banner of RASC Weekly. More information on the RASC AstroImaging Certificate is available [here](#).

15-ANNULAR-SOLAR-ECLIPSE-0333-SB:

My wife and I combined a vacation in Utah, Arizona, and Nevada with the 2012 annular solar eclipse. Our original destination to view the eclipse was Bryce Canyon but, when we arrived there, the large crowds prompted us to seek an alternate location. We discovered the appropriately named, Kodachrome Basin State Park, a spectacularly beautiful place, a few miles east. We set up just before first contact at a little photo turnoff. At the outset it was just the two of us, but as the eclipse progressed, more people arrived and one person started handing out eclipses glasses. A steady line-up formed at the eyepiece of my little refractor (protected by a Thousand Oaks Solar Filter). And, even though it turned into quite the social event, I was still able to grab a few shots. The sun disappeared behind a distant rocky outcropping before we were able to see final contact. But, even so, it was still one of the coolest astronomy events I've ever experienced.



To see the large image, check out the [RASC AstroImaging Zenfolio page](#).

Follow along as we image the Great Conjunction!

We are using the DSLR on the back of RASC's Robotic Telescope to capture Saturn and Jupiter as they conjunct! Follow us on social media to catch our daily photos of the planets.



Data Available For Purchase

Calling all astroimagers! The data from our Robotic Telescope is finally available for purchase. This is the perfect gift for the aspiring astroimagers in your life, and with no shipping costs! ALL of the data from the RASC Robotic Telescope for 2019 and 2020 is now available for purchase. You'll receive data for over 30 different narrowband and LRGB targets, including targets from our DSLR camera.

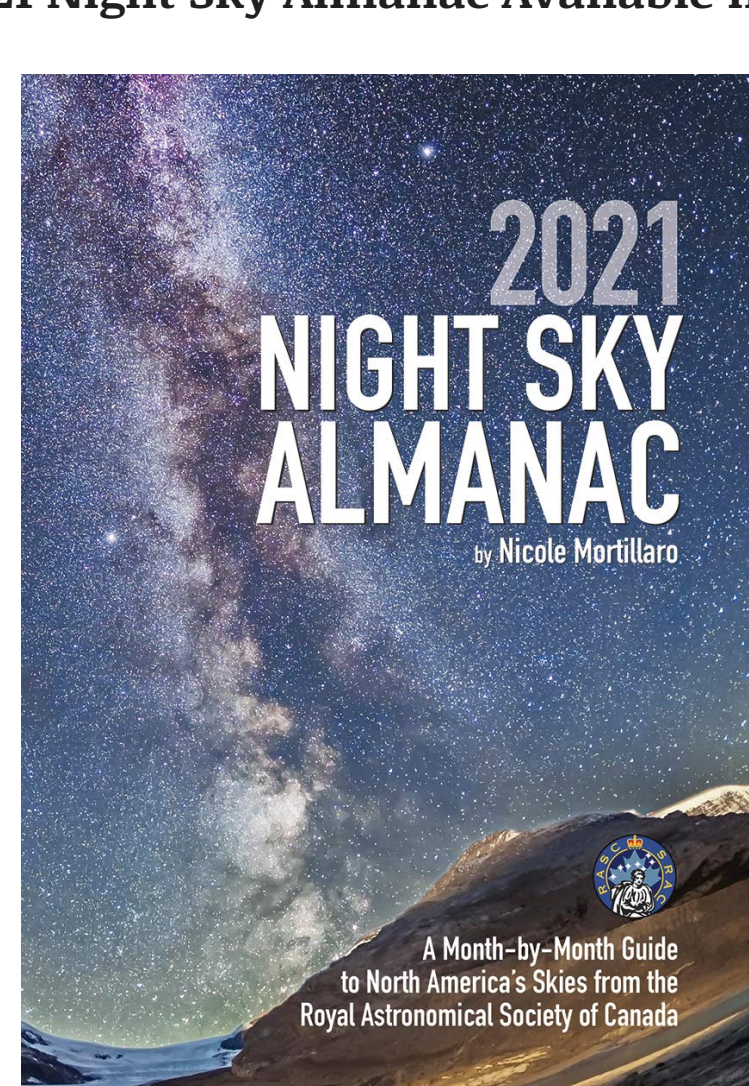
Head to our online store to purchase this item! Choose the item (adult or student) that applies to you or the person you're buying the item for. If you plan on gifting this purchase to someone, please email telescope@rasc.ca to inform them of your intent.

[Buy Now](#)

Gift Memberships

This holiday season, give the gift of a RASC membership to your friends and loved ones! A RASC membership includes a wealth of resources and a chance to connect with a large community of astronomy enthusiasts. If you have a budding astronomer in your life, our annual membership makes an excellent gift! To purchase a membership, contact our Membership Coordinator, Adela Zyfi at mempub@rasc.ca or (519) 783-1529.

2021 Night Sky Almanac Available now!



[Buy 2021 Night Sky Almanac](#)

This Week's Observing Targets

December 13, 2020, 18:15 – December 14, 2020, 7:45 EST
Geminids Meteor Shower

Thanks to the debris shower by asteroid 3200 Phaethon, we get to see up to 120 multicolored meteors per hour! Given the nearly new moon, the sky will be dark enough to view the peak of the showers between the night of the 13th and the morning of the 14th. Some meteors might still be visible this week, even though the peak of the meteor shower has passed.

Monday, December 14 - 8:30 – 14:00 EST

Total Solar Eclipse - Only Visible in Chile and Argentina
The moon blocks the sun revealing its corona or atmosphere. This will be most visible in South America, more specifically Chile and South Argentina!

Monday, December 14 - 11:18 EST
New Moon

Located on the same side of the Earth as the Sun, it will not be visible in the night sky. This is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is no moonlight to interfere.

Member Highlights

Do you know a member who you think deserves a spot in our newsletter? Let us know! Email communications@rasc.ca with your submissions.

[view this email in your browser](#)

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