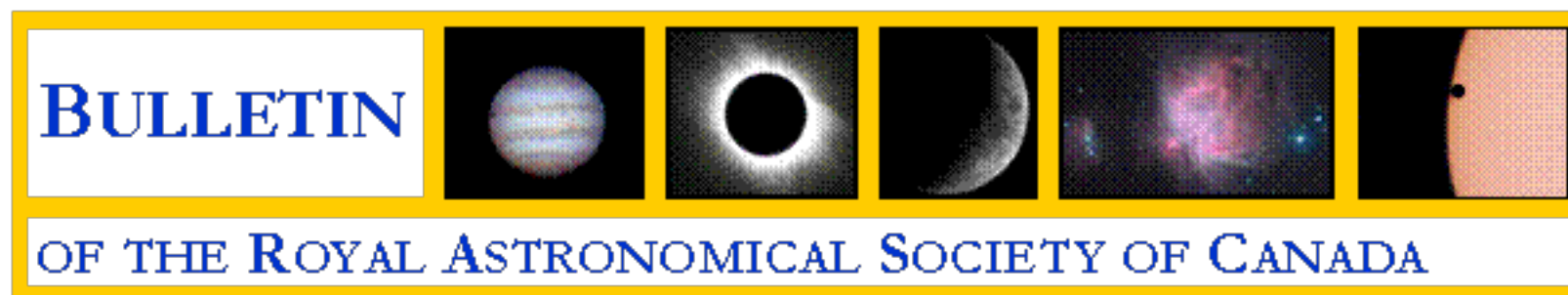


2007-04



April 2007 - Volume 2, Number 4

Andrew Oakes, Editor

► [News @ RASC.ca](#)

[Astronomy Week Celebrated Across the RASC!](#)

The RASC is celebrating Astronomy Week in a big way this year with over 35 events scheduled from Halifax to Victoria this year. Complete listings are available at rasc.ca/education/astronomy-day [1].

[New Service at RASC](#)

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada is offering a new free service to the general public. Called **Ask RASC**, it is an on-line form that puts individuals in touch with knowledgeable RASC members who can answer astronomy questions with a Canadian perspective. To submit a question, visit www.rasc.ca/info/askrasc.shtml [2].

[Astronomy Roundup 2007 - Register Now!](#)

Registration is now open for *Astronomy Roundup 2007* to be held in Calgary, Alberta, June 28 to July 1. An early bird registration price of \$100 Canadian is in effect until **April 29**. On and after April 30, the registration fee will be \$120.

The Calgary Centre is hosting the 2007 General Assembly of the **Royal Astronomical Society of Canada** in conjunction with the **American Association of Variable Star Observers** (96th Spring Meeting) and the **Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers** (60th Annual Meeting). The meeting will be held on the campus of the University of Calgary in Calgary, Alberta.

For more information on *Astronomy Roundup 2007* activities and to register, go to: calgary.rasc.ca/ar2007 [3].

National Council Minutes

[Flash Minutes](#) [4] from RASC National Council meeting of March 10, 2007 (NC071) are available on the Contents page of the National website.

Interim Secretary Appointed

Due to personal reasons, Society Secretary **Stan Runge** has stepped down from his position. The National Executive has appointed National Recorder **James Edgar** to the post until the 2008 General Assembly in Toronto.

Sky in April 2007

Gary Boyle (Ottawa) offers his monthly heads-up on what can be viewed on a clear Canadian spring night. For details see www.rasc.ca/news/The_Sky_This_Month_-_April_2007.shtml [5]. Learn about two constellations -- M106: a lovely spiral galaxy with bright knots, a magnitude of 8.3, about 25 million lightyears away, and one of the brightest galactic examples of Messier's collection; and M51: dubbed the Whirlpool Galaxy, a magnitude 8.4 face-on structure at 37 million lightyears away.

► Across the RASC

E-version of April 2007 RASC Journal

The April 2007 issue of the RASC Journal is now available online. For access, please click www.rasc.ca/currentjrasc/2007-apr-hr.pdf [6]. The username is "jrasc2007" and the password is "brightstar".

Niagara Centre Banquet

The RASC Niagara Centre is hosting its annual banquet on Saturday, April 14th, 2007 from 6:00 p.m. All members are invited to take in this event. Paul Delaney of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, York University, will be the featured speaker on the subject of *No place like home: Our changing Solar System*, focusing some of the recent science returns for our own celestial backyard. For more information, see www.rasc.ca/news/NiagaraBanquet2007.shtml [7].

Montreal Photos

Visit the **Montreal Centre's** website for some neat member photos on astronomy and space-related

topics. Click on www.rascmontreal.org/Gallery-Astro-Misc.html [8]. Here's a two-photo sample. (Please note that all images are the property of the respective Montreal Centre members.)



JUPITER: Stack of 70 exposures, 1 - 10 seconds, taken with a Nikon 5000, 8 SCT, 25mm eyepiece; photo by **Bob Cadloff**.



ENTERPRISE: A flashback photo of the Space Shuttle Enterprise atop its modified Boeing 747 carrier flying over Montreal on a goodwill tour some years ago; photo by **Bruno Paul Stenson**.

Co-hosts for 2008 General Assembly

The **Hamilton**, **Mississauga** and **Toronto** RASC Centres will be co-hosting the Society's *2008 General Assembly* on the campus of York University in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This event will take place in co-operation with York University's Department of Physics and Astronomy.

Andrew H.C. Schuh (1954-2007)

An active member of RASC's Toronto Centre and its webmaster, **Andy Schuh**, died on March 22, 2007 in Toronto. A regular contributor to the Toronto Centre's outreach and administrative activities, and a participant in the RASCals e-mail group, Andy will be missed by many. For more details, see <http://rascto.ca/index.php> [9].

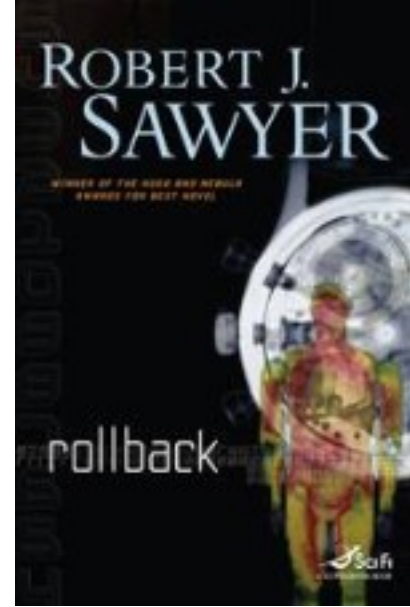


Andrew H.C. Schuh

SETI Topic of Toronto Member's New SF Novel

An award-winning science-fiction writer and Toronto Centre member **Robert J. Sawyer** will be launching his new novel, *ROLLBACK*, with a public reading

and signing at Bakka-Phoenix Books, 697 Queen Street West (just west of Bathurst Street) in Toronto, Ontario, on Saturday, April 14, at 3:00 pm. The book is about a Canadian astronomer involved with SETI. See Rob's website at www.sfwriter.com [10] for more detail.



ROLLBACK, Robert J. Sawyer's new book

► RASCals Highlights

Messier Marathons, Sun's Chromosphere, and Photo Manipulation - some of the recent topics on the RASCals Discussion List

Messier Marathons

On the weekend of March 17-18, 2007, a series of e-mails criss-crossed the country on the RASCals list reporting member attempts at carrying out Messier Marathons -- the search for distant astronomical bodies listed in the Messier Catalogue. Success was varied, as the e-mail discussion showed.

Quebec: "At Quebec city, we live under 20 cm of new snow!!!," wrote **Daniel Tardif** (Quebec).

Ontario: "It is looking pretty good here in Windsor," wrote **Steve Mastellotto**. "Will be mostly clear in the early evening, then it is supposed to be totally clear overnight. It is just a matter of how quickly the clouds clear out and whether they cover any of the early evening objects."

Alberta: "Clouded out in Calgary; we will try again in April, not as good an opportunity as tonight, but its still worth it," wrote **Roger Nelson** (Calgary).

British Columbia: "Has anybody got clear skies for the marathon tonight?" asked **Doug Montgomery** (Vancouver). "Here in Vancouver we have heavy rain (even for here)."

British Columbia: Meanwhile, three Okanagan Centre members did their Messier Marathon from March 14-15, 2007, despite variable cirrus patches, especially in the south and west skies.

"It was luxurious to have M77 high enough to be an easy catch," **Alan Whitman** reported on RASClister subscribers. As for M74, "this is only the second Messier Marathon that I have succeeded with M74, out of about ten marathons ... As usual, I was the slowest of the bunch. Dave and Dave sailed through the Virgo Clutter, but there was a lot of high cloud over the Virgo Galaxy Cluster when I finally got to it. For

the first time ever, I saw Virgo as Messier had. There was no clutter, because only the Messier galaxies were discernable through the murk -- I saw only one non-Messier galaxy!”

Alan concluded: “It was enjoyable, the company was good, and it is great not to start a marathon with three to four misses (M77, M74, M79, and M33) as we usually do here when we do a marathon in April.”

And then there was a RASClister from down south ...

New Mexico: “Beautifully clear skies in New Mexico... doing a short run of images,” noted **Craig Breckenridge**. “Chris Graham did a run Thursday (104 objects) and Friday night (6 objects) for a complete set of colour images of the Marathon.”

Moon Eclipse – Photo Manipulation

“For those who were socked in with clouds during the [March 2007 Lunar] eclipse, there's a beautiful photo of totality on APOD [Astronomy Picture of the Day],” wrote RASClister member **Dave Roles** in a collegial attempt to give other list readers a heads-up of a great pic. (See antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap070308.html [11].)

But **Dave Chapman**, wrote back: “Indeed the image is dramatic, although my initial reaction (as one who observed the eclipse with eyes and binoculars) was 'unreal'.” Dave boosted the magnitude limits on his *Voyager III* program, verified that the star field was correct and to scale. The APOD "photo" caption admitted that the image was a combination of two exposures and that many of the stars would have been too faint to see.

“I am not certain where one draws the line on image alteration, but for me the line has been crossed with this image, on the basis that it departs too far from the perceptual experience. Let's call it 'art'.... So, all I am saying is: if you missed the eclipse, my condolences...but you did not miss the view suggested by this image!”

Magnetic Vortex

On March 21, 2007, **NASA** released never-before-seen movies of intense activity (a magnetic vortex almost as big as Earth) in an unexpected place on the Sun – the chromosphere. The images were captured by a space telescope onboard Japan's **Hinode** spacecraft. For the full story, see science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2007/21mar_chromosphere.htm?list778348 [12].

The RASCals e-mail list is the RASC's town hall where members from across the country gather to chat about astronomy in general. To subscribe to this member-focused forum, visit www.rasc.ca/discussion [13].

The December 2006 issue of the *Journal* is a special "collector's" edition, celebrating the 100th year of publication. Extra paper copies are available from the National Office.

To view an e-version click on to www.rasc.ca/currentjrasc/2006-dec-hr.pdf [14]. Access requires the user name "jrasc2007" and password "brightstar".



► Dates to Remember

- **April 14** - [Niagara Centre's Annual Banquet](#) [7]
- **April 21** - Draw Date for at Saskatoon Centre's Raffle
- **April 21** - [International Astronomy Day](#) [1]
- **April 29** - [GA Early Bird Registration Deadline](#) [3]
- **April 30** - Notification of accepted papers/poster for 2007 General Assembly
- **June 28 - July 1** - [General Assembly \(Calgary\)](#) [3]



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Links:

- [1] <https://www.rasc.ca/astronomy-day>
- [2] <https://www.rasc.ca/ask-astronomer>
- [3] <http://www.calgary.rasc.ca/ar2007/>
- [4] <https://www.rasc.ca/news/flash-minutes-nc071>
- [5] <https://www.rasc.ca/news/sky-month-april-2007>
- [6] <https://www.rasc.ca/content/jrasc-2007-april>
- [7] <https://www.rasc.ca/news/niagara-centre-banquet-features-paul-delaney>
- [8] <http://rascmontreal.org/zenith/gallery/>
- [9] <http://rascto.ca/index.php>
- [10] <http://www.sfwriter.com>
- [11] <http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/ap070308.html>
- [12] http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2007/21mar_chromosphere/
- [13] <https://www.rasc.ca/forums/rasc-discussion-groups/rascals>
- [14] <https://www.rasc.ca/content/jrasc-2006-december>
- [15] <mailto:mempub@rasc.ca>
- [16] <http://www.rasc.ca>