

# BULLETIN



## OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

March 2011 - Volume 6, Number 3

Ian Levstein, Editor

We welcome your comments on the *Bulletin*. Email them to the Editor at [bulletin@rasc.ca](mailto:bulletin@rasc.ca).

A PDF version of the *Bulletin* is available at: <http://www.rasc.ca/im/bulletin/201103.pdf>

A text-only version of the *Bulletin* is available at: <http://www.rasc.ca/im/bulletin/201103.txt>

### ► News @ RASC.ca

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#### Brian Segal (1948-2011)

With regret, we note the passing of **Brian Segal** on February 13. Brian had been a member of the RASC Halifax Centre and executive; he was the designer and layout artist of the RASC *Journal*, and worked on the *Observer's Calendar* and other RASC advertising and promotions. Our deepest sympathies go to his wife, **Julia Redgrave**, his family, and friends.

#### Leif Robinson (1939-2011)

With regret, we note the passing of **Leif Robinson** on February 27. Leif was a former Editor of *Sky & Telescope*, and was an Honorary Member of the RASC. Read his tribute at [Sky & Telescope](#).



#### Sky Quality Meter Project

by [Robert Dick](#), Chair, Light-Pollution Abatement Committee

Some readers may have heard or read about the Ottawa grade-8 student **Stacy Glasberg** who drove about the city with her father taking sky glow measurements using the Sky Quality Meter (SQM-L) by Unihedron. The RASC has ten such units that are available for loan to RASC centres.

The RASC is making these instruments available so you can do projects like Stacy's. All you need to provide is a car, a map, and a pen. If you are interested in

characterizing the sky glow across your city, contact your light-pollution abatement team to borrow an SQM-L.

For more information and highlights of the general interest her work has attracted, click [here](#).

## ASP Sharing the Universe - New Resources

by [R.A. Rosenfeld](#), RASC Archivist

The Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) has been a world-leader in astronomical education and public outreach for over 120 years. Society members will recall the notice in an earlier *Bulletin* (November 2009 - Volume 4, Number 11) about the ASP's [Sharing the Universe](#) (STU) programme, designed to "help amateur astronomers find ways to improve the quality and effectiveness of their education and public outreach (EPO) activities by looking at what successful clubs are doing".

STU is much more than that, however, for the open-access Web site features superb resources to enhance the impact of activities of astronomy clubs, no matter their size, membership, or interests. To the original set of five videos presenting [Tips for Stellar Presentations](#), a second set has now been added on [Growing Your Astronomy Club](#). The engaging videos are produced to professional standards, and owe their effectiveness to meeting head-on the EPO problems we all face.

## RASC Outreach Event Report

by [Ron Macnaughton](#), Chair, RASC Education Committee

On the RASC [Web site](#), members can report outreach events. I downloaded the data on February 26. So far, 12 Centres have reported 75 events with 10251 guests, 414 RASC helpers, and 3541 Star Finders handed out.

Eventually, we hope more Centres who do outreach will report what they do. As the weather warms, more and more Centres will run events. Part of the process is picking a description of the event. Here are the totals:

- Night observing 25
- Presentation 9
- Youth group 8
- Elementary school visit 6
- Observatory visit 6
- Secondary school visit 3
- Day time observing 3
- Other 3

I'm including some of the comments:

*"Very interested group, lots of great questions!"*

*"Dave McCarter presented a PowerPoint show "Asteroids!" and Bob Duff gave out Galileo Cards and Starfinders. Both answered the questions."*

*"I presented a Solar System on an adding-machine paper roll, to five different classes (Kindergarten to Grade 4) with pairs of students representing the planets; also distributed Star Finders to each student and teacher."*

*"Despite a snowfall, 20 people from ages 3 to probably 83 attended a talk on the birth, life and death of stars. Also included was information on why stars have colour, why they twinkle, variable stars and double stars. Starfinders were explained, and astronomy cards of Nebula and Star Clusters were handed out."*

*"The Okanagan Science Centre holds an event once a year for those who may have gotten a telescope*

for Christmas, or have one hiding in their closet, to show them how to set it up and use it. We were asked to assist. We also showed a Galileoscope, a SunSpotter and a PST."

## ► Across the RASC

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### Video Tour of DDO Online

by [Eric Briggs](#), Secretary, Toronto Centre

A private tour of the David Dunlap Observatory in Richmond Hill, Ontario was given to RASC members on 2011 February 5. A [video](#) of the tour is now available. The video is hosted by **Paul Mortfield**, Toronto Centre, and lasts 9:42. The video was shot by **Robert Lansdale**, the son of **Robert E. Lansdale** - the man who was commissioned to photograph the dome interior on 1969 September 18 just after the interior had been painted.



### RASC Youth Member Wins Science Fair

by [Chris Weadick](#), Chair, RASC MAP

**Holly Ayles**, New Brunswick Centre, won the 2011 Bliss Carman Middle School science fair for Grade 8. This is the first year that the science expo "STE<sup>2</sup>M" included projects having an environmental awareness.

*"This year, in addition to the usual Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics components of the Expo, we have added a second E – for the Environment! Our special focus this year is promoting projects*

*and presentations that deal with caring for and responsibly managing our Earth and its resources."*

Holly chose to research the level of light pollution in her community and the impact from other communities. Holly used one of the SQM meters from the RASC [LPA SQM](#) project for measuring sky quality. The analysis included 47 locations taken in a grid format throughout her community, which was also updated to the RASC SQM database.

The announcement of her first-place win included acknowledgment of RASC's appreciation for the research, as well as a thank you for a copy of the project, which included Google Map locations of each of the readings used.

Holly is submitting her project for the District challenge in late March. You may remember Holly from the assistance she gave at the 2010 GA. Holly is also our National Youth Ambassador and assisting with the Membership and Promotion Committee.

## ► Astronomy Beyond RASC

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### What Can a Nikon D700 Do?

by [Kevin Kell](#), Kingston Centre

[Awesome!](#) There are 1,159 thirty-sec exposures spanning more than 10.5 hours. The irregular galaxies Small and Large Magellanic Clouds (SMC and LMC, respectively) are visible towards the middle of the time-lapse sequence. Very Large Telescope, Paranal Observatory, Atacama Desert, Chile, 2009 August 23-24 (Nikon D700).

### IAYC 2011 - Call for Applications

**Editor's Note** - The following letter was received by the RASC, and is included here (mostly) for our European members who may be interested. It is reprinted here unedited - exactly as received.

by **María Ruiz**, International Astronomical Youth Camp

Imagine spending 3 weeks of your summer in beautiful mountain scenery working with other students from all over the world on an astronomical project of your choice. The International Astronomical Youth Camp (IAYC) is a three-week long summer camp aiming to promote knowledge on astronomy and related sciences in a unique international atmosphere. Each year it takes place in a different European location, this year near the small town of Tremešek in the Olomouc region, in the north-eastern Czech Republic, from July 17th to August 6th.

Participants will explore astronomy related projects in one of 7 working groups - together with other young people. The working groups are led by young scientists and focus on a specific field in astronomy. There will be something for everyone from the complete beginner to the ambitious student.

This year the working groups are:

- A PhD - Alex's Professional helpDesk
- BTW - Basic Theory Wielding
- CHAOS – CHemistry, Astronomy and Other Stuff
- ET - Experiments and rockeTs
- HA-P - Harmless Astro-Particles
- POP - PhotOgraphy and Photometry
- SGA - Stargazing Astronomers

As well as the astronomical programme, there are many non-astronomical activities such as group games, sporting events, singing evenings, hiking tours and an excursion. Since it is an international camp, the camp language is English.

For more information please click [here](#), or send [email](#).

## ► Bulletin Photo of the Month

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### M42



This photo of M42 - the Orion Nebula - was taken by [Mark Eburne](#) and **Leigh Cummings**, Vancouver Centre.

The photo was taken with a Takahashi FSQ106ED F5 scope on an EQ6Pro mount. The camera was a Canon T1i Modified by **Hap Griffin**, the guide scope was a Sky Watcher ED80, and the guide camera was a Meade DSI II. The photo was a composite of 5 x 600sec images processed with Darks and Flats using MaxImDL, PHD, and PS5 software.

## ► The Sky this Month

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### What's New in the Sky

Members are encouraged to check out the [Northern Skies](#) section of the RASC Web site. Thanks to **Gary Boyle** for keeping us all in the know.

## ► Dates to Remember

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- 2011 March 26 - National Council meeting (NC111), Toronto
- 2011 April - [Global Astronomy Month](#)
- 2011 May 11 - Astronomy Day
- 2011 June 30-July 4 - [2011 General Assembly](#), Winnipeg
- 2011 July 1-4 - [Stargazing Manitoulin](#), Gordon's Park Dark-Sky Preserve
- 2011 August 5-8 - [Manitoulin Star Party](#), Gordon's Park Dark-Sky Preserve



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