

BULLETIN



OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

July 2011 - Volume 6, Number 7

Ian Levstein, Editor

We welcome your comments on the *Bulletin*. Email them to the Editor at bulletin@rasc.ca.

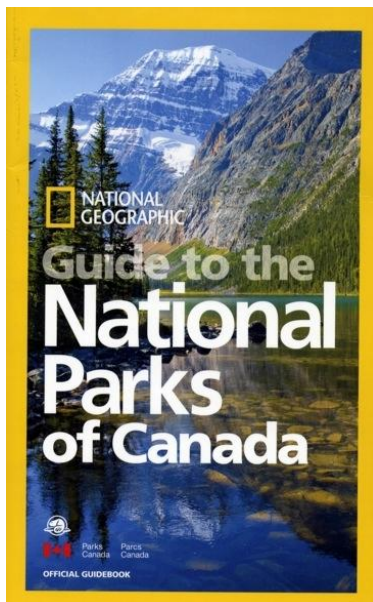
A PDF version of the *Bulletin* is available at: <http://www.rasc.ca/im/bulletin/201107.pdf>

A text-only version of the *Bulletin* is available at: <http://www.rasc.ca/im/bulletin/201107.txt>

► [News @ RASC.ca](http://News@RASC.ca)

RASC DSPs Feature in NG's *Guide to the National Parks of Canada*

by [Mary Lou Whitehorne](#), RASC President



"Diamond dust. It looks as if the mighty hands of the gods spread a broad arc of diamond dust across the heavens. The sharp, cold glitter of thousands of distant stars encircles the sky with a ghostly embrace of ancient light. This is the Milky Way, our home galaxy. But only if you are lucky enough to be somewhere free of light pollution will you see its majestic splendour."

So opens a feature article on Dark Sky Preserves in Canada, written by RASC President, **Mary Lou Whitehorne**. The new volume is an official Parks Canada guidebook. It is published as part of the park system's 100th birthday celebrations this year. Divided into six regions, the guidebook covers every national park and national historic site in Canada. Pages 58-59 contain the feature article on DSPs, and lists all the RASC-certified parks, noting the seven of the eleven that are part of the Parks Canada system.

The RASC is well represented in this high-profile book by one of the world's most recognized and well-respected publishers. The *Guide to the National Parks of Canada* will carry our dark-sky message around the globe. RASC could not ask, or pay for, better publicity than this!

ISBN 978-1-4262-0805-8

\$27 in Canada, \$26 in the U.S.

Available [online](#).

IT Committee Volunteers Needed

by [Ryan May](#), Chair, IT Committee

RASC's Information Technology Committee is looking for volunteers to help maintain the Society's

soon-to-be-released new Web site. The Committee is currently looking for Web content editors to work with National committees and staff to create, update, and improve content on the site. Experience with basic HTML and content management systems, such as Drupal, would be helpful, but training will be provided.

A full job description is available on the IT Committee's [Web page](#).

Interested members should contact [Ryan May](#).

The CWSF Nationals!

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

Stacy Glasberg of Academie Jeanne D'Arc in Ottawa advanced from the Ottawa Regional Science Fair to the Canada Wide Science Fair National competition with her science project on light-pollution in Ottawa. She also won an award for excellence in astronomy from the RASC.



She won a Bronze medal with her project "The Dark Side of Night".

She also received the RASC Award for Excellence in Astronomy (Junior). Her project was based on surveying the City of Ottawa and region with a Sky Quality Meter, loaned to her by the RASC Light-Pollution Abatement Committee. She also assessed the impact of snow on sky glow and the effectiveness of intersection lights on reducing accidents. In the photo above, **Ron Macnaughton** of the Education Committee presents Stacy with the RASC award.

A summary of her project and summary of her awards is available at the [Canada Wide Science Fair](#) Web site.

RASC Constitution Committee Recruiting for 2011-12

by [Mary Lou Whitehorne](#), RASC President

The national Constitution Committee is seeking dedicated, detail-oriented RASCals to help draft new Articles of Incorporation for the RASC, in time for the 2012 Edmonton GA and annual meeting.

Join the Constitution Committee and shape RASC's future! The new Canada Not for Profit Corporations Act (CNCA) will soon be declared law (expected in fall of 2011). This means we have no choice but to overhaul and restructure our governance documents. With the help of expert, external legal assistance, the Committee will prepare new Articles of Incorporation to be approved by special resolution at the 2012 Annual Meeting at the Edmonton GA. We've only got one year to pull this governance rabbit out of the RASC hat.

For more information about what this means, and what will be involved, please see the following

documents:

[NC111 Executive Committee Report](#) (pg. 4-5)

[NC112 Executive Committee Report](#) (pg. 3)

[NC112 Executive Director's Report](#) (pg. 3-4)

And also see [this page](#) from Industry Canada.

Requirements for the job:

Familiarity with existing RASC By-Laws and careful attention to detail are a must. An ability to contribute a considerable amount of time to this important project is also necessary. Legal experience in governance issues as they apply to charitable organizations would be a welcome asset, but is not required. The ability to play well with others is definitely an asset :-)

Interested in making a big contribution? Please contact 1VP [Glenn Hawley](#).

Transit of Venus Project Web site Launched!

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

2012 June 5 marks the second time in eight years this rare celestial event will be seen from Canada - the next opportunity to see a transit of Venus in this country won't come till 2125 December 8 (and you probably won't be doing the observing, but your descendants).

The international Transit of Venus Project [Web site](#) is now the most comprehensive resource on past and future transits of Venus - it even features some Canadian content. The development team, lead by **Steven van Roode** (Netherlands), has put together a fantastic site with:

- citizen science activities, such as [Measure the Sun's Distance](#), [Mark that Site!](#), and [Experimental Archaeology](#)
- observing tips
- an active blog
- full information on past transits, with links to the historical literature
- an online transit calculator, allowing you to compute the contact times for any given location on earth

Steven and his colleagues are also developing a powerful (and free!) Web-based phone app, to enable observers to contribute observations to "Measure the Sun's Distance".

The Transit of Venus Project is part of the [Astronomers Without Borders](#) programme.

► Across the RASC

Banff National Park - Astronomy Nights in the Mountains

by [Andrew Jones](#), President, Calgary Centre

The RASC Calgary Centre was recently approached by the Banff National Park Heritage Team to help them implement an astronomy program within the park. The 100th anniversary of Parks Canada, the first national parks service in the world, was commemorated on May 19. As well, Banff National Park

was established in 1885 and celebrated its 125th anniversary last December. There is a grand re-opening of Banff's famous Cave and Basin hot spring and natural area to the public in 2012 to mark these historic milestones. The Banff team had the wonderful idea of including stargazing nights as part of these celebrations and contacted us for assistance and ideas. As a result, we are now assisting park staff with the development and implementation of astronomy-related talks and telescope viewing.

Banff Park staff purchased two new telescopes for this program with the help of Centre members, and two public starnight events have already been held on April 30 and May 21. The response to both these public events was extremely positive from the many visitors who came by the park administration building to take in the sky show. The skies were clear both nights, and visitors were treated to Saturn, star clusters, double stars and Spring-time galaxies. The next event will feature daytime Solar viewing as well. Calgary Centre volunteers (including some from Banff and Canmore) will travel to the park several more times over the next year to help park staff plan starnight observing targets, learn to care for their new instruments, and become self-sufficient in their operation.

Seasoned public-speaking veterans from Calgary will also assist in developing the indoor portion of the program, including creating talks on what's up in the night sky and an astronomical display. By June 2012, park staff will be sufficiently trained and knowledgeable to be able to run the programs themselves. We will maintain contact with the staff in Banff after June to answer any questions, provide troubleshooting help or direction as needed, but some of us will undoubtedly still take the hour-long drive to view the night sky from their beautiful and historic mountain setting.

Photos [here](#) and [here](#).

► *Bulletin Photo of the Month*

Supernova in M51



This photo of Supernova SN2011dh was taken by **Joe Carr** (Victoria Centre) on June 4 at 0100 PDT.

Equipment: 14" Meade LX-200 SCT operating at f/10; QSI 583c colour CCD camera; Paramount ME

equatorial mount, guided with Orion autoguider & PHD guiding software. Image acquisition by Nebulosity.

Image parameters: 10x5 minute exposures; 1x1 bin; one shot colour. 3x5 minute dark frames; 13.7°C ambient temperature; CCD temperature -20°C.

Processing: ImagesPlus 4.25 x64 - Auto Image Set Processing for Generic RGB CCD; calibrated using dark frames. Digital Development - aggressive contrast stretch applied. ACDSee Pro 4: midtone contrast stretch, colour balance, crop, reduce colour depth from 48 bit to 24 bit; save as jpg.

► The Sky this Month

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

- **2011 July 1-3** - [2011 General Assembly](#), Winnipeg, MB
- **2011 July 1** - **National Council Meeting**
- **2011 July 3** - **Annual Meeting**
- **2011 July 29-31** - [RASCals Star Party](#), Metchosin, BC
- **2011 July 30-31** - [Alberta Star-B-Q](#), Caroline, AB
- **2011 August 25-28** - [Saskatchewan Summer Star Party](#), Cypress Hills Inter-Provincial Park, SK
- **2011 August 25-28** - [Starfest](#), Ayton, ON
- **2011 August 26-28** - [Nova East](#), Smileys Provincial Park, NS
- **2011 September 2-4** - [Butter Pot Star Party](#), Butter Pot Provincial Park, NL
- **2011 September 23-25** - [14th Annual Algonquin Adventure](#), Mew Lake Campground, APP, ON
- **2011 September 23-25** - [Fall'N'Stars](#), Thomasburg, ON
- **2011 September 24-25** - [Alberta Star Party](#), Starland Recreation Area Campground, AB
- **2011 September 27-October 2** - [Northern Prairie Star Party](#), Black Nugget Lake, AB



The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

203 – 4920 Dundas St W, Toronto ON M9A 1B7 CANADA

Tel: (416) 924-7973, Fax: (416) 924-2911

Member Service: nationaloffice@rasc.ca

Visit Us at: www.rasc.ca

The *Bulletin* of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada is a benefit of membership in the Society.

© 2011 Royal Astronomical Society of Canada