



The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 4

EDITOR'S CORNER

Looking for something? What has the RASC been up to? 2017 is just around the corner. A lot of things are planned, and a lot of people have been preparing for them. James Edgar informs us about some of the projects our Board has been involved with—keep an eye out for the Strategic Plan the Board is working on that will guide us into the future.

John Percy reflects on where we have been and what we can do to forge new relationships with our local communities.

Curious about who won the 2017 Donald E. Osterbrock Book Prize for Historical Astronomy, awarded by the Historical Astronomy Division of the American Astronomical Society? It's on the next page.

Want to know about the Education & Public Outreach Committee? Check Andrea Misner's article.

But if all you want is some quick information about the 2017 General Assembly in Ottawa or the 150th anniversary of the RASC, you'll find it in these pages.

We're here for you.

—David Garner, Editor

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2017 GA Organizing Committee



CAPTURING THE WITCH'S BROOM NGC6960, sometimes called the Witch's Broom, can be seen at the top of this image, and part of Pickering's Triangle is visible in the bottom half. The glowing tendrils of gas are part of the Veil Nebula, a supernova remnant. A Moravian G3-16200 EC camera, a 10-inch f/3.6 ASA astrograph and a Paramount MX mount were used to take this photo.

—Ron Brecher, Kitchener-Waterloo Centre

CONTACT US

We invite all Centres to contribute articles about their latest activities. Have you had any public star parties, award ceremonies, special events or observatory activities? Photos are welcome. Please send articles and pictures to newsletter@rasc.ca.

PULL OUT NEWSLETTER TO VIEW SKYNEWS STAR CHART

NEWS FROM THE EDUCATION & PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE

NEW PROJECTS ON THE HORIZON

The Education & Public Outreach Committee has an encompassing mandate that seeks to support RASC member Centres and the general public. Our mandate is to promote knowledge and understanding of astronomy in general, especially to our Canadian audience.

To that end, we are busy at work with both short- and long-term goals. Currently, we are designing partial-eclipse brochures for members who will not be travelling to see the full eclipse this summer, as well as information cards on the planets and other astronomical phenomena.

For the longer term, we are focusing our efforts on a new project: a National Star Party. The idea is that on one night—Saturday, July 29, 2017—star parties will be held across the country. Special handouts will be produced for members and the general public. A great way to celebrate Canada's 150th! Further, we are working toward having a stronger social media and on-line presence to better engage with our audience.

For all the latest developments, visit our website at www.rasc.ca/education-public-outreach-committee.

Educators who are looking for resources to improve their astronomical teaching can also visit www.discovertheuniverse.ca or www.decouvertedelunivers.ca for more information on workshops.

—Andrea Misner, Chair, Education & Public Outreach Committee



PRAISING ARIZONA

A wonderful time was had on our eight-day trip to Arizona in September. Highlights included visiting Kitt Peak National Observatory, Mount Lemmon SkyCenter, Lowell Observatory and the Arizona Meteor Crater (pictured here) and sightseeing in Sedona and Canyon de Chelly.

—Randy Attwood
RASC Executive Director

RASC MEMBERS WIN AAS AWARD

Several RASC members are part of the team that has won the 2017 Donald E. Osterbrock Book Prize for Historical Astronomy, awarded by the Historical Astronomy Division (HAD) of the American Astronomical Society (AAS).

RASC members Dr. Alan H. Batten, Peter Broughton, Prof. Owen Gingerich, Prof. Eugene F. Milone, Prof. Jay M. Pasachoff, R. A. Rosenfeld, Dr. William Sheehan and the late Prof. Richard A. Jarrell, along with the other international coauthors, won for their authorship of the *Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers*, 2nd Edition, ed. Thomas Hockey et al. (New York Heidelberg Dordrecht London: Springer-Verlag, 2014), www.springer.com/us/book/9781441999160.

The biennial award was originated by HAD in 2009 and was named in memory of Donald E. Osterbrock in 2010, a former director of the Lick Observatory, a University of California astrophysicist and a historian of astronomy.

Established in 1899, the AAS is the major professional organization in North America for astronomers, other scientists and individuals interested in astronomy.

—David Garner



PATIENCE MAKES PERFECT This 5½-hour LRGB image of NGC1333, a reflection nebula in Perseus, was taken at the Alberta Star Party at the Starland Recreation Area in Alberta on September 11, 2015, using a Tele Vue 127 telescope and a QSI 583wsg CCD camera.

—Dan Meek, Calgary Centre

RASC NEWSLETTER



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CANADA!

By the time you read this, Canada will be celebrating its 150th birthday. There will be events all across the country, and I hope that the RASC will be part of many of them. The RASC is only one year younger than Canada, so much of our history is shared. We are already planning many ways to celebrate our birthday.

Based on my international experience, I find the RASC to be exemplary in its balance between national and local activities. As a result, we have been able to contribute to our country in many ways. For decades, *JRASC* brought Canadian astronomy to astronomers around the world. This reflected well on our country; we have always ranked highly in astronomical achievements per capita or per dollar spent. Our *Observer's Handbook* is still used and respected around the world. The RASC and its Centres have promoted and supported major community facilities, such as planetariums, science centres and observatories. We have partnered successfully with both national and community organizations, such as libraries, in unique and imaginative ways, bringing astronomy to parks, festivals, shopping malls—wherever people

are. In partnership with CASCA and FAAQ, we reached almost two million Canadians face-to-face during International Year of Astronomy 2009. In 2003, we were honoured with the prestigious national Michael Smith Award, for outstanding and sustained voluntary achievements in science promotion.

As you start to plan for RASC sesquicentennial activities, consider how you could continue and expand your contributions to your country. Could you support astronomy teaching—an effective way to increase public understanding of astronomy—in our school system? Could you forge new partnerships to bring astronomy to new audiences, including underserved groups, such as inner-city kids and refugees? Could you diversify the membership of your Centre, in terms of age, gender and ethnicity? Could you learn more about the astronomy of our First Nations cultures, as

we form new relationships with them? Could you continue and expand initiatives in reducing light pollution—an area in which the RASC excels—and bring a few more stars to a lot more people? Could you help preserve the history and heritage of your Centre and of astronomy in your community for future generations? In other words, could you help make astronomy a greater part of our cultural mosaic, of which we are so proud?

At the same time, let us make known Canada's astronomical achievements, by both professional and amateur astronomers and by science educators and communicators. We have a lot to be proud of thanks, in no small part, to you and your RASC colleagues!

—John Percy
Honorary President, RASC



BOARD NEWS

The Board of Directors has been busy doing what we said we were going to do. At the National Council meeting last May, National Representatives were guided through a brainstorming process by Denis Grey, resulting in numerous ideas for ways that the Society could be more responsive to Centre needs. Taking the cue from this meeting, the Board met in September in Calgary with a facilitator, Dr. Wilma Slenders, to continue the process. Over two days, the 10 members of the Board followed the lead from President Craig Levine when he said, "This is our opportunity to look at what we do with a critical eye and to look at how we can engage more deeply with membership and Centres. This could be a generational change. Who do we want to be?"

So we analyzed ourselves through SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and then a PEST

(Political, Economic, Social, Technological) analysis, keeping track of the results and sometimes placing ideas on a "Parking Lot" for later examination.

By the time members read this, the Board will have met a couple more times by phone or computer, building on this experience, and the National Council will have met in mid-November to further the process. What comes out of all this back and forth will be a Strategic Plan to guide us into the future—near and distant.

Do we stay the status quo, keeping along the same path that we've successfully followed for decades? Or do we strive for greater objectives, reaching higher than we can imagine? This is our opportunity to make the latter happen, as we near the 150th celebration of this great Society.

—James Edgar, Past President, RASC



RASC NEWSLETTER

2017 RASC OTTAWA GENERAL ASSEMBLY, JUNE 29 TO JULY 3



The RASC Ottawa Centre is pleased to offer an outstanding lineup of activities for delegates and spouses taking part in the 2017 General Assembly, and we look forward to seeing you here in Ottawa. Is there really any other place to be than the nation's capital on our 150th birthday?

The following schedule of activities and more information can be found at ottawa.rasc.ca/content/2017-general-assembly-ottawa.

SCHEDULE HIGHLIGHTS

THURSDAY, JUNE 29

- ★ 3:00 p.m.: Residence check-in and GA registrations desk open
- ★ Evening: Hospitality suite open

FRIDAY, JUNE 30

- ★ Welcome
- ★ Keynote Address: Ken Hewitt-White
- ★ National Council Meeting (concurrent all day)
- ★ Algonquin Radio Observatory: Brendan Quine
- ★ Moving Clusters: Glenn LeDrew
- ★ Astronomy Workshop
- ★ Downtown in the Afternoon: Tours
- ★ BBQ on Campus
- ★ Evening Star Party & Diefenbunker Tour

SATURDAY, JULY 1—CANADA 150 DAY!

- ★ Meteor Workshop: Pierre Martin
- ★ The Solar System, a Geological Perspective on Current Controversies: Simon Hanmer
- ★ Moon Sketching (lunchtime group activity)
- ★ Ruth Northcott Lecture & Reception with Dr. Eric Steinbring
- ★ Public Outreach Event

SATURDAY, JULY 1 (continued)

- ★ Starry Night: Documentary video with Charles Ennis
- ★ Panel Discussion
- ★ CANADA DAY Celebrations on Parliament Hill
- ★ Quiet Canada Day on Campus with Carmen Rush

SUNDAY, JULY 2

- ★ Annual General Meeting/ Spouses' Tour (concurrent)
- ★ Speakers Corner
- ★ Talk TBD: Carmen Rush
- ★ Talk TBD: Rick Wagner
- ★ Astro-Desserts, Recipes for Astronomy-Themed Goodies: Kelly Jordan
- ★ August 21, 2017, Solar Eclipse: Alan Scott
- ★ History of Predicting Solar Eclipses: Ron MacNaughton
- ★ Group Photo & RASC Awards Banquet with Speaker Dr. Nadine Manset

MONDAY, JULY 3

- ★ 11:00 a.m.: Residence checkout
- ★ Holleford Crater Tour with Chuck O'Dale

—Brian McCullough and Tim Cole, 2017 GA Organizing Committee

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