



30-second exposure at the Vancouver Island Star Party, August 11, 2023, Bright Angel Park. Randy Enkin

Summer Events Issue

This abridged issue of SkyNews is devoted to our summer events. There are no AstroCafés or University Presentations until September, so make sure you join in these events to enjoy your astronomy community.

As well as the scheduled events listed in the calendar below, the “Members in Charge” of the Victoria Centre Observatory will call for evenings up at the observatory. Email membership@victoria.rasc.ca to get registered as an “Active Observer”, so that you will receive announcements on hillobs-list@victoria.rasc.ca.

Randy, pastpres@victoria.rasc.ca



President’s Message

Spring this year will always be remembered for the total solar eclipse of April 8 and the great auroral display of May 10-11. Even though those memorable events have been followed June observing conditions best characterized as mixed, there are still plenty of astronomical activities to talk about.

At the top of the list is International Astronomy Day, which returned to the Royal BC Museum during the long weekend on Saturday May 18. Astronomy Day is the Victoria Centre’s biggest public outreach event of the year, and our volunteers put on a great show that was enjoyed by more than a thousand members of the public.

In spite of weather predictions of clouds and rain, the Sun was visible most of

the day through our telescopes set up in front of the RBCM, and the many displays and activities inside the Clifford Carl Hall at the RBCM drew many families from around Greater Victoria. Many thanks to the RCBM, our volunteer team headed by Randy Enkin, Lauri Roche, and David Lee, and the Victoria Times Colonist, which publicized the event.

In the evening, the action shifted to the Centre of the Universe at the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory. The clouds of the late afternoon parted as twilight gave way to darkness, and visitors were treated to tours of the Plaskett Telescope and views of celestial objects.

It was a great start to our summer! While our monthly meetings and Astronomy Cafes are taking breaks for June, July, and August, we are moving into Saturday nights at the Centre of the University with public outreach activities and excellent speakers throughout the summer. Please join us and the Friends of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory for Saturday night observing sessions, which are listed at <https://centroftheuniverse.org>

The 2024 Island Star Party will take place the nights of Friday August 9 and Saturday August 10 on the Saanich Peninsula in the grounds of St. Stephen's Anglican Church, at 7921 St. Stephens Road, off Mount Newton Cross Rd. Gates open at 2 p.m. on Friday. There will be plenty of observers with telescopes and other activities for astronomers and interested members of the public. Details are available at our website <https://victoria.rasc.ca/island-star-party-2024/>

The Saanich Fair on Labour Day weekend marks the traditional conclusion for summer in Greater Victoria, and the Victoria Centre will be part of it. Please consider joining our volunteers at our booth at this great annual fair.

After the Saanich Fair, the Pleiades, Orion and other features of our fall skies will return, along with Astronomy Cafes on Mondays and our monthly meetings at the University of Victoria. See you soon!

Chris Gainor, President@Victoria.RASC.ca

July-August Astro-Events

July 2	Moon in Pleiades
July 4	Earth at Aphelion, 1.01673 AU, 21:00 PDT Henrietta Leavitt of Leavitt's Law, the Cepheid period-luminosity relationship used to measure the distances to galaxies, born 1868. Henrietta Leavitt Memorial Horizon Watch at Cattle Point. Bring your binoculars, telescopes and cameras to watch America's celebration of the birth of this great astronomer, from Friday Harbour on San Juan Island (~10PM) and Fisherman's Harbour on Lopez Island (10:30PM).
July 5	New Moon, 15:47 PDT Isaac Newton's Principia Mathematica published, 1687

July 6	<p>New Moon, 05:37 PDT</p> <p>1995: Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz, Observatoire de Haute-Provence, finalize discovery of 51 Pegasi b, the first planet found around an ordinary star other than the sun. (Nobel Prize, 2019)</p> <p>19:30 Star Party at the Centre of the Universe. Volunteers appreciated to staff the RASC table and demonstrating telescopes.</p>
July 13	<p>First Quarter Moon, 14:49 PDT</p> <p>19:30 Star Party at the Centre of the Universe. Volunteers appreciated to staff the RASC table and demonstrating telescopes.</p>
July 14	<p>1965: Mariner 4 flies by Mars in 1965 and sends back the first close-up images of another planet from space. It shows a cratered landscape and no canals or other evidence of Martians. New</p> <p>2015: New Horizons flies by Pluto and Charon</p>
July 16	<p>1850: The first photograph is taken of a star other than the sun (Vega) by William Bond and John Adams Whipple at the Harvard College Observatory.</p> <p>1994: Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 collides with Jupiter</p>
July 17	<p>Georges LeMaitre, father of the Big Bang Theory, born 1894.</p>
July 19	<p>Edward Pickering, director of Harvard College Observatory during the early days of astrophotographic surveys of the sky, born 1846.</p> <p>Brian May, famous for spectrographic studies of zodiacal dust, born 1947.</p>
July 20	<p>1969: The Eagle has landed. First time our species sets foot on another world.</p> <p>19:30 Star Party at the Centre of the Universe. Volunteers appreciated to staff the RASC table and demonstrating telescopes.</p>
July 21	<p>Full Moon, 02:17 PDT</p>
July 22	<p>Pi Approximation Day</p>
July 23	<p>Vera Rubin, discoverer of dark matter, born 1928</p>
July 24	<p>Saturn 0.4°S of Moon.</p>
July 26	<p>1609: Thomas Harriot draws first telescopic map of the moon.</p>
July 27	<p>Last Quarter Moon, 18:51 PDT</p> <p>19:30 Star Party at the Centre of the Universe. Volunteers appreciated to staff the RASC table and demonstrating telescopes.</p>
July 28	<p>1851: First photograph of the sun's corona during total eclipse, Johann Berkowski, Konigsberg Observatory, Prussia</p>
July 29	<p>Moon in Pleiades</p>
Aug. 1	<p>Helen Sawyer Hogg, specialist in globular clusters, born 1905.</p>

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Aug. 3	19:30 Star Party at the Centre of the Universe. Volunteers appreciated to staff the RASC table and demonstrating telescopes.
Aug. 4	New Moon, 03:13 PDT
Aug. 9 and 10. Tear down Aug. 11 before noon.	Vancouver Island Star Party! St. Stephen's Church, 7921 St. Stephens Road, Saanichton, just off Mt. Newton Cross Road, east of West Saanich Road. 19:00 Welcome and Raffle 19:30 Astronomy Talk 21:00 Telescope Walk 21:30 Pre-Dark Activities 22:00 Observations Begin
Aug. 10	19:30 Star Party at the Centre of the Universe. Volunteers appreciated to staff the RASC table and demonstrating telescopes.
Aug. 12	First Quarter Moon, 07:19 PDT Peak of the Perseid Meteor Shower
Aug. 14	Mars 0.3°N of Jupiter, 07:00 PDT
Aug. 17	19:30 Star Party at the Centre of the Universe. Volunteers appreciated to staff the RASC table and demonstrating telescopes.
Aug. 18	1868: A new element, which came to be called Helium, observed independently by Pierre Janssen and Norman Lockyer in the spectrum on the solar corona during a total eclipse.
Aug. 19	Full Moon, 10:26 PDT
Aug. 20	Saturn 0.4°S of Moon, 18:54 PDT
Aug. 24	19:30 Star Party at the Centre of the Universe. Volunteers appreciated to staff the RASC table and demonstrating telescopes. 2006: Pluto demoted from planet to dwarf.
Aug. 25	Moon in Pleiades
Aug. 26	Last Quarter Moon, 01:26 PDT
Aug. 19	John Flamsteed, the first Astronomer Royal of England, born 1646.
Aug. 30	11:00-14:00 Pre-fair setup, moving equipment from the Centre of the Universe to the Saanich Fair grounds.
Aug. 31	19:30 Star Party at the Centre of the Universe. Volunteers appreciated to staff the RASC table and demonstrating telescopes.
Aug. 31 to Sep. 2	Saanich Fair. We <u>need 4-5 volunteers at each 9:30-13:00 and 12:30-16:00 shift, Sat. Sun. and Mon.</u> Tear-down and transfer Mon. 16:00-18:00. Please contact Marji Welchframe, marjie@victoria.rasc.ca

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada – Victoria Centre

Sept. 2	New Moon, 17:55 PDT
Sept. 7	19:30 Star Party at the Centre of the Universe. Volunteers appreciated to staff the RASC table and demonstrating telescopes.
Sept. 9	Welcome back to the first AstroCafé of the season! Hybrid meeting, in person at the Fairfield Community Centre, or on-line on Zoom.

Director Positions	Name	Email
Past President	Randy Enkin	pastpres@victoria.rasc.ca
President	Chris Gainor	president@victoria.rasc.ca
1 st Vice President	Dan Posey	vp@victoria.rasc.ca
2 nd Vice President	Kirsten Pedersen	vp2@victoria.rasc.ca
Treasurer	Doug Hardy	treasurer@victoria.rasc.ca
Secretary	Oliver Robinow	secretary@victoria.rasc.ca
Member at Large	David Lee	david@victoria.rasc.ca
Member at Large	Myles Morrison	
Member at Large	Jeff Pivnick	
Member at Large	Lauri Roche	lauri@victoria.rasc.ca
Member at Large	Alex Schmid	librarian@victoria.rasc.ca
Committee Positions		
Telescopes Loans	Sid Sidhu	telescopes@victoria.rasc.ca
Schools Program/FDAO Liaison	Lauri Roche	schools@victoria.rasc.ca
Observing Chairperson	Jim Stilburn	obschair@victoria.rasc.ca
Light Pollution Abatement	Dave Robinson	
Webmaster	Joe Carr	web@victoria.rasc.ca
Librarian/UVic Liaison	Alex Schmid	librarian@victoria.rasc.ca
SkyNews Editor and Astrocafé Coordinator	Randy Enkin	pastpres@victoria.rasc.ca
Membership Coordinator	Chris Purse	membership@victoria.rasc.ca
National Representative	Bill Weir	nationalrep2@victoria.rasc.ca
National Representative	Nathan Hellner-Mestelman	nationalrep@victoria.rasc.ca