

# SKYNEWS



*Comet C2023 A3 Tsuchinshan-ATLAS on October 14<sup>th</sup> after travelling around the sun and coming out in the early evening. Photographed from King George Terrace. Randy Enkin*

## November 2024

The nights are getting longer. Orion and the Winter Hexagon will soon be up in the evening sky. We have weekly Astrocafés, monthly presentations at the University, and many observing evenings up at the Victoria Centre Observatory. It's a great time enjoy astronomy.

Have you considered becoming a member of the Victoria Centre council? One of the roles of the Past President is to cajole members to get involved. I'll be phoning people soon. Or, you could contact me first!

Randy Enkin, [pastpres@victoria.rasc.ca](mailto:pastpres@victoria.rasc.ca)



## President's Message

One of the greatest benefits of membership in the Victoria Centre is that we get to meet and know some of the giants of Canadian astronomy. This centre was founded under the tutelage of the father of Canadian astrophysics, John S. Plaskett. When I joined the centre, I was able to rub shoulders with people like Jack Newton, George Ball and John Climenhaga. Jim Hesser and John McDonald remain active members of our centre, and some of our younger speakers at our monthly meetings will no doubt move on to prominence in astronomy.

In recent weeks, we in Victoria have lost two remarkable astronomers who I am glad to have known. Dr. Allan Batten was an important figure in the history of our centre. He served as president both of our centre and the National RASC, and also as Editor of the Journal of the RASC. Dr. John Hutchings, who was known in our centre for his talks over the years, was one of the central figures in the rise of space-based astronomy in Canada.

Dr. Batten, who passed away on July 30 at age 91, joined our centre in 1962 after starting work at the DAO in 1959. A native of the United Kingdom, he spent his career at the DAO and researched radial velocities and binary stars. He was President of our Centre in 1970-72 and then moved to the national scene, serving as National President in 1976-78, and as Editor of JRASC in 1980-88. He received the RASC Service Award in 1988, was honorary president from 1993-97 and was named a Fellow of the RASC in 2016.

He also served as the second President of CASCA in 1972-74, following Dr. Helen Sawyer Hogg in that job. He was a vice-president of the International Astronomical Union, taught at the University of Victoria, and held visiting appointments in many places, including the Vatican Observatory.

Dr. Batten became more interested in recent years in the history of astronomy and in philosophical reflections on science and society, and later in his life, he lectured and wrote widely on these topics. He was active in the Anglican Church of Canada and at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society.

Many of us saw him speak on those topics, since he continued to speak regularly at RASC meetings and elsewhere at UVic until recently. He was also a bellringer at the Christ Church Cathedral, and at his funeral there, the bells rang in his honour.



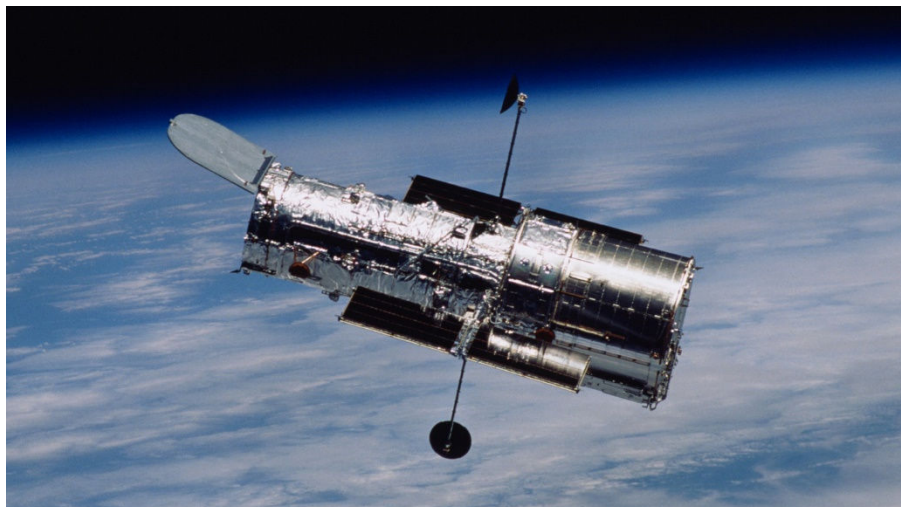


Dr. Hutchings, who passed away in his sleep on September 18 at age 83, was still actively engaged in research at the DAO in his retirement. A native of South Africa, he started at the DAO in 1967. He was involved in the development of the Hubble Space Telescope from its beginnings as a member of the research teams for the Goddard High Resolution Spectrograph and the Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph. He also chaired Hubble's Space Telescope User's Committee.

He was the Canadian Project Scientist for the James Webb Space Telescope during much of its tortuous development process, and was involved in other space telescope programs.

When I began research work on my history of the Hubble Space Telescope, one of the first doors I knocked on was that of Dr. Hutchings. He provided valued advice to me, and I was looking forward to talking to him again as part of my research on the history of space astronomy in Canada.

*Chris Gainor, [President@Victoria.RASC.ca](mailto:President@Victoria.RASC.ca)*



## NGC6914 Area in Cygnus - Dave Payne



*Planewave CDK12.5; AP 1100GTO AE; QHY600M, - Baader CMos Opt LRGB and 6.5nm H $\alpha$  Filters. Total integration time = 14.8 hrs (July 9 to 12, 2024) Maple Bay, BC*

This dark nebula is backlit (on the far side) by H $\alpha$  emissions and we have a view of the dark shadows cast by condensed material within the molecular cloud(s). In this image there appears to be layers of material providing varying shadow darkness of the H $\alpha$  light and starlight from beyond.

The view of the dark nebulosity is enhanced by reflections from stars on this side of the dark nebula. These stars, in addition to reflecting light off the dark nebula, tend to shine the brightest of the stars as uninhibited by the dark condensed material. In order to provide high reflections, the stars must be close to, or even within the otherwise dark material. The reflection colour tends to be that of the star light with the three “main” reflections being blue, indicative of blue, young, hot stars. The fourth brightest, to the right of the three blue reflections, is yellow/pink. This reflection is being created by an even younger, newborn star that may not have even begun nuclear fusion yet, as it emerges from the dark nebula where it was conceived. As this star starts/continues to burn, it will push away the dark cloud, and join the rest of the star cluster also created by, and now reflecting off the cloud.

In the centre of the image, even the reflections are partially blocked divulging the “layered” nature of the dark nebula. In other spots, the H $\alpha$  shines through.

*Editor’s note: Dave’s Astrophotography Gallery ([rascvic.zenfolio.com/davepayne](https://rascvic.zenfolio.com/davepayne)) features remarkable descriptions which explain many fascinating details. Check them out. This is one of his short ones!*

## November Astro-Events (Pacific Standard Time = UT-8)

Nov. 1	04:47 New Moon
Nov. 2	Harow Shapley, born 1885. Argued that spiral nebulae are inside the Milky Way, until Hubble's discovery of Cepheid variable stars in the Andromeda galaxy.
Nov. 3	Daylight Savings Time ends. Move to UT-8 hours. It will get dark earlier!
Nov. 4	AstroCafé hybrid meeting, in person at the Fairfield Community Centre, or on-line on Zoom
Nov. 8	Edmund Halley, born 1656, recorded a transit of Mercury, and computed the orbit of Comet 1P/Halley. 21:56 First Quarter Moon
Nov. 9	Carl Sagan, born 1934, pioneered the field of exobiology and promoted the search for extraterrestrial intelligent life (SETI). Co-wrote and narrated the television series Cosmos: A Personal Voyage.
Nov. 10	17:36 Moon occults Saturn. We'll see Saturn about 1 lunar diameter above the moon.
Nov.11	Tycho observes supernova, 1572 (No Astrocafé. Remembrance Day)
Nov. 12	Voyager 1 flies past Saturn, 1980 19:00, Council Meeting. Zoom link in upcoming email from president@victoria.rasc.ca
Nov. 13	19:30 University of Victoria RASC Meeting Speaker - Dr. Christian Marois, researcher on direct exoplanet imaging Bob Wright Centre, Lecture Theatre A104 Followed by Coffee, Cookies and Conversation in the Astronomy Lounge on the 4th floor of the Elliot Building. Alex Schmid will open up the Centre RASC Library which is located in this lounge.
Nov. 15	William Herschel, born 1738. Discovered Uranus, and with his sister Caroline produced the Catalogue of Nebulae and Clusters of Stars with 2500 entries. 13:29 Full Moon
Nov. 17	Leonid Meteor Shower
Nov. 18	AstroCafé hybrid meeting, in person at the Fairfield Community Centre, or on-line on Zoom.
Nov. 20	Edwin Hubble, born 1889, won the argument with Harrow Shapley
Nov. 22	17:28 Last Quarter Moon
Nov. 25	AstroCafé hybrid meeting, in person at the Fairfield Community Centre, or on-line on Zoom.
Nov. 28	Jocelyn Bell and Antony Hewish discover the first pulsar in 1967
Nov. 30	Galileo makes his first sketch of the moon with his telescope, 1609 22:21 New Moon

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