

SKYNEWS

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April 1993

No. 143

Published by:
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
Victoria Centre

RASC Meeting - Wednesday 14, April 1993
at the Elliott Building #061 • University of Victoria

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Members' Night

This month's meeting is a members' night. This traditional program consists of various members of the centre presenting reports on their recent activities. Among the presentations will be a video tape of a recent appearance by Centre member Jeremy Tatum on the television program, "Front Page Challenge."

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COMING EVENTS:

- April 14-18: Annual Hobby Show at the Victoria Curling Rink, 1952 Quadra Street (10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sunday). Volunteers and suggestions for the Victoria display are needed. Please call Don Dundee if you can help.
- April 21: Observers' Group meets at the Newtons' home/dome, 640 Cains Way, RRI, Sooke.
- May 1: Astronomy Day!
- May 12: Regular RASC meeting. Jack Newton, past president and now national representative for the Victoria Centre, will speak on some of his latest results using CCD imaging.
- May 19: Observers' Group meets at the Newtons' (See April 21).
- June 2-5: Public lectures of the 24th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Astronomical Society, to be held this year at the University of Victoria. See page 4 for details.
- June 9: Regular RASC meeting. Our final speaker for this year is Dr. Doug Geisler (Cerro Tololo Interamerican Observatory, La Serena, Chile), who will tell us about "The Mountains of Chile: Observations and Observatories".
- June 16: Observers' Group meets at the Newtons' (See April 21).
- July 2-5: 1993 General Assembly of the RASC in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Look for details elsewhere in this issue.

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Observers' Group Report

The last meeting of the Observers' Group was on Wednesday, March 19, and wouldn't you know it -- we were clouded out -- again! Those few intrepid members who had taken a chance on it clearing up made themselves comfortable and joined Jack Newton in his observatory's office.

Most interest was shown in some of the latest images Jack had made of an assortment of planetary nebulae and other deep-sky objects. His growing expertise in manipulating CCD images was evident when we saw how true the colours were to the actual wavelengths emitted and by the clarity of detail it is possible to obtain.

Jack had recently received some CCD images made by Don Parker in Florida. We peered in wonder at Don's rendition of the planets. They were stunning! The computer screen glowed with colour and detail. Jupiter showed a wealth of swirling cloud bands such as only the Hubble telescope might reveal, while Mars displayed clearly defined light and dark patches and bright polar areas; what caught our attention the most was Olympus Mons, the giant extinct volcano on Mars, showing as a circular patch of considerable size. We wondered if anyone had ever before succeeded in obtaining such detail in a ground-based image. An example of Don's work appears on page 53 of the April issue of *Astronomy*.

The next time we meet at Jack and Alice's will be on April 21. Maybe, just maybe, the sky will be clear! If it is, please join us. If it isn't, come anyway! You'll enjoy the company, and there's always something to learn about CCD imaging.

The April sky has a lot to offer, including the Lyrid meteor shower, which peaks on the night of 21/22, and on the 19th don't miss the beautiful pairing of Venus and Mercury with the waning crescent moon in the pre-dawn sky. Later in the day, an occultation of Venus by the moon will not be anything more

than a graze as viewed from Victoria.

My own observatory is up and running, and I'm very pleased with it. Originally the dome rotated on rubber-tired wheels running in a groove, but I soon discovered that it wasn't the best engineering idea to come out of my head! Flats weren't a problem, but binding was. Every now and then a wheel would rub hard against its groove, and the dome would require a hefty shove to get it moving again. They were retired to oblivion in the shed and replaced with steel rollers running on a track. Now it turns sweetly.

EMT tubing is used by many dome builders to construct a track, but it has its own particular problems, the main one being bending it to just the right shape and getting it to lie flat. I tried plastic tubing meant for installing underground wiring; it is thick-walled and strong, and it bends to a perfect curve with no kinks and no straight sections. By ensuring that it is laid circular and not egg-shaped, with the wheels properly aligned, shaving of the plastic is eliminated. Screws need to be placed four inches apart to prevent creaking as the wheels rotate over the track. It works well; neither have flats appeared where the dome rests in its home position. Plastic tubing might not be suitable where both the dome and the base are being supported; the weight might be too much for it, but for a dome alone it seems to be the answer. Time alone will tell.

When I hooked up my ST4 CCD to my XT computer with an 8088 CPU and Hercules board (five years old and totally obsolete already), the dithered grey scale gave a useless image with extended objects like planets and M 42. It was unhooked in a hurry! The XT will have to continue doing duty as keeper of the Centre's financial affairs and database of membership lists. My wish list now has either a Mac or a 486 on top of it.

Bill Almond



CASCA '93

The Dominion Astrophysical Observatory
National Research Council
and

The Department of Physics and Astronomy
The University of Victoria

invite you to attend the Public Lectures
of the
24th Annual Meeting of the
Canadian Astronomical Society

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Wednesday, June 2, 8:00 p.m.
University Centre Auditorium

*Mapping the Universe:
So Many Galaxies, So Little Time*

Prof. Margaret Geller, Harvard University

(RASC/CASCA Helen Sawyer Hogg Lecture)

*

Saturday, June 5 at 9:30 a.m.
David Lam Auditorium
(MacLaurin Building, Room A144)

What Makes Science "Hard"?

Sheila Tobias

Author and Science Education Critic

*

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Friday, June 4 at 8:00 p.m.
Begbie Building, Room 159

*The "Problem" of Women in Science:
Why is it so hard to convince people there is one?*

Sheila Tobias

Author and Science Education Critic

*

Saturday, June 5 at 10:40 a.m.
David Lam Auditorium
(MacLaurin Building, Room A144)

*Effective Astronomy Teaching and
Student Reasoning Ability*

Dennis Schatz, Associate Director
Pacific Science Center, Seattle

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What's Happening in the RASC?

Victoria Centre members who plan to attend the 1993 General Assembly to be held in Halifax on July 2-5 will be interested to know that Head Office has arranged the cheapest air fares possible through GNB Marketing Limited of Toronto. Fares from Victoria total \$1045.39 including GST and from Vancouver \$941.60. See the treasurer if you are going!

*

Last year the Vancouver Centre wanted to host a "Gathering of the Clans" for all clubs and societies on the West Coast; unfortunately, it fell apart at the last minute. This year, in conjunction with the British Columbia Space Sciences Society, they are trying again. A one-day meeting on Saturday, October 23, will be followed by a dinner and an outdoor public lecture titled "A Walk Through the Universe". See details elsewhere in this issue of *Skynews*.

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FOR SALE

The Centre has a few copies of both the RASC *Observer's Handbook* at \$16.00 (incl. GST) and the popular *Beginner's Observing Guide*, with updates for 1993, at \$5.35 (incl. GST). Call the treasurer if you are interested.

*

**THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF
CANADA**

1993 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

c/o 53 Zinck Avenue, Lr. Sackville, Nova Scotia B4C 1V9
e-mail WHITEHORNE@HUSKY1.STMARYS.CA
(902) 865 - 0235

1993 GENERAL ASSEMBLY: CALL FOR PAPERS

Have you done some interesting observing this year? Read some interesting research lately? Acquired any fabulous astrophotos recently? Or maybe you have been involved in some aspect of public education in the field of Astronomy and related sciences? Of course you have and now you want to share your experience and knowledge with the rest of the Society! The dates for the Halifax GA are July 2 - 5, 1993 and the GA Organizing Committee invites you now to be a presenter for this event. The 1993 General Assembly is fast approaching (but not so fast that you don't have time to prepare!) and will be the perfect opportunity for you to share what you've been doing with the rest of the Society.

We are anxious to hear from you about your presentation. Send us your name, address, and an abstract of your talk, with a short biography of yourself, to the address listed below. Also, please let us know what, if any, special presentation equipment you will require. Papers should be limited to ten minutes in length and, schedule permitting, there will be a five minute question period after each speaker. There may be a limited number of twenty minute time slots available for longer presentations but these will be allotted on a first come, first serve basis. We are looking forward to hearing from you! Send your response to:

RASC 1993 GA Paper Session
c/o David Chapman
8 Lakeview Avenue
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
Canada
B3A 3S7

or via E-MAIL to CHAPMAN@MAGGIE.DREA.DND.CA

Ruth Northcott Memorial Lecture 1993

CATCH A COMET!

DAVID H. LEVY

Internationally known astronomer, author and discoverer of 17 comets will be speaking about

"THE ART OF COMET HUNTING"

DATE: Sunday, July 4, 1993

TIME: 9:00 PM

**PLACE: Seton Academic Centre, Auditorium B
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY
Halifax, Nova Scotia**

EVERYONE WELCOME - ADMISSION FREE

Come and find out what it's like to have a chunk
of the solar system named after you!

sponsored by :

**The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Halifax
Centre)**

FOR SALE

Bausch & Lomb "Discoverer"
60mm zoom-lens refractor with case
and Stitz tripod.
Asking \$295.

Call James Kirk at 360-1714.

*

FOR SALE

10" f/20 van der Byl
Cassegrain telescope

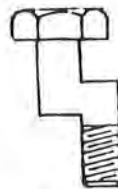
For details call Kees Bais
at 656-8636.

*

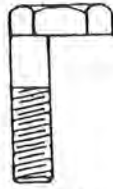
THE ASTRO (LOGICAL) BOLT CO.

A bolt for every possible occasion to solve all problems in
telescope construction, for the amateur astronomer.

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For Mismatched
Holes



For Holes too near
the Edge



For Holes Counter sunk
too deep



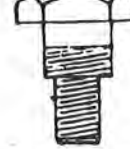
For holes drilled
crooked & cockeyed



For holes countersunk
on the wrong side



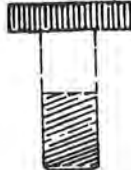
For holes not square



Assemblers special
oversize and standard
bolt



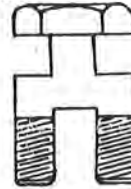
For double counter-
sunk holes



For double drilled holes



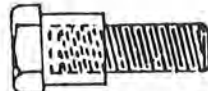
For out of round holes



For redrilled holes
that still don't match



For all size
Tapers



Telescoping bolt where length
is not known

Special head for vise
grip torquing



For use when pilot hole
does not line up

(Submitted by John Howell. Can anyone supply
the original source?)

THE VANCOUVER CENTRE OF
THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
&
THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SPACE SCIENCES SOCIETY
present:

*The West Coast Amateur Astronomy Conference
"The Gathering of the Clubs"
October 23, 1993 from noon to 5:30 pm
(and later if the weather permits)
at Vancouver's H.R. MacMillan Planetarium*

PRESENTATIONS:

By clubs and individual astronomers on any topic of astronomy including astronomical equipment, techniques and activities. Persons interested in offering a presentation should fill in and return the tear-off portion at the bottom of the previous page.

THE COMPUTER ROOM:

Computers and software will be set up to demonstrate current digital astronomy and other computer applications.

THE VIDEO ROOM:

There will be continuous video presentations of astronomy and space science movies and images throughout the day and into the evening.

"A WALK THROUGH THE UNIVERSE"

Join us after sunset for an illustrated lecture outdoors followed by guided tours of the universe using telescopes provided by members of the Vancouver Centre of the R.A.S.C. and the B.C. Space Sciences Society set up on the expansive grounds surrounding the Planetarium.

A one-day amateur astronomy conference with the guest of honour **Jack Newton** presenting an illustrated lecture: CCD Colour Imaging.

We invite all interested clubs and BCSSS members and individuals to attend and most importantly to participate.

Your registration fee will allow you to attend the lecture and meeting in the auditorium but there will be other rooms open and free to all in order to demonstrate various aspects of astronomy.

After the conference join your fellow astronomers in more merry-making at a banquet in the Planetarium's restaurant. This cost is yet to be confirmed but is expected to be in the \$15 - \$25 range.

For more information or to register, fill in the form and mail to:
"West Coast Amateur Astronomy Conference",
c/o: THE H.R. MACMILLAN PLANETARIUM
1100 CHESTNUT ST., VANCOUVER, B.C., V6J 3J9

We have secured accommodations at The Quality Inn and Burrard Motor Inn for this conference. Persons expecting to stay overnight are directed to contact either of these two establishments directly. Both are within 10 minutes drive of the Planetarium.

The Burrard Motor Inn is located at 1100 Burrard St., Vancouver, B.C., V6Z 1Y7, (604) 691-2331 (FAX) (604) 681-9753.

The Quality Inn is located at 1335 Howe St., Vancouver, B.C., V6Z 1R7, (604) 682-0229 (FAX) (604) 662-7566.

Persons wishing to book accommodations at either of these facilities are advised to mention this conference when making their reservations.

THE GATHERING OF THE CLUBS IS SPONSORED BY:

THE VANCOUVER CENTRE OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA
THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SPACE SCIENCES SOCIETY
An event of: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WEEK



PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ ZIP/PC: _____ TELEPHONE #: _____ CLUB AFFILIATION (IF ANY): _____	Registration fee: DOES NOT INCLUDE BANQUET! Prior to May 30th: \$10.00 After May 30th: \$12.50 After September 15th: \$15.00
Please tick if you are interested in: Banquet (\$15 - \$25): _____ Bringing a telescope: _____ Giving a presentation: _____	Please make cheques payable in Canadian funds to: Vancouver Centre, R.A.S.C. Which hotel will you be using? Quality Inn _____ Burrard Motor Inn _____ Mail to: 1100 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9

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