

RASC victoria council

this month

monday nights

President/Website Editor/Email Lists

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Treasurer

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Skynew Editor/ Past President

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National Representative

David Lee
nationalrep@victoria.rasc.ca

Members at Large

Bill Almond, Jim Hesser, Ed Maxfield,
Blair Pellatt, Colin Scarfe, Chris Gainor,
Norm Willey

New Member Liaison

Sandy Barta
newmembers@victoria.rasc.ca

Astronomy Cafe

Fairfield Community Centre,
1330 Fairfield, Victoria
7:30-11pm

Call John at 250.480.0928 for
directions and information.
New comers are especially
welcome. Come and enjoy!

**ASTRONOMY
CAFÉ**



second wednesday of the month

Monthly Meeting

7:30 PM, Elliott Lecture Theatre,
Rm 060, UVic.

as sky and interest dictate

New Observers Group

Hosted by Sid Sidhu.
1642 Davies Road, Highlands.
Call 391-0540 for information
and directions.

by email

**Observer/CU Volunteers/
Members email lists**

Contact Joe Carr to subscribe to
these email lists for important,
timely, member-related news.

skynews



*this month***Dr. Mark Adams****Three Radio Astronomy Futures: EVLA, ALMA, and SKA**
January 10, 7:30 PM, Elliott Lecture Theatre, Rm 060, UVic

Two major international radio astronomy research facilities are now under construction: the Expanded Very Large Array (EVLA) in the southwestern United States, and the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA) in the high-elevation desert of northern Chile. A third new international research facility, the Square Kilometre Array (SKA), is in its early design phase. This talk will provide an overview of the scope, design, and schedule for each of these extraordinary new facilities.

Mark Adams works for the National Radio Astronomy Observatory at its headquarters in Charlottesville, Virginia, where he is the Assistant Director for Education & Public Outreach. Mark received an undergraduate astronomy degree from the Pennsylvania State University, then attended the University of Arizona, where he completed his Ph.D., also in astronomy. After 13 years working in industry,



Mark returned to astronomy in 1994 when he became the site director for the University of Texas - McDonald Observatory in west Texas. Mark moved to Virginia and the NRAO in January 2004. During his career, Mark has conducted research at radio, optical, and infrared wavelengths and has published papers on star formation, gravitational lenses, radio galaxies, Wolf-Rayet stars, supernovae, quasars, fiber optics, and large telescope operations. Mark has also written popular articles on astronomy and natural history, including a book published in 2003 by Texas A&M University Press titled "Chasing Birds across Texas: A Birding Big Year."

From Bruno

Hi, just found this tid-bit on the weather network page... Stargazing predictions for Victoria BC.. <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/features/stargazing/pages/CABC0313.htm#>

From the Library

If you've been wondering what's happened with our Centre's decision to sell off some of our older, unused library books; we decided to test the waters on eBay with two books. One sold and one didn't.

Stars and Telescopes by David P. Todd, 1901 sold for US\$71.00 (reserve was \$5.00)

Stellar Evolution by James Croll, 1890 didn't sell (reserve \$25.00)

On behalf of the Centre, Joe Carr received payment and shipped the book that sold. Shipping cost for the one book is CD\$12.25. eBay listing costs for both US\$5.15. Paypal fee US\$2.36. So we net about US\$53 or CD\$58 on this sale. Our first trial library book sale was a success!

Hubble Happenings

A new image from NASA's Spitzer and Hubble Space Telescopes looks more like an abstract painting than a cosmic snapshot. The masterpiece shows the Orion nebula in an explosion of infrared, ultraviolet and visible-light colors. It was "painted" by hundreds of baby stars on a canvas of gas and dust, with intense ultraviolet light and strong stellar winds as brushes. <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.cfm?release=2006-136>

observers group

RASC Victoria Centre and the NRC have signed a License to Use Land Agreement which gives members of Victoria Centre expanded access to NRC property on Observatory Hill.

If you are a member in good standing of Victoria Centre RASC, consider yourself an "active observer", and wish to take advantage of this opportunity, please send an email to the 1st or 2nd Vice President. More information on this program see: <http://victoria.rasc.ca>

*This and That***From David Lee**

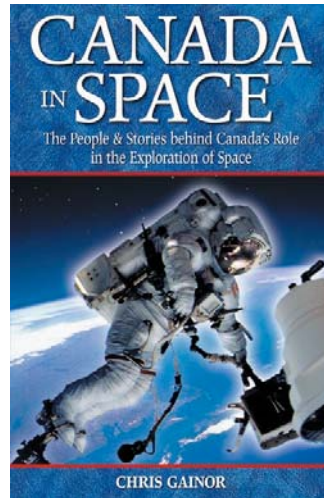
I just came across a piece of freeware/shareware for astronomy observation planning. It's not meant to replace Starry Night or the Sky but is meant for planning observations. It has a great interface eg. it has all the information you need for determining optimal times for observation. It takes in to account altitude, transit times and the best time of year to observe.

It even has a way of determining the best alignment stars for polar alignment. <http://www.ilangainc.com/ASTROPLANNER/>

Chris Gainor has a new book!

Canada in Space: The People & Stories Behind Canada's Role in the Exploration of Space. Edmonton: Folklore Publishing, 2006.

This book tells the story of the Canadian space program from its beginnings up to Steve MacLean's recent flight to the International Space Station. The book also discusses the Canadians who opened the road to space, including controversial cannon developer Gerald Bull and the Canadian engineers who joined the U.S. space program after they lost their jobs working on the Avro Arrow. Available online from local bookstores and the Chapters/Indigo website or the publisher's website: <http://www.lonepinepublishing.com/cat/1-894864-59-X>

**From Joe Carr**

NASA is looking for some amateur astronomers to help them observe meteor impacts on the Moon. Amateur gear is suitable for this work, and they need more images to supplement their coverage. Details are on their website: http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2007/03jan_lunargeminids.htm?list1444

They will soon be releasing software to help with the task of detection, which can be run on normal desktop computers.

*on the cover***Orion Nebula
Guy Walton**

Here is my contribution to images from December 27 at the "Old 16" Site":
Telescope: Orion 100mm. f9 ED on an HEQ5 Mount.

Camera: Nikon D50 Modified using ImagesPlus to control the camera.

Exposure: 20 minutes total time at ISO 800.

Processing: ImagesPlus, Photoshop CS2 and Noise Ninja.

*coming up***Supernovae and the Mystery of "Dark Energy"**

Dr. Chris Pritchett, UVic

February 14, 7:30 PM, Elliott Lecture Theatre, Rm 060, UVic

The Universe is filled with a mysterious energy that causes its expansion to accelerate. The nature of this "dark energy" (not to be confused with dark matter) is completely unknown, and represents perhaps the greatest challenge to face physics and astronomy in the past century. Canada and France are together leading the world in the observational quest to understand this dark energy, through the Supernovae Legacy Survey. Using observations of faint, very distant supernovae (lookback times of more than half of the age of the Universe), we can probe the geometry of the Universe, and detect the signature of dark energy with a precision that has never before been attained. In this talk, I will focus on the detector and telescopes that make this project possible, the observations, and a simple picture of how our observations constrain dark energy.



President's Report

**President's Message
January 2007**

Happy New Year to everyone involved with Victoria Centre. Let's hope the weather improves from the dismal time we've had since I wrote my last message in late November 2006. As I mentioned last month, I'm a fairly dedicated observer, so I'm really hoping we see some clear winter weather over the next while so we can get out and observe and photograph the night sky.



The coming year has some celestial events worth mentioning:

- Total eclipses of the Moon on March 3 and August 28.
- Jupiter will return to view by summertime, and will be close to Earth.
- Mars will be particularly bright by the end of 2007.
- Mars will be occulted by the Moon on December 24.
- The Pleiades will be occulted by the Moon March 23, June 13, and September 3.
- Saturn will be occulted by the Moon on April 25 and June 19.
- Other lunar occultations will occur in 2007 - see the Observer's Handbook for detailed info.

I expect we will stage some public events around at least one or two of these events, so please stay tuned for more information.

Victoria Centre has also planned two major events for 2007:

International Astronomy Day - April 21, 2007 being held at the Royal BC Museum and the Centre of the Universe

RASCALS Star Party - August 24-26, 2007 being held at the Victoria Fish and Game, Malahat

There is an open invitation to any members of Victoria Centre to attend the upcoming Council meeting scheduled for Jan 17th. Please contact me for further info, or if you wish to add an item to the agenda.

Joe Carr

astrophotography



**Bruno Quenneville
Andromeda Galaxy**

With a few clouds and fog conditions, I was able to capture 20 light frames of M31. Many thanks to Charles for his help and introducing me to Images Plus Processing... This is my first attemp... just aligned and stacked... Now to learn about PhotoShop...



**John McDonald
Orion Nebula**

The image of the Core of the Orion Nebula was taken on Maui with a borrowed 12 inch Meade STC with my Pentax and 0.8x focal reducer. I took a variety of exposures from 30 sec to 1/10 sec and combined them. Total exposure time was only about 4 minutes at ISO 800. I was not expecting much as the moon was really bright and the exposure time limited but at that altitude and with a 12 inch aperature you can still get something and the result was better than I expected.



**John McDonald
Rosette Nebula**

Went to the hill with Charles, Bruno and Guy December 27 and planned to test the upgrade of my HEQ5 mount. The mount worked quite well and I have now joined the ranks of the lazy astronomers with goto capability. During testing I also tried some exposures of the Rosette Nebula and this is the result. It had a total of 13 minutes of exposure which is not a lot for this diffuse target so the image needed some fairly aggressively processing. I am pleased that I was able to tease out some of the beautiful nebulosity.

\$15.00), to encourage under-age-21 family members to join. The fee will be used to offset the losses from the Student Membership.

Student Member

Must have a valid Student ID card
Can be any age, as long as attending post secondary school.
Does not need to be "attached" to a Regular or Life Member

Benefits/Restrictions

Same as Regular Member

Membership fee

Same as the Youth fee: \$34.25. RASC-Victoria makes up the shortfall (\$55.00 - \$34.25 = \$20.75) from any surplus created from the Associate Members, Associate Youth Members, and Senior Members' fees, then from general funds.

Senior Member

Age 65 or older.

Benefits/Restrictions from National

No Observer's Handbook
No SkyNews magazine
No issues of the Journal
No Member discounts on RASC publications and paraphernalia

Benefits/Restrictions from Victoria Centre

Same as current benefits

Membership fee

Between \$15.00 and \$20.00, to cover the Victoria Skynews newsletter and offset the losses from the Student Membership .

Please let us know your thoughts on the above, or any other alternatives which you would like us to consider.

Thanks,

Dave Bennett (chair)

address change? information incorrect

Contact the National Office

Telephone - 416.924.7973 or toll-free in Canada 888.924.RASC
Fax - 416.924.2911
Email - nationaloffice@rasc.ca
Post - RASC, 136 Dupont Street, Toronto, ON M5R 1V2
General enquiries - nationaloffice@rasc.ca

contact us on-line

Web Site www.victoria.rasc.ca
New Members newmembers@victoria.rasc.ca
General Inquiries info@victoria.rasc.ca

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Alternative Membership Committee

For all of our existence, RASC-Victoria has used the three membership classes from National; Regular Member, Youth Member and Life Member. Over the years, members have asked Council to investigate providing other options, such as a Family Membership or a Student Membership.

This year, Council has created a committee to investigate and make recommendations on alternative forms of membership. The committee has now met and come up with several alternatives which we would like to present to the RASC-Victoria members.

Please take a look at what we've come up with and, if you wish, provide any feedback to one of the committee members:

Dave Bennett (chair)	Dave.Bennett@gov.bc.ca
Blaire Pellatt	pellatt@telus.net
Matt Watson	Matt.WatsonM@gmail.com
Kevin Campbell	Kevc@shaw.ca

First of all, here's what the current membership options are:

Regular	\$57.00
Youth (under age 21)	\$36.25
Life	\$2,100.00

For this, each member gets from National:

- The current Observer's Handbook
- Six issues of SkyNews magazine
- Six issues of the Journal (in electronic format)
- Member discounts on RASC publications and paraphernalia

From Victoria Centre:

- Monthly members meetings with speakers
- Monthly RASC-Victoria Skynews newsletter
- Weekly Astronomy Café
- Monthly beginners' observing at Sid's place
- Free loan of library of books and periodicals
- Free loan of RASC-Victoria telescopes and equipment
- After-hours viewing on Observatory Hill
- Access to Members-only events

The committee proposes the following additional membership options:

Associate Member

Must be "attached" to a Regular or Life Member
Must be age 21 or older

Benefits/Restrictions from National:

- No Observer's Handbook
- No SkyNews magazine
- No issues of the Journal
- No Member discounts on RASC publications and paraphernalia (can purchase through their Attached Member)

Benefits/Restrictions from Victoria Centre:

- Monthly members meetings with speakers (only when escorted by their Attached Member)
- Monthly RASC-Victoria Skynews newsletter
- Weekly Astronomy Café (only when escorted by their Attached Member)
- Monthly beginners' observing at Sid's place (ditto)
- No Library of books and periodicals (can be obtained by their Attached Member)
- Use of RASC-Victoria telescopes and equipment (must be obtained/signed out by their Attached Member)
- After-hours viewing on Observatory Hill (only when escorted by their Attached Member)
- Members-only events (when escorted by their Attached Member, except for Star Parties because families are already invited)

Membership fee:

Between \$15.00 and \$20.00, to cover the Victoria Skynews newsletter and offset the losses from the Student Membership.

Associate Youth Member

Must be "attached" to a Regular or Life Member
Must be age 20 or younger

Benefits/Restrictions

Same as Associate Member

Membership fee

\$5.00 less than Associate Member (i.e. between \$10.00 and