

SKYNEWS



Luna
by
Sherry Buttnor

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FEBRUARY MEETING

Sarah Sadavoy

7:30pm

A104 Bob Wright Bldg,
University of Victoria
3800 Finnerty Rd.

www.victoria.rasc.ca

On the Cover

Using a vintage Celestron 8" telescope, Sherry Buttnor captured a 10 day old moon by holding her Olympus 1030sw digital camera close to the eyepiece and taking the shot. Using a high shutter speed will reduce the vibration of a handheld image.

February Speaker

Feb 8, 2012 - Star Formation in our Galaxy - Sarah Sadavoy, PhD student in Astronomy at UVic

I am a PhD student in Astronomy at the University of Victoria in Canada. In a nutshell, I study star formation in our Galaxy. As an observational astronomer, I've traveled to different telescopes, such as the James Clerk Maxwell Telescope (JCMT) in Hawaii

Further information is on her [website](#).

Presidents Report by Laurie Roche



Happy middle of winter in Victoria! Aren't you glad you live here and not in some other areas of our country that are in various depths of snow or in a deep freeze right now? We are so lucky here, particularly when the sun finally comes out - even if it's only for a few days. Now that the weather has improved I hope you all have had the chance to get out and view the sky at night

under some good conditions or are in the enviable position of having access to a solar telescope to see if there are prominences and spots on the sun. As I spoke to many visitors at our booth at the Hobby Show last weekend I was happy to hand out the RASC planispheres and show them what to look for when they went outside at night: Orion in the south, Cassiopeia above us and the Big Dipper in the northeast, Venus and Jupiter shining away and Mars just rising. It is such a great time of year for sky viewing, soak it up when you can. The Hobby show was a great success with good questions from guests which provided long discussions, and lots of people lined up to buy raffle tickets for the brand new Skywatcher 12" Dobsonian Telescope. Almost three hundred were sold in total. If you want in on the raffle, you'll have to be quick about it and you still have opportunities to get some.

On Friday evening we were even able to show visitors the moon through the glass of the roof in the mall. Thanks to Sid and all the volunteers who spent many hours in this public outreach.

At our last general meeting in January I asked members and guests to help with an activity to elicit ideas for membership, publicity for events, and some creative suggestions for our public outreach programs such as Astronomy Day and the RASCal's Star Party. I wanted to give you some of the feedback that came from that endeavor, so, here is the input for the Publicity section.

I will put the rest up on the website so you can see it as well. This is a great list of suggestions but if you can think of any other places we can advertise (for little or no money) then please let me or any other member of council know. Thank you for the input so far. I think it will make a big difference to our group in the future.

Publicity Feedback

- Raffle 2 tickets on Amtrak to Arizona for the Transit of Venus - possibly even accommodation?
- Channel 11 Shaw TV-video talks-presentations – also on their Community events calendar
- Have our Face book page with photos of our events added in
- Use Twitter to publicize events
- Put our events on Craigslist calendar
- Is there a way to use "Used Victoria" ?
- Write an article about observing for a local magazine, e.g. Focus Magazine
- Make sure we are in Monday Magazine – on their Community Events Calendar
- Community announcements on CBC , other local radio stations - ask CFAV etc. for time to talk about latest events
- Victoria / Saanich / Oak Bay / Peninsula Review newspapers for advertising
- Advertise meetings on UVIC calendar website and other UVIC outlets
- Coffee shop " Night sky Highlights" sheets every month in their broadsheet
- Public Libraries- notice boards and Display cabinets
- Public Bulletin Boards- at Community Centres, supermarkets etc.
- Upgrade our own RASC Victoria Centre brochure for handing out at events
- Quarterly or semester activity poster members could print and put in stores

Whew!

Hobby Show 2012

Thanks to all the volunteers for their contribution to a very successful "Public Outreach Event" at the Westshore Town Centre's Hobby Show. We had a very busy three day event where the public was

entertained with 3D images of Mars, a light pollution abatement poster display, viewing the Moon and Andromeda galaxy in spite of being inside the mall. I am sure everyone, public and volunteers, enjoyed some lovely far reaching dialogs.



The total public participation was **834**.

first ever Ticket Raffle sales for the 12" telescope was a huge success.

I am very pleased report that the launch of the Victoria Centre's

We were able to sell **290** tickets.

Thanks again to the volunteers; nothing will ever happen without their help.

Cheers,
Sid Sidhu

The Messier Marathon

The Victoria Centre holds an Annual Messier Marathon each Spring at the Victoria Centre Observatory (VCO), on West Saanich Road. It starts about an hour before sunset and finishes the following morning at dawn. Come one, come all, but keep in mind *all participants must be members of RASC*, and participating members must be enrolled on the [Active Observers List](#). This is an all night session. Coffee and donuts will be served. New members are welcome to attend this fun event. Notices for practice sessions will be scheduled ahead of time (weather permitting), and will be posted to the Active Observers email list.

NASA Mission Returns First Video From Moon's Far Side

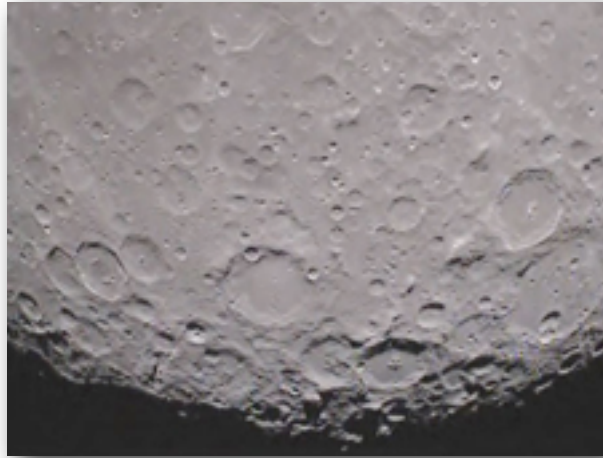
PASADENA, Calif. -- A camera aboard one of NASA's twin Gravity Recovery And Interior Laboratory (GRAIL) lunar spacecraft has returned its first unique view of the far side of the moon. MoonKAM, or Moon Knowledge Acquired by Middle school students, will be used by students nationwide to select lunar images for study.

GRAIL consists of two identical spacecraft, recently named Ebb and Flow, each of which is equipped with a MoonKAM. The images were taken as part of a test of Ebb's MoonKAM on Jan. 19. The GRAIL project plans to test the MoonKAM aboard Flow at a later date.

To view the 30-second video clip, visit: <http://go.nasa.gov/zZXAPs>.

In the video, the north pole of the moon is visible at the top of the screen as the spacecraft flies toward the lunar south pole. One of the first prominent geological features seen on the lower third of the moon is the Mare Orientale, a 560-mile-wide (900 kilometer) impact basin that straddles both the moon's near and far side.

The clip ends with rugged terrain just short of the lunar south pole. To the left of center, near the bottom of the screen, is the 93-mile-wide (149 kilometer) Drygalski crater with a distinctive star-shaped formation in the middle. The formation is a central peak, created many



South pole of the far side of the moon as seen from the GRAIL mission's Ebb spacecraft.

Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

billions of years ago by a comet or asteroid impact.

"The quality of the video is excellent and should energize our MoonKAM students as they prepare to explore the moon," said Maria Zuber, GRAIL principal investigator from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge.

The twin spacecraft successfully achieved lunar orbit this past New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Previously named GRAIL-A and GRAIL-B, the washing machine-sized spacecraft received their new names from fourth graders at the Emily Dickinson Elementary School in Bozeman, Mont., following a nationwide student naming contest.

Thousands of fourth- to eighth-grade students will select target areas on the lunar surface and send requests to the GRAIL MoonKAM Mission Operations Center in San Diego. Photos of the target areas will be sent back by the satellites for students to study. The MoonKAM program is led by Sally Ride, America's first woman in space. Her team at Sally Ride Science and undergraduate students at the University of California in San Diego will engage middle schools across the country in the GRAIL mission and lunar exploration. GRAIL is NASA's first planetary mission carrying instruments fully dedicated to education and public outreach.

"We have had great response from schools around the country; more than 2,500 signed up to participate so far," Ride said. "In mid-March, the first pictures of the moon will be

taken by students using MoonKAM. I expect this will excite many students about possible careers in science and engineering."

Launched in September 2011, Ebb and Flow periodically perform trajectory correction maneuvers that, over time, will lower their orbits to near-circular ones with an altitude of about 34 miles (55 kilometers). During their science mission, the duo will answer longstanding questions about the moon and give scientists a better understanding of how Earth and other rocky planets in the solar system formed.

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., manages the GRAIL mission for NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington. The GRAIL mission is part of the Discovery Program managed at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala. Lockheed Martin Space Systems in Denver built the spacecraft.

For more information about GRAIL, visit: <http://www.nasa.gov/grail> .

Information about MoonKAM is available at: <https://moonkam.ucsd.edu> .

JPL is managed for NASA by the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.

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NASA Releases First Multi-Player Facebook Game

Space Race Blastoff, NASA's first online game for the social media age.

Who was the first American to walk in space?
Who launched the first liquid-fueled rocket? In

what movie did O.J. Simpson play NASA astronaut?

If you know the answers to these questions, or are just curious to find out, you're ready to play Space Race Blastoff, NASA's first online game for the social media age.

Available through its own Facebook page, Space Race Blastoff pits players in remote locations in a test of their knowledge of NASA history, technology, science and pop culture. Players who correctly answer questions earn virtual badges depicting NASA astronauts, spacecraft and astronomical objects. Players also earn points they can use to obtain additional badges to complete sets that earn premium badges.

"We're hoping Space Race Blastoff opens up NASA's history and research to a wide new audience of people accustomed to using social media," said David Weaver, NASA's associate administrator for communications. "We're really excited to see what the interest will be."

NASA chose to make the game available through Facebook to take advantage of the social media site's large audience and enable players to compete against others. Individuals can also play solo games.

Once in the game, players can choose an avatar and answer 10 multiple-choice questions. Each correct answer earns 100 points, with a 20-point bonus to the player who answers first. The winner advances to the bonus round to answer one additional question for more points. Answering the bonus question earns the player a badge, which may depict an astronaut, a spacecraft, a planet or other person or object. Additional badges can be obtained for 1,500 points.

The game, developed by Scott Hanger, Todd Powell and Jamie Noguchi of NASA's Internet Services Group in the Office of Communications, is available via its Facebook page: <http://apps.facebook.com/spacerace>.

**ASTRONOMY
CAFÉ**



Fairfield Community Centre

1330 Fairfield Rd. Victoria,
7:30pm - 10pm

Call Malcolm at (778) 430-4136 for directions and information.

New comers are especially encouraged.

Observing events for February

Planets

Venus in Evening sky
Mars in Leo, Morning sky
Jupiter Western Evening sky, bright!
Saturn in Virgo, Morning sky
Uranus, Evening sky next to Venus.



New Observers Group

Hosted by Sid Sidhu
1642 Davies Road, Highlands. Call (250).391-0540 for information and directions.

Events to watch for:

5th Uranus 0.3° of Venus
7th Full Moon
13th Spica 1.7° of the Moon
14th Last Quarter Moon
21st New Moon (deep sky observing time)
23rd Mercury 6° away from 2 day old Moon
27th Jupiter 4° S. of Moon



Email Lists

Observer / CU Volunteers / Members

Contact Joe Carr to subscribe
web@victoria.rasc.ca

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday March - 14th 7:30pm - A104 Bob Wright Bldg, University of Victoria, 3800 Finnerty Rd.

RASC Victoria Council for 2010 / 2011

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President Lauri Roche president@victoria.rasc.ca	Librarian Michel Michaud librarian@victoria.rasc.ca	Light Pollution Abatement Mark Bohlman lpa@victoria.rasc.ca
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