

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada – Victoria Centre

SKYNEWS



VCO and the Path of the I.S.S.
by
Charles Banville

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MARCH MEETING

Weds. Mar. 13, 2013
University of Victoria
A104 Bob Wright Bldg.
3800 Finnerty Rd.

On the Cover

By Charles Banville

The International Space Station flies high above the VCO.

Date: February 19, 2013

Location: Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, Victoria, BC

Optics: Canon EF 8-15mm f/4L Fisheye USM

Camera: Canon EOS 5D Mark III

Exposure: Nine light frames of 30 seconds, f/4, ISO 400

March Speaker

The speaker for March 13 is Dr. Falk Herwig, Assistant Professor, Physics and Astronomy.

Title of talk: **Scientific Predictions Through Computer Simulations**

In the simulations presentation I discuss the basic principles of scientific predictions through computer simulations. Although the topic of the simulations will be in astrophysics the presentation is aimed to convey fundamental aspects of the nature of predictive science and the kind of statements scientists can make based on such simulations. This presentation would enhance the public's awareness of scientific approach, and can be useful on the present debate on climate change predictions, based on simulations. This presentation may be very well suited in a lecture series about a corresponding topic.

President's Report

This last month has passed without much to excite the observers and imagers among us, although occasionally, in the midst of weeks and weeks of cloudy nights, a clear night will slip through, more likely than not accompanied by a large, bright, moon. In my logbook, so far this year, I have recorded one night of observing. Thankfully, other activities which are not so weather-dependent continue. For example, thanks to the excellent efforts of Lauri Roche, and the National RASC Public Speaker Program, we are a joint sponsor of the principal speaker at the upcoming symposium of the IAU, being held this Spring in Victoria. Thanks to Mark Bohlman and Dorothy Paul, and other members of the Light Pollution Abatement Committee, for their fine work on the establishment of Cattle Point as an urban dark sky preserve. Extra kudos to Mark for his first-class interview about the preserve on CBC, and to Chris Gainor for his excellent interview on CFX explaining how space rocks come to land in Russia. Lastly, we took note of another honor presented to Dr. Jim Hesser; the 2013 CASCA (Canadian Astronomical Society) Qilak Award for "astronomy outreach and communication." We are lucky to have Jim in our midst.

Nelson Walker

Dear RASCals,

Here are your March, 2013 Membership and Liaison reports from me.

Membership Reports March 2013

New and Returning Members: 3

Renewed: 11

Upcoming Membership Expiry: 5

Total Membership: 167*

Liaisons

HIA: Nothing from Clyde.

CU: no reply.

Transport Canada/GLP: none.

Plaskett: I have asked Dave if he could get us some imaging time for this quarter, but have not heard back.

**please note: there was a problem from the National Office; several Centres did not receive their monthly reports, including us. I still don't have the total membership numbers, so the 167 is from February. It will be similar for March.*

Sherry Buttner

Qilak Award Presented to Dr. Jim Hesser

The Qilak award recognizes outstanding contributions to public understanding and appreciation of astronomy in Canada. CASCA is pleased to announce that the winner of the 2013 Qilak Award is Dr. James E. Hesser of the National Research Council.

Dr. Hesser has been a prominent figure in Canadian and international astronomy for many years. The director of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory since 1986, Dr. Hesser is a past president of both CASCA (2004-2006) and the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (1987-1989), and a former vice-president of the American Astronomical Society (1991-1994).

In 1997, Dr. Hesser was one of the first recipients of the prestigious Michael Smith Award, given through NSERC Canada to "honour people and groups that are inspirational in the way that they promote science to the general public". He received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002 in recognition of his services to the National Research Council and to all aspects of astronomy. In 2004,

he received the CASCA Executive Award for exceptional service to CASCA, and he holds the title of Honorary President of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC).

With a career-long commitment to astronomy education and public outreach, Dr. Hesser has led by example to forge an effective, efficient partnership between the main organizations of professional and amateur astronomy in Canada: CASCA, RASC, and the Fédération des Astronomes Amateurs du Québec (FAAQ). In collaboration with others, he worked diligently to establish respectful partnerships with Canada's Aboriginal communities to preserve and celebrate indigenous knowledge of astronomy, and to illustrate pathways by which Aboriginal youth can aspire to and enter careers in science and technology. A longtime supporter of community outreach programmes, he often gives enthusiastic talks at astronomy conferences and other venues across Canada to encourage, motivate, and inspire his professional and amateur colleagues to participate in EPO activities.

Perhaps most significantly, Dr Hesser worked tirelessly to lead International Year of Astronomy (IYA) efforts within Canada. From 2005 to well beyond 2009, he led and guided this highly visible international project by serving as Canada's "single point of contact" and as chair of the Executive Committee and Advisory Board for IYA within Canada. Under his direction, the IYA provided a "Galileo Moment" (i.e., "an engaging astronomy experience") to more than two million people in Canada through more than 3600 separate events, from coast to coast to coast, and in both official languages. Always mindful of the need to cultivate lasting partnerships that sustain public interest in astronomy, Dr. Hesser has been a driving force behind "Beyond IYA" efforts within Canada.

CASCA thanks Dr. Hesser for his commitment to deepening the public's understanding and appreciation of astronomy.

*Laura Ferrarese, President, on behalf of the CASCA Board
Patrick Cote, Chair, on behalf of CASCA's Awards Committee*

Introduction to Astrophotography - W John McDonald

Photographing the night sky can be a rewarding pastime. As a result of improvements in off-the shelf cameras, amateurs can produce images that sometimes rival those done by professional astronomers. The course will include instruction on camera types and settings for various astronomical subjects. It will focus on subjects accessible with a camera and tripod but will also include the opportunity to take images through a telescope. If you have a camera that has manual settings please bring it to class.

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If you plan to purchase one feel free to wait until the discussion of camera properties in the first class.
Tue 7-9pm - Apr 9, 16 & 23. 3 Sessions for \$70 - To register, call or visit the Monterey Recreation Centre, 1442 Monterey Ave, Oak Bay - 250-370-7300 - quote event #109917

John McDonald

Council for 2012 / 2013

Past President: Lauri Roche pastpres@victoria.rasc.ca

President: Nelson Walker president@victoria.rasc.ca

First Vice President: Charles Banville vp@victoria.rasc.ca

Second Vice President: Sherry Buttner vp2@victoria.rasc.ca

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Secretary / Recorder: Deb Crawford secretary@victoria.rasc.ca

Librarian: Michel Michaud librarian@victoria.rasc.ca

Website: Joe Carr web@victoria.rasc.ca

E-Mail Address: Matt Watson admin@victoria.rasc.ca

Skynews Editor: Diane Bell editor@victoria.rasc.ca

Telescopes / School Programs: Sid Sidhu telescopes@victoria.rasc.ca

National Representative: Mark Bohlman nationalrep@victoria.rasc.ca

Light Pollution Abatement: Mark Bohlman lpa@victoria.rasc.ca

New Member Liaison: Sherry Buttner NewMembers@victoria.rasc.ca

Membership Coordinator: Sherry Buttner Membership@victoria.rasc.ca

Observing Chairperson: Bill Weir obschair@victoria.rasc.ca

Members at Large: Bill Almond, Jim Hesser, Alex Schmid, David Lee, Li-Ann Skibo, Paul Schumacher, Matt Watson

2013 Messier Marathon – Victoria Centre, RASC

The Centre's Annual Messier Marathon was held on March 8-9, 2013 at the VCO. In attendance were Micah, Jim, Greg, Urmila, Michel, and I. We had perfect weather conditions with clear skies from sunset to sunrise. Greg, Micah, and I had our Dobsonian telescopes set up on the observation pad by 18:30 and awaited darkness. By 19:15 I had my first observation, M74 the galaxy in the constellation of Pisces, and the race was on. I kept M79 in the back of my mind as I missed this object in 2009. By 23:30 all three runners had observed the galaxies in Virgo and were ready to move on to the lower parking lot. After setting up we carried on with our hunt. Light pollution from the city definitely slowed things down, especially for objects low in the sky. Greg and I struggled with M83, the Southern Pinwheel in Hydra. It took me an hour to locate it. Meanwhile, Micah charged ahead, helped I'm sure with larger eye pupils. By 4:00 my gear was covered with dew and had to be warmed up in my vehicle. At around 5:20 we witnessed a beautiful moonrise and gave up a few minutes later as it was getting to light to observe. In the end I came short of my goal of observing 100 Messier Objects by 7 for a personal best of 93 Messier Objects. Micah observed and logged a remarkable 102 Messier Objects. Congratulations Micah! I went to bed at 7:00 and got up three hours later to find the sky covered with clouds...our lucky break.

....Charles

P.S. If you'd like to experience our Messier Marathon in less than 30 seconds checkout this time-lapse video I created. <https://vimeo.com/61472947>

ASTRONOMY CAFÉ



Astronomy Café: Held every Monday at Fairfield Community Centre - 1330 Fairfield Rd, Victoria, at 7:30pm to 10pm Call Malcolm at (778) 430-4136 for directions and information. Newcomers are especially encouraged. **Please note: There will be no Astronomy Café on March 18 or April 1.**



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



Email Lists Observer / CU Volunteers / Members
Contact Matt Watson to subscribe. <mailto:admin@victoria.rasc.ca>

Next month's meeting is Wednesday, April 10, 2013, at 7:30 PM.