

SKYNEWS



© 2014 W J McDonald

CENTAURUS A (NGC 5128)

By W. John McDonald

IN THIS ISSUE

On the Cover
President's Report
April Speaker
Astronomy Day!

MEETING

Weds. April 9, 2014, 7:30 PM
University of Victoria
A104, Bob Wright Bldg.
3800 Finnerty Road

On the Cover

Centaurus A or NGC 5128, is one of the closest radio galaxies to Earth. The galaxy is also the fifth brightest in the sky, making it an ideal amateur target but it is only visible from low northern latitudes and the Southern Hemisphere. The centre of the galaxy contains a supermassive black hole.

The photo was taken at the Painted Pony Resort in New Mexico. Conditions were clear - 7 degrees C with a light wind. Modified Canon T3i camera on a 105mm apo refractor operating at f/7 mounted on an iOptron ZEQ25GT equatorial mount with an Orion mini-guide scope.

Exposure – 5 lights at 480 seconds, and ISO 1600 with 5 darks and 8 flats to match.

Processing in Images Plus and Photoshop.

President's Report

This month we have some excellent news. Last Wednesday, Victoria Centre Council voted unanimously to submit a proposal to NRC Herzberg that Victoria Centre host a series of Saturday openings of the Observatory this summer. These openings are in addition to night sky viewing on Astronomy Day, May 3, also hosted by us (with the assistance of NRC staff), and the GA 2014 Welcome BBQ, to be held Thursday, June 26, at the observatory. We are optimistic that our proposal will be looked at favourably. It is hoped that this summer "pilot project" lead to a more permanent arrangement with us, the NRC, and other groups taking over functions and activities lost with the closing of this landmark.

This proposal is the result of the hard work of several Council Members, led by Lauri Roche, who are part of the "Short Term Working Group for the Reopening of the Observatory" which was formed at a community meeting held last November, thanks to the efforts of MLA Lana Popham and Don Moffett. At the time of that meeting, which was held at the Herzberg, and was attended by NRC staff and administration, we hoped both that the Centre of the Universe or the DAO, or both, might be reopened in some form, and that there would be a role for us similar to what we had done in the past, both near, and distant, in terms of public outreach and education on the hill.

It will be proposed that the Observatory be open for seven Saturday evenings, three in each of July and August, and one in September. The Observatory will be open for tours to be conducted, eventually, by our members. Other members of our group will be outside with the usual telescopes, weather permitting. We will propose that four members will be on the hill on each of these openings, and that a small group of us be trained to open and close the observatory, and operate the telescope.

There are still hurdles to be cleared, and matters to be discussed even if our proposal is accepted, but this first step is vital, and is the most important one. This could turn into a "flagship" activity for our club. If you are interested in helping with this program, please let us know.

....*Nelson Walker*

April Speaker

Our monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday evening, April 9, 2014 at 7:30 PM - in Room A104 of the Bob Wright Centre, U-Vic. Following the business meeting, Dr. Réal Roy, a biologist at UVic will talk to us about the origin of life. The title of his talk: *Space Dust, Bugs and DAO: Beneficial Bacteria*.

To find out more about Dr. Roy's interests visit:

<http://www.uvic.ca/science/biology/people/home/faculty/facpages/roy.php>

Membership Report – April, 2014

Membership Activity:

New and Returning: 2

Renewed: 3

Total Membership: 184

Liaisons:

HIA: Clyde has nothing to share with us for April.

Transport Canada: None.

U-Vic Observing: Still tentatively scheduled for the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month. However, due to weather and other commitments of John and Sherry, we will just call sessions whenever we can fit them in.

....*Sherry Buttner*

Astronomy Day!

Come and join us in celebrating **International Astronomy Day** on **Saturday, May 3rd**. The **Royal BC Museum** will be our venue for the day from **10 am to 4 pm**.

Out in the courtyard we will have our famous “Walk Among the Planets” display and different types of solar telescopes for you to check out the sunspots that are showing off this year.

Inside, on the main floor in Clifford Carl Hall, there will be many kinds of demonstrations. Bring your camera and find out more about astrophotography, check out our new “Astronomy Apps” workshop for different types of electronic devices or try out mirror grinding. We have children’s programming featuring Science Venture from UVIC, our “Ask an Astronomer” booth, and a Planetarium program running to figure out what’s up in the sky this month. There will be some new displays celebrating the RASC Victoria’s 100th Anniversary and the history of the Plaskett Telescope and what is probably our Centre’s most prized possession, the beautiful, brass Wray-Brydon Telescope. Lots of other types of telescopes will be on display as well, so if you looking to do some research for yourself, talk to the members behind the ‘scopes.

We will have two presentations in the Newcombe Conference Hall, one at 11 am when our own Dr. Chris Gainor will talk about the newest Mars explorations and the second at 2 pm when NRC Herzberg astronomer, Dr. James Di Francesco will show us the latest research in extra –solar planets.

We hope to see you sometime during the day. All the Astronomy activities are free to the public. Come and join our Centre in our Centenary celebrations.

And then for our big finale.....drumroll please.....we are delighted to announce that we are back up “**On the Hill**” for the evening of May 3rd. With the support of the NRC Herzberg staff we will be re-opening both the **Dominion Observatory Building** with the historic **Plaskett Telescope** as well as the **Centre of the Universe** from **8 pm to 11 pm**. We will have a short welcome ceremony and then we will allow visitors to wander through the displays in the CU building, take a tour of the Observatory and find out what the telescope is looking at, talk to members of the RASC who will put their telescopes up on the side of the parking lot or attend a presentation or two given by NRC Herzberg astronomers at different times in the evening. We are very excited to be able to re-open the “Hill” just for this night (but watch this space for further information about more openings that may happen in the summer).

Keep your eyes on our website for more information about the access and parking for the Astronomy Day event as finding a parking space on busy nights up on the hill can be a problem. Perhaps consider sharing a drive for that night.

So mark Saturday, May 3rd on your calendar right now and we will see you at the Museum and up on “The Hill”.

Please contact Sherry Buttner, Sid Sidhu, Nelson Walker or Lauri Roche if you need more information.

....*Laurie Roche*

Council for 2013 / 2014

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
Treasurer: Bruce Lane treasurer@victoria.rasc.ca
Secretary / Recorder: Deb Crawford secretary@victoria.rasc.ca
Librarian: Michel Michaud librarian@victoria.rasc.ca
Website: Joe Carr web@victoria.rasc.ca
E-Mail Coordinator: 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

ASTRONOMY Café



Astronomy Cafe: 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.



New Observers Group: Hosted by Sid Sidhu, 1642 Davies Road, Highlands. Please 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, May 14th, 2014, at 7:30 PM.