

SKYNEWS



DOMINION ASTROPHYSICAL OBSERVATORY and our
100TH ANNIVERSARY CAKE
By Sherry Buttner

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MEETING

Weds. Sept. 10, 2014, 7:30 PM
University of Victoria
B150, Bob Wright Bldg.
3800 Finnerty Road

On The Cover

This special photo is a departure from our usual gallery of celestial objects on the cover of Skynews! The beautiful cake in the foreground was created in celebration of our 100th Anniversary of the Victoria Centre, and was shared with the RASC General Assembly delegates as they met for the Welcome Barbecue at the end of June, 2014. The pride and joy of Little Saanich Mountain, the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, was the site of the seven successful Star Party programs held up on the Hill this summer - welcoming thousands of visitors over the Saturdays during the months of July, August and early September.

September Speaker

Our monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 10th in Room B150 of the Bob Wright Centre, University of Victoria, at 7:30 PM. **Please note that this is a change of venue for our meeting, for the duration of 2014.**

Our speaker will be Dr. Samantha Lawler, Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Victoria and the Hertzberg Institute of Astrophysics. The topic of her lecture is: "The nearby star Fomalhaut hosts a beautiful dust ring and a directly imaged planet candidate, Fomalhaut b, which seems to continually defy expectations." Dr. Lawler gave a great talk on this fascinating topic at the Cowichan Valley Star Finders Star Party last August, and will reprise her presentation for us at the September RASC meeting.

Please join us for coffee and cookies in the Astronomy Lounge after the lecture, located on the fourth floor of the Elliott Building.

....*Sherry Buttnor, Vice President*

Membership Report – September, 2014

Membership: Total membership is now 187. I know at least two new members were a result of interaction at the DAO Saturday evening events !

Other: No new developments from Transport Canada re: Green Laser Pointers (GLPs). A reminder that **ALL** RASC events using GLPs must be reported to TC ahead of the event. Clyde from HIA reports nothing new from them we need to be aware of. We are still planning to begin the Friday evening UVic telescope sessions in the near future. Stay tuned!

....*Sherry Buttnor*

President's Report

This will be a summer to remember - our hosting of GA 2014, along with our hosting of a series of "Summer Star Parties" at the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory. Although there was a tiny bit of initial reluctance to undertake both of these at the same time (along with, for sure, most of our "normal" summer outreach activities), once the commitment was made, it was full speed ahead. The obvious success of both of the ventures was due to the almost unbelievable commitment and effort of their organizers.

It is the latter of these that is freshest in the mind. Last Saturday, at the last of these "Summer Star Parties," there were nearly five-hundred visitors! Public attendance on the Saturdays when it was not raining, or when the wind was not howling, was always in the hundreds. And problems that arose were mostly connected with the traffic on West Saanich Road.

There is something deeply satisfying about the notion and practice of "public outreach," something known to our members that head up the club's outreach efforts, but which I have personally really begun to experience only this last year. Last Saturday, on the hill, the gibbous moon was crystal clear. We had telescopes set up on both sides of the dome. Mine was aimed at the moon. The lineups at my scope were endless: young families, seniors, twenty-somethings. Out of this hoard of people of all ages who looked at the moon through a telescope, most surely for the first time, there was not a handful who had nothing to say. The moon, coming and going unnoticed as it does, can still bring a tear to the eye.

Thanks to those of you in this club that made this happen.

....*Nelson Walker*

Your Editor's Musings

In the past few days, I have been taking time to recall memories of this great summer of 2014 - one of the best I've had under our many nights of starry skies. I even checked off two big items on my astronomical "bucket list."

I attended my very first RASC General Assembly here in Victoria, meeting delegates from across Canada and participating in all of the events. And – I realized a 50-year old dream of owning an 8" reflector telescope. The joy my new Dob 'scope gave me under those clear skies was an understatement. How fortunate I was to volunteer, with many others, at all the Observatory and Star Party programs up on the Hill. With the seven combined evenings, we received thousands of visitors.

The first images I saw through my new Dob were rather celebratory! The "Rock the Shores" concert was playing on the outskirts of Westshore as we waited for the skies to darken on one

of the mid-July evenings. Before the stars made their appearances one by one, we were able to see some awesome post-concert fireworks over in the distance – magnified about 80 times! Our main targets for the rest of the Saturdays were Saturn, her moons - and Messier's summer treasures. As the ringed planet brightened after twilight, lines formed at all the telescopes. Visitors, young and old, came to discover the wonders of our night skies for the first time, and some others came to get re-acquainted with old "friends" like M13 and the Dumbbell Nebula.

Memories were created in those nights over the summer. I witnessed emotion and tears from a mother and her grown daughter as they saw Saturn for the first time. I saw the excitement and fascination of a visiting group of Japanese students who joined us for one of the evenings. They rarely experience star-lit skies from their home cities and up on the Hill that night, their Galileo moments were amazing. Moments they will remember for a long time.

Clear Skies !!

....Diane

Telescope Contest Winner



At the Saanich Fair this year 36 young people aged 10 to 16 entered the RASC Victoria's Telescope Contest, where all contestants were asked to write a short essay about why they would like to win a five-inch Newtonian telescope. Judges Miles Paul and Chris Gainor had a tough time selecting a winner from many excellent entries, but they finally chose 13-year-old Kayleen Miller of Colwood.

"I love looking up at the break of night to see Venus and Mars, as well as other stars and constellations," Kayleen wrote, adding that she hopes to become an astronomer.

Because Kayleen attended the fair on Sunday and was visiting a friend on Sunday, the telescope was accepted on her behalf by her mother Anna Miller and sister Elisha after the judges decided on the final day of the fair on Monday.

Council for 2013 / 2014

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ASTRONOMY CAFE



Astronomy Cafe: Held every Monday at Fairfield Community Centre - 1330 Fairfield Rd, Victoria, at 7:30pm to 10pm. Call John McDonald at **(250) 480-0928** 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>

The next meeting is Wednesday, October 8, 2014, at 7:30 PM.