

SKYNEWS



Victoria Centre Observatory **By John McDonald**

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MEETING

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

On The Cover

Victoria Centre Observatory in black and white on a cool clear fall night – November 15, 2014.
Clear and -2 deg C with no wind.
Canon 6D with 15mm Sigma lens on tripod.
15 second exposures at f/2.8 and ISO 5000.
Processed in ARC and Photoshop.

December Speaker

Our monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 10th in Room A150 of the Bob Wright Centre, University of Victoria, at 7:30 PM.

Our speaker will be Dan Posey – his topic is: Astronomers' Work is of Great Value - The Construction of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory and the Foundations of the Modern Canadian Astronomy Program, 1905-1930. Dan is a second-year graduate student in the University of Victoria's History program. He completed his undergraduate degree from the same institution in 2012. His thesis focuses on the history of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory and its contributions to both Canadian Astronomy and British Columbia throughout the twentieth century.

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

President's Report

I would first like to start off by thanking the previous Victoria Centre Council and committees for their outstanding work during their terms, and to welcome the new Council to their positions for the upcoming one. Looking at the names of those who served before us makes me realize we have some pretty big shoes to fill, but we definitely are ready for the challenge.

The coming year looks exciting, and we are already working on events such as our own summer star party, Saturday night public observing at the DAO, various outreach events, and even the total solar eclipse in 2017. It will be a fun year!

There is, however, something you can help me with. We are now just at around 200 members, and many of those are new to the RASC, and astronomy. I would like to know what we can do for you to make your experience in astronomy positive, and enjoyable. This is YOUR Centre. Please always feel free to bring your ideas and comments to Council by email, phone, or at a Council or general meeting.

So let's make the beginning of the Victoria Centre's second century as great as its first!

Clear skies,

....*Sherry Buttnor*

Membership Activity – December, 2014

Membership Report: Total membership is currently 198. There are 6 members in the grace period. Please contact Chris Purse, 2nd Vice President (membership@victoria.rasc.ca) if you would like to check the status of your membership.

Your Editor's Musings



As we soldiered through the late Autumn months of November and early December, I was grateful for any clear skies the weather office could afford us. If there was an opportunity on a moonless night, I would head up to our wee Observatory and have a last look at our Summer Messiers, as they made their way westward – and welcome the eastern celestial treasures. And certainly the Sisters, as they heralded the Hunter, awakening again to begin his trek across the coming Winter sky. When it got too cold to observe, it was always good to warm up beside the 14” Meade, my

coffee in hand, and to catch up on the news with old and new friends. And....there was also a moment or two of reflection on the past months of this challenging year....

My heartfelt thanks to all of you who supported me through my illness, during the first half of 2014. I have much to be grateful for - I was able to attend the General Assembly here in Victoria. And....to make it up to the Hill - to volunteer for all the Saturdays with the Summer Public Star Parties! I was happy indeed, to play “tour-guide” to our many visitors under our mostly clear skies, with the assistance of my new 8” Dob telescope.

This is my last “Musings” as Editor. I’m taking a break and will be handing over the Skynews to Malcolm Scrimger. Grateful thanks to you, Malcolm. I won’t be giving up the occasional writing though; from comets to eclipses to meteor showers, there has been more than enough excitement in our skies to write and share with you all. And certainly more to come !!

I wanted to end with some thoughts from Sherry Buttner – her words echo my own thoughts and feelings as I sat under star-filled skies for most of my lifetime – and....with one or two of my own cats as well....

Come with me, just for a moment, into my night....

It's velvety warm out, and calm. Overhead, the Milky Way. So bright and clear, I feel I can almost scoop up a handful. The trees in our yard seem to be reaching up, seemingly in competition with me to see who can touch it first.

Before me is a telescope, a kind of porthole (or portal) to the universe. The images it provides for my eyes are beautiful. Like looking into a jewel box. Presently, though, I've abandoned the instrument in favour of a lounge on the lawn. Kamali'i is on my lap, at a low purr. All I can do now is lie back, look up, and take in the exquisite diamond-strewn beauty that is beyond words.

It is the kind of night I wish I could pour into a bottle; I'd save a little for a rainy winter evening, and share the rest with you.

It is absolutely stunning....

All the best of the Christmas season to all of you and continuing clear skies for 2015.

....Diane

Awards and Honours

Nelson Walker presented **Certificates of Appreciation to the whole key General Assembly 2014 team:**

- John McDonald – Registration
- Chris Purse – Registration
- Reg Dunkley – Registration
- Deb Crawford – Hospitality
- Nelson Walker – Finance
- Lauri Roche – Papers and Presentations
- Jim Hesser – Papers and Presentations
- David Lee – Audio / Visual
- Sherry Buttner – Audio / Visual
- Charles Banville – Transportation

David Lee was presented with the **Award of Excellence in Astrophotography** for his photos of the Partial Solar Eclipse Oct 2014.

Jim Stillburn was presented with the **Ernie Pfannenschmidt Award in Amateur Telescope Making** for the fabrication of his custom 10 inch Optical/Reflector Tube Assembly

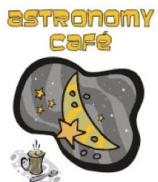
Mark Bohlman and Paul Schumacher were presented as co-winners of the **Newton – Ball Service Award 2014** for their management of the 2014 National General Assembly.

Outgoing President **Nelson Walker** was presented with a **Certificate of Excellence** for his excellent leadership of Victoria Centre.

Council for 2014/2015

Past President: Nelson Walker pastpres@victoria.rasc.ca
President: Sherry Buttnor president@victoria.rasc.ca
First Vice President: Steve Pacholuk vp@victoria.rasc.ca
Second Vice President: Chris Purse vp2@victoria.rasc.ca
Treasurer: Bruce Lane treasurer@victoria.rasc.ca
Secretary / Recorder: Joy Fisher secretary@victoria.rasc.ca
Librarian: Michel Michaud librarian@victoria.rasc.ca
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Light Pollution Abatement: Dorothy Paul lpa@victoria.rasc.ca
New Member Liaison: Chris Purse NewMembers@victoria.rasc.ca
Membership Coordinator: Chris Purse Membership@victoria.rasc.ca
Observing Chairpersons: Michel Michaud/Jim Stillburn obschair@victoria.rasc.ca

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



Astronomy Cafe: Held every Monday at Fairfield Community Centre - 1330 Fairfield Rd, Victoria, at 7:30 pm to 10 pm. 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, January 14, 2015, at 7:30 PM.