

Nomination of David Lane
FRASC 2015
by Roy Bishop and James Hesser

Preamble

David Lane is Director of the Burke-Gaffney Observatory at St. Mary's University, and Systems Administrator for the University's Department of Astronomy and Physics. He has been an exceptional member of the RASC for more than a quarter century. The Society has benefited immensely from the good judgment, diplomatic skills, technical expertise, and dedication of this unpretentious gentleman from Stillwater Lake, Nova Scotia.

The award of Fellow of the RASC (FRASC) was created to acknowledge the work of long-serving members who have made extraordinary contributions to the Society, much of which service has been rendered at the national level. As evidenced in the summary below, David Lane more than satisfies these criteria.

Summary of David Lane's contributions to Astronomy

For the Halifax Centre

David Lane joined the RASC Halifax Centre in 1986. His abilities soon resulted in him becoming arguably the most valuable member in the Centre. Among the executive positions he occupied were Secretary, Observing Chair, Editor of *Nova Notes* (for six years), Treasurer, and President. He worked countless hours to assist in the organization and running of the 1993 RASC General Assembly in Halifax. That year he formalized his commitment to the Society by becoming a life member. He volunteered to conduct planetarium shows, took leadership roles in the running of the Centre's annual star party *Nova East*, and participated in

astronomy promotional events at schools, on television, and on many radio programs. During the planning and construction of the Centre's St. Croix Observatory, Dave provided the sort of level-headed counsel the Centre had grown to expect from him, plus hours of back-breaking labour. Nominated by the Halifax Centre, he received the Society's Service Award in 1998.

For the National RASC

In the 1990s David Lane began to apply his impressive talents for the benefit of the national Society, as a member of the Computer Use Committee and the Publications Revitalization Committee. He led the reform and merger of the earlier incarnation of the *Journal* and former *Bulletin* publications, and served as the first Journal Production Manager until 2002. Also, he was the Society's first Webmaster. For the past 18 years he has been a regular contributor to the Society's *Observer's Handbook*.

In 2004 he began the eight-year sequence of presidential positions, serving as national President in 2008-2010. (Indeed, he generously stepped in when his predecessor had to step down early.) That was a particularly busy period for the RASC as it encompassed the sale of the Society's Dupont Street headquarters, the International Year of Astronomy (IYA 2009, for which preparations began in 2006) and the hiring of its first Executive Director. Dave was an active, strong, reasonable voice on the national IYA 2009 planning committees, where he without fail provided constructive suggestions and supported the efforts of CASCA, FAAQ and RASC to deliver diverse, exceptional experiences nationwide. He personally established and maintained the email communication systems upon which the national effort relied. Throughout the multiyear preparations for IYA and the intense reporting year 2010 he never missed a beat on the challenging and time consuming sale of the headquarters and preparing the transition to the Society's first Executive Director. He represented the RASC at the opening

ceremonies of the IYA in Paris, France, in January 2009. During this period he selflessly put his astronomical software business (see next section) on hold to focus to the maximum extent possible on the major issues involving the RASC. The latter included strong contributions to crafting the new Bylaws required by Federal law, and helping in his effective, persuasive way everyone to work through the enormous complexities of transforming RASC governance. During the last six years of his various presidential positions, he also served as Editor of the Society's *Observer's Calendar*.

For Astronomy Generally

David Lane designed, produced, and distributes "Earth Centred Universe" (ECU), a desktop planetarium and telescope-control program, noted for its ease of use, rich feature set, and speed. He operates Nova Astronomics, a part-time software company that primarily markets ECU.

In 1994 Dave partnered with Paul Gray to search for supernovas. A few months later they found SN1995F, the first supernova to be discovered from Canada. Subsequently, on images taken at Dave's backyard, automated, Abbey Ridge Observatory, they have found four additional supernovas: 2005B, 2005ea, 2010lt, 2013hc. The last two were discovered by Paul Gray's children, Kathryn and Nathan, making them, at 10 years of age, the youngest ever to have discovered a supernova.

In 2006, David Lane began a professional-amateur collaboration with astronomers at St. Mary's University by adapting his automated Abbey Ridge Observatory to obtain data on variable stars. Following from that, he is now a co-author on several research papers in professional journals. He also participates in observing campaigns initiated by the American Association of Variable Star Observers.

Awards Received by David Lane

From the RASC:

Ken Chilton Prize (1995 and 2010), Chant Medal (1996), Service Award (1998), President's Award (2013)

From Nova Scotia's Discovery Centre:

Science Champion Award, for promotion of science and technology to the public above and beyond the normal avenues of communication (2007)

From St. Mary's University:

President's Award for Exemplary Service (2008)

From the International Astronomical Union:

Asteroid 117032 named Davidlane (2008)

Recommendation

For nearly thirty years David Lane has made extraordinary contributions to a diverse palette of core RASC activities beginning with effective local contributions followed by truly exceptional national service and leadership. His sustained efforts have materially contributed to the high international regard in which the Society is held. For these and many other reasons we recommend that he be appointed a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

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