

Glenn Hawley
RASC Awards Committee Chair

November 3, 2014

2015 Service Award – David M. F. Chapman

The Halifax Centre hereby nominates David Chapman for the RASC Service Award. This is a major award of the Society, given to a member in recognition of outstanding service, rendered over an extended period of time, where such service has had a major impact on the work of the Society and/or of a Centre of the Society. We believe that Dave qualifies for this award, and offer the following information in support of our nomination.

David Chapman, a retired professional scientist, has been an amateur astronomer for 52 years. He is a life member of the Society, having rejoined the RASC (Halifax Centre) in 1984 after an absence of several years. He has been an active member of the Centre and the Society ever since, in a variety of capacities.

At the Centre Level

Over the years he has willingly and capably lent his time, talent and knowledge to many Halifax Centre activities. He served as Centre librarian in 1985, and as Centre president in 1995-96. Working quietly in the background, he has mentored several individual members and helped them become active observers of the night sky. Dave has also contributed many talks to the Centre, and articles to *Nova Notes*, the Centre newsletter. He was the Webmaster for the Halifax Centre, a role he filled for several years. An active outreach volunteer, he shares his knowledge and enthusiasm through many public talks and sidewalk astronomy events.

A unique contribution of Dave's is the "Mini-Messier List", an observing program developed by Dave as an introduction to the sky for new observers. It helps them build all the basic observing skills without the intimidation often experienced by novices who tackle the much larger Messier List. The Mini-Messier List includes 20 easy (mostly binocular) objects, spread across the four seasons, as well as examples of the main types of celestial objects. Once the list is completed, the new observer has gained skills, confidence, and a great start on the official Messier List. Many keen observers of the Halifax Centre got their start with Dave's Mini-Messier List.

Dave was one of the driving forces behind the new 16" Dobsonian go-to telescope at the Centre's Saint Croix Observatory. He has also run training sessions to familiarize Centre members with the operation and handling of the telescope.

Dave Chapman has also been a local leader in the use of social media to raise awareness of the night sky and generate public interest and participation in astronomy education and public outreach (EPO) events in Nova Scotia and beyond. In preparation for International Year of Astronomy in 2009 (IYA2009), he stepped up to the role of "communications point person." His first step was to bring the Halifax Centre and Saint Mary's University Astronomy & Physics Department together to form the highly-successful website, Astronomy Nova Scotia (astronomynovascotia.ca). It includes a

Twitter and Facebook account, and remains a one-stop information source for all things astronomy-related in Nova Scotia. Six years later, Dave is still the site administrator.

At the National Level

Chapman has not limited his involvement to the Centre level. The late 1990s saw him serving on the national Awards Committee, where he worked to upgrade the Halifax Centre-initiated Simon Newcomb Award. Under Dave's leadership, the committee developed new terms of reference for this award, transforming it into the high-level award it is today. He also initiated a review and fine-tuning of the Society's awards processes and terms of reference. That resulted in a more unified framework of standards for the Society's awards nomination and evaluation process.

IYA2009 saw several Dark-Sky Preserves (DSP) declared. Dave Chapman was a key player in the establishment and success of Kejimikujik National Park Dark-Sky Preserve. But why stop with a new DSP? Why not take it a step beyond? Established in parallel with the DSP, is Kejimikujik's highly successful annual Dark-Sky Weekend event. Kejimikujik is both a National Park and a National Historic Site of special significance to Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaq people. Dark-Sky Weekend programs include local First Nations cultural interpretations as a large part of the astronomy presentations, enriching visitors' experience of the night sky. To these ends, Dave has been instrumental in building and strengthening vital relationships between the RASC, the Halifax Centre, Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaq people, and Kejimikujik National Park. The annual Dark-Sky Weekend is now the single most popular event at Kejimikujik.

Dave Chapman is an experienced and dedicated lunar observer who has encouraged and recruited many RASCals into an elite group of *Lunatics*. Using the "Werner X" and social media, he has brought many unsuspecting observers over to the well-lit moonlight side of astronomy.

He is also the co-developer (in partnership with Centre francophone de Montreal's Patrice Scattolin) of a new, bilingual Lunar Observing Program. At present this is a local "by request" program that has the potential to become a national RASC program (we hope it does so). Like the Mini-Messier list, it encourages and supports less experienced observers by bridging the gap between the very basic Moon Gazer's Guide and the significant challenge of the Williamson Lunar Observing Program.

He was a Contributing Editor for the *Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada* (JRASC) for seven years, with a much longer history as a frequent contributor to both JRASC and the previous iteration of the *Bulletin*. Dave is also a stalwart and vocal member of the Publications Committee, contributing to both the content and the quality of RASC publications. He ensures that matters arising in meetings or project proposals get fully investigated. He is very supportive and contributes positively to the work currently being done to either revive the *Beginner's Observing Guide* or produce something entirely different and more useful.

Dave undertook a major commitment of time and effort for the national society in 2011 when he accepted a five-year term as editor of the *Observer's Handbook*. Not only has Dave maintained the high standard set by his predecessors, but he has applied his own magic to the task: in his first four editions he has recruited contributors for half a dozen

new sections in the Handbook, while holding the number of pages fixed at 352! In typical Chapman fashion, most of those new sections are designed to entice people to observe the sky.

At the International Level

Dave Chapman has taken his interest in astronomy EPO to the international stage. Although this is a personal project of his, and not an official RASC endeavor, it is an outstanding personification of everything that the RASC stands for.

He has made three trips to Cuba in recent years. With the support of the Halifax Centre and its members, he has contributed equipment (computers, telescopes, a sky quality meter) and publications to Cuban astronomers and educators. The RASC *Explore the Universe* observing certificate program (translated into Spanish) has been exported to Cuba and the first certificates awarded in that country. Dave has given talks in Cuba, consulted with Cuban academics, a Cuban TV science journalist, appeared on a Cuban TV show, conducted hands-on astronomy workshops with Cuban youth groups, and helped local astronomers start the process of establishing their own dedicated dark-sky park. Dave has been successful in raising awareness and providing knowledge, as well as the tools and expertise needed to establish an effective dark-sky program and EPO program in Cuba. That is no small accomplishment.

The positive reach and impact of Dave Chapman's substantial and long-term contributions to the work of the RASC are undeniable. Whether at the local, national, or international level, he exemplifies the goals and objectives of the RASC. For all of the foregoing reasons, we believe Dave Chapman is highly deserving of the Service Award.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lou Whitehorne
Chris Young
Quinn Smith
Roy Bishop
Pat Kelly
Dave Lane

In 1995 I was privileged to be the President of the Hamilton Centre of the RASC, but I stood in front of the membership and said that I would have to step down because it was easier to find a new president than a new editor for Orbit, the Centres newsletter. I just didn't have the time to do both jobs.

Somebody who I had never seen before put his hand up and instantly volunteered. His name was Colin Haig. For two years, Colin proved that he was one of the finest editors we have ever had...and the Hamilton Centre has been very fortunate to have had some exceptional people in this position, including, but not limited to, Ken Chilton.

During this time, Colin threw himself into all aspects of the Centre. One Centre project was to build a cookbook CCD camera. A team of us donated parts, expertise, solder, raised funds and occasionally turned the Centres library into an electronics workshop. The project faltered a couple of times and only got into high gear when Colin got involved. Within a short time, the camera was finished.

When Comet Hyakutake graced our skies, Colin found out about a NASA project to get as many observatories as possible around the world involved in what they termed the "Worlds First Virtual Star Party." The idea was to have these institutions take pictures of the comet using CCD cameras and post the images on a web site. NASA also wanted staff online to answer questions posed by the general public. The Hamilton Centre was one of only two Canadian institutions to take part on March 24th, 1996, and Colin spent the evening online using a 9600 baud modem. It was cloudy that night in Hamilton, so no pictures were taken of the comet for us to post, but we were very proud to be able to take part, and a good chunk of our being able to actively participate was due to Colin.

Colin succeeded me as President, and he headed the Centre during a period of unprecedented growth. This created a number of problems, but Colin solved them all with his usual aplomb, good humour, and business acumen. An affable host, and an engaging speaker, Colin had all the time in the world for new members. During his three years as President, he also managed to find time to get involved on a National level, attending GA's and serving as the Society's Librarian. In 1999 he flew Bert Rhebergen to Victoria so that Bert could receive his Chant Medal in person.

Colin was, and remains, universally respected and liked. His business-like approach, fair-mindedness, ability to see the other side of an argument, and negotiating abilities have served the Hamilton Centre very well over the years that Colin has been a member. Whether on the Board or not, when Colin speaks, everyone listens.

For these, and many other reasons, the Hamilton Centre believes that Colin Haig would grace any Centre, and that we are most fortunate that he has chosen the Hamilton Centre. We therefore would like to submit Colin Haig for consideration to receive the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's Service Award.

Sincerely, and on behalf of the Hamilton Centre,

Roger Hill

Former Hamilton Centre President, and recipient of the Service Award, 1999.

I've known Colin for a several years in my role as Recorder, National Secretary, and now Society President. What I admire most about him is his eagerness to do things and to do them well. He often drops by the Society Office to ensure things are running smoothly, to check on the computer systems, to co-sign cheques. When the Society moved offices a few years ago, Colin went to the new location and wired the computer systems, ensuring that it all worked properly, and that the cabling was out of the way and well hidden.

For the past two+ years, in his role as 1st Vice-President, Colin has been the Chair of the both the Constitution Committee and the Publications Committee. He has served well in those roles, especially during the changes to federal legislation regarding the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. He recently has guided the production of a user's guide for the Explore the Universe certificate program.

Prior to that, Colin served two years as 2nd Vice-President, chairing the Nominating Committee. And all the while, over those numerous years, and even before, Colin has been a member of the Information Technology Committee, lending his expertise of computer systems whenever it was needed. He is a stalwart!

Unknown to many people, Colin's suggestions over the past few years have found fertile ground, flourished, and have borne fruit. The Fellowship concept was first his; the suggestion to jointly participate with *SkyNews* in developing the *Getting Started in Astronomy* booklet was partly his idea; he has championed a *RASC Guide to the 2017 Solar Eclipse*; and he most recently chaired the working group to search for a new Society Executive Director.

Colin's unselfish contributions are the epitome of service to the Society, and I can think of nobody who is more deserving of recognition by his peers. I heartily recommend him for consideration for the 2015 RASC Service Award.

James Edgar
President



RASC Service Award nomination

Chris Malicki

Chris Malicki has been a member of the RASC since 1979. He has contributed his volunteer time at both the centre and national levels.

Chris has been the Secretary of the Mississauga Centre since its inception in 2006 and filled the same role for its previous incarnation as the Mississauga Astronomical Society. His attention to detail ensures that the minutes of council meetings and the yearly reports on Centre activities submitted to the Society are complete and accurate.

In addition to the normal duties of a secretary, for many years Chris wrote a detailed report of every meeting of the Centre, documenting the talks given by both invited speakers and Centre members, and published these on the website, allowing members to read up on speakers they had missed or refresh their memories about points a speaker had made.

Chris also helps out at outreach events, and acts as the Centre's observing guru. He has given many talks about what he has observed over the years and is always eager to show other members or the public the wonders of the night sky. He was instrumental in the Centre acquiring a solar scope, researching all the brands and scope options and recommending and then purchasing for us the one that best fit our needs.

At the National level, Chris was recruited as a proofreader for the Observer's Handbook in 2011, as he was reported to have a keen eye for anomalies. His skill goes beyond detecting textual errors—he also finds inconsistencies inside tables and between entirely different articles! In this respect, for the past four editions of the Observer's Handbook, he has become a valued fact-checker and quality monitor.

Chris is an accomplished amateur astronomer. He enjoys searching for faint galaxies with his 14-inch telescope. He is also an experienced eclipse chaser. He and his wife Liz have travelled around the world – from Mexico to China to Australia - to observe 13 total eclipses of the Sun. His presentations on these events are so vivid and exciting that a

listener often feels that he or she was there. In each presentation that he does, he includes his impressions of the lesser-known phenomena of an eclipse, such as the approach of the moon's shadow across the earth, shadow bands and the crescent shadows on the ground formed through the observer's interwoven hands. In that way those who have never seen an eclipse in person have a much better understanding of the entire experience.

The undersigned respectfully submit this nomination for consideration by the RASC Awards Committee.

J. Randy Attwood
Executive Director

David Chapman
Editor, Observer's Handbook

Leslie Strike
President – Mississauga Centre