

Richard Christie – Okanagan Centre

Richard Christie has been an active Okanagan Centre volunteer since the Centre's inception in 1996. He has negotiated free meeting space for the centre's three meeting groups at Okanagan College campuses in Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton each year which contributes greatly to the financial viability of the Centre. As a professional astronomer, he has been a major contact with the area's professional astronomers, and has been active in recruiting them as speakers. Each year he researches an astronomical topic outside his own research interests, and presents a talk at one of the monthly meetings.

He has been a regular volunteer at outreach activities and also at the Friday evening public nights at the Okanagan Observatory since it opened to the public in 2008. Richard assisted the Okanagan Astronomical Society before its merger with the Okanagan Centre. Richard has been a significant member of the organizing committee at the annual Mount Kobau Star Party for many years, and he served three terms as chairman, in 2010–12.

Richard operated the A/V equipment at the Okanagan Centre GA in 2005. He required all speakers to meet with him half a day before their presentation to ensure that their pictures and videos would seamlessly show up on the screen when they were supposed to instead of the usual speaker puzzlement when they say: "Gee, my Powerpoint always worked before!" Richard thus prevented speaker's presentations from being the usual shambles of rebooting computers and A/V equipment that we have all come to expect from Powerpoint. Because of Richard, the Okanagan GA paper sessions ran much more smoothly than at prior GAs. He was the communication nexus for the dissemination of weather forecasts to the scores of Okanagan Centre members who travelled to far-flung sites across Oregon and Idaho for the 2017 total solar eclipse.

He was the speaker at the centre's 2017 Gala which is the Okanagan Observatory's major annual fundraising event. Nationally, he has been the Okanagan Centre's National Representative on National Council since 2011. He is a member of Okanagan Centre Council's Observatory and Gala Dinner Committees.

Submitted by:
Alan Whitman
David Hawkins

Brian Lucas - Sunshine Coast Centre

Brian Lucas, a retired anesthesiologist, is one of the founding members of our Sunshine Coast Centre and is currently the Secretary on the Board of our Centre. Brian has been a member of the RASC since January 1999 and was originally with the Vancouver Centre before moving to the Sunshine Coast of B.C.

Brian Lucas is a passionate advocate for the abatement of light pollution and started researching the problem and advocating for solutions when he was with the Vancouver Centre. He has accumulated extensive files on this subject. Brian is currently on our Sunshine Coast Centre's Light-Pollution Abatement Committee. Brian served briefly on the RASC's national Light-Pollution Abatement Committee, starting back in 2008. It was Brian's extensive research that supplied our Centre with the data needed to succeed in getting the District of Sechelt to become a Dark Sky Community, under IDA regulations. Our Centre shared Brian's files with the Yukon Centre, which used this information to win their battle with the Yukon Territory and Whitehorse to get the correct colour temperature street lighting. Brian has spent countless hours researching this subject and seeking out problem lighting and solutions on the Sunshine Coast.

Brian came up with an idea which turned into a very successful fund-raising venture for our Centre (and others across Canada): reloadable shopping cards. These are plastic cards for a particular store (in our case the IGA supermarket), which you load with credit and then use to purchase your items. It doesn't cost you any extra, but for every purchase, the store donates 4% of the total. This project is bringing in \$2000 a year for our Centre in the first year.

Submitted by:
Charles A. Ennis
Michael Bradley

Colleen O'Hare – Okanagan Centre

Colleen O'Hare has lead astronomy outreach activities in the Okanagan Centre for 12 years, and each year she continues to arrange the exceptional number of events which won her the first Qilak Award in 2012. In 2017, she arranged 99 events [of which 76 took place, the rest being cancelled due to weather]. By December 5th these events had served 4451 guests, and she participated personally in almost all of them. Some years she has reached more like 8000 people. She has travelled to towns several hours distant to provide astronomy experiences to them.

She has served on the Okanagan Centre council since shortly after joining the Centre in 2004, including serving three terms as president and being the librarian for about a decade (she lugs books related to the main speaker's topic to the Kelowna, Vernon, and Penticton monthly meetings). She is an active member of these Okanagan Centre council committees: the Okanagan Observatory Planning Committee, the Finance Committee, the Gala Dinner Committee, and chairs the Nominating Committee.

She researches topics and is the main speaker at meetings at least once each year. She made the public service announcements for our Kelowna area meetings and events for a decade or so; composes and has printed handout materials promoting the centre and the observatory; creates decorations and information displays to augment our tent at outreach events; frequently brings baking to meetings; and for many years has brought the coffee making supplies to Kelowna meetings.

When she was a new member Colleen did much of the organizing for the meet and greet table at the 2005 Okanagan General Assembly, acting as an enthusiastic and cheerful ambassador for our Centre. She volunteers at the week-long Mount Kobau Star Party's registration desk each summer.

She has had an active role in the Friday evening public nights at the Okanagan Observatory since it opened in 2008. In addition, she led the SkyTheatre development (planning, construction, and volunteer organization); has helped with annual maintenance (painting, weed pulling, and crush raking); organized special observing nights at the observatory for school children, youth groups and service groups; and helped in developing the mobility-challenged bus service program. She has been the media representative for the observatory: developing leads, contributing to news releases, and taking part in televised interviews. She has contributed to the Gala Dinner (the annual observatory fund raiser) by soliciting name speakers, creating and printing admission tickets, and running merchandize and ticket sales.

Wherever astronomy volunteers are working on a project in the Okanagan Valley, Colleen O'Hare is almost always there and pitching in.

Submitted by:
Alan Whitman
Richard Christie

Grant Rice – Okanagan Centre

Grant has served several years as the Okanagan Centre Secretary. Grant was a member of the registration committee for the RASC General Assembly in 2005, was instrumental in implementing the web-based registration process, and a gracious OC representative host throughout the event.

Grant was in on the ground floor of the development of the Okanagan Observatory. The Okanagan Observatory is open to the public every Friday that weather permits, and also hosts special bookings of youth and school guests. Grant was initially involved in creating the business plan and researching the financial opportunities that might promote advancement of the project, and successful in many funding applications. For many years Grant ensured that our annual charity tax return was completed properly and on time, and has mentored other members in this task.

Grant has also used his computer skills to great purpose in the development of the security system for the remote Okanagan Observatory assets. Grant has played a role in the planning, installation and monitoring of the entire system. Grant has made numerous short-notice trips out to the observatory in order to reset or adjust the security equipment, sometimes having to snowshoe in and dig away snow for door access.

The above examples of Grant's service to the Okanagan Centre highlight the generosity he extends in offering his computer and other skills whenever they are needed. When our club website was undergoing a needed revitalization in 2011 by the then President who had no experience with the internet whatsoever, Grant generously lent his expertise, time, and especially infinite patience to teach the necessary skills which made this possible. Grant is familiar with the operation of all of the Okanagan Observatory equipment and plays an active role on our public Friday nights in operating a telescope, assisting with parking, helping at the welcome desk or giving laser-guided tours of the night sky.

It is thanks to Grant's insistence and determination that we now hold an annual Gala Dinner for our Centre. For seven years now, we have engaged a special guest speaker and gather to enjoy a meal and silent auction, with the funds raised going to the advancement of the Okanagan Observatory. Grant chaired the Gala committee for the first three years and he continues to play an active role.

Very recently Grant was successful in garnering yet another donation to the observatory project for a binocular observing station as part of the public nights. Grant is looking forward to organizing the assets and developing the binocular program, as well as sharing with our larger community.

Submitted by:
Guy Mackie
Colleen O'Hare

Neil Sandy – Sunshine Coast Centre

Neil Sandy, a Sunshine Coast realtor, has been a member of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada since January 1997, roughly 11 years before our Sunshine Coast Centre was founded in April 2008. Neil became one of the founding members of the Sunshine Coast Astronomy Club that was the precursor of our Centre in 2004. Our Sunshine Coast Astronomy club became the Sunshine Coast Centre of the RASC in April 2008. Neil served 5 years as a director on the Sunshine Coast Centre's first Board of Directors. Neil set up the Freelists email lists for our Centre and has managed these email lists ever since. Neil oversaw the Public Speaker Program for our Centre for several years and was so employed when I joined the Sunshine Coast Centre in 2013. I took the speaker program over from him in 2014, but Neil has often billeted speakers who come to the Sunshine Coast for the evening to speak at our monthly meetings at the Sunshine Coast Arts Centre at no charge to our Centre since then. Neil is always there at welcome dinners for the speaker to make the visitor welcome.

Our founding President, Bill Clark, describes Neil as a "lead hand" in astronomy outreach events for our Centre. Neil has always been supportive in our Centre's public outreach events, bringing his telescopes to these events year-round, spending countless hours taking great pride and pleasure in helping the public to view the skies. When our Centre built its roll-off roof observatory at the Sechelt Airport, Neil acted as liaison with the Sechelt Airport Users Group to represent our interests. Neil has built several telescopes and taught classes on this and other astronomy subjects to Centre members. Neil is always volunteering his expertise to assist members on line. Neil Sandy has consistently been an excellent ambassador to the public for the RASC.

Submitted by:
Charles Ennis
Bill Clark