

## 2019 Awards *(compiled by James Edgar)*

---

The Service Award is a major award of the Society given to a member in recognition of outstanding service, rendered over an extended period of time (at least 10 years), where such service has had a major impact on the work of the Society and/or of a Centre of the Society.

### **Joanne Burns – Belleville Centre**

---

Joanne is the only remaining founding member of the Belleville Astronomy Club which was formed by a small group who had attended a local community college astronomy course. Certainly, without the enthusiasm of Joanne and a few others, the Belleville Centre of the RASC would not exist.

From the beginning Joanne appointed herself club historian and organizer, a role that was formalized when she was elected secretary in 1990 and has served in this capacity for the past 28 years. Having Joanne as a core of the executive made our becoming an RASC Centre in 2003 a smooth transition as she readily took on the additional requisite responsibilities.

Joanne is quick to take on responsibilities well beyond the office of secretary. She has ensured that the group has always had a meeting place and is generally the first to volunteer for club events such as public outreach, provincial park partnerships, astronomy day activities, bus trips, as well as social events like club dinners and barbecues.

Joanne has always been the key Belleville Centre organizer for the annual Fall'N'Stars

event, south-eastern Ontario's only autumn star party, co-sponsored with the Kingston Centre, for the past 18 years.

Joanne has graciously volunteered her time over a large number of years to keep the Centre operating. Her personal contribution has been invaluable in helping deliver countless programs and activities to both the public and members of the Centre.

As representatives of the Belleville Centre, we submit Joanne Burns to be a well deserving recipient of the RASC Service Award.

Don Town, Belleville Centre, National Council Representative

Greg Lisk, Belleville Centre, President Emeritus (2006-2018)

Randy Boddam, Belleville Centre, Vice-President

David Cotterell, Belleville Centre, President

## Robyn Foret – Calgary Centre

---

Robyn has been a very active Calgary Centre member, and has held multiple positions within the Calgary Centre Council over the past several years, including Secretary, President, Past President, and now Treasurer.

He has also served as one of three astronomy instructors for the Calgary Centre's Youth Group.

Robyn has also been heavily involved in public outreach. Starting initially as one of the volunteers running the telescopes on the observing deck of the TELUS World of Science (TWOS) in downtown Calgary at our Friday night public viewing events, Robyn took over as Deck Volunteer Coordinator, and eventually assumed the role of Volunteer Coordinator for all public outreach events for the Calgary Centre. Given that the Centre runs more than 50 public outreach events throughout the year with multiple volunteers needed for each event, this is a very busy role. All of this has not stopped Robyn from continuing to volunteer at outreach events himself, be they in Calgary or as far afield as Banff.

Robyn also applied to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) on behalf of the Calgary Centre for Casino fundraising. We have now run two successful Casino events to raise money for our Centre's public outreach events, with another casino tentatively scheduled for next year. This money has allowed us the funds to invite high profile speakers such as Dr. Carolyn Porco (planetary scientist and leader of the imaging team for the Cassini mission to Saturn) to engage the general public in astronomy education at free events.

Robyn was also instrumental in ensuring that Calgary would be the host for the 2018 RASC General Assembly, which was held this past summer. As the Chair of the GA Committee, he provided oversight for the entire process, from the initial planning stages through to the final financial reckoning, and it was in large part due to his leadership that the event was so successful.

On the National level, Robyn has served and continues to serve on the RASC Board of Directors, initially as a Director, then as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, and currently as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President.

It is for his sustained volunteer activity with the RASC for many years, at both the Centre level as well as the National level, that we are pleased to nominate Robyn Foret for a National Service Award.

Sincerely,

Roland Dechesne, President, Calgary Centre  
Steve Donaldson, Past President, Calgary Centre  
Peter Brackett, Councillor, Calgary Centre

## Roger Nelson – Calgary Centre

---

Roger's service to the RASC spans many roles, two RASC Centres, as well as the National Council and Board. His breadth of contributions is so large that it is almost insulting to try to fit it all on one page.

Roger joined Regina Astronomical Society in 1986 and shortly thereafter he was President, reinvigorating and thus saving the Regina Astronomical Society from collapse. He was a driving force in the push to reestablish ties with the RASC, which occurred in 1989. He led the efforts to move the club's meeting space and a new observatory to the Saskatchewan Science Centre. Roger was instrumental in creating what was to become the Saskatchewan Summer Star Party when he invited the Saskatoon, Calgary, and Edmonton Centres to the Cypress Hills Star Party. This kick-started the enduring partnership between the Regina and Saskatoon Centres who continue to run the SSSP to this day.

After Roger's move to the Calgary Centre, he quickly became active in the Calgary Centre's programs and council. He was the Observing Committee Chair for many years, but also contributed as Councillor and the time-consuming role of Centre Secretary.

On the national front, Roger was a Centre Representative on National Council and played the role of co-chair of that body. He is currently on the RASC Board, where he fills the position of Secretary, and is also the Chair of the Information Technology Committee.

Roger's prowess in information technology was never so welcomed as when he scratch-built the 2018 RASC General Assembly website under an impossibly tight deadline when it became clear the legacy web program that all assumed was going to work, simply did not. Without Roger's efforts, the General Assembly would not have been possible to host properly.

Roger is also an active observer, with a meticulous log book. He encourages members and the public alike to go observe the heavens, whether for simple enjoyment, observing certificate programs or, perhaps, to attempt some science.

Roger is also comfortable on television, and in both Regina and Calgary he used that medium to promote astronomy to the public in special community broadcasts or on news programs of major television network affiliates.

Roland Dechesne, President, Calgary Centre

Pierre Schierle, President, Regina Centre

Ross Parker, Historian, Regina Centre

## Luca Vanzella – Edmonton Centre

---

It gives us great pleasure to nominate Luca Vanzella for the RASC Service Award. Luca has been the driving force behind some of Edmonton Centre's most successful activities that benefit both the public and RASC members.

Over the last decade, Luca has played an important role in the organization of events and providing the administrative backbone to keep Edmonton Centre's programs running smoothly. Luca has contributed to Edmonton Centre in a variety of administrative roles, taking on the positions of National Council representative, secretary, vice-president, president, and now past president. In addition, he has also

stepped up to organize our biannual casinos that fund most of our activities. He played an important part of the committees that organized activities for the 2009 International Year of Astronomy, and the RASC GA hosted in Edmonton in 2012. He has provided all members of Council with advice on Edmonton Centre bylaws, policies and procedures. In recognition of his many contributions to Edmonton Centre, he was awarded the Edmonton Centre's Annual Service Award in 2017.

The Queen Elizabeth II Planetarium, opened in 1960, was Canada's first public planetarium. It was an important part of Edmonton Centre's activities for many years until it was closed in the 1983. After 1983 the planetarium slowly decayed until the City of Edmonton decided in 2016 to restore the building. Luca Vanzella spearheaded a new Edmonton Centre committee to work on programming ideas for the planetarium once the renovations are completed in 2019. He worked hard as a liaison between RASC, the City of Edmonton, and Telus World of Science Edmonton (TWOSE). TWOSE will serve as the official tenant of the planetarium, and Edmonton Centre will provide programming for the public and members one evening each week. This will be a major focus of Edmonton Centre's outreach efforts once the building is reopened.

Edmonton Centre received a donation of a 32-inch mirror from a former member, Bob Drew. This donated mirror catalyzed a group within Edmonton Centre to build a telescope using this mirror as well as an observatory at a dark site East of Edmonton at Black Nugget Lake. The observatory, known as the Black Nugget Lake Observatory (BNLO) will be a premier observing site when it is completed in 2019. This project required an enormous amount of planning and administrative support, which Luca provided. Luca took care of applying for grants to fund the project. He wrote the application to the Government of Alberta to get permission to use the land for this purpose. He applied for the building permits to build structures on the land. He helped negotiate agreements with the group that manages the campground located at the site. The amount of bureaucratic hoops that were required for this project were daunting, however Luca kept the BNLO committee on track, both with the paperwork and the budget. The project is on target for a first light event in Fall 2019 for both the telescope and observatory at the Northern Prairie Star Party held at this location.

Sometimes one hears about an interesting initiative taking place at another RASC Centre, but it requires the right person to actually make it happen. When we learned about Victoria Centre's Astro Cafe events, Luca is the sort of person who decided that we needed to make something similar happen in Edmonton. He organized the first Astro Cafe in September 2015, and has continued to run these informal meetings on elementary topics for beginning astronomers on an approximately monthly basis. Luca had to investigate different venues until he found a local community hall that was an appropriate size and price, as well as starting a committee that decides on programming for these events. The Astro Cafes have been very successful, and we plan to continue holding them in the Queen Elizabeth Planetarium once it has reopened.

An important part of any organization is how it presents itself to the world through its webpages. Our webpage was at one time poorly organized, unprofessional looking, and difficult to update. Luca worked hard with a small committee to design a new website which premiered in 2014. The resulting website, [edmontonrasc.com](http://edmontonrasc.com) is easy to use, easy to navigate, and both members and the public can find information about our programming.

In addition to the outstanding service contributions to RASC, Luca is an excellent visual astronomer and creative wide-field astrophotographer. He serves on the National astroimaging certificate committee, as well as acting as a mentor to Edmonton Centre members on many aspects of wide-field astroimaging. He is well-known for his long-term photographic projects including his Moon rise and set time lapses, Sunrise azimuth sweep (from Summer to Winter Solstices), Edmontonhenge sunrise and sunset images (featured on Astronomy Picture of the Day), and his film photography analemma project.

Luca Vanzella has been a cornerstone of many Edmonton Centre activities. In general, his organizational skills, diplomatic abilities, and positive personality have enabled us to provide outstanding astronomy programming and infrastructure. We feel that Luca Vanzella's outstanding service to the RASC make him most deserving of the RASC Service Award.

Alister Ling, Edmonton Centre National RASC Council Representative

Sharon Morsink, President, Edmonton Centre RASC

---

## Ed Mizzi – Hamilton Centre

---

Ed is an extraordinary volunteer, and became engaged in all aspects of the Centre, and encouraged both new and long-standing members to get actively involved in the Hamilton Centre.

If Ed was curious, he would learn a new skill, but as a natural leader, he would bring along the entire Centre to take part. From his natural teaching ability, he re-energized many Centre programs, and served in many positions on the Board, volunteered on AstroCATS and eventually became Centre President. He is very much enthusiastic and engaged now that he is enjoying retirement from his professional career.

Ed actively attends other RASC Centres when he can. He is a regular reporter and feature writer for RASC Hamilton Centre's newsletter, *The Orbit*. Among his contributions, he also authored a multi-page feature on how to conduct successful Outreach. He provided detailed and hands-on information on how to become an effective presenter, gleaned from decades as a professional teacher. He regularly, if silently, assists National Youth Outreach Co-ordinator Jenna Hinds' efforts to circulate educational material across his network of teaching contacts. He has taken new -- and young -- Board members under his wing to teach them the importance of their roles and to give them first understanding of vital leadership concepts such as Governance and Duty of Care. When

Hamilton Centre launched its online Forum, in 2016, a review of Forum activity revealed that in those first weeks and months, Ed Mizzi was the second-most-frequent poster, after the Newsletter Editor and that he spent the 5th-most time online, after the Editor, the Webmaster and two other Board members.

Besides RASC, Ed spends 6 weeks each year counselling at a Grade 7-8 kids' camp in Algonquin Provincial Park and this always includes astronomy. At Starfest, Canada's largest annual amateur astronomy conference and star party, "he helps everyone." This includes the visitor who—unknowingly—totally messed up Ed's already-aligned and already plate-solved imaging rig. (Adrian Aberdeen, Director RASC Toronto Centre, writes that Ed "went the extra mile" on this visitor.) He also actively promotes non-RASC astronomy-related events, such as presentations by McMaster University's Origins Institute and the University of Toronto's "Astronomy on Tap," a social/education event, held at a trendy brew-house-cum-lecture-theatre by the astrophysics community. A regular speaker on things astronomical to groups such as the Rotary Club, the Bronte Creek Project (a Halton District-run 1 semester, 4-credit, environmental leadership program for Grade 11-12 students) and even to teachers during their PA days, among others.

He is, at every turn, a gentleman and a gentle man. Modest, too. Several years ago, Ed wrote: "I do it for the students and because it is so rewarding... We are all teachers in our own way." He sees the best in people and encourages them to be better even if it means he ends up having less time than he would like for his own passions, such as astrophotography.

"He's a big reason I joined the Club because of his Outreach efforts and general kindness and I'm sure I'm not the only one he's got interested in astronomy."

Mark Smith, RASC Hamilton Centre Member and RASC National Robotic Telescope team contributor

"Last StarFest, it being my first time camping as an adult, Ed took me under his wing to show me the ropes of getting setup. I honestly believe that my trip was as enjoyable because of him. I would say that Ed is a selfless person who has dedicated himself to the betterment of the Society."

Adrian Aberdeen, RASC Toronto Centre Board Director

"Ed's always had a keen interest and desire in astrophotography in both his personal journey as well as helping with the maintenance and of the club's observatory to ensure club members are able to enjoy the facility. Ed's enjoyed using his DSLRs for astrophotography and sharing the knowledge he's learned over the years with the many people he meets at his outreach events. He has constructed an observatory in his backyard that has increased his ability to enjoy the night skies. Recently he added a monochrome camera and narrowband filters to help with pursuing his astrophotography hobby. Ed's always approachable and willing to share what he's learned to newcomers."

Martin Palenik, Hamilton Centre Member

---

## Rick Saunders – London Centre

---

John Richard "Rick" Saunders was born in 1956 and joined the RASC London Centre in 2004. Rick distinguished himself right away with his technical competence and willingness to work on London Centre projects. He brought with him the special skills he had acquired in a career with the Canadian military and the weather service at London Airport. A lot of the work done to develop the London Centre observing site near Fingal, Ontario, was organized or performed by Rick. In particular, Rick took the lead in acquiring the structure for the second observatory at the site. He also played a key role in putting up the current arrangement of telescopes, one optimized for imaging and the other for visual observing, and Rick organized a barbecue and star party for the grand opening on 2012 October 21.

Rick's formal service on the London Centre executive began as Secretary from 2007 to 2009, continued as Webmaster in 2010 and 2011, then culminated as 34th President from 2012 to 2017. Under Rick's leadership, the London Centre regular meetings returned to Cronyn Observatory on the campus of Western University, where the meetings had been held in the decades before 1970. His jovial and informal style as chair of club meetings was very popular, and no less so the regular feature he presented called "Cheap Stuff from China," which highlighted useful or quirky hardware items that could be ordered online in our modern world. For the transit of Venus on 2012 June 05, Rick helped organize a major event at Western University, which almost 2000 persons attended.

One of Rick's most interesting achievements was the return of H.R. Kingston's refractor to London. H.R. Kingston was the founder of London Centre who passed away in 1963. Kingston's grandson lives near Seattle, Washington, and Rick made arrangements with him to have the refractor presented to the club membership at a banquet Rick organized on 2012 July 28 for London Centre's 90th anniversary, and now it resides in the 1940s "Period Room" at Cronyn Observatory.

As a key member of the 2016 General Assembly organizing committee, Rick's responsibilities included arranging the program of guest lecturers, including astronaut Jeremy Hansen, Erika Rix of Astronomy Magazine and Ann Hornschemeier of NASA's Goddard Research Center. In late 2018, Rick began to serve as editor of *Polaris*, the London Centre newsletter.

Since 2009 Rick has been involved in 26 outreach events, including participation in Astronomy Day events, displays for McKittrick's camera shop in Cherryhill Village Mall and in Masonville Mall and for Scouts at Camp Timken, near London, for Beavers & Cubs near Sparta, Ontario, at Camp Orenda, at Quai du Vin winery, at the London Regional Children's Museum and at Longwoods Conservation Area. Often these events involved Rick setting up his 20.3cm AstroTech F/4 Astrograph or 102mm Stellarvue 102 ED refractor, and sometimes with solar viewing apparatus for daytime events. On 2017 September 16, Rick presented astronomical images at Metropolitan United Church as part of London Symphonia's ambitious performance of Gustav Holst's famous suite "The Planets." Months in planning, this event required working with the musical director of the

orchestra and the technical staff of the venue. The images were shown on large screens in the main hall of the church while the orchestra and choir occupied the stage. Rick's work garnered wide praise from the audience.

It is a pleasure for London Centre executive to authorize and to support this nomination.

## Mike Hanes – London Centre

---

Michael Francis Hanes (b.1959) joined the London Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society in January 1995, after receiving a large refracting telescope from his wife for Christmas. He soon became a leading force in the Amateur Telescope Making group, first with a six-inch scope to learn the basics and progressing up through 8 inch, 12.5 inch, 15 inch, 17.5 inch, and ultimately a 24 inch mirror. His telescopes are known for their quality, precision, attention to detail, craftsmanship, and functionality.

Mike was ATM Chair for London Centre from 2004 to 2016, often hosting a group of enthusiastic telescope makers in his large basement with up to six grinding tables operating simultaneously. Mike built a large motorized rough grinding table in his garage and another for polishing in his basement, to reduce the problem of grit contamination, and these machines have been used by several London Centre members to reduce the hand work required in mirror making. He donated one of his small scopes to the Centre and has also made telescopes for several other members of London Centre.

Mike joined the small observing group that met at Sharron Creek, and after several interactions with passing motorists Mike was first to promote observing from the Fingal Wildlife Management Area. He arranged to get keys to the FWMA gates and was later instrumental in gaining approval from the Elgin County Stewardship Council to observe from the park interior where passing cars and local lights do not disturb observers. When London Centre decided to build a Warm Up Room at the FWMA observing site for the comfort of observers, Mike did a large part of the framing, roofing, cladding, installing fibreglass insulation, vapour barrier and drywall. He fabricated a concrete "bunker" to store and protect the heater propane tank outside the building and built a welded steel frame to support a solar panel on the roof with which to charge storage batteries for the 12V and 120V AC off-grid power system.

London Centre's largest project was the building of Observatories One and Two on the FWMA concrete pad, which also houses the Warm Up Room.

Mike helped frame the foundations and cut three large holes in the existing and very hard WWII concrete pad so that isolated concrete piers could be installed for Centre telescopes. Mike provided much of the leadership in the group effort to frame in and clad the first roll-off-roof observatory, which was accomplished over a single weekend.

Mike also obtained and assisted with the installation of the secure steel door.

Mike was involved with the Society's Property Committee regarding the former headquarters building on Dupont Street and provided guidance and advice when the decision was made by National Council to relinquish the landlord role.

For the 2016 General Assembly, Mike worked tirelessly with conference staff at Fanshawe College and other committee members to ensure that the facilities were set up properly for all General Assembly events and for the AstroCATS event.

Mike's service to London Centre rose to a new level when he became President for 2018. His term was marked by a new format for club meetings and a well-organized program of Guests of Honour. Mike's outgoing personality and inclusive approach made it easy for other members to contribute, too.

As an avid observer, Michael has benefited from the experience of others, and he is quick in turn to assist new observers in finding their way around a busy sky.

It is a pleasure for London Centre executive to authorize and support this Service Award nomination.

## Leslie Strike – Mississauga Centre

---

After joining the Mississauga Centre in September 2006, **Leslie Strike** quickly became an important and integral part of the Mississauga Centre.

Leslie immediately became active in the running of the Centre by joining the Council. She served as Vice-President from 2008 to 2012, then took on the role of Centre President for four years starting in 2012. Beginning in 2012, she also assumed the role of National Council Representative for the Mississauga Centre, only recently finishing six years of National Council service.

Leslie earned the Explore the Universe Certificate in 2006.

Another important contribution from Leslie is her assistance in setting up the Centre awards as Chair of the Awards Committee and participating in having the awards made and presented annually. In fact, in 2016, the Mississauga Council presented Leslie with the Centre's prestigious Attwood Award for her contribution as President, only the second time that this award has been given since its inception in 2012. The Attwood Award is given to a member of the Mississauga Centre who has demonstrated superior commitment to the goals and aims of the Centre, has devoted significant time to its endeavours, and has had a substantial impact on the vitality of the Centre.

Leslie is also active in reviewing and updating the Centre's By-Laws.

Leslie is an active member and attends all the meetings, sometimes hosting and oftentimes making presentations on Centre activities as well as her own activities, such as astrophotography, eclipse-chasing, and astronomy trips to Tahiti, Atacama, Australia, Alaska, Svalbard, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Indonesia, Nebraska, and Iceland. She plays an important role in Centre fundraising activities by running the meeting raffle and selling RASC merchandise. Leslie also attends the

Centre's outreach events, such as working with Girl Guide groups, helping teach astrophotography at the Centre's annual astronomy course, giving talks at libraries, and showing the sky to the public at the Centre's regular events at the Riverwood Conservancy. She rarely misses an opportunity to share her experience and knowledge with the public, not only by sharing her skills and enthusiasm as an astrophotographer and eclipse chaser, but by answering questions from the membership as well.

Leslie has proven to be an invaluable member of the Mississauga Centre, as well as the RASC itself. For all the reasons described above, we nominate Leslie Strike for the Service Award.

Betty R. Robinson, Mississauga

Allan Connery, Mississauga

## Vance Petriew – Regina Centre

---

Vance Petriew developed a passion for astronomy as a youth while growing up on the family farm northwest of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Vance joined the Saskatoon Centre while attending the University of Saskatchewan where he spent his evenings teaching first year astronomy labs and working at the campus observatory. In 1999, Vance transferred to the Regina Centre where he has been in leadership positions ever since.

From 2000 to October 2008 he was the Centre's webmaster supporting our public presence. During this time, he conceived and implemented a redesign of the Centre's website.

- In October 2001, shortly after his discovery of Comet 185P/Petriew, he became the Centre President serving until October 2004. This was a very active time and Vance was a leader on several initiatives including:
  - leading a team of 4th year University of Regina engineering students that developed the mechanical and computer systems to drive the Centre's Saskatchewan Millennium Telescope (SMT) and Kalium Observatory dome via the internet.
  - providing "outstanding work ethic and dedication" along with "expertise and encouragement" to the Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park in obtaining their Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) designation.
  - driving a major revision to the Centre's Bylaws.
- From October 2004 to October 2005 Vance served as Past President. During this time, he mentored the new President in his role. He also continued in his role as Centre webmaster.
- In October 2006 Vance was elected Vice President and held that role until October 2008 when he once again became the Centre President. He held that position through October 2009 and then served three years as Past President through October 2012.
- In February 2015 the Centre was experiencing turnover in some leadership positions and Vance came back as the Centre Secretary filling that role until November 2015

when he accepted the role of Centre President once again. He served his maximum three-year term until November 2018 and is now the Centre Past President. His focus during this time was:

- re-establishing and mentoring a new Centre leadership team.
- developing a Centre Operations Manual to capture the critical knowledge necessary to run the Centre.

Over the last two decades, Vance has also been the driver behind several other initiatives. These include but are by no means limited to:

- being the single largest source of revenue for the Centre through his fundraising activities. He runs the Office Recycling Program that obtains surplus government equipment and sells it. He also designs the logos, procures the t-shirts, and manages the Saskatchewan Summer Star Party (SSSP) t-shirt fundraiser.
- recruiting and coordinating the Regina Centre team that leads the solar viewing and night-time public observing programs at SSSP. That program has reached more than 10,000 people who visit the Cypress Hills DSP. He also is very active in local Centre outreach events reaching thousands of people through Astronomy Day, Canada Day observing, speaking at Public libraries, and in the school system.
- frequently presenting at the Centre's monthly meetings on topics such as: selecting your first telescope, selecting eyepieces, Dobsonian telescope design, the structure of the Solar System / galaxies / Universe, how to complete the Messier Marathon, the AAVSO and variable star observing, astrophotography and CCD photometry, and light-pollution abatement to name a few.
- acting as the Centre's primary media (television, radio, and newspaper) interface as well as responding to email and voicemail inquiries from the public.
- setting an example for others by completing the Messier list (2002), Finest NGC list (2002), the Deep-Sky Challenge list (2014), the Deep-Sky Gems list (2014), and being the only person to have ever completed every single object on the Explore the Universe list (2017).
- mentoring new observers and frequently contributing to the Centre's *Stargazer* newsletter, where he passes along his knowledge and experience.
- organizing work days to maintain the Centre's Davin Deep Sky Observatory and the Kalium Observatory which is used for public outreach.
- researching the weather and ideal locations for the Regina Centre group who travelled to the Casper, Wyoming, area for a very successful view of the 2017 Solar Eclipse.

Along the way, Vance also contributed significantly to the broader astronomy community beyond the Regina Centre. The following are a selection of his contributions and honours:

- the RASC Ken Chilton Prize (2002) and the IAU Edgar Wilson Award (2002) for the visual discovery of Comet 185P/Petrew, which provided the impetus to obtain the DSP designation for Cypress Hills.
- 2007 recipient of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO) Director's Award "for his leadership of the Comparison Star Database Team, devoting numerous hours in the documentation of every comparison star currently used by the AAVSO. Vance also utilized his database skills in the creation of the Variable Standards Database, a masterful relational database of the comparison stars that can be updated in perpetuity."
- Leading the research and authoring a scientific paper titled "Photometric Analysis of HD 213616: a Multi-modal Delta Scuti Variable Star" published in *The Journal of the AAVSO*.
- contributing well over 1,800 visual and 310,000 CCD variable-star observations to the AAVSO.

Vance's love of astronomy has compelled him to almost two decades of selfless service to the Regina Centre. While he could justifiably be proud of his many accomplishments, nothing quite fills his heart with the same joy as the excitement and wonder in the eyes of people as they view the Universe. More than the 20-inch aperture of his telescope, this undoubtedly explains why he always has a lineup at SSSP.

Submitted by: Pierre Schierle, James Edgar

## Danny Sklazeski – Sunshine Coast Centre

Danny Sklazeski is one of the founding members of our Sunshine Coast Centre, being one of the members of the original Sunshine Coast Astronomy Club that started in 1988. Danny is one of our Centre's most reliable volunteers, despite an ongoing battle with cancer. Danny is "Mr. Public Outreach." For thirty years Danny has shown up for all our Centre's outreach events with his telescopes, both night and solar, and takes great pride and pleasure in showing the public the skies. Since 2010 Danny has been a regular at our monthly "Astro Café" event. Danny shows up for all observatory events with his personal telescopes and was one of the most active volunteers in building that observatory and maintaining the observatory grounds. Danny assisted our observatory manager in his many site surveys seeking a final site for our observatory. Danny regularly mows the fields around our observatory, built the pathways, and maintains the portable toilet at the observatory site. Danny makes signage for outreach events. Danny sets up the coffee and snacks and cleans the kitchen afterwards at all of our monthly meetings. Danny is always there with tools and generator when needed. In 2018 Danny became our National Representative. Danny is our unofficial archivist, saving clippings and information of historical interest.

Submitter: Charles Ennis, 2nd Vice-President, RASC, Past President, Sunshine Coast Centre

Submitter: Bill Clark, Past President, Sunshine Coast Centre

## Bruce Fryer – Sunshine Coast Centre

Bruce Fryer is one of the founding members of our Sunshine Coast Centre and one of the members that joined the Sunshine Coast Astronomy club in 2004 that became the Sunshine Coast Centre 4 years later. Bruce served for several years as the Treasurer on the Board of our Centre, the best treasurer we've ever had, and an accomplished conflict mediator. He has been active in working on grant applications to fund our Centre's activities and observatory. In October 2018 Bruce became our Centre's President. Bruce regularly presents a "Skies this Month" PowerPoint presentation at each of our Centre's monthly meetings. Until his retirement in 2017, Bruce was a high school science teacher and took astronomy into the classroom. Bruce helped write scripts and host the third and fourth season of our Centre's "Night Lights" community TV program, which we produce in partnership with Eastlink/Coast Cable. He went on road trips to the Okanagan Centre, the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory, LIGO Hanford, the Museum of Flight, and the total solar eclipse in Oregon to capture footage for the Night Lights show. He is a Qualified Operator at our Centre's observatory.

Submitter: Charles Ennis, 2nd Vice-President, RASC, Past President, Sunshine Coast Centre

Submitter: Bill Clark, Past President, Sunshine Coast Centre

## Michael Bradley – Sunshine Coast Centre

Michael Bradley was one of the original members of the Sunshine Coast Astronomy club when it reformed in 2004 and joined the RASC when the club became the Sunshine Coast Centre in April 2008. From 2004 to the 2015, Mike was one of the people working to make our observatory a reality, making presentations to various local governments and organizations. Mike was the President of the Sunshine Coast Centre 2012-2014. Mike is currently our Vice President and webmaster. Mike is one of our most reliable and creative volunteers. He shows up for all the outreach events with his telescopes, both night and solar. Mike shows up for all observatory events. Mike was the first Observatory Director and is currently on the Observatory Committee, having put in countless hours building and maintaining our observatory. Mike has spent many hours doing collimation, alignments, and other maintenance on the observatory's telescope and other club telescopes. Mike is our most notable in-house "maker": Much of the electronic equipment on the pier of our observatory's telescope is equipment he designed and built for it, such as dew suppression systems, timers, scintillation detectors, etc. Mike devised the system to monitor the power usage in our solar powered observatory created a wireless system to connect our observatory to the internet through a shared wireless link with one of the flying clubs at the airport where we have our observatory. This link gives us real-time information on conditions at the observatory building. Mike has made a lot

of display equipment for our information booth at outreach events, such as solar viewers, display stands and boards, solar projectors, and sky cameras. Mike is our point man in successfully pursuing many government and community grants to support the observatory and has made many presentations to community organizations to promote our Centre. He's taught many astronomy classes for our Centre as well as for the local Elder College. Michael helped write scripts and host two seasons of our Centre's "Night Lights" community TV program, which we produce in partnership with Eastlink/Coast Cable. He also appears in an episode of the Aboriginal People's Television Network youth science program "Coyote Science" and helped us film our Bravo Factual documentary, "Starry Nights". Mike is an avid astrophotographer who donates his pictures to the Centre's various projects. Many of the photos used by me in writing *Building a Small Observatory* and the *Solar Observer's Handbook* came from Mike or show Mike in action.

Submitter: Charles Ennis, 2nd Vice-President, RASC, Past President, Sunshine Coast Centre

Submitter: Bill Clark, Past President, Sunshine Coast Centre

## David Thompson – Sunshine Coast Centre

---

David Thompson was one of the original members of the Sunshine Coast Astronomy club in 1988 and has served the club for thirty years. He was one of the people behind our club becoming the Sunshine Coast Centre of the RASC in 2008. David has served several times on our Centre's Board of Directors and was responsible for drafting the club's original bylaws and constitution.

David worked on our application to the CRA to become a registered charity and has worked on parts of all of the Centre's grant applications over the years. David is the current Observatory Director for our Centre and has served for 6 years on the Observatory Committee. David did two detailed surveys of the Sunshine Coast (2009 and 2011), taking Sky Quality Meter readings (which he submitted to the Light-Pollution Abatement Committee in 2009) and surveying possible sites for our observatory. He wrote several proposals and support documents for the observatory project to assist the club presenting the concepts to local governments and organizations. David is a philanthropist at heart: I long ago lost track of the number of things he has donated to our Centre, including telescopes, telescope accessories, and many fixtures for our observatory. Every year he makes a substantial matching donation to the Centre. David probably has spent more hours working on building and maintaining our observatory than all the other volunteers in our Centre combined. David has been there for every phase of the construction, and he is one of our in-house "makers." All the wiring and mechanical installations in the observatory are his work, and he created and installed the motorized retraction system for our observatory's roll-off roof. David is always at the observa-

tory when adjustments, alignments, or collimation need doing on the main telescope. David has spent many hours maintaining the Centre's loaner telescopes. Crowds aren't his thing—he's the man behind the scenes making sure everything works for those who are in the public eye. Despite this, he attends all the monthly meetings and has many times taught classes including a popular Christmas Astronomy Quiz at our December meeting.

Submitter: Charles Ennis, 2nd Vice-President, RASC, Past President, Sunshine Coast Centre

Submitter: Bill Clark, Past President, Sunshine Coast Centre

## Phil Chow – Toronto Centre

---

Phil Chow has been an active member of the RASC Toronto Centre since 2003. He has served since then starting as the assistant membership secretary by managing the Centre's membership rolls with member renewals, changes of information, tax receipt issuance and more. He continues to serve as the Centre's Membership Secretary.

It also didn't take very long for Phil to discover the Centre's E.C. Carr Astronomical Observatory on Blue Mountain and he quickly became a familiar—and welcoming—face to members there. Phil dove into the volunteer pool at CAO and began participating in the public outreach and member activities offered there. He continues to contribute to group events and has significantly ratcheted up his commitment in the intervening years.

Phil currently serves as the CAO's Observatory Director and chair of the CAO Committee, which oversees the operation and management of the site. Aside from that position, he is an active volunteer with boots on the ground at CAO in many facets of its operations. He is a regular participant at CAO work parties and is currently the work party co-coordinator responsible for planning and conducting the day's activities, which entails detailing the tasks of about 20 volunteers' duties for the day.

A question regarding those events may be posed: What would it be worth to you if you could have 20 volunteers come over to your house one Saturday and they would do whatever chores you asked? Well, that is the situation that the Centre enjoys at least twice annually at CAO with its generous volunteers and a good part of the reason that they continue to step forward is because of the welcoming manner of the managing volunteers like Phil Chow.

Phil just has a way of setting folks at ease and genuinely appreciating them for who they are yet his style does not interfere with his focus or compromise the discharge of his responsibilities. His character has proven to be an important contributor to the harmony in his committee and the growing commitment of the CAO volunteers; and it is noticed.

Phil also serves the Centre as a scheduled CAO Supervisor in welcoming public and members alike to the CAO and facili-



tating their experience there. Being an effective supervisor and ambassador for the Centre at CAO is not for everyone, but Phil's easy style makes him a natural; the Centre is grateful for that.

Phil served as Editor of the Centre newsletter *'Scope* from 2006 to 2008 and has participated in the conducting of many Centre workshops such the popular astrophotography series held at CAO. He also continues to enjoy his long running participation in the Centre's city public outreach events as well. Phil can often be found mentoring newer members and is passionate about sharing his enthusiasm for astronomy.

We are very pleased to nominate Phil Chow for the National Service Award.

B. Ralph Chou, President, Toronto Centre

Tony Horvatin, Past President, Toronto Centre

Charles Darrow, Past President, Toronto Centre

## **Blake Nancarrow – Toronto Centre**

---

Immediately upon his joining the Toronto Centre in 2007, Blake set about volunteering to support the information technology needs of the Centre. As a computer trainer, he used his extensive knowledge of computer hardware and software to improve the experience of our members in support of our then email list server and also the technology needs of various committees in the Centre. Blake has assisted our web team and provided software training as an assist to our volunteers in carrying out their duties. He is an excellent author of operations and training manuals and it is safe to say that the majority of existing Centre technical documentation has been created and maintained by Blake. He has also served as our IT Committee chair.

Blake is an enthusiastic volunteer in our public outreach efforts. He has participated in both our daylight and evening telescope outreach events at many of our regular venues such as the Ontario Science Centre, E.C. Carr Astronomical Observatory and the David Dunlap Observatory over the past decade. He has also delivered polished astronomy presentations of his own creation to various groups, both to members and to the public.

Blake is also very knowledgeable in both observational telescopes and imaging systems and shares his knowledge freely with both our members and the public. He often mentors beginner members who are looking for guidance in learning these systems and technology. For example, he organized and ran a workshop at the DDO for our members designed to assist them with operating new equipment they may have received over the holidays but were a bit overwhelmed with the learning curve before them. He maintains a personal blog with a wealth of useful astronomical information at [blog.lumpydarkness.com](http://blog.lumpydarkness.com).

Blake has also served in the Centre's administration as an effective and well-informed Councillor. He is a past Director of the Centre's E.C. Carr Astronomical Observatory and continues to serve as a CAO work party captain where he is present and contributes at nearly all such events. He remains the CAO IT Chair and a CAO site supervisor where he serves as an ambassador and facilitator to site visitors. Blake currently serves on the DDO Committee.

Blake continues to be a regular presenter at our Centre meetings with the monthly *The Sky this Month* segment, which provides members a summary of the coming month's observing points of interest and other topics. These presentations are valuable aids and reach many as meetings are now live streamed and archived on the Centre's YouTube channel.

His current passion for double star study invigorates the imagination of members through his online postings and contributions via his *Journal* column, Binary Universe.

We believe that Blake Nancarrow has and continues to make his mark on both members and the public and we are pleased to nominate him for the National Service Award.

B. Ralph Chou, President, Toronto Centre

Tony Horvatin, Past President, Toronto Centre

Charles Darrow, Past President, Toronto Centre

## **A.W. Scott Masterton – Toronto Centre**

---

Scott Masterton has been a member of the RASC Toronto Centre since 1996 and a volunteer for most of that time. He is a long-time volunteer at Centre public outreach events by bringing his telescopes out to meet the public at the Ontario Science Centre, E.C. Carr Astronomical Observatory and David Dunlap Observatory.

Scott began serving on Council as Councillor in 2007. It is difficult to fathom the amount of service that Scott has actually provided to the Centre in his current role as treasurer. He is in his ninth, and final, year of service in that post! In this capacity, Scott has done a great service to the Centre in several ways. He shepherded the conversion of our electronic bookkeeping from the former New Views software to the more intuitive Quick Books, which was no simple feat. Scott also dealt with the complex bookkeeping requirements of managing our own property at the E.C. Carr Astronomical Observatory and then also the record keeping of managing the property of the David Dunlap Observatory when the Centre was responsible for all costs of operating the site between 2008 and 2016. Scott has consistently kept the Centre's finances in tip top shape and liaised well with our auditors.

Scott has been a primary driver of efforts to create Centre policy documents to control and regulate matters such as due diligence and conflict of interest considerations of our Council, and charitable donations assessments protocols so as

to be in compliance with CRA's charities requirements. He has liaised with our property insurers faithfully keeping our ever-changing information up to date in their files but also haggling on our behalf on the premiums charged. Scott has successfully navigated our auditor's requirements and relayed these often-cumbersome rules to the Centre's active volunteers to ensure that our finances remain on the straight and narrow. It is truly a thankless job but we recognize Scott's commitment to a job very well done!

Drawing on his work experience in the insurance industry, Scott designed the required fire-safety plans for both our own E.C. Carr Astronomical Observatory property, and the David Dunlap Observatory during the time that the Centre was its manager from 2008 to 2016.

Scott has also been a regular volunteer at CAO work parties over the years and generously contributed his skills where he could. Scott continues to serve and represent the Centre as a volunteer judge at high school science fairs where Centre prizes are awarded.

The undersigned are pleased to nominate Scott Masterton for the RASC National Service award.

B. Ralph Chou, President, Toronto Centre

Charles Darrow, Past President, Toronto Centre

## **Linda Pulliah – Unattached**

---

RASC Member Linda Pulliah has been a member of the Sudbury Astronomy Club since the early 2000s, when she first met some club members at their astronomy dome site adjacent to a camp where her Girl Guides were spending some time. Linda came up to the dome to find out what they were doing there. She was shown the telescopes that the group had, and what the astronomers were viewing. Linda was hooked on astronomy.

Linda is a recently retired nurse whose passions include camping, astronomy and Guiding. Known as "Guider Freckles," she would include astronomy lectures as a part of numerous national Jamborees with the Girl Guides as well as presentations too numerous to count at local schools where the curriculum for Grade 6 students includes astronomy.

Linda has always been available on short notice to head out and look at the stars in large or small groups. She has increased the mutual participation in events with the North Bay Astronomy Club and Sudbury Astronomy clubs and she regularly attends meetings held in North Bay.

Star Parties fill Linda's calendar throughout the summer months. She regularly attended the Frozen Banana and Gateway to the Universe star parties and has built a strong relationship with Ontario Parks. She started the star party titled "Half the Night at Halfway Lake" and every year gets

Sudbury Astronomy Club members to attend with her in order to educate the campers on all things astronomical. Since that start, she has increased her contacts and now we have star parties in Samuel de Champlain Provincial Park and Grundy Lake Provincial Park.

Linda has completed her Messier Objects list and is also working on the Finest NGC Catalogue whenever clear skies allow.

In 2017, Linda reached out to Science North in Sudbury to offer her support for their free monthly star parties. She promoted the Science North events within the Sudbury Astronomy Club and welcomed Science North staff to SAC meetings. "Linda and the Sudbury Astronomy Club enriched the free programs offered at Science North by providing lectures, equipment and expertise at these events", according to Dr. Olathe MacIntyre, Staff Scientist, Space Place and Planetarium at Science North. "During the 2017 Solar Eclipse, Linda and members of the club helped to enrich the viewing experience for approximately 900 visitors. The success of that collaboration led to us partnering on a public event called 'Stars over Killarney' to celebrate the 150th anniversary of RASC, the Dark Sky Preserve Status of Killarney Provincial Park and the Killarney Provincial Park Observatory, which is available for public use."

The Killarney event attracted over 300 participants, and Bob McDonald from CBC Radio's *Quirks and Quarks* attended the event and spoke about the importance of dark skies in his blog that has a reach of ~65,000 people.

The Sudbury Astronomy Club was the recipient of Science North's Volunteer Organization Award due to Linda's tireless commitment to increasing public understanding and appreciation of astronomy.

Linda is so committed to educating the public about astronomy that she took a first-year astronomy course at Laurentian University just to be more knowledgeable with her Star Party presentations.

She has made presentations to seniors' groups, Cub Scouts, Church Groups, and others in the area, and does a marvelous job teaching about the night skies. She has a unique way of presenting complex astronomical phenomena in a way that everyone can understand, and she can adapt quickly to different ages in her audience.

Linda's contributions and outreach activities should be recognized with the 2018 Service Award.

Robert Pothier, President, Sudbury Astronomy Club

Pete Marshall, Vice President, Sudbury Astronomy Club,  
RASC Member

Luc Boulard, Chair of the Observatory Sudbury Astronomy Club, RASC Member

Bob O'Daiskey, Director at Large, Sudbury Astronomy Club

Dr, Olathe MacIntyre, Staff Scientist, Space Place and Planetarium, Science North

Paul-Émile Legault, Director of the Doran Planetarium

Steve Dodson, Sudbury Astronomy Club and RASC Member

Richard Robert, Sudbury Astronomy Club and RASC Member

## Laurie Roche – Victoria Centre

---

Laurie Roche has been a member of RASC since 1995. She was an elementary and middle school teacher for many years, using her Master of Education from Carlton effectively to support kids with a wide range of disabilities as a special education teacher. Laurie switched to teaching grade 7-8 math and science through to her retirement, and she continues to substitute teach those subjects, plus she tutors students.

Laurie has been active in Victoria Centre, volunteering for or leading countless public outreach events, including: International Astronomy Day, public nights at the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory (DAO), International Year of Astronomy (IYA 2009), Vancouver Island Regional Science Fairs, numerous public observing events, and bringing astronomy to the very popular Saanich (agricultural) Fair.

Laurie is also active at the National level of RASC, contributing to the Education and Public Outreach (EPO) committee. During 2018, she co-hosted a national contest in honour of the RASC sesquicentennial called *Imagining the Skies*. This online contest highlighted astronomical media through photography, sketching, art and crafts.

Serving terms on Victoria Centre's Council as Treasurer, Vice-president, and President, Laurie has shown great leadership through collaboration with many Centre members. Her past efforts to involve RASC members in public outreach have resulted in many members who continue to support this most important mission to engage the public in science and especially astronomy. Her support of others' leadership of events speaks to her excellent collaborative approach to public outreach, and using volunteerism as a fun, social activity to get members involved in RASC's main mission.

As one of the lead members of the Victoria Centre's *School Telescope Program*, Laurie has lent her considerable expertise in interacting with students of all ages (kindergarten to high school), and has helped make this program the most sought after by teachers beyond the local area schools. In the 2017-2018 school year more than 2,000 students took advantage of this program, involving 80 presentations and night sky viewing sessions.

Laurie's support of astronomy outreach to the public on Observatory Hill through Saturday night events during the summer months at the Centre of the Universe and the historic Plaskett telescope predates her involvement in the Friends

of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory (FDAO). That said, she joined the board of the FDAO very soon after its inception and has been one of its strongest resources for outreach and education ever since, as the FDAO strives to revitalize EPO on Observatory Hill.

Laurie has almost single-handedly kept FDAO's fledgling volunteer daytime tours program running, not only by being lead presenter and educator, but also by organizing other volunteers to participate. She has also been a mainstay of regular Saturday star parties for the public every summer, and unstintingly gives her time on other evenings of the week to give talks on basic astronomy and about Canadian observatories around the world to all ages and levels of knowledge. Finally, Laurie is a strong advocate on the Board for enhancing public outreach offerings and their accessibility to the widest possible public.

Collaborating with and encouraging RASC members to get involved has been the hallmark of Laurie's approach to public outreach. Laurie's contagious enthusiasm for astronomy and science, and her active support outside the classroom of young women choosing science careers can't help but support astronomy being more inclusive. There is no doubt that her outreach in the classroom has helped younger people to consider scientific endeavours as cool and desirable career choices.

Reg Dunkley, President, Victoria Centre

Chris Purse, Past President, Victoria Centre

Dr. Chris Gainor, National President

Sid Sidhu, Victoria Centre

Dr. Ben Dorman, Chair, Friends of the DAO and  
Joe Carr, Victoria Centre

## Qilak Award

RASC—Chris Curwin (New Brunswick Centre)

CASCA—Dr. Jan Cami (Western University)

FAAQ—Hugues Lacombe (Club d'astronomie de Charlevoix)

## President's Award

### Michael S.F. Watson, Unattached

---

Michael Watson is being awarded the RASC President's Award for 2019 in recognition of his major contributions to the governance of the Society as a member of the Board of Directors. Mr. Watson provides important legal perspectives on issues affecting the Society, and thanks to his long experience in the RASC, he is a source of great advice to his colleagues on the Board. ★