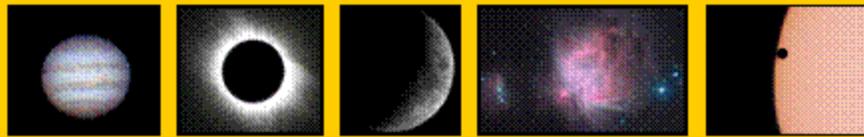


BULLETIN



OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

March 2012 - Volume 7, Number 3

Ian Levstein, Editor

We welcome your comments on the *Bulletin*. Email them to the Editor at bulletin@rasc.ca.

A PDF version of the *Bulletin* is available [here](#).

A Web-based version of the *Bulletin* is available [here](#).

► [News @ RASC.ca](#)

2012 General Assembly Registration Open

by [Luca Vanzella](#), Edmonton Centre



Registration for the 2012 General Assembly is now open! This year's GA will be held in Edmonton as the Society joins the Edmonton Centre on the occasion of their 80th anniversary. The GA will be held from June 28 to July 2.

Important Dates:

- 2012 March 31 - Cutoff for Early Bird Registration - save \$25.00 by registering and paying before this date!
 - 2012 April 1 - Cutoff for paper and session proposals
 - 2012 May 24 - Cutoff date for souvenir merchandise orders
 - 2012 June 1 - Late registration fees begin
 - 2012 June 18 - Last day for on-line registration
- Stay tuned for more information and details as we get closer to the date and plan now for your participation in this year's GA.

Call for Nominations

by [Colin Haig](#), RASC 2nd Vice President

The RASC is seeking candidates to fill the following four positions on the national Executive Committee: **President, 1st Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President, and Treasurer**. These positions will become vacant at the conclusion of the 2012 Annual meeting, on 2012 July 1. If you or your Centre know of a person interested in and qualified to assume the responsibilities associated with any of these positions, please get in touch with the chair of the nominating committee, no later than **2012 April 15**, by emailing the [Chair of the Nominating Committee](#).

The Nominating Committee has confirmed the willingness of the current Vice-Presidents to ascend to

the next level on the Executive committee. Any other member who wishes to run for these elected positions may do so by following the procedures outlined in the Society's By-Laws. The Committee must present the name(s) of all interested candidates for these openings to the National Secretary at least 60 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

For more information about the duties and responsibilities of these nationally elected positions in the Society, please refer to these sections of the [RASC By-Law Number 1](#):

Sections 6.05 (1) and (2): Nomination of Elected Officers

Sections 6.06 (1) and (2): Election of Officers

Sections 6.09 (1 through 2): Duties of the President

Section 6.10 (1 through 4): Duties of the Vice-President

Section 6.12 (1 through 3): Duties of the Treasurer

Section 7.09 (1 through 5): Executive Committee

Eclipse Planning

by [Chris Beckett](#), Chair, Observing Committee

Hopefully all western Centres are making advance plans to observe the easily accessible May 20 annular eclipse in the western USA. Centres could devote part of a meeting to making preliminary plans for joint travel arrangements and ride-sharing so that all of their members can observe the annular eclipse instead of the mere partial eclipse that will be visible from home.

Your 2012 *Observer's Handbook* has detailed information on the eclipse on pages 120-126, written by **Fred Espenak**, and weather prospects for the eclipse on pages 138-140, written by **Jay Anderson**. Safe solar observing is on page 143.

Jay's [Web site](#) has detailed maps of the annular eclipse path, with separate maps for California, Nevada, Utah-Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Every driver should print out these maps and then draw the eclipse centreline and path limits on their detailed road atlas. (Suitable road atlases are sold at truckstops on main highways.)

Jay's Web site also includes a bar graph giving average May cloud cover along the eclipse track. You'll note that the central valley in California is strongly favoured. Nevada (while not bad) is not nearly as clear. Here are some locations:

- Redding, CA (a good-sized city on Interstate 5) 32 %
- Chico, CA 48 %
- Oroville, CA 11 % !
- Alturas, CA 29 %
- Reno, NV 56 %
- Lovelock, NV 42 %
- Ely, NV 47 %
- Cedar City, UT 40 %
- Bryce Canyon, UT 17 % !
- Winslow, AZ (at the southern limit of the path) 6 % !
- Window Rock, AZ/NM border 8 % !
- Albuquerque, NM 54 %

These are climatological statistics. They can be used for preliminary planning purposes. But remember that the weather on E-day may be vastly different from these longterm averages.

When this annular eclipse last came by in the saros cycle 18 years ago, the climatological statistics favoured Arizona-New Mexico-west Texas while articles pretty much wrote off New England and Canada's Maritime provinces as near hopeless. On eclipse day almost the entire path was clear except for Arizona-New Mexico-west Texas which were mostly clouded out due to a cold low over Arizona.

Mobility and flexibility are always essential when eclipse-chasing. This eclipse can be chased at minimum expense by several observers sharing gas and a motel room. Serious observers will put the chase ahead of sleep, regular meals, and fancy washrooms on eclipse day. Experienced eclipse-chasers are entirely flexible and willing to go with the flow and will go wherever the weather requires on eclipse day. Bring a notebook computer to check satellite photos at places advertising Wi-Fi access, plus, of course, stay at motels that have the Weather Channel.

Tentative plans in the Okanagan Centre are to leave early on May 18 giving enough time for a leisurely drive to northern California while allowing enough time for a dash much further southeast if the weather requires it. Then two days to drive back from California (perhaps three days if weather pushes us down to the Utah/Arizona border area although a sole driver once made it from Chaco, New Mexico, to Kelowna in two days).

May is prime season for observing Omega Centauri and Centaurus A, so you may want to go to more southern sections of the annular eclipse path so that you can see these splendours. (Omega Cen was well-resolved, if mushy due to low altitude, in an ancient 13-inch Coulter Dob at Chaco Observatory, NM at latitude 36.) Refer to the list of Southern Hemisphere Splendours on pages 329-330 of your 2012 *Observer's Handbook* for other showpieces visible from the American Southwest.

Eclipse Glasses Distribution Information

by [Chris Beckett](#), Transit of Venus Committee

Council will be discussing this topic at the March 10 National Council meeting.

Distribution of limited numbers will be performed by our excellent National Office staff, the remainder to be held by the Dunlap Institute (DI) for their activities. Distribution for Centres will be partially based on previous outreach numbers submitted from past years, Centre interest in obtaining more glasses amongst other factors such as partnerships with Science Centres or other institutions as well as public outreach plans for the eclipse/transit events.

Individual members may submit requests if not associated with a Centre or if working on independent projects.

Orders would be placed through National Office using an online form currently under development.

► [Astronomy Beyond RASC](#)

International Astronomical Sketching Competition

by **Alexander Massey**, ASNSW Member

Many of you may be aware of the death of a champion of astronomical sketching, Australia's **Scott Mellish**. The [Astronomical Society of New South Wales](#) has organised an Astronomical sketching

competition in his honour. The Scott Mellish Sketching Competition is an [international competition](#).



Entry details, rules and the required submission template are all available on the competition link. There are two categories, Deep Sky and Solar System, and up to 2 entries per category are permitted.

Any questions you may have you can be sent to the competition's [email](#) address.

Judging will be by popular vote on April 21 this year at the [South Pacific Star Party](#) in Australia.

Entries must be received before then for inclusion. If you are considering making a submission from outside of Australia, please

note that you should allow at least three to four weeks for delivery. This means you should consider mailing off your entries by the second week of March.

Please read the rules carefully as this is a "pencil and paper" competition only. The "template" is the prescribed way that a sketch needs to be presented for submission to provide a standardised form. The sketch can be done either on white or black paper, but needs to be laid out following the template.

This competition seeks to foster further participation in this fabulous art form.

► [Bulletin Photo of the Month](#)



Trio and Orion

by [Rose-Marie Burke](#),
Kingston Centre

See those nasty clouds sneaking in there? Couldn't find a good angle to get trees and Moon/ Jupiter/ Venus together with Orion, would have liked more landscape, but nature sees me coming with that camera and I can just hear her snickering. Had to hurry. At my age,

"hurry" is not happening as hurriedly as it once did.

It's a good thing the predicted geomagnetic storm fizzled out, or there would have been a storm of grump in my house tonight. Details: February 26. Canon 350D/Rebel XT, f 4.0, ISO 1600, 10-20 mm @ 10mm, 16 seconds.

► The Sky this Month

What's New in the Sky

Members are encouraged to check out the [Northern Skies](#) section of the RASC Web site. Thanks to **Gary Boyle** for keeping us all in the know.

► Dates to Remember

- **2012 March 10** - National Council Meeting, Toronto
- **2012 March 31** - [Earth Hour](#), 8:30 p.m.
- **2012 March 31** - Deadline for GA Early Bird Registration
- **2012 April 1** - Deadline for GA Paper Proposals
- **2012 April 15** - Deadline for RASC Executive Nominations
- **2012 April 28** - Astronomy Day
- **2012 May 20** - Partial Solar Eclipse visible from Western Canada
- **2012 June 5** - Transit of Venus
- **2012 August 16-19** - [Starfest](#), the 31st annual event of the NYAA, Ayton, ON



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