



**January 2018 - Volume 13, Number 1**

We welcome your comments on the *Bulletin*.  
Email them to the Editor, David Garner at  
[bulletin@rasc.ca](mailto:bulletin@rasc.ca)

► [News @ RASC.ca](#)

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## News from the Society Office

by [Randy Attwood](#), RASC Executive Director

**Happy New Year to all of our Members!**

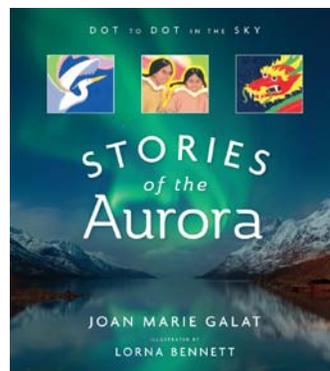
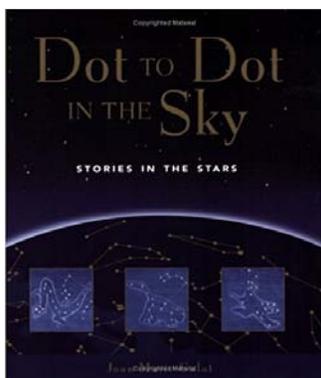
Celebrate the Society's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary

<https://rasc.ca/2018>

Clear Skies in 2018!



Our RASC 150<sup>th</sup> baseball hat is back in stock, due to popular demand! Get yours and [support the RASC 150<sup>th</sup> today!](#)



The RASC now has two amazing children's books for sale by Canadian author Joan Galat. Read all about them [on our eStore!](#) Only **\$16.95** each (plus tax and shipping).

*Observer's Calendar 2018* - **\$15.95** (for members)



A beautiful calendar showcasing RASC members' astro-images with information on what's up in the sky tonight. A perfect gift for the beginner and a must-have for the experienced observer. [Grab one before they're gone!](#)

## 2018 Election of Board of Directors - Call for Nominees

by **Robyn Foret**, RASC 2nd Vice-President

Three (3) Board of Director positions, each being a 3-year term, are open for election at the 2018 General Assembly.

Nominations for the RASC Board of Directors is open through 2018 April 30, and we encourage all Members in good standing consider a role on the Board. The 2018 Board of Directors will be announced at the 2018 General Assembly in Calgary.

Candidates' requirements are stipulated in **Policy G9: Society Nominations and Elections** of the Policy Manual. The Policy Manual is available in the Member's-only section of the website here: **RASC Policy Manual** (<https://www.rasc.ca/rasc-policy-manual>).

For more insight into the effort and commitment expected of Board members, feel free to reach out to the Nominating Committee Chair, Robyn Foret. Robyn can be reached at [arforet@shaw.ca](mailto:arforet@shaw.ca) or 403-803-1075.

## General Assembly 2018

by **Robyn Foret**, RASC 2nd Vice-President

The RASC General Assembly for 2018 will be held in Calgary, Alberta, June 28 through July 2. With the Society celebrating its 150th and the Calgary Centre celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup>, 2018 will be a very special GA.

Accommodation is at Hotel Alma on campus at the University of Calgary. An upscale euro-style hotel, Alma offers 2 bedroom student quarters, standard hotel rooms and 1 bedroom suites. Overflow accommodation is in Student Housing so book early to secure your optimal room at Alma.

A western-style barbeque at the U of C's Rothney Astrophysical Observatory informally kicks off the GA on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Great speakers, opportunities to take an Alan Dyer workshop or a tour of the Cross Conservation area, a Social to meet up with RASC friends old and new, a Big Reveal on Friday night, a Stampede Breakfast, incredible poster and paper presentations, the Hogg Lecture, the actual General Assembly, the RASC 150 celebrations, the Banquet and optional visits to

the KT Boundary / Dinosaur Provincial Park / Royal Tyrell Museum, and a Martian landscape will all make this a very special GA that Members and their families can enjoy.

In the spirit of the West, and espousing our Western values and hospitality, you will be well cared for. Airport pick-up and drop off, a comprehensive meal plan and comfortable accommodations are ready for you.

Registration is limited so visit our web site and register soon. You don't want to miss this GA. Web-site will be live and registrations will open in December, 2018.

P.S. If you're planning an extended trip, the Calgary Stampede begins on July 6. Imagine a wonderful GA followed by a visit to Banff and Lake Louise, horseback riding on Moose Mountain then Yaa-Hoo along with the Calgary Stampede.

## **The Unusual Full Moon Dates of Early 2018**

by **Dave Chapman**, Chair, Observing Committee

Alert readers of the 2018 RASC *Observer's Calendar* will note that the dates of the first four Full Moons are unusual: January 1, January 31, none in February, March 1, and March 31 (in North America, at least). Having two Full Moons in a calendar month happens reasonably often, on average once in about 2.7 years. This can happen because 11 out of 12 calendar months are longer than the synodic period of the Moon, 29.53... days on average. February is too short to ever have two Full Moons; moreover, it can have NO Full Moons (as in 2018). When that happens, both January and March MUST have two Full Moons each.

Is your head spinning yet? This two-none-two sequence happens infrequently, but with some regularity, following the Metonic cycle of 19 years (see the Handbook, p. 125).

There is no cosmic significance to this sequence, it is simply a quirk of our civil calendar, which has been subject to political interference since its inception. If February (the last month of the year in early Roman times) had been given 30 or 31 days, it simply would not be an issue. Of course, for cultures that use the

actual lunar cycle for their months, Such as the Mi'kmaq of Atlantic Canada, it does not even come up! Enjoy the first Full Moon of 2018 on January 1st! Here in Nova Scotia, it is the Chief Moon, closest to the winter solstice, hence the highest Full Moon of the cycle and longest in the sky overnight.

(A longer version of this comment appears in the 2018 February Issue of Sky&Telescope, in the Focal Point column at the back of the magazine. The Mi'kmaw Moons Project page is found at [www.facebook.com/www.MikmawMoons/](http://www.facebook.com/www.MikmawMoons/)).



## **CASCA Winter Solstice 2017 Newsletter**

by **Eric Briggs**, RASC, Toronto Centre

The Canadian Astronomical Society/Société Canadienne d'Astronomie has published its Winter Solstice 2017 Newsletter 'Cassiopeia'.

- President's Report
- ALMA Matters
- BRITE-Constellation News
- Canadian Gemini Office News / Nouvelles de l'Office Gemini Canadien
- CATAC Update
- JCMT Update
- Maunakea Spectroscopic Explorer (MSE) Update

- SPICA Status Report
- The Dao 100 Project
- CRAQ Summer School Announcement
- A Call to Action for Canadian Astronomy in Space
- Results from the First Indigenous Astronomy Workshop at the University of Toronto
- A Note from the Editor

<http://casca.ca/?p=9749>

## **Asteroids with Canadian Connections**

by [Eric Briggs](#), RASC, Toronto Centre

The following has been added to the List of Asteroids with Canadian Connections:

(16972) Neish = 1998 WK11

Discovered 1998 Nov. 21 by the Lincoln Laboratory Near-Earth Asteroid Research Team at Socorro.

Catherine D. Neish (b. 1981) is a professor at the University of Western Ontario who studies Titan, the Moon and Venus using orbital radar. Previously known by the moniker Katie Dot, she is an avid scuba diver, a champion for social justice, and mother to Penelope.

Reference: MPC 107739

Orbit type: Main Belt

<https://rasc.ca/asteroids/16972>

## **RASC Observing News**

by [Dave Chapman](#), Chair, Observing Committee

In December, RASC awarded an observing certificate, Explore the Moon—Telescope, to Shane Grassing (unattached member, Pilot Butte, Saskatchewan).

That's 13 certificates awarded in all for 2017, lower than for 2016, but about average for recent years. Let's see if RASC members can complete or at least start more observing programs in 2018, the RASC 150th Anniversary Year.

If you did not get one for Christmas, consider buying the revised Explore the Universe Guide, 2nd Edition. Additional material includes all-sky star maps and a special Moon map for the EtU program. Nomenclature and observing details have been harmonized between the EtU Guide and the EtU observing program itself, although the required observations remain the same ([www.rasc.ca/explore-universe](http://www.rasc.ca/explore-universe)). Centres interested in bulk orders at a substantial discount should contact Julia at the Society Office ([mempub@rasc.ca](mailto:mempub@rasc.ca)).

At press time, 25 of 28 RASC Centres have confirmed their participation as Local Certification Centres for the Explore the Universe certificate and pin (see [www.rasc.ca/participating-centres](http://www.rasc.ca/participating-centres)). We will be contacting the following centres soon: Kingston, Niagara, and Windsor (unless you contact us first at [observing@rasc.ca](mailto:observing@rasc.ca)).

On Twitter, please follow us @RASCobserving for announcements of earned observing certificates and special observing opportunities.

## **RASC Astrophotography Certificates**

by [James Edgar](#), *Observer's Handbook* Editor

Astroimagers – earn a certificate while you learn your craft. You can apply for three different certificates: Wide Field, Solar System, and Deep Sky. A certificate suitable for framing comes with a showcase of your winning photos on the RASC Zenfolio site. Have a look at some of the certificate earners' great images at [rascastroimaging.zenfolio.com](http://rascastroimaging.zenfolio.com)

Go to [www.rasc.ca/astro-imaging-certificate](http://www.rasc.ca/astro-imaging-certificate) for the different category requirements and submission details.

## RASC Montreal Centre Upcoming Events

by **Carl Jorgensen**, Secretary, Montreal Centre

Saturday, January 13, 7:30 – 11:00 pm: Montreal Centre Members Arbo Clubhouse at the Morgan Arboretum , 150 Chemin des Pins, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue.

Friday, January 19, 7:30 – 11:30 pm: Montreal Centre Members Arbo Clubhouse at the Morgan Arboretum .

Saturday, January 27, 7:30 – 11:00 pm: Montreal Centre Members Arbo Public Event National Star Party at the Morgan Arboretum. Kickoff of the 2018 RASC 150th Anniversary Celebrations.

Note: During the months of January and February the Montreal Centre's activity basically consists of Members Arbo Clubhouses on either Friday or Saturday. We have one public event on January 27<sup>th</sup> our contribution to the RASC National Star Party. Activity is low during January and February because of cold weather; however we do have observing after the events, weather permitting.

## Astronomy Poem

by **Paul Heath**, Outreach Chair, Halifax Centre

This poem is from Paul Heath's book: *Food for the SOUL - Poems for Star Gazers*

### Winter Sky

*One leaf holds firm,  
Upon a frosted limb, now bare.  
As zephyrs twist and turn  
And we watch 'till dusk becalms the air.*

*Then thrice cocooned, we step from portal warm  
To wind swept stair*

*And crunch with measured pace a snow enshrouded field.*

*Eyes sweep up the calm and crystal air  
As bundled within, our spirit stirs  
To see the slivered, silver moon, rest gentle  
On twilight's shoulders bare.*

*And thrice cocooned, with frosted breath  
We stand and stare  
While fires brighten, deep within the darkening air.*

*With myth and wonder, our spirit's draw  
In frosted paintings across the air  
Those timeless images, caught frozen there  
And only seen, when breath drifts frozen on crystal air.*

*Now thrice cocooned, our spirits soar,  
To see those brightest fires  
Stand clear and high above, that frosted limb, now bare.*

## **Thank You to our Sponsors!**

by **Julia Neeser**, RASC Marketing Coordinator

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada has a unique partnership with our friends in the astronomy industry. We are now offering companies the distinction of becoming a sponsor of the RASC, Canada's pre-eminent amateur astronomy organization. This offer is available only to those industry leaders who recognize the value in being associated with the amateur astronomy community.

[www.rasc.ca/rasc-sponsors](http://www.rasc.ca/rasc-sponsors).



## What's New in the Sky

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



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