

Photo: Bruce Waters // Killarney Provincial Park Observatory



October 5 to 18, 2020

What's happening at The RASC?

Next week is Thanksgiving Monday, so we will be covering two weeks' worth of events in this edition.

Tuesday, October 6th - 3:30 to 5:00pm EDT Insider's Guide to the Galaxy: Mars Fest 2020

Today's the day! Mars is at its closest approach to Earth, making it the biggest and brightest it will be for another 15 years! We'll explain why that is, give you tips for seeing Mars in your telescope, take a look at Mars' geology and the spacecraft and rovers that are exploring the Red Planet, and more! And we'll explain the difference between Mars' closest approach today, and its official opposition on October 13th.

[Register for Insider's Guide to the Galaxy](#)

Friday, October 9th - 7:00pm PDT RASC Sunshine Coast: Centre Meeting

At 7:00 PM PDT, 2020 October 9, online on Zoom, the Sunshine Coast Centre of the RASC presents Dr. Arif Babul, whose topic is The Large-Scale Structure of the Universe. Vancouver Center is joining us for this, but all RASC members are welcome.

The link for the meeting can also be found on [the Sunshine Coast RASC site](#).

Meeting password is: 305677

[Join Sunshine Coast Centre Meeting](#)

Sunday, October 11th and Monday, October 12th - 9:00pm to 11:30pm EDT RASC Toronto and the town of Richmond Hill: Virtual Mars Madness Event

This event will run twice. You must buy tickets for the day you wish to attend. **Tickets are \$12.50.**

Broadcasting Live from the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory!

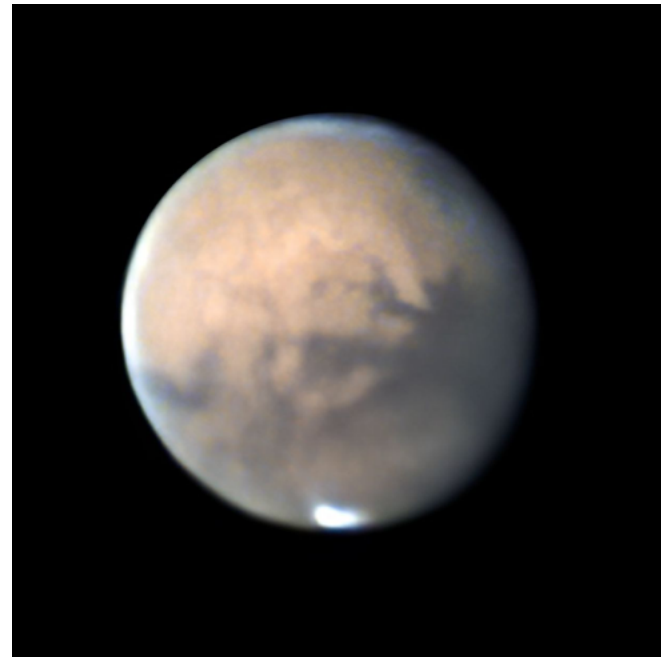
Although Earth passes by Mars every couple of years, it's only during rarer Great Opposition years like 2020 that the distance between the two planets is at its smallest, making Mars appear much larger when viewed through telescopes here on Earth. Join us at our Mars Madness event for a chance to see Mars at its very best. We will have views through telescopes, including the largest telescope in Canada, guidance to help you find Mars for yourself from your own backyard, interesting facts and stories about Mars and its exploration, special guests and fun activities. Best of all, you get to enjoy all of this from the comfort of your own home! Don't wait till 2035 to see the next Great Opposition of Mars! The program is most suitable for adults and older children (due to the late start-times). Prior to the start of your program, you will be emailed information containing the link to join the virtual program and any specific information relating to your program.

[Buy tickets for Sunday's event](#)

[Buy tickets for Monday's event](#)

Tuesday, October 13th - 8:00pm to 10:00pm EDT Mars Opposition Star Party

We'll be bringing you live views of the Red Planet, tips to observe, and our guest speaker Erin Gibbons (PhD candidate) will discuss her research on the potential for microbial life on Mars!



Following Erin's talk, [Astrogeoguy](#) Chris Vaughan, author and [Learn to Stargaze](#)'s John Read, [Astronomy in Action](#)'s Ryan Marciniak and RASC's Outreach Coordinator Jenna Hinds will discuss observing Mars and bring you live views of the Red Planet from across the (eastern part of the) country.

Erin Gibbons is a PhD candidate at McGill University, and is the Public Relations and Communications Co-Lead of the Space Generation Advisory Council.

[Register for the Mars Opposition Star Party](#)

Wednesday, October 14th - 7:30pm to 9:30pm EDT RASC Toronto: Recreational Astronomy Night

Join RASC Toronto for our monthly recreational astronomy night meeting. This is where our members get to show their latest projects or give tutorials and tips on just about everything to do with astronomy. Talks start at 7:30pm, socializing at 7:00pm.

- Arnold Brody - The Sky This Month
- Speaker #1 TBA
- Speaker #2 TBA

[Join RASCTC live on their YouTube Channel](#)

Thursday, October 15th - 3:30pm to 4:30pm EDT Explore the Universe: Zodiacal Light

This is our last best chance to see the Zodiacal light this year! You need a very specific set of conditions to be able to see it, which makes it one of the most challenging targets on the list. We'll also be going over some of our last targets for the program (which ends on October 29th!).

Do you have targets you wish we had covered better, or some that you're struggling with? [Email Jenna Hinds](#) and let her know what you would like to see reviewed in our last 2 sessions!

[Register for Explore the Universe](#)

This Week for Explore the Universe Online

Tuesday, October 6th

Mars is at its closest approach! It'll be as close to the Earth as it gets in our two-year dance with Mars. Even though this closest approach happens about once every two years, this approach will actually be the closest of the closest approaches we will get for another 15 years!

Why does this matter? When Mars is closest, it's also as big and bright as it will get in our sky! It's the perfect time to dust off that old telescope and go out to give it a look. You may even be able to see some surface features, if you have the right kind of scope!

Tuesday, October 13th

Today, Mars is at opposition. It's slightly different from closest approach. Opposition happens when the Earth, the Sun and Mars are all in alignment. It means that Mars will be rising right as the Sun sets, and we'll be able to observe it all night long. While it won't be quite as big and bright as it was on October 6th, it will still be beautiful to observe!

Thursday, October 15th

It's our second-last session today! Get a sneak peek of the targets for this session [here](#).

Looking for info on observing Mars?

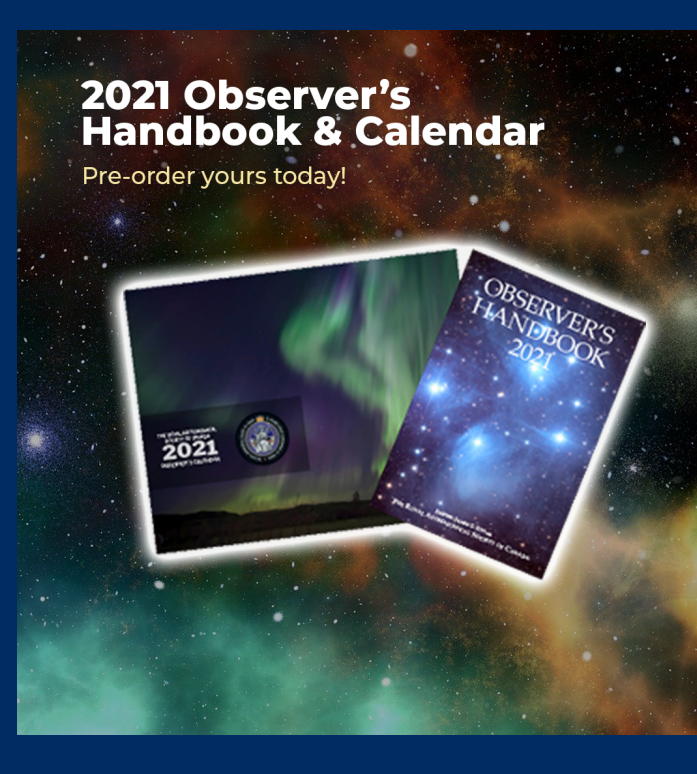
Check out these pages that RASC Observer's Handbook contributor Roy Bishop assembled. They'll show you how to figure out exactly what Mars will look like at any time during this opposition.



Missed last session? That's okay! Rewatch episode eight on our YouTube Channel.

We host episodes once every two weeks at 3:30pm EDT on Thursdays. Find out more and register for sessions here!

The 2021 Observer's Handbook is now available for preorder. Get your very own copy of the astronomical reference book we have been publishing for over a century! The Observer's Handbook is internationally renowned, and our editorial team does a fantastic job with it every year. Order now in our estore!



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