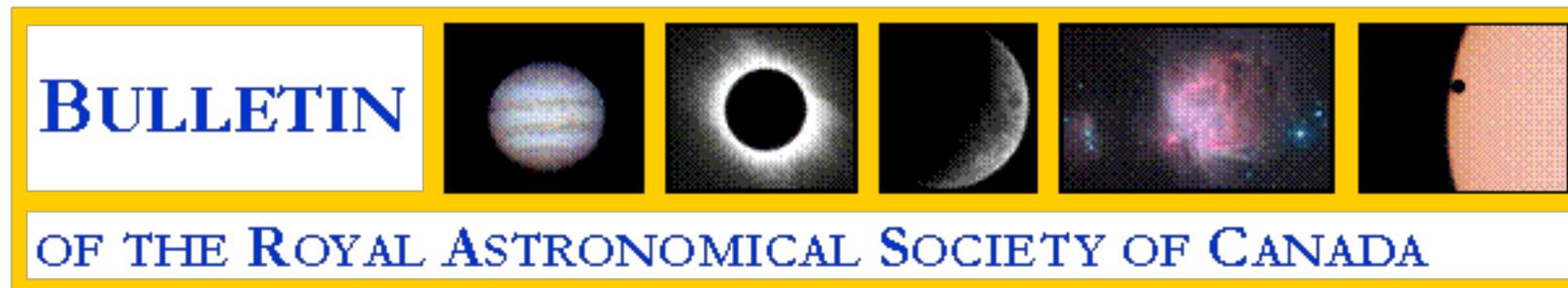


2009-03



March 2009 - Volume 4, Number 3

Ian Levstein, Editor

We welcome your comments on the *Bulletin*. Email them to the Editor at bulletin@rasc.ca [1].

Member: ~FULL_NAME~, RASC ID: ~ID~

► Editor's Notebook

by Ian Levstein

National Council Meeting Correction

The date for the National Council meeting was listed incorrectly in February's *Bulletin*, and I apologize for the confusion. The correct date for the National Council meeting is **Saturday, March 28**.

► News @ RASC.ca

National Office Update: Moving Day Approaches

by **Mary Lou Whitehorne**, 1st VP, RASC On February 13, a 3-year lease was signed for RASC's new National Office. Located near the Islington subway station in Toronto, visitors to National Office will find ample visitor parking available as well as a fully accessible building that is significantly easier to reach from Pearson Airport. There are pictures [here](#) [2]. We have the keys to our new home. New carpeting has been installed, the walls have been painted, and other changes made in the space to meet our needs. We are already listed on the building's directory. Things are progressing well in regards to ensuring that all utilities and communications are installed and ready to go so we can hit the ground running when we move in. The move is planned for a 2-3 day period in mid-March. The new mailing address for RASC National Office is:

**203 – 4920 Dundas St. West,
Toronto, Ontario M9A 1B7
CANADA**

Member Access Now Added to Web Portal

As part of the continuing rollout of our new Web site's features and capabilities, we are pleased to announce that access to the online edition of the *Journal* and the private area of the RASC Web site, is now available from the RASC's secure Web Portal. Read all about it [here](#) [3].

New MAP Committee Chair Appointed

by **Mary Lou Whitehorne**, 1st VP, RASC The Executive Committee is pleased to announce the appointment of **Randall Rosenfeld** as interim chair of the MAP (Membership and Promotion) Committee. As MAP chair, Randall has some good ideas for directions we might pursue to increase membership, and particularly to recruit members from sections of society which are not well represented: women, minorities, and the disadvantaged. Randall is the Society archivist and an active member of the History Committee, as well as being involved in salvaging our library after two basement floods, and proactively developing and implementing a workable solution to save the bulk of our library by transferring much of it to the collection of the National Science and Technology Museum in Ottawa.

New Astronomy Day Coordinator

by **Kim Hay**, RASC Education Chair International Year of Astronomy has us all busy, but what better way to tie in another event that happens every year: Astronomy Day (May 2), and Astronomy Week (April 27 - May 3). We have a new Astronomy Day Coordinator, **Ron Macnaughton** and he will be sending out updates and information to all Centres. Email him [here](#) [4] with your Astronomy Day/Week questions.

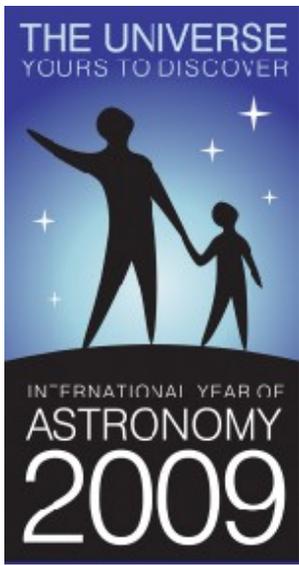
How many RASC Observatories are there in Canada?

by **Barry Matthews**, Chair, History Committee There are many RASC members who have constructed club and personal observatories. These wonderful structures are usually located in obscure areas throughout Canada, and the planning and construction of these observatories, and the projects undertaken in them remain, largely, a mystery. In this International Year of Astronomy, why not do a little horn blowing of our own and show what RASC members have and do with these facilities? The History Committee proposes that Centres and individual RASC members who have observatories, document these structures and forward the information to the Committee to be incorporated onto CDs for retention in our new National Office for future reference to others who might wish to build their own observatory.

Committee members will prepare a standard form to use as a guideline including (on a strictly voluntary basis): observatory name, photos, regional location (ie. Province or City), type of roof structure (dome/roll off), building & pier construction, sculptural decoration, primary & secondary equipment, average sky conditions, past, present or future projects being undertaken at that site, as well as any additional information that contributors wish to provide. In a future *Bulletin*, the Committee will ask for volunteers to act as area coordinators to help collect the observatory information. One person from each Centre would be ideal. For any additional information about the project, please contact me [here](#) [5].

► International Year of Astronomy 2009

Astronomy on YouTube



by **Ron Jerome**, IYA Coordinator, Vancouver Centre As part of our IYA activities, Vancouver Centre is producing a series of ten-minute educational programs called "SUPERnova" and is using YouTube as the host for their distribution. These are written and produced by Vancouver Centre members with a myriad of media talents. Each episode has a feature topic including an interview with someone prominent in the astronomical community. That segment highlights an activity or project designed to enhance our access to the universe in which we live. The second part will tie that project to local, hands-on activities with the objective of attracting both RASC members and the general public to upcoming events. The final portion will highlight a prominent constellation or night sky event currently visible. The first episode features the development of the Thirty Meter Telescope. An upcoming episode will feature **Jaymie Matthews**, and look at the efforts to study stars, including our own sun. We also intend to address the problem of light pollution. RASC Centres Canada-wide are invited to use these videos to their benefit. They can be linked from our Centre's [Web site](#) [6], or embedded directly into your own. (We can provide instructions on how to do that.) We are also considering making them available in a DVD format and presented in such a way that they could be used piecemeal according to each Centre's specific objectives. We need to know if there is an appetite for such a product. We invite your comments and feedback.

IYA Proclamation

by **Chris Gainor**, Victoria Centre The City of Victoria has issued a proclamation signed by Mayor Dean Fortin. Read the entire proclamation [here](#) [7].

IYA Project in France

by **Jack Ruitenbeek**, Victoria Centre Although I officially live on Gabriola Island BC, and am a RASC life member, I spend 11 months a year in France, just outside of Geneva. I have hitched my observing wagon

to the local astronomy club, called M51, here in France. Last year, our club obtained permission from the French IYA09 authorities to use their logo to do an online astronomy quiz. **[Editor's Comment]** You can read the entire article [here](#) [8].

► Across the RASC

Astrophotography and YouTube

by **James MacWilliam**, Sunshine Coast Centre I know many members enjoy astrophotography and sharing their images with other observers. Many produce their own prints, post their images to Web sites like the [Anacortes Telescope Gallery](#) [9] or maintain their own Web sites like [mine](#) [10]. Recently, I've started to see many astronomy-related videos on YouTube and realised this is a great outlet for posting and finding interesting astronomy videos from around the world. I recently received a new Antares 8" Newtonian and, riding on a driven mount, I shot a Moon video with a pocket digital camera and posted it [here](#) [11]. For anyone interested, it's very easy to do and great fun. To begin, just go to YouTube and enter "Astronomy" in the search box. Good Seeing.

► Bulletin Photo of the Month

Moon-Venus Conjunction



Mark Burnell of Winnipeg took this great photo of the conjunction of Venus and the Moon from his driveway. He used a Canon 50D with a Canon 70-200mm f2.8L IS lens set at 200mm, with a Canon 2X II Extender making it 400mm.

What's New in the Sky

Readers are encouraged to check out the **Northern Skies** [12] section of the RASC Web site. Thanks to **Gary Boyle** for keeping us all in the know!

Horns of Venus, or How to be Inferiorly Great

by **Alister Ling** It's pretty cool to see Venus when it is in conjunction with the Sun – best in transit of course, but interesting observing possibilities exist when it is also at its greatest distance from the Sun at conjunction. On March 27, Venus is a full 8° to the north! For starters you can see, with unaided eyes, Venus as both a morning and evening star on the same day. You'll need a good horizon of course. Next, try for it near local noon by hiding the Sun behind the roof of a house and looking just above – binoculars are allowed if your sky does not pass the thumb test, where the sky is blue right up to the edge of the Sun when blocked by your thumb. **WARNING!** Whatever you do, make sure you can't accidentally step back and take the full force of the Sun through unprotected optics!



Murray Paulson captured Venus at an elongation of 8.9° on 2007 August 14

Venus will be a magnitude -4.0 blazing yet razor-thin crescent of $59''$ diameter, and most wonderful of all, the horns extend considerably around the curve of the otherwise invisible disk, perhaps up to 220 degrees. For the horns to extend more, Venus actually has to be *closer* to the Sun. In the Venus section of the RASC *Observer's Handbook* (beginning in the last paragraph of page 218) Murray Paulson shares many good suggestions on how to locate Venus.

It is no coincidence that we are roughly halfway between the great transit pair of 2004 and 2012. If you think of the orbit of Venus like a twirling coin about to lie flat on the table, halfway between the rotating nodes, or crossings is a high point – this is now.

- - **2009 March 28** - National Council Meeting, Toronto
 - **2009 April 2-5** - 100 Hours of Astronomy
 - **2009 May 2** - Astronomy Day
 - **2009 June 19-21** - EfstonScience Star Party, DSP in Gordon's Park
 - **2009 July 16-26** - Total Solar Eclipse Tour, China
 - **2009 July 17-21** - Stargazing Manitoulin, DSP in Gordon's Park
 - **2009 August 13-16** - **RASC General Assembly 2009**
 - **2009 August 13-16** - Saskatchewan Summer Star Party in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park
 - **2009 August 14-18** - Manitoulin Star Party, DSP in Gordon's Park
 - **2009 August 21-23** - Nova East Star Party, DSP in Smileys Provincial Park, Nova Scotia
 - **2009 September 18** - Huronia Star Party



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Visit Us at: www.rasc.ca [14]

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IYA France

Victoria Member's IYA Project in France

by Jack Ruitenbeek, Victoria Centre

Although I officially live on Gabriola Island BC, and am a RASC life member, I spend 11 months a year in France, just outside of Geneva. I have hitched my observing wagon to the local astronomy club, called M51, here in France. Last year, our club obtained permission from the French IYA09 authorities to use their logo to do an on-line astronomy quiz. The original quiz was in French (based on a locally developed board game of the "Snakes and Ladders" type - called "Jonah and the Black Hole") which was then translated into English, German, Italian, Spanish, and Dutch. The quiz itself is maintained on a server at the Lyon Observatory in France. I provided most of the English translation to the quiz as part of my local volunteer effort, and for so doing, they also permitted me (in the translation credits) to list my affiliation as "RASC, Victoria Centre".

The quiz includes 50 multiple-choice questions and is geared to young and old alike. The site is now up and running in 5 of the 6 languages (excl. Spanish) and I invite you to try it, or make reference to it. I would be happy to write a more coherent short piece about it for your website or for an issue of Skynews. (The Spanish version is now being proofread so may be up and running by the time you read this.) The main site is test-astronomie.com.

That site shows the credits and by clicking anywhere in the big logo, you move to the entry site for the quiz (test-astronomie.com/accueil%20AMA09.html), where you choose your language (by clicking on a flag). And off you go...

We found it popular in classrooms while testing the site, and also a challenge in a few languages if you think you have one mastered. Of course this may also be of interest nationally because it is available in 6 different languages, but I do not know who I might contact at RASC. If you have any ideas or if there is a broader effort to have the Centres report nationally then this can potentially be part of that.

Wishing you all well, and clear skies. Contact me [here](#) ^[15].

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Links:

- [1] [mailto:bulletin@rasc.ca?subject=Bulletin Mail](mailto:bulletin@rasc.ca?subject=Bulletin%20Mail)
- [2] <http://www.flickr.com/photos/35122804@N06/>
- [3] <https://www.rasc.ca/news/member-access-now-added-web-portal>
- [4] [mailto:macnaughton@rogers.com?subject=Astronomy Day](mailto:macnaughton@rogers.com?subject=Astronomy%20Day)
- [5] [mailto:opticks@sympatico.ca?subject=Observatory Project](mailto:opticks@sympatico.ca?subject=Observatory%20Project)
- [6] <http://rasc-vancouver.com/>
- [7] <https://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/VicProc.pdf>
- [8] <https://www.rasc.ca/bulletin/2009-03/iya-france>
- [9] <http://www.buytelescopes.com/imagegallery.aspx?g=1>
- [10] <http://www.starchasers.ca>
- [11] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBm2r-NzPtc>
- [12] <https://www.rasc.ca/news/northern-skies>
- [13] [mailto:mempub@rasc.ca?subject=Request for Info](mailto:mempub@rasc.ca?subject=Request%20for%20Info)
- [14] <http://www.rasc.ca>
- [15] [mailto:hjr@island.net?subject=Jonah and the Black Hole](mailto:hjr@island.net?subject=Jonah%20and%20the%20Black%20Hole)