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Ian Levstein, Editor

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A PDF version of the *Bulletin* is available at: <http://www.rasc.ca/im/bulletin/201102.pdf>

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## Welcome, Jalima Simancas, National Office Administrator!

by [Mary Lou Whitehorne](#), RASC President

Please join the Executive Committee in welcoming **Jalima Simancas** to our National Office staff. Jalima (the "J" is pronounced as an "H") is taking on the role of Office Administrator starting on February 14. Jalima will be responsible for all bookkeeping and administration duties, as well as assisting with membership and publications activities for the Society. Jalima has more than twenty years of private sector accounting and management experience working for Xceed Molecular Corporation, Copperfield Advertising, and Soho Management. We are happy to have Jalima join us and we are looking forward to her contributions to the National Office team and to the Society.

Unfortunately, as reported in the January issue of the *Bulletin*, **Jean Wilson** is unable to continue to work at the National Office due to a family emergency. Our best wishes are with Jean.

## Communicating Nationally in the RASC

by [Mary Lou Whitehorne](#), RASC President

Excerpted from the JRASC [February 2011, Volume 105, Number 1]

I am going to make a statement that not everyone may agree with: the national executive team tries very hard to communicate often and openly with our centres and members. This *Bulletin* article is only one of the several ways we try to do this. Other opportunities for communication come through the *Journal*, e-News on our Web page, the email announce list and, most importantly, through discussion papers and reports that are presented to national council. I'll say more about this further along in this column.

Member surveys are communications tools, too. We do them from time to time, as a way of finding out what our members are thinking, in a way that is separate and less random than monitoring all of our many RASC email discussion lists.

Not too long ago, all RASC members with an email address on file, received a survey about the RASC.

About 3200 surveys went out and 900 of you responded with thoughtful care and candor about your Society. A 28% rate of response is remarkably high and very gratifying to the executive team that sent out the survey. Clearly, many of you care very much about the RASC.

The survey results were overwhelmingly positive, and it is gratifying to know that a large majority of our members are happy with the benefits of membership in the RASC, and with the programs, products and processes of the Society.

Enough about the present. What about the future? The survey was also a consultation with you, our members, about our future, and about developing a strategic plan. You responded to the survey with hundreds of narrative replies to many of the survey questions. Your executive committee spent plenty of hours reading and digesting all that input. The wording of our new vision, mission and value statements is a fusion of all the inspiring words and phrases that came from the hearts and minds of those 900 responding members.

With the survey results in hand, the executive committee went to work to build a draft strategic plan. This draft plan was presented first to council and then shared with our centres for consultation and feedback. As of this writing, the consultation process is still ongoing. By the time you actually read this, the executive hopes to have all of the centre input in hand for the purpose of adjusting the draft strategic plan.

The draft strategic plan is not carved in granite. The executive committee hopes our centres will give it due consideration and provide us with constructive feedback. The final strategic plan, when adopted by national council, will give the Society direction, guidance and milestones as the Society moves ahead, engages challenge and makes decisions that will have an impact over the long term. It will provide a foundation for all other planning that we do as an organization. It will help establish priorities, provide focus and clarity, and it will communicate to everyone what is most important to the RASC.

I have received a couple of complaints about the consultation process we have chosen. While it would be nice to involve everyone in every decision at every level, I'm sure all of you reading this will agree that full involvement from everyone from the very beginning would be an impossible process to manage successfully. I trust our members to agree that we have made a good start. I believe that through the consultation process in place that everyone will have adequate opportunity to contribute to the final strategic plan.

As mentioned in my first paragraph, there is much relevant background information to be found in the discussion papers and reports made to council from the last year or so. These are posted on the members-only section of the Web site [here](#).

I cannot stress enough that one of the most important links in communication between national council and our centres, is/are the national council representative(s) from each centre. These key people are essentially two-way information conduits, carrying information from the centre to national council, and vice versa. This is a hugely important role! More information about the roles and responsibilities of national council reps can be found on the members-only section of the Web site [here](#).

For those of you who want even more background and context for what goes on in the Society, how things are done, and how decisions are made, there is plenty of interest in the [By-Laws](#) and the [RASC Manual](#). These are also posted on the members-only section of the Web site.

Happy reading, and happy communicating, everyone.

Quo Ducit Urania!

## Outreach Reporting System

by [Ron Macnaughton](#), Chair, RASC Education Committee

The event reporting form is up and running. Just click [here](#).

As of January 22, 38 events were reported with 6647 guests, 251 volunteers, and 1760 Star Finders handed out. In discussions about providing Star Finders to centres, it was felt fair to keep providing them to centres which report that they are being given out. So far only 5 centres have reported events. I look forward to getting more reports.

I also looked at the events occurring since New Years Day. We've already had 16 events, 4805 guests, 61 volunteers, and 821 Star Finders handed out. Many centres lump a number of events into 1 entry. That's OK. I read the general descriptions. I particularly like the session the Okanagan centre ran on how to use telescopes. That was just after many received a special present from Santa.

## Top Astronomy stories of 2010

by [Roland Dechesne](#), Membership and Promotion Committee

The Membership and Promotion Committee (MAP) is proud to reveal the top astronomical/science stories of 2010 as voted by you, the membership, based on the short list of top stories presented in last month's *Bulletin*. As you can see, the top three stories turned out to be ones that fundamentally change how we view or manipulate the Universe and its physical laws. The middle of the list is biased towards stories involving Solar system robotic exploration and, finally, three amateur observing-type stories make the top-ten cut as well.

**Editor's Note:** The list of winning stories can be found [here](#).

## Ralph B. Baldwin (1912-2010)

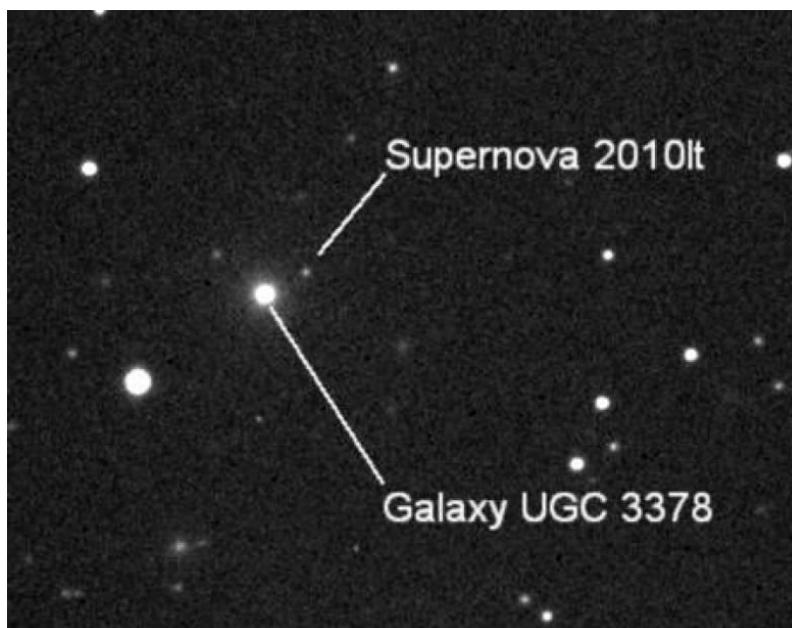
Ralph Baldwin was a native of Michigan and a graduate of the University of Michigan. Due to a position as a part-time planetarium lecturer, he developed an interest in lunar topography. During the 1940s, he formulated the principles of current lunar geology: that lunar craters are the result of impact events, not volcanism; that the lack of active lunar erosion means that the craters are very old; that Earth should have been bombarded in the same way; and that there should be impact structures, large and small, still preserved on Earth. His first book "The Face of the Moon" (1949) was the generating force behind modern research in both terrestrial impact craters and lunar surface features. Seldom has a single book had such far-reaching consequences in the progress of science. Although the scientific community was slow to show interest in his ideas, today Baldwin is regarded with awe because he got so much so right so early!

Dr. Baldwin was an Honorary Member of the RASC.

## Gray<sup>2</sup>/Lane Supernova Discovered

Ten-year-old **Kathryn Aurora Gray** of Fredericton, NB, under the watch of astronomers **Paul Gray** and **David Lane**, are pleased to report the discovery of a magnitude 17 supernova in galaxy UGC 3378 in the constellation of Camelopardalis, as reported on IAU Electronic Telegram 2618. The galaxy was imaged on New Year's Eve 2010, and the supernova was discovered on 2011 January 2 by Kathryn and her father, Paul. Kathryn is the youngest person ever to have made such a discovery.

The discovery was verified by Illinois-based astronomer **Brian Tieman** and Arizona-based Canadian astronomer **Jack Newton**. It was then reported to the International Astronomical Union's Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams.



This is Dave's fourth supernova discovery, Paul's seventh, and Kathryn's first!

Details about the discovery, and the observatory from which it was made, can be found [here](#), complete with a before/after animation.

Myriad accolades poured in, and the discovery was picked up by both national and international news agencies (with various mistakes), including the [Vancouver Sun](#), [CBC](#), [CTV](#) (with video), the [BBC](#), [NPR](#) (audio, scroll down), and online at [Digital Journal](#)... just to name a few.

## Happy 50th, Kingston Centre



On January 19, Kingston Centre celebrated its 50th Anniversary!

## ► Bulletin Photo of the Month

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### Werner X



This photo of the Werner X was taken by [Tenho Tuomi](#), Saskatoon Centre, at -23C!

The photo was taken with a Rebel XT through a 12" Newtonian. The picture is cropped to 1/3 size. You never know what you'll see when working on the Isabel Williamson Lunar Observing Program.

## ► The Sky this Month

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### 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

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- **2011 February** - nothing reported
- **2011 March 26** - National Council meeting (NC111), Toronto
- **2011 April** - [Global Astronomy Month](#)
- **2011 June 30-July 4** - [2011 General Assembly](#), Winnipeg
- **2011 July 1-4** - [Stargazing Manitoulin](#), Gordon's Park Dark-Sky Preserve
- **2011 August 5-8** - [Manitoulin Star Party](#), Gordon's Park Dark-Sky Preserve



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