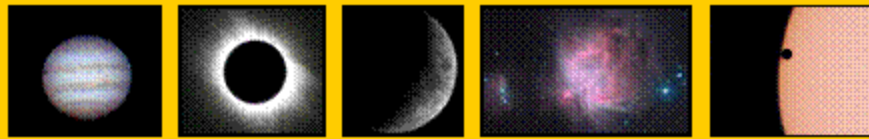


BULLETIN



OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

February 2012 - Volume 7, Number 2

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](#).

► Editor's Notebook

by Ian Levstein

In Memoriam

With regret, we note the recent passing of [Patsy Tombaugh](#), widow of Clyde Tombaugh; and [Norman Edmund](#), a pioneer of modern optics.

► 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.

Interested? Here's how to find out more:

1. Check out the Edmonton Centre [Web site](#) for complete information on the GA and to plan your visit. A new promo video is also available.
2. If you're ready to register, then go [here](#) to complete your on-line registration - you can pay by Visa, MasterCard or cheque.
3. If you want to participate in a paper, poster, or other session, then go [here](#) and submit your proposal for consideration.

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

Globe at Night Project

by [Robert Dick](#), Chair, Light-Pollution Committee

For those interested in contributing to the bi-annual Globe at Night Project, visit their [Web site](#) for more information and supporting star maps.

The benefit of this project is that it is expected to be a long-term compilation of observational data on the skies above major cities and rural areas.

So if you have contributed in the past, please keep on contributing.

Wonderful News for Transit Outreach - Eclipse Glasses Available

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



The Dunlap Institute (DI) is partnering with RASC, CASCA, and FAAQ on a national Transit of Venus outreach initiative. The DI is funding 100% of the purchase of 40,000 pairs of eclipse/ transit glasses for the May 20 partial eclipse and the June 5 Transit of Venus. These are for distribution to as many public observing events across Canada as we can collectively manage to make happen.

In return for this gift, RASC and FAAQ will bulk distribute and hand out the viewers at public events.

The official logo and URL of each organization will be placed on the side arms of the eclipse viewers. Basic safety information will be printed on the inside of the side arms, in English and French.

A bilingual handout is now being prepared for distribution with the glasses.

Ideas for Activities during Transit Public Events

I am working on a 20 minute PowerPoint presentation for the March 7 Toronto Centre meeting on ideas for activities during public outreach events. I intend to discuss:

- safety at events
- this excellent [Web site](#) with timing information
- how to connect a camera from a solar scope into a computer monitor so many people can safely watch at the same time
- why Transits of Venus are so rare, mentioning tilted orbits and nodes
- how timing transits from northern and southern locations allowed the size of the Earth's orbit to be calculated centuries ago to within about 2% of the modern value
- the rich history of expeditions to observe transits and how they were an early example of international scientific cooperation
- how exoplanets, even of the size of Earth, are being detected from transits of other stars by the Kepler and COROT spacecraft
- how eventually biosignatures such as oxygen might be detected in atmospheres of planets around other stars
- other ideas I might learn about – suggestions appreciated

This PowerPoint file will be posted on the RASC Web site, so any Centre will be able to use it if desired.

Transit of Venus Project

by [Stephen Bedingfield](#), RASC Unattached Member

We, **Stephen** and **Lynn Bedingfield**, are putting together an informal Transit of Venus Project for the Yellowknife area and are seeking expressions of interest from serious observers who will travel to Yellowknife to observe the Transit. We are interested in serving as hosts so your stay will be more enjoyable in our fair city.

If seriously interested in seeing the Transit from Yellowknife, please email us [here](#).

This is a non-commercial service to our fellow observers, and we assume no liability whatsoever with regards to this project.

Project Description

- To observe the 2012 Transit of Venus (Tuesday, 2012 June 5) from a suitable observing site in the Yellowknife area, Northwest Territories.
- In the 2012 *Observer's Handbook* and on his Web site, **Jay Anderson** states, "To see the entire transit, travel to Canada's northern regions is required. Yellowknife offers the most promising cloud and sunshine statistics of any northern site, Europe or North America, with sunshine hours averaging 64 percent of the maximum – and you can drive there."
- Obtaining optimal weather predictions and having the capability to relocate as necessary are critical to this project. Several prime observing sites have been scouted and are being considered.
- To host visiting amateur astronomers to Yellowknife, and to facilitate their visit.
- Should there be a great demand, we may need to limit the number of participants we can serve.

Toronto Transit News

by [Denis Grey](#), Toronto Centre

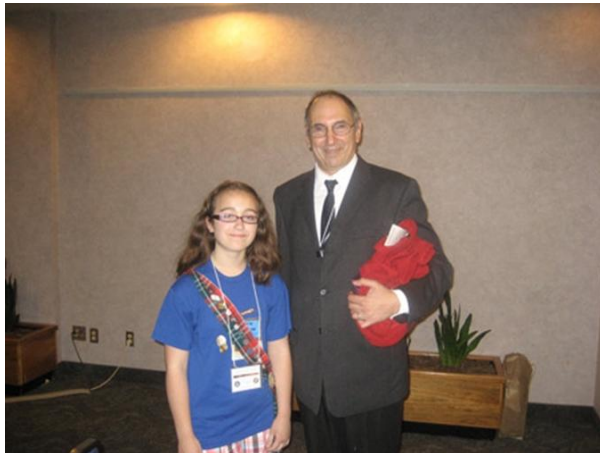
RASC Toronto is planning a Transit of Venus trip to Hawaii. See [here](#) for details.

Top 10 Canadian Astronomy Stories of 2011

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

Canada's top 10 astronomy stories of 2011 have been posted to the RASC [Web site](#).

How David Levy (Almost) Ate My Birthday Cake



Here's an [article](#) written by RASC Youth Member **Holly Ayles** regarding her multiple "bumping intos" with **David Levy**... from the 2010 GA, but published in a youth publication aimed at youth.

First RASC Astrosketchers' Contest!

by [Randall Rosenfeld](#), RASC Archivist

When you observe, do you add drawings to your logbooks? Is sketching at the eyepiece your favourite way of recording what you see? Do you draw planets, comets, asterisms, star clusters, galaxies, and nebulae while your astrograph, dedicated CCD and autoguider are busy at work?

Why not enter your work in the first RASC Astrosketchers' contest, sponsored by the RASC Astrosketchers group? The winning entry will go online at [here](#), appear in the *Journal*, and the winner will receive a valuable mystery prize – relevant to astrosketching!

Contest rules:

- 1) participation is open to all list members (except for the RASC Archivist who is administrating the contest);
- 2) entries must be based on one or more observing sessions with the observer/artist at the actual eyepiece, or using her/his naked-eye if an unaided observation;
- 3) to be eligible, the image(s) must be made anytime from 2011 December 1 to 2012 March 1;
- 4) only entries executed in manual drawing media (e.g., not drawn with a stylus on a digital tablet) will be considered this time around (we may open it up for subsequent contests);
- 5) specifications of the instrumentation used, and circumstances of the observation(s) should accompany the entries, with an optional commentary or story if you have one (e.g., "skunk came by, looked at my Tak, laughed at my plössl, made a rude tail gesture at my drawing, and waddled off") - but the commentary/story is not mandatory;
- 6) list members can submit more than one entry;
- 7) entries should be posted to the list as JPG attachments to messages, at 300 dpi and not exceeding 1 MB;
- 8) judging will be done by list members - the entry with the most votes from list members, wins!

After the close of the contest 2012 March 1 at 24:00, the contest administrator will send a message with the images, or links to the images, and the voting will take place from then till 2012 March 18, after which the winning entry will be announced.

Send your entries [here](#) and include the subject of your entry.

Good luck!

► Across the RASC

Montreal Centre Raising New Observatory

by [Andrew Fazekas](#), Director of Communications and Chair of Observatory Committee, Montreal Centre



The Montreal observatory construction crew, from left to right: **Andrew Fazekas**, **Ray Latulipe**, **Mark Milas**, **Victor Bush**, **Richard Latulipe**, **Ron Baran**, **Lloyd Coffin**, **Gary Smith**
Photo Credit: **Ray Latulipe**, Montreal Centre

After more than a decade of negotiating, planning and fundraising, the Montreal Centre is nearing completion of the construction phase of their new observatory located at the far western tip of the island of Montreal. Moving from their historic downtown location on the side of Mount Royal five years ago because of poor access and light pollution, the Centre now operates within a 247-hectare reserve called Morgan Arboretum, owned by McGill University. Most members-only and public activities are held there.

RASC Montreal Centre has hosted public star parties and lectures at the arboretum's Conservation Centre and associated grass field for nearly 20 years. So when it came time to close the IK Williamson observatory within the city centre, the arboretum, as one of the darkest observing sites on the island, was the natural choice as the new home of the Centre's observatory.

In the last few years the project finally got wings, thanks, in part, to financial support from various science faculties at McGill and nearly a dozen Quebec government ministers.

As of the end of November, the observatory building - a 10 foot Prodome from Technical Innovations in Maryland, USA - had been raised, and winter months are being used to install the telescope and all the wiring. At the heart of the new facility will be a Meade 14" RCX400 GoTo scope generously donated by former Montrealer and Honorary President of the Centre, **David Levy**.

As the only public-access observatory on the island, the Centre, together with its McGill partners, are working towards creating a rich education program for both visiting school groups and the community at large.

Official public first light is expected to occur in late Spring 2012.

You can check out a short video of some of the observatory construction [here](#).

► Bulletin Photo of the Month

Sundogs

by [James Edgar](#), Regina Centre



James Edgar took this terrific photo on 2012 January 11 at 10:30 CST from a farmyard in Tonkin, Saskatchewan. He used a: Canon Powershot S100 (brand new!), f/6.3, 1/1250 sec, ISO 160.

Moon Pillar Montage

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



BigWetNose got me out of bed around 6:15 a.m., and I noticed the Moon peeking out of the clouds on the horizon. I finally got my eyes pried open enough to get dressed, grab my camera gear, and head out to the cemetery out back. **SleepyMe** needs

to remember to bring the camera bag with lenses as the wide-angle wasn't picking up a close enough shot, so I ran back in and grabbed another lens. By this time the Moon was setting and sending up a lovely pillar of light. I took several shots as the Moon set. The pillar of light was visible even after the Moon had set.

► 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 February** - Nothing reported
- **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 28** - Astronomy Day
- **2012 May 20** - Partial Solar Eclipse visible from Western Canada
- **2012 June 5** - Transit of Venus



The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

203 – 4920 Dundas St W, Toronto ON M9A 1B7 CANADA

Tel: (416) 924-7973, Fax: (416) 924-2911

Member Service: nationaloffice@rasc.ca

Visit Us at: www.rasc.ca

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