



The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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SkyNews, Meet RASC News!

This is the return of the National Newsletter that ran from February 1970 until it transformed into the Bulletin some years later. The Bulletin still continues as it has for well over 100 editions. Since the RASC acquired *SkyNews* magazine last year, we have decided to bring back the National Newsletter to put a bit of RASC news within the pages of *SkyNews*.

This National Newsletter is a forum for all members of the RASC to contribute newsworthy items. We are looking for brief and relevant articles regarding RASC activities and events (in English or French). Have you had any public star parties or built an observatory for your Centre? Please let us know. Send your pictures and articles to newsletter@rasc.ca.

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CONTACT US

We invite all Centres to contribute articles about their latest activities. Have you had any public star parties, award ceremonies, special events or observatory activities? Photos are welcome. Please send articles and pictures to newsletter@rasc.ca.

GLOBULAR CLUSTER M2 Located in the constellation Aquarius, M2 is a bright globular cluster. This image was acquired using an SBIG STL-11000M camera, Baader LRGB filters and a 10-inch f/6.8 ASA astrograph mounted on a Paramount MX. Shot from my SkyShed in Guelph, Ontario.

—Ron Brecher, Kitchener-Waterloo Centre

 PULL OUT NEWSLETTER TO VIEW SKYNEWS STAR CHART



RASC NEWSLETTER



President's Message

The last week of June 2014 in Victoria was eventful, at least for me, because it began what I thought would be a year of being the President of a royal society, the RASC. What an honour! I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed working with the fine people who make up this Society. Presidents often try to

visit each Centre during their term in office, but it borders on being an impossible task. Nonetheless, I have managed to visit quite a few. For those I've missed, I have this message: I'll just have to try harder. What I've come away with from the Centres I have managed to visit is that we have wonderful people in this vast country doing great things to spread the word far and wide about astronomy. Good stuff!

Much to my surprise, I was elected to a second term as President in Halifax in June 2015. As I write this, I reflect on all the good things—our Society has achieved in the past few months. While we felt saddled with having to go through a government-mandated change of governance, I believe we are stronger and more flexible for it. Going through the motions was trying, but we have come out of that with a Society and a Board of Directors that can adapt rapidly to change, that can quickly institute improvements and that can respond to opportunities. The purchase last year of *SkyNews* magazine is a case in point. And this newsletter is another one. With a strong team at the Society office, led by our Executive Director Randy Attwood, backed by a dedicated group on the Board, we are poised to go on to even bigger and better things. Clear skies!

—James Edgar, President, RASC

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

At the General Assembly in London, a working group composed of volunteers was formed, some from the Board of Directors and some from the National Council.

The purpose of this process is to develop a new Strategic Plan and direction for the Society, and from that will flow a Fundraising Strategic Plan.

The Board will meet next in Calgary (makes sense now with three Board members there) in the early days of September.

New RASC Astrophotography Certificates

For many years, the RASC has recognized achievements for visual observing among our astronomers. Earlier this year, certificates were made available for excellence in astrophotography. The certificates cover three areas: wide-field, solar system and deep-sky photography.

The purpose of the wide-field certificate is to introduce beginners to different types of wide-field or tripod photography. Fifteen pictures from a list of suggested astronomical objects or events are required for the certificate. Pictures are judged on how closely they capture a scene the way it looks to the human eye, either naked eye or through low-power binoculars. The balance between the astronomical object(s) and the foreground scenery is also taken into account.

The purpose of the solar system certificate is to teach basic techniques of photographing the Moon and planets, with enough detail to show certain features in each. Pictures are judged on tracking, focusing, stacking and image processing.

The purpose of the deep-sky certificate is to teach basic techniques of photographing deep-sky objects. Pictures are judged on tracking and focusing, but with a greater emphasis on proper exposures, noise reduction and image processing.

—Tenho Tuomi
Astroimaging Committee Chair



Visits to Kitt Peak, below, and the VLA site, left, are planned for this once-in-a-lifetime excursion.
Photos: NRAO (left), NOAO (below)



Arizona Astronomy Tour Scheduled for September 2016

After a successful trip to astronomy and space exploration sites in southern California last November, we are planning a five-day trip to Arizona in September to visit the following amazing astronomy sites: Kitt Peak National Observatory, Mt. Lemmon SkyCenter, Lowell Observatory and the Arizona Meteor Crater, with sightseeing in Sedona and Canyon de Chelly. Please check out our website (www.rasc.ca/rasc-tours).

If you are interested in this tour and want more information, please contact Executive Director Randy Attwood at the Society office (execdir@rasc.ca).

—Randy Attwood, Executive Director, RASC

Special Projects Program

Society funds are available for projects that further the RASC mandate and are carried out by individual members or groups of members. Such projects may include but are not restricted to: research projects (not connected with any academic institution); brochures or handouts; booklets; display materials; websites; workshops; classes; school visits; special lectures; General Assembly travel for members who have had a paper accepted for presentation; and support, such as materials or field trips, for elementary or secondary school students.

Projects must be completed within one year of the date of the grant. In addition to the grant and as a requirement of the program, successful applicants may be asked, if appropriate, to prepare and deliver public presentations of their results or otherwise report on their activities to their home Centres and be willing to travel to any other Centres that may be interested in sponsoring them under the Public Speaker Program.

For more information, see www.rasc.ca/special-projects-program.

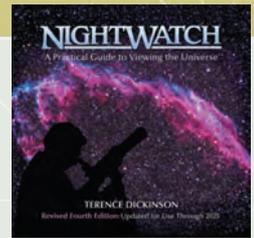
—Barbara Wright, Administrative Trustee

NightWatch Is Now Available

Revised fourth edition;
updated for use through 2025

Written by Canadian astronomy writer and RASC member Terence Dickinson, this classic title features a section of star charts that are cherished by backyard astronomers everywhere. *NightWatch* has been acclaimed as the best general-interest introduction to astronomy. This hardcover edition includes star charts for use in the southern hemisphere. There are also dozens of new photographs throughout the book that show the latest thrilling discoveries made by current space observatories and probes.

—R.A.



2017 Eclipse Bulletin

A new guide to the 2017 total solar eclipse is available through our eStore. Written by Fred Espenak and Winnipeg Centre member Jay Anderson, this is an excellent preview to a special event: a total solar eclipse visible in the continental United States. On Monday, August 21, 2017, a total eclipse of the Sun will be visible from the contiguous United States for the first time since 1979. The track of the Moon's umbral shadow begins in the Pacific Ocean and crosses from west to east, through Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. The *Eclipse Bulletin* is the ultimate guide to this highly anticipated event.

—R.A.



RASC NEWSLETTER

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RASC Centre Review

A brief review of some of our Centre websites offered the following news:

- ▶ St. John's is having its 50-year anniversary. Congratulations!
- ▶ Halifax is hosting the Nova East 2016 Star Party, August 26-28.
- ▶ The Ottawa Centre is making plans for the 2017 General Assembly.
- ▶ The Toronto Centre is very active, with lots of news and events.
- ▶ Mississauga is celebrating its 10th anniversary.
- ▶ Congratulations to the London Centre for hosting the 2016 General Assembly and AstroCATS.
- ▶ Saskatoon is hosting the 2016 Saskatchewan Summer Star Party, August 3-7.



M81, BODES GALAXY This 10-hour image was taken with an 11-inch EdgeHD Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope and a QSI 583wsg CCD camera.

—Dan Meek, Calgary Centre