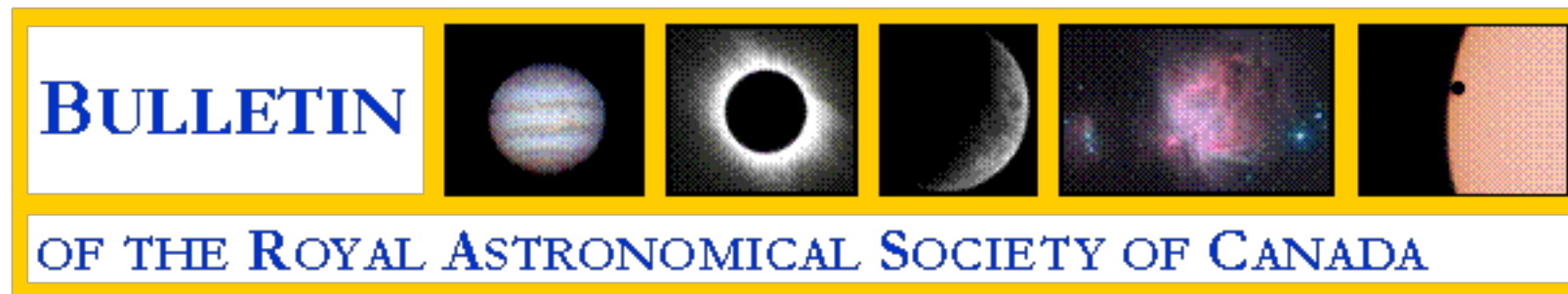


2010-05



May 2010 - Volume 5, Number 5

Ian Levstein, Editor

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

► [News @ RASC.ca](#)

Public Speaker Programme

by **James Edgar**, RASC National Secretary

Just a quick reminder that the RASC's Public Speaker Programme is now up and running. More information, including procedures and application forms can be found on the RASC's [Web site](#) [2]. A subsequent email announcing applications, will come out in mid-June for the next round.

Submit Your Ideas for the 2011 *Observer's Handbook* Challenge

by **Alister Ling**

Share with us a wonderful visual observing experience you've had (or want to have!) that might inspire hundreds of skygazers to try as well. Aim for an event or object that will leave observers thinking "that would be cool!". It can require a telescope or be visible to the unaided eye, just as long as it's not hopelessly beyond the reach of most amateur astronomers. Will you play a role in helping fellow observers achieve a personal best, and enjoy an experience out of the ordinary?

Please communicate this to your Centre members, and send ideas to [Alister Ling](#) [3] or [Pat Kelly](#) [4].

Two Canadians Honoured by ASP

The team responsible for the development and maintenance of the Clear Sky Chart has been honoured by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific [5].

The Amateur Achievement Award recognizes significant observational or technical contributions by an amateur astronomer. This year's recipient is Allan Rahill on behalf of the Clear Sky Chart team comprised of Rahill and Attila Danko. Rahill, a meteorologist with the Canadian Meteorological Centre (CMC), adapted CMC forecast products for the purpose of planning observing sessions with highly accurate high resolution point forecasts of cloud cover, transparency, seeing, darkness, wind, temperature and humidity over North and Central America. Danko developed the web page that presents these forecasts. The universal acclaim received by the Clear Sky Charts in both the amateur and professional astronomy communities wins the team the Amateur Achievement prize for 2010.

2011 Observer's Calendar - Call for Images

by **Dave Lane**, Editor, *Observer's Calendar*

Astronomical images of all types are invited for consideration for publication in the 2011 *Observer's Calendar* including: deep sky, solar system, and dramatic astronomically themed landscapes. Images can be prime focus, piggyback, eyepiece projection, or fixed tripod; and recorded on a digital/CCD camera, film, or webcam. Submitted images must be of sufficient quality and resolution to reproduce well at 10" x 12.5" and must be compatible with the "landscape" orientation of the calendar images. Generally, this will mean a resolution of at least 1200 pixels tall. We will also consider making a quilt or mosaic of lunar/planetary webcam captured images (so as not to over magnify an individual image for publication).

If you already have a gallery of images on your Web site, send me the link, but also direct me to your favourites. Both well-known and obscure objects are published in the calendar, so to avoid having the same objects used too often, I will be screening for those that may have appeared in recent years.

Please email submissions to me here [6]. While I have a bottomless email box, it's best to send me jpegs first. If your image is selected, I will request a full resolution tiff version. The deadline for submissions is 2010 May 31. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Help Revamp the RASC Line of Promo Items

by **R. A. Rosenfeld**, Unattached Member, and **Kevin Kell**, Kingston Centre

Have you spotted some clever astronomy gadget you'd love to see with the RASC name, seal, or word mark? Are there astronomically-themed promotional items other organizations are marketing that you think the RASC is missing out on? Is there an item of apparel or a clothing accessory that would look smashing, were it but available with the RASC insignia? Have you thought of a device you and others

could use that hasn't been marketed to astronomers, has marketing potential, and would enhance the RASC line of merchandise?

If so, the Membership and Promotions Committee (MAP) would like to hear from you. MAP will gladly entertain any good ideas and reasonable suggestions, will cost them out, and see if they're doable in reasonable runs balancing quality against cost. We can't promise to put every suggestion into practice, but we're grateful for all received. If you've already done the sourcing for your idea, and worked out some of the practicalities, all the better.

Ideas already received are:

- - red LEDs with different mounting options, and variable brightness levels
 - pens and automatic pencils, possibly incorporating red LEDs
 - waist pack fitted to accommodate eyepieces and observing accessories
 - USB keys
 - quality observing logs & sketchpads (possibly waterproofed?)
 - micro-fibre sacks giving added protection for eyepieces and other optics, which can fit into mfg-supplied cases
 - windbreaker with good night-use visibility which could be worn at public events (star parties) to help identify RASC volunteers

Send your suggestions [here](#) [7].

Hesser Wins CASCA Award

The CASCA Board announced that the very first "CASCA Executive Award for Outstanding Service" will be presented to **Dr. James Hesser** of the Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics, in recognition of his long and effective service to the astronomical community, and for his exceptional leadership and contributions to the International Year of Astronomy 2009.

This award is presented to an individual who, throughout their career, has made sustained contributions in service (eg. to innovations in education, outreach, support of research facilities or tools used by others) that have strengthened the Canadian astronomical community and enhanced its impact regionally, nationally and/or internationally. The award includes a certificate and a cash prize of \$1000. The inaugural award will be presented to Dr. Hesser at the CASCA Annual General Meeting, in Halifax this month.

► [Across the RASC](#)

Aurora



by **Kevin Kell**, Kingston Centre Popped outside (thanks Kim!), and finally my dim old eyes saw some aurora. So we fired up the Canon on a tripod and got a series of 64 second exposures. Not bad... first aurora in many years!

Leo Enright Memorial Prize for Astronomy and Related Sciences

by **Susan Gagnon**, President, Kingston Centre 2010 marks the first year for the awarding of the newly-renamed Leo Enright Memorial Prize for Astronomy and Related Sciences at the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Science Fair. As many of you know, Leo passed away in August 2009. The local Executive agreed this would be a suitable tribute to his memory. Leo was a teacher and very keen on public outreach, participating in many school visits in the Sharbot Lake area over the years. In the past, there were 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners - this year, we limited the award to a single prize which included \$70 and a copy of the BOG. The winning prize went to a display on eclipses titled 'Moon Shadow' by **Robin Pianosi** from Odessa Public School. I think Leo would have been pleased with the project topic and its presentation.

Vancouver's SuperNova Project Complete

by **Ron Jerome**, Vancouver Centre Vancouver Centre produced and has on its [Web site](#) [8], the final two episodes of SuperNova, our IYA project. [SUPERnova Episode 5](#) [9] – “Cosmology, Deep Sky Observing & Aquila.” Cosmologist, Levon Pogolian, explains the Cosmic Microwave Background and one of the great mysteries of the universe – Dark Matter. Lee Johnson gives us a tour of distant galaxies. And Discovery takes flight through the Milky Way with Aquila. [SUPERnova Episode 6](#) [9] – “Imaging & Cassiopeia.” Astronomer, Christian Marois, shows us the exo-planet system he and his team discovered and explains his technique for imaging exo-planets. Amateur astrophotographer, Chris Vondruska, shows us that astroimaging is an every-astronomer hobby. And Discovery takes us on a tour through one of the richest parts of the sky in Cassiopeia. These are available for educational purposes, to any Centre that can use them.

Venus & Mercury



by **Rick Stankiewicz**,
Unattached Member

On April 4th the skies were finally clear after sunset for the close 3 degree conjunction of our Solar System's two innermost planets to the Sun. Venus was shining brightly (mag. -4.0), but Mercury was no wilting lily (mag. -0.7), as the attached image attests. For the previous evenings, the Western horizon had been obscured by cloud, but in time for the best evening of all, it was clear! From about 8:37 - 9:00 pm, I shot the

impressive pairing from my backyard near Keene, south of Peterborough, Ontario. Mercury did not reach its greatest elongation from the Sun until April 8th, but the skies could not have been more cooperative that day, and it was almost as high above the horizon as Venus.

The image of the White Pine tree (*Pinus strobus*) appears to be reaching with outstretched arms and presenting the two planets in all their glory, in the twilight sky. The image was shot with a tripod mounted Canon 400D camera and Sigma 70 to 300 mm lens, ISO 400. Settings ranged from 2.5 to 4 sec., $f/4.0$, and 92 to 119 mm.

► The Sky this Month

What's New in the Sky

Members are encouraged to check out the **Northern Skies** ^[10] section of the RASC Web site. Thanks to **Gary Boyle** for keeping us all in the know.

► Dates to Remember

- ○ **2010 May 31** - Deadline for *Observer's Calendar* submissions

- **2010 July 1** - National Council Meeting, Fredericton, NB
- **2010 July 1-4** - **RASC General Assembly 2010 and General Meeting** [11], Fredericton, NB
- **2010 July 9-11** - Star-B-Q [12], Calgary, AB
- **2010 July 9-12** - Stargazing Manitoulin [13], Gordon's Park DSP, Manitoulin Island
- **2010 August 6-9** - Manitoulin Star Party [14], Gordon's Park DSP, Manitoulin Island
- **2010 August 12-15** - Saskatchewan Summer Star Party [15], Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, SK
- **2010 August 13-15** - Butter Pot Star Party [16], St. John's, NL
- **2010 August 13-15** - RASCals Star Party [17], Metchosin, BC
- **2010 September 3-6** - Nova East [18], Smileys Provincial Park, NS



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- [3] [mailto:aling@telus.net?subject=Observer's Challenge](mailto:aling@telus.net?subject=Observer's%20Challenge)
- [4] [mailto:patrick.kelly@dal.ca?subject=Observer's Challenge](mailto:patrick.kelly@dal.ca?subject=Observer's%20Challenge)
- [5] <http://www.astrosociety.org/membership/awards/10winnerspr.html>
- [6] [mailto:dlane@ap.stmarys.ca?subject=Observer's Calendar](mailto:dlane@ap.stmarys.ca?subject=Observer's%20Calendar)
- [7] [mailto:map20008@rasc.ca?subject=RASC Promo Items](mailto:map20008@rasc.ca?subject=RASC%20Promo%20Items)
- [8] <http://rasc-vancouver.com/>
- [9] <http://rasc-vancouver.com/blog/2011/01/11/supernova-episodes-1-6/>
- [10] <https://www.rasc.ca/news/northern-skies>
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