



August 2018 - Volume 13, Number 8

We welcome your comments on the *Bulletin*.
Email them to the Editor, David Garner at
bulletin@rasc.ca

➤ [News @ RASC.ca](#)

News from the Society Office

by [Randy Attwood](#), RASC Executive Director

August Holiday- Office Hours

Please note: the RASC Society Office will be closed on Monday, August 6 (Civic Holiday). Have a safe holiday and clear skies!



NEW Item: **RASC Observer's Calendar 2019**

A beautiful calendar showcasing RASC members' astro-images with information on what's up in the sky tonight. A perfect gift for the beginner and a must-have for the experienced observer. [Now available for pre-order!](#)

Our New Board of Directors and Executive

by [Chris Gainor](#), RASC President

The 2018 General Assembly put on by the Calgary Centre is now in the books as an outstanding success, starting with a First Nations welcome under dramatic skies framed by the Rocky Mountains at the University of Calgary's Rothney Astrophysical Observatory, and ending with a most enjoyable banquet.

In between we were welcomed by Canadian astronaut and U of C Chancellor Bob Thirsk and three outstanding featured speakers — Plaskett Medalist Dr. Fereshteh Rajabi, Helen Sawyer Hogg lecturer Emily Lakdawalla, and banquet speaker Dr. Tanya N. Harrison. Alan Dyer led a great astrophotography workshop, and attendees also enjoyed a fascinating symposium on the 150 years of the RASC. Participants enjoyed a delicious Stampede Breakfast and witnessed the unveiling of two stamps from Canada Post honouring the RASC and astronomy. I thank GA Chair Robyn Foret, Centre President Steve Donaldson and the members of the Calgary Centre who made the GA such a success - a fit celebration of the Sesquicentennial of the RASC and the 60th anniversary of the Calgary Centre.

There was also a great deal of work done at this GA, which will be also be remembered for a meeting of National Council where representatives of RASC Centres from across the country discussed how to make Council a more effective body. Eric Briggs of the Toronto Centre was elected as the new co-chair of National Council (the National President is the other co-chair) and Patrick Kelly of the Halifax Centre is the new Recorder. Council also agreed to a framework to make sure that Council acts as an effective voice for the Centres, and Council reps will work to implement this plan at National Council meetings this fall.

A new Board of Directors and a new Executive took office at the GA:

- Dr. Chris Gainor (Victoria), President
- Robyn Foret (Calgary), 1st Vice-President
- Charles Ennis (Sunshine Coast), 2nd Vice-President

- Catherine Carr (Toronto), Treasurer
- Roger Nelson (Calgary), National Secretary
- Heather Laird (Calgary), Director
- Colin Haig (Hamilton), Director, Past President
- Dr. Rob Thacker (Halifax), Director
- Michael Watson (Unattached), Director
- Randy Attwood (Mississauga), Executive Director

The Board has a lot of work ahead of it, including implementing our strategic plan and dealing with a challenging financial situation. We will also be working on our RASC Robotic Telescope Project.

After a great GA, we are already looking forward to the 2019 GA, which will take place in Toronto the weekend of June 14 to 16. It will be a joint meeting with the American Association of Variable Star Observers.

Photos from the 2018 GA in Calgary

by [Chris Gainor](#), RASC President



First Nations dancers perform at the GA Opening Night event at Rothney Astrophysical Observatory.



GA attendees enjoyed a Stampede Breakfast of pancakes and sausages in the End Zone of McMahon Stadium, home of the Calgary Stampeders.

Our New Honorary President

by **Chris Gainor**, RASC President

I am delighted to announce that Dr. Douglas P. Hube of the Edmonton Centre is the new Honorary President of the RASC.

Dr. Hube joined the RASC as a student in 1960 and has been active member ever since. He has served as President of the Edmonton Centre and was Society President from 1992 to 1994. He won the RASC Service Award in 1982.

He grew up in St. Catharines, Ontario, and studied astronomy at the University of Toronto, where he met his wife Joan.

Since joining the faculty at the University of Alberta in 1969, Dr. Hube has mentored generations of astronomy students and RASC members, including the undersigned. He also has a strong record as a researcher, administrator and promoter of astronomy. He has written many articles in RASC publications and scientific journals. Doug and Joan Hube continue to take active part in RASC activities, including the recent GA in Calgary.

Dr. Hube succeeds Dr. John Percy of Toronto as Honorary President, and his term runs for four years until the GA in 2022.

Chris Gainor, Ph.D.
President, Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

Observing News

by [Dave Chapman](#), Chair, Observing Committee

In July of 2018, RASC awarded the following observing certificate: Explore the Moon—Binocular to Shane Grassing (Unattached, Pilot Butte, Saskatchewan). In the first 7 months of this 150th Anniversary year, RASC has awarded 16 observing certificates—this is already two more than the total issued in 2017. Keep them coming!

This year, the Observing Committee has refreshed the layout of the *Explore the Universe* observing program, thanks to the efforts of Blake Nancarrow. **Don't worry, the objectives remain the same!** If you are working on the program, you may want to print out a fresh copy for yourself. We have been fielding a lot of questions on the program that are addressed in the new layout, particularly in reference to double stars.

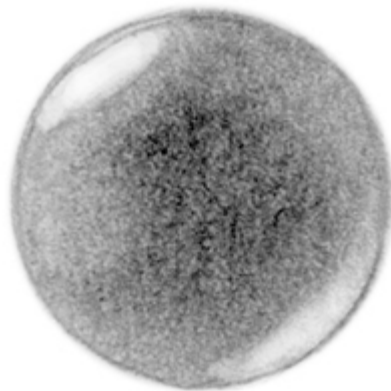
We are also excited to announce a new French translation, *Explorer l'Univers*, the first in 15 years. Now the French version is totally in line with the English version, for those who prefer to work in that language. *Merci bien* to Pierre Paquette for that volunteer work! Tell your francophone friends.

For those following this summer's close Mars opposition, a new page has been added to the Special Projects section of the RASC Observing web

site www.rasc.ca/mars-2018-opposition. There you will find several downloadable resources on observing and drawing Mars, including a bi-fold printable brochure for outreach published by the Education and Public Outreach Committee. Many of us have been disappointed with our telescopic views of Mars so far this year, often doubting our observing skills and sky conditions, but the truth is that there has been a massive dust storm encircling the planet for some time. There is hope that the storm is abating with the possibility of better views later in August.

On Twitter, please follow @RASC using the hashtag #RASCobserving for announcements of earned observing certificates and special observing opportunities.

Also, please let us know of RASC members earning observing distinctions from other societies, such as the Astronomical League, AAVSO, and so on.



Veteran observer Michael Gatto's view of Mars (through the dust storm) in his 8" f/7.5 Dob on the morning of July 8.

What Canada Day Meant for Me this Year

by [Suzanna Nagy](#), Vancouver Centre

Canada Day in Maple Ridge is an annual outreach event for RASC Vancouver. It is a chance for us to participate in celebrating Canada as well as being able to engage the public-at-large in our shared love of astronomy.

This year's event took on a deeper meaning for me this time. At one point during the afternoon, a little boy (probably no more than five years old) and his mother were visiting our RASC booth. This little boy, his chubby face painted with little Canada flags, was clutching his just-received RASC Finder and thanked me by shouting out "Happy Canada Day."

His joy and enthusiasm brought a smile to my face but also tears to my eyes because it caused me to remember a recent visit to our Centre by a refugee from Afghanistan. This refugee, Mr. Bakhshi, is the founding member of the Afghanistan Astronomy Association and was volunteering at schools teaching astronomy to the Afghan children in Kabul (which is not part of the school curriculum there). Unfortunately, in 2017 Mr. Bakhshi had to flee Afghanistan because the Taliban put a price on his head simply because he was trying to teach the science of astronomy to children. You will be hearing more from your RASC Vancouver council on this as we try to find ways to assist Mr. Bakhshi as he continues to work with the Afghanistan Astronomy Association albeit from abroad.

But my point is, there I was on July 1 celebrating Canada Day and teaching astronomy to the children and families who were stopping by our booth without having to fear for my life. This is the freedom we celebrate in Canada every July 1 — a freedom so many fellow astronomy enthusiasts around the world cannot enjoy.



I would like to thank the RASC volunteers that gave of their time on July 1 to operate the booth, displays, and solar telescopes: Leigh, Karl, William, Terry, Arya, Ken, Wilfred, Kyle, and Jennifer.

The day started out with thunderstorms and for a period of time, the ten of us were huddled together under our 10x10 tent trying to keep ourselves and our equipment dry. However, the weather gods finally cooperated and by the afternoon the rain departed, the clouds cleared, and we had Sun to dry out our belongings as well as point our solar telescopes to. We engaged with several hundred people and I am sure I speak for the volunteers when I say that we all had a fun Canada Day.

Montreal Centre Upcoming Events

by [Carl Jorgensen](#), Secretary, Montreal Centre

Wednesday, August 1, 7:30 – 11:00 pm: Montreal Centre members Morgan Arboretum Conservation Centre , 150 Chemin des Pins, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue. The Bellevue Observatory will be open, but you can also bring your own telescope or binoculars (weather permitting).

Saturday, August 4, 7:30 – 11:00 pm: Members offsite observing at Woolly – Woods, 45 Rang Saint Antoine, Saint-Chrysostome (weather permitting).

Wednesday, August 8, 7:30 – 11:00 pm: Members observing at the Morgan Arboretum Conservation Center. The observatory will be open (weather permitting).

Saturday, August 11, 7:30 – 11:00 pm: Montreal Centre Public Event “The Perseid Meteor Shower”. Presentation on the Perseids 8:00 pm at the Morgan Arboretum. Observing meteors afterward (weather Permitting).

Wednesday, August 15, 7:30 – 11:00 pm: Members Observing at the Morgan Arboretum Conservation Center. The observatory will be open (weather permitting).

Saturday, August 18, 10 am – 3:00 pm: Montreal Aviation Museum Family Fun Day. Montreal Centre Members are asked to bring their solar telescopes for public solar observing (weather Permitting).

Saturday, August 18, 7:30 – 11:00 pm: Astrophotography and offsite observing at Cap Saint-Jacques 20099 Boul Gouin W Pierrefonds. Non-RASC Montreal Centre event, sponsored by the city of Montreal. Montreal Centre members are welcome to bring their telescopes for public observing.(weather permitting).

Saturday, August 25, 7:30 – 11:00 pm: Members Arbo Clubhouse at the Morgan Arboretum. Observing afterwards (weather Permitting).

Wednesday, August 29, 7:30 – 11:00 pm: Members observing at the Morgan Arboretum Conservation Center. The observatory will be open (weather permitting).

Thank You to our Sponsors!

by **Julia Neeser**, RASC Marketing Coordinator

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada has a unique partnership with our friends in the astronomy industry. We are now offering companies the distinction of becoming a sponsor of the RASC, Canada's pre-eminent amateur astronomy organization. This offer is available only to those industry leaders who recognize the value in being associated with the amateur astronomy community.

www.rasc.ca/rasc-sponsors.





What's New in the Sky

Members are encouraged to check out the **Northern Skies** section of the RASC website. Thanks to Gary Boyle for keeping us all in the know.



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