
NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

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Members of the National Council of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada at the Victoria General Assembly. Photo by Terry Hicks.

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

The *National Newsletter* is a publication of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada and is distributed together with the Society's *Journal*. Inquiries about the Society should be directed to its National Office at 136 Dupont Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 1V2.

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Deadline for February issue is December 1.

Victoria Retrospective

by Alice Newton
Victoria Centre

The 1988 General Assembly of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, the 100th Annual Meeting of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific and the 1988 Summer Meeting of the Western Amateur Astronomers (whew!) is now "history". We are elated at the success of this endeavour, but sorry to see all the excitement end!

Following on the heels of some two years of logistical planning and countless hours of meetings, ASP President Jim Hesser and Executive Officer Andy Fraknoi, Jack Newton (on behalf of the RASC) and the University of Victoria's Jeremy Tatum and Chris Pritchett can at last sit back and reflect on the outcome of the activities of the joint meeting held June 28 through July 3 on the campus of the University of Victoria.

Space limitations preclude the opportunity to extend individual thanks to all the people whose efforts ensured the smooth running of the Conference. When the flurry of activity died down, it was confirmed that close to 600 had taken part in the teacher's workshop and the professional and amateur symposiums. Our local organizing committee was chaired by representatives from the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, and the University of Victoria. The large slate of speakers in the professional "Extragalactic Distance Scale" symposium was arranged thanks to the tireless efforts of Sidney van den Bergh (DAO) and Chris Pritchett. The University's Conference Officer, Mary Ransberry, handled the numerous on-site arrangements at the University.

For the first time in RASC history, our General Assembly was a shared forum with the U.S. based Astronomical Society of the Pacific. Also, a first was the participation of approximately 140 teachers in the "Universe in the Classroom" lectures, a workshop designed for teachers from grades 3 to 12. This

program was designed for teachers, librarians, curriculum specialists and other educators at the elementary and secondary levels. The "Extragalactic Distance Scale" symposium featured 16 papers from world-renowned experts, and the joint RASC/ASP/WAA sessions offered another 39 papers of their own. Our only regret is that so many superb oral papers were submitted overall that it was necessary to run the professional and amateur portions of the program concurrently.

Delegates were treated to some extra-special events, one being a late afternoon reception hosted by their Honours, the Lieutenant-Governor and Mrs. Robert Rogers, at stately Government House. Participants travelled to and from this delightful function via (London-style) double-decker buses. Throughout the week, other tours were run to the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, the Institute of Ocean Sciences complex, and the famous Butchart Gardens. Optional tours were also offered to the Gulf and San Juan Islands and to a delicious salmon barbecue at Sooke, where logging sport competitions were featured.

No RASC General Assembly would be complete without the ever-popular Murphy Slide Show. (It should be noted that our ASP and WAA friends were overwhelmed by the comradery displayed during the song contest and slide presentation and are threatening to include this time-honoured RASC tradition in their future meeting plans!). Victoria Centre President Gene Steeves, assisted by his wife Welda and our Librarian, Sid Sidhu, outdid themselves in preparing delicious food and arranging a generous supply of "bubbly" for the event. The song contest was won by the Winnipeg Centre, whose members performed a rousing version of "In the Dome Again" (to the tune of Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again"). It was truly an evening not to be missed.

The awards banquet witnessed over 250 delegates in attendance. Winners of major awards and event organizers were "piped in" to their places by a kilted Scottish bagpiper. The WAA, ASP, and RASC each made presentations of their group's respective awards. Cliff Holmes and Margaret Matlack performed the honours for the Western Amateur Astronomer prize winners. Retiring President Mary Grey received a framed "Haida Moon" painting from an appreciative RASC membership. Presentation of the RASC awards was made by incoming President, Lloyd Higgs. Jim Hesser read the citations for the many Astronomical Society of the Pacific awards, and the ASP's Andy Fraknoi conducted the door-prize draw with the capable assistance of Juliana Ver Steeg.

Victoria Centre did very well with the awards. Chris Spratt received the Chant Medal, Philip Teece received the Ken Chilton Prize, and Dr. Alan Batten received a Service Award. Jack Newton won the ASP's coveted Amateur Achievement Award for 1988, Malcolm Scrimger received a merit award for his astrophotography, and Chris Spratt's meteor display took first prize (with honourable mention to Ed Majden). Victoria was also deemed to have had the best overall display.

We wish to recognize George Ball for his care and expertise in setting up the Bryden Telescope, Alice Newton for her design of the Centre's poster displays, and Paul Thomas and Gene Steeves for their handcrafting of the beautiful merit awards and engraved plaques.

Again special thanks to the local volunteers who gave so freely of their time during the meeting and to all the delegates for their friendship and knowledge. Until we meet again.

Due\$ Due

The 1989 membership year began October 1, 1988. It is time for all regular and youth members to renew their memberships with the Society. The national fees for the 1989 year are:

Regular Membership	\$25.00
Youth Membership (under 18 years of age)	\$15.00
Life Membership	\$500.00

For all foreign members, residents in the United States and overseas, these amounts are quoted in U.S. Funds.

Fees should be sent to your Centre Treasurer, or if you are an unattached member, directly to the National Office. By the time you read this note the new 1989 *Observer's Handbook* should be in the hands of Centres and ready for distribution to paid-up 1989 members.

RASC membership is one of the best bargains around. Renew now!

Astronomical Conference – Victoria 1988

by Mary Anne Harrington
Toronto Centre

The campus of the University of Victoria on beautiful Vancouver Island was the site at the end of June for a special meeting of three major astronomical societies. This joint meeting featured the 100th Annual Meeting of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP), the 1988 Summer Meeting of the Western Amateur Astronomers (WAA), and the 1988 General Assembly of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC). This was the first time that these three societies had held a joint meeting. The event was also co-hosted by the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, National Research Council of Canada; the Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Victoria; and the Victoria Centre, RASC.

With 600 registered delegates, this very industrious meeting started with a weekend “Workshop on Teaching Astronomy in grades 3-12”. Co-sponsored by the RASC and the ASP, the workshop was well-attended with 150 participants. Next, there was the Scientific Symposium on “The Extragalactic Distance Scale” which featured talks by noted international scientists. The RASC/ASP/WAA joint meeting was extremely successful and had 450 delegates including 200 professional and 250 amateur astronomers.

Some highlights of the paper sessions included: “Glimpses of the First 70 Years of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory” by A.H. Batten; “Lick Observatory: The First Century” by D.E. Osterbrock; “Astrophotography: A Colour Portrait of the Universe” by J.B. Newton; “Research Opportunities for Amateur Astronomers” by E. Edberg; and “Central Monsters in Galaxies” by J. Kormendy. The special feature lecture of the meeting was the 1988 Helen Sawyer Hogg Lecture of the RASC and the Canadian Astronomical Society. The topic of this year’s lecture was “The Early Moments of the Universe” by Hubert Reeves from Paris. Following this lecture, a reception was held which featured the Murphy Slide Show and Song Contest. Despite stiff competition, the Winnipeg Centre once again won the Song Contest.

Delegates also enjoyed several excellent and well-organized tours. These included the world famous Butchart Gardens, the Institute of Ocean Sciences on beautiful Patricia Bay, a salmon barbecue and logging show at Sooke, a ferry tour of the Gulf Islands, and a very impressive reception at Government House, home of the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, hosted by their Honours, the Honourable Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rogers. A very special event was a tour of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory (DAO) on Little Saanich Mountain. The Observatory was celebrating its 70th Anniversary this year. Delegates had a chance to see both the 1.8 m (72”) and the 1.2 m (48”) telescopes; to explore the main office complex; and even time to enjoy the spectacular view.

The Awards Banquet was held on Friday evening and it was quite an impressive affair. Following a lovely buffet dinner, the Award presentations were made. Mr. Cliff Holmes, President of the WAA, presented his Society’s awards. Mrs. Mary Grey, President of the RASC, and Dr. Lloyd Higgs presented the awards for both the display competition and the RASC national awards. Dr. Jim Hesser, President of the ASP and Director of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, presented the awards of the ASP. To close off the evening, numerous door prizes were drawn, with top prizes of a Macintosh computer and an Astroscan 2001 telescope being awarded.

The Annual Meeting of the RASC was held on Saturday, July 2 and was well-attended with sixteen Centres represented as well as several unattached members. One of the main items on the agenda was the election of officers of the society. The following were elected by acclamation: President, Dr. Lloyd Higgs (Ottawa Centre); First Vice-President, Damien Lemay (Quebec City Centre); Second Vice-President, Peter Broughton (Toronto Centre); Recorder, Henry Lee (Windsor Centre); and Librarian, Brian Beattie (Toronto Centre).

The 1989 General Assembly (June 30 to July 3, 1989) will be hosted by the Cape Breton Astronomical Society and the Canadian Coast Guard College. This is the first time that a GA has been hosted by unattached members.

In conclusion, many thanks must go to the many organizers of this most enjoyable and exciting conference. These include Andrew Fraknoi (ASP), Margaret Matlack (WAA), James Hesser (DAO),

Jack Newton (RASC), Jeremy Tatum and Chris Pritchett (University of Victoria), all members of the Victoria Centre RASC, and a special "Thank You" to Mary Ransberry, Conference Services, University of Victoria.

See you all in Sydney, Nova Scotia in 1989!

Report of the June 1988 National Council Meeting

by Leo Enright

The National Council of our Society met twice on the occasion of the 1988 General Assembly – the first time on Thursday, June 30 and the second time immediately following the 1988 Annual Meeting of the Society on Saturday, July 2. The National President-elect, Dr. Lloyd Higgs, presided at the first meeting replacing Mrs. Mary Grey who was recovering from an illness and whose attendance at the meeting was much appreciated. The newly elected officers assumed their positions before the beginning of the second meeting.

Dr. Higgs announced that the first meeting would begin with a special one-hour debate on the proposed new constitution for the Society.

Mr. Watson, chairman of the Constitution Committee, thanked the members of the committee, especially Dr. Bishop who had put the draft issues of the document on his word processor and had received and answered many comments from the Centres of the Society. He also thanked the members of centres for their comments following the latest draft of ByLaw Number One which had been revised as of January 31. The committee had met on that date and through considerable compromise had accomplished a great deal in producing a 32-page document. There would be no attempt in the coming months, he pointed out, to "rush it through" too quickly. On the other hand, there was some concern from some members that approval should come as soon as possible. During the coming discussions it would be necessary to maintain a spirit of compromise since not everyone would be able to agree on all of the items. The Constitution Committee had attempted to do a number of things: to codify a number of practices within the Society; to put matters relating to one topic in a single area of the document; to provide cross-references; and to propose some changes.

There was an article-by-article debate on the controversial parts of the proposed bylaw, with a number of members stating their concerns with such topics as surcharges by centres of the Society.

The regular agenda for the meeting included reports from the officers and standing committees of the Society as well as a number of other important items.

Approval by Council was given to the proposal from the Calgary Centre for a national contest to select a poster that could be used by centres to advertize many kinds of events and attractions.

The Centenary Committee had considered and continued to receive a number of suggestions on how to appropriately mark the 100th anniversary of the Society in 1990. These included a commemorative issue of the *Journal* and the issuing of a special astronomy stamp by Canada Post.

The position of International Astronomy Day Co-ordinator was formalized by Council and the nomination of Mr. Steve Dodson, by Mr. Enright, as the latter's successor in that position, was approved. Mr. Enright announced that in 1989, Astronomy Day would be Saturday, May 13.

Dr. Batten introduced Dr. Jeremy Tatum as the new editor of the *Journal*.

At the suggestion of Dr. Bishop, the editor of the *Observer's Handbook*, Council approved maintaining the same price schedule for the 1989 *Handbook* as was followed in 1988. Dr. Bishop, the chairman of the Honorary Members Committee, invited nominations to fill the one vacancy on the list of Honorary Members of the Society. Also, as the Nominating Committee chairman, Dr. Bishop announced the list of incoming officers who would shortly assume their positions: President, Dr. Lloyd Higgs; First Vice-President, M. Damien Lemay; Second Vice-President, Mr. Peter Broughton; Recorder, Mr. Henry Lee; Librarian, Mr. Brian Beattie. It was noted that in the coming year the positions of Treasurer and Honorary President would become vacant and nominations were welcome.

The chairman of the Centennial Fund reported that a draft of the proposed brochure was being prepared. It would list the aims of the Society and the benefits of membership and invite donations. A

special Centennial Fund was instituted by transferring \$5000. from the revenues of the Society into this new fund.

Dr. Higgs reported that the first of the Society's new Plaskett Medals has been awarded to Mr. Richard Grey, a graduate of the University of Toronto.

Council approved the invitation by the Ottawa Centre to hold the 1990 General Assembly in that city on the Canada Day weekend. Approval was also given to a motion for the formation of a committee that would design and conduct a survey of the members of the Society, with the hope that the information obtained could lead to improved services to all members.

During the second National Council the standing committees for 1988-89 were appointed.

Complete details of all the items discussed at both meetings may be found in the Minutes of the meetings which have been distributed to all Centre Presidents and National Council Representatives. The Minutes of the 1988 Annual Meeting of the Society, which took place on Saturday, July 2 are being published in the October issue of the Journal.

Across the R.A.S.C.

HAMILTON: Solar observing seems to have gained additional interest as more members are doing regular observations and drawings and this year's opposition of Mars has boosted the number of planetary observers.

John Gauvreau, Richard Petrone, Sean Carey and Bruce Collier have undertaken an ambitious fundraising campaign for the Centre. In August they scheduled a Bike-a-Thon to the Starfest gathering in Mount Forest and took pledges for the 275 km round-trip effort.

Several other items are of note. The new f/6 mirror objective for the 10-inch telescope mounted in the Chilton Building is now in operation and is reported to be giving good views due to the special talents of Barry Sherman. The Centre's washroom project was temporarily stalled during the summer drought because of the difficulty of measuring the height of the water table. And congratulations to Karyn Bennett and her hard-working crew for their efforts in the spring garage sale. The funds generated will certainly help support the Centre's activities for another year.

WINDSOR: Joady Ulrich reports that in July, an informal gathering of thirty members of the Centre, with friends, was held on the grounds of Western Secondary School, near Amherstburg, Ontario. Everyone enjoyed looking at such celestial favourites as the Ring Nebula and Saturn. Later in the month, ten members had an observing evening at Point Pelee National Park.

KITCHENER-WATERLOO: The club's annual picnic was held at the Ayr observatory in June. In addition to observing through the 12.5-inch reflector, centre members spent time cleaning and mending the facilities. Paul Bigelow now mails the monthly National Museum of Science and Technology sky sheets out to centre members. Alan Paeth has been investigating the realuminizing of the Ayr reflector's secondary mirror. The centre held observing nights throughout the summer.

HALIFAX: Although the Centre's attempts at a Messier Marathon last March were clouded out, Patrick Kelly reports that Larry Bogan was out on the night of the 17th and bagged 103 Messier objects. Following a visit by a Halifax member, an astronomy club in Barbados is hoping to form an affiliation with the Centre. Over 40 people attended the May banquet which featured a talk by Randall Brooks. The Burke-Gaffney award was presented to Dan Falk. Also in May, the Centre hosted a program for two dozen members of the Hebron Astronomy Club and even the skies cleared for an excellent observing session. To commemorate NOVA EAST this year, the executive will promote T-shirts showing a lighthouse and a telescope and designed by Doug Pitcairn. Other T-shirts and baseball caps with the RASC crest are also being ordered.

Across the R.A.S.C. is a regular feature of the *Newsletter*. Centre editors or secretaries should send reports of their centre activities and upcoming events directly to the Editor. Deadline for the February issue is December 1.

Awards of the RASC 1988–1989

As outlined in the Annual Report of the Society for 1978, page 31 ff, awards may from time to time be conferred upon members in recognition of meritorious service or achievement. Recommendations for such awards should in most cases be made through the Council of the local Centre. Unattached members may submit recommendations, if they so wish, to the National Council for consideration by the National Council. Centre Councils will, of course, submit recommendations as they see fit to the National Council for final approval.

CHANT MEDAL

The Chant Medal of the Society was established in 1940 in appreciation of the great work of the late Professor C.A. Chant in furthering the interests of astronomy in Canada. This medal is awarded, not oftener than once a year, to any amateur astronomer resident in Canada on the basis of the value of the work which he or she has carried out in astronomy and closely allied fields of investigation. Nominations (including citations) should reach the National Office by December 31.

SERVICE AWARD MEDAL

The Service Award was established in 1959, on recommendation of a special committee of the National Council. This bronze medal is presented to members who have performed outstanding service to a centre or to the National Society. Nominations should reach the National Office by December 31.

KEN CHILTON PRIZE

The Ken Chilton Prize was established in 1977 by the National Council of the Society in remembrance of the late K.E. Chilton, an active member of the Hamilton Centre. The prize is awarded annually to an amateur astronomer resident in Canada, in recognition of a significant piece of astronomical work carried out or published during the year. Nominations should reach the National Office by December 31.

SIMON NEWCOMB AWARD

The Simon Newcomb Award is named in honour of the famous Canadian astronomer Simon Newcomb (1835–1909) who was born in Nova Scotia and later served for 20 years as Superintendent of the American Ephemeris and National Almanac Office at the United States Naval Observatory in Washington. The award was created in 1978 by the National Council on the initiative of the Halifax Centre. The intent of the Simon Newcomb Award is to recognize literary ability among members of the Society who are not professional astronomers. Submitted articles must be original and should not have been previously published in any substantially similar form (although appearance in Centre newsletters is permissible).

Who can enter? Any member of the Society who does their astronomy purely as a hobby.

Format: The article(s) should be no more than 2,500 words in length, be written in proper grammatical form, and be presented typewritten and double-spaced. Diagrams need not be in a finished form but should be complete and ready for drafting. Photographs may also be submitted and, if possible, original negatives should accompany the submission. The author(s) name(s) should appear only on the title page and reference to Centre affiliation should not appear in the article.

Submission of Entries: Articles must be received by the National Awards Committee between January 1 and March 31. Members of Centres must first submit their entries to their Centre Executive for its approval before submission to the National Awards Committee. Unattached members should make their submissions directly to the Committee c/o RASC National Office.

Judging: Articles are judged on their scientific accuracy, originality, and literary merit.

Presentation: The award is presented at the General Assembly and remains in the hands of the winner's Centre for display until the following April.

For further details on the Simon Newcomb Award, contact the Awards Committee. RASC National Office, 136 Dupont Street, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1V2, or contact your Centre Secretary.

Awards Presented at Victoria Conference

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF THE PACIFIC

The Catherine Wolfe Bruce Medal (for a lifetime of achievement in astronomy): John G. Bolton

The Robert J. Trumpler Award (for an outstanding PhD thesis, written at a North American university): Jill Bechtold (PhD from the University of Arizona)

The Muhlmann Prize (for an outstanding research project carried out at one of the observatories on Mauna Kea): John Kormendy (Dominion Astrophysical Observatory)

The Klumpke-Roberts Award (for outstanding contributions to the popularization of astronomy): Joseph Chamberlain (Adler Planetarium)

The Amateur Achievement Award (for outstanding contributions to astronomy by an amateur): Jack Newton (Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Victoria Centre)

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

For a description of the principal RASC awards see elsewhere in this issue.

Chant Medal: Chris Spratt (Victoria)

Ken Chilton Prize: Philip Teece (Victoria)

Service Awards: Dr. Alan Batten (Victoria)

Dr. Roy Bishop (Halifax)

Dr. John L. Locke (Ottawa)

Eric Orr (Hamilton)

Messier Certificates: Robert Breckenridge (Edmonton)

Tom Matty (Edmonton)

Martyn McConnell (Kingston)

Thomas Hurley (Windsor)

Display Competition:

Astrophotography: Malcolm Scrimger (Victoria)

Meteors: Chris Spratt (Victoria)

Centre Display Victoria Centre RASC

WESTERN AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

The G. Bruce Blair Gold Medal (to a living professional or amateur who has made outstanding contributions to amateur astronomy): Dr. Stephen J. Edberg

The E.E. Barnard Observers Award (to recognize and promote outstanding and scientifically useful observational contributions by amateur astronomers): David H. Levy; Charles Morris

The Caroline Herschel Astronomy Project Award (to recognize outstanding scientific projects by amateurs): John W. Grieser III; Don Machholz

National Service Award: The Mount Wilson Observatory Association

Regional Service Award: Clifford W. Holmes

Local Service Award: Gordon D. Crowell Docents

Margaret Matlack

James Lipp

Observer's Cage

by David H. Levy
Your Sky

*As I went walking that ribbon of highway
I saw above me that endless skyway.
I saw below me those golden valleys.
This land was made for you and me.*

*This land is your land, this land is my land,
From California to the New York Highlands,
From the Redwood forests to the Gulfstream waters,
This land is made for you and me.*

Woody Guthrie's joyous celebration of nature has grabbed two generations of hearts and souls, because his words personalize the nature around us - the beauty belongs to each of us. Who more than a stargazer can appreciate these words; who more than someone who has looked through a telescope and touched the sky can appreciate this special thought that earth and sky are ours to love.

We touch what is ours, and touching is part of observing. Under a dark sky we maintain dark adaptation by learning to recognize the eyepieces by the feel of their sizes and shapes, and we find flashlights, pencils and focusing knobs by their touch. But touch extends beyond that. Our first look at the Orion Nebula before dawn in late summer, an observation of a bright comet, a photograph of the Hercules globular star cluster with a meteor streaking through, and many others are all examples of observations and experiences that have touched us and given us title to the sky.

We object to the idea of people invading or abusing our sky; we are angered by astrology and react strongly with lectures about precession and gravity. Those who trust their decisions to the stars do not care about those things which have touched us. They see the stars in a fundamentally different way, and rely on them in astrology's artificial system. There is not much we can do to convert people from the horoscope to the *Observer's Handbook*, to show that instead of signs and houses, we use moon phases, weather forecasts, and IAU Circulars to plan our lives under the stars. A better way to invite them into our house is to show them the beauty of the sky through a telescope and hope that they will stay a while.

Helen Hogg's book *The Stars Belong To Everyone* (Doubleday 1976) is a strong message from one of Canada's best known professional astronomers. The sky is not just for the scientists, there is room for poets and artists too. We need to share it, to take advantage of every opportunity to bring the stars to adults and children who have not had the opportunity to see what we see, to take advantage of many nights, and to enjoy our sky.

Nominations for 1989 R.A.S.C. Officers

The By-Laws of the Society provide for a Nominating Committee composed of the three surviving immediate Past Presidents, whose duty is to prepare a slate of candidates for the officers of the Society.

In 1989, we must elect a new Treasurer and Honorary President. If any member wishes to make suggestions for nominations, they should contact the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, Mrs. Mary Grey, as soon as possible. Write to Mrs. Mary Grey c/o National Museum of Science and Technology, P.O. Box 9724, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 5A3.

The By-Laws provide that "any five members of the Society, in good standing, may nominate candidates for any office, provided that such nomination, accompanied by a letter of acceptance from the nominee, shall be received by the Secretary of the Society, not less than sixty (60) days before the date of the annual meeting."

As the Society's Annual Meeting will be held in Sydney, Nova Scotia over the Canada Day long weekend in July 1989, nominations, together with a short resume should be submitted no later than April 15, 1989 to allow for printing and mailing of ballots to be completed as required.

Full details pertaining to nominations are outlined in By-Law 1, Article 11(a), as published in the *Journal*, June 1969, pp 155-168.

R.A.S.C. Poster Contest

Purpose

To design a multi-purpose, bilingual, astronomical poster which can be used by all centres of the Society across Canada. The poster will be designed so that the bottom one-third will be left blank making it possible for each centre to customize their own posters.

Guidelines For The Poster Contest

- Size: 18" x 24"; usable space for design 18" wide by 16" long
 Stock: 80 lb. coated stock
 Type: You choose the type face. Maximum of 150 English and French words.
 Colours: You choose the two colours (Poster printed on white stock.)
 Photos: Maximum of two can be submitted. Black and white prints are preferred. Size is not a problem.

A rough layout must be submitted with all copy, photos, artwork, etc. in place.

Due Date For Poster Application: December 31, 1988

The contest will be held at the January 1989 National Council Meeting. The winner will be the decision of the poster committee and the National Council.

Send Proposals To: The Poster Committee, RASC National Office, 136 Dupont Street, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1V2.

For further information please contact: Susan Bolton, Toronto Centre (416) 884-5203; Don Hladiuk, Calgary Centre (403) 256-4480; or John Dekker, Niagara Centre (416) 934-7210.

Remember to send along your name, phone number and the centre to which you belong.

Tariffs on Telescopes, Parts and Accessories

On January 1, 1988, Revenue Canada, Customs and Excise, introduced a new tariff classification system called the Harmonized System. The entire tariff schedule was rewritten in a significantly different way.

1. Special provisions on the importation of certain astronomical telescopes have been carried over into the new tariffs. Astronomical telescopes having an objective mirror of a diameter of 7.5 cm or more but not exceeding 51 cm or having an objective lens of a diameter of 6 cm or more but not exceeding 20.5 cm, formerly classified under tariff item 46203-1, are now classified under tariff item 9005.80.10.00, and remain duty free.

2. Parts and accessories (including mountings) for telescopes qualifying under tariff item 9005.80.10.00, which were also classified under 46203-1, are now classified under tariff item 9005.90.10.00, and are duty free as well.

3. Telescopes not qualifying under 9005.80.10.00, and parts and accessories for such telescopes, are dutiable under tariff items 9005.80.90.00 and 9005.90.90.00, respectively at 7.3%.

These goods are normally subject to federal sales tax at a rate of 12% however, they may qualify for federal sales tax exemption when purchased for their own use by educational institutions, and museums and planetaria, under the provisions of Section 12 of Part III of Schedule III of the Excise Tax Act.

La Lunette Apochromatique

par Marc A. Gélinas
Société d'Astronomie de Montréal

Etant un astronome amateur de ville je consacre la plupart de mes observations aux objets brillants. Je ne m'en plains pas car l'astronomie planétaire me passionne. Je cherchais dans un télescope pouvoir de résolution et haut contraste de l'image plutôt que collecte de lumière, c'est pourquoi j'ai succombé aux charmes de la lunette astronomique.

J'ai ainsi choisi la lunette apochromatique de 6 po. F:12 de la Cie Astrophysics comme télescope idéal (le troisième de ma carrière). Après plus de 9 mois d'attente pour sa fabrication, j'ai entrepris mes premières observations à l'été 1987. Première constatation, la publicité n'a pas menti, c'est vraiment un instrument de qualité optique supérieure. Ce qui m'a le plus agréablement surpris cependant fut la qualité de la monture équatoriale allemande (#706) produite par la même compagnie. Par ailleurs, et je m'y attendais, une lunette d'environ 2 m de long et sa monture ne sont pas ce qu'on peut qualifier de portatif. J'ai donc installé le tout dans un abri semi-permanent, que j'appelle "mon observatoire". L'esthétique n'est pas fameuse mais l'instrument est à l'abri et s'ouvre facilement sur le ciel. Voici un résumé des premiers mois d'observation.

Les Planètes

Saturne a été ma première cible. J'y ai vu de 6 à 8 bandes et zones sur le disque. Les anneaux A, B, et C sont nets. L'anneau B est apparu de deux teintes à une reprise. La division de Cassini est facile et visible sur tout le pourtour.

Jupiter à son tour a montré des détails innombrables. Ce dont je me souviens avec le plus d'émotion est la vue d'Io quittant le devant du disque jovien sous la forme d'un petit disque bien net.

Mars, depuis le milieu du printemps 1988 j'en suis l'évolution et en dépit du peu de fois où le seeing a été bon j'ai déjà pu reconnaître de nombreuses régions de la planète.

Vénus et Mercure ont été observés souvent le jour et si pour Venus c'est chose facile, je n'avais jamais réussi avec Mercure avant le printemps 1988.

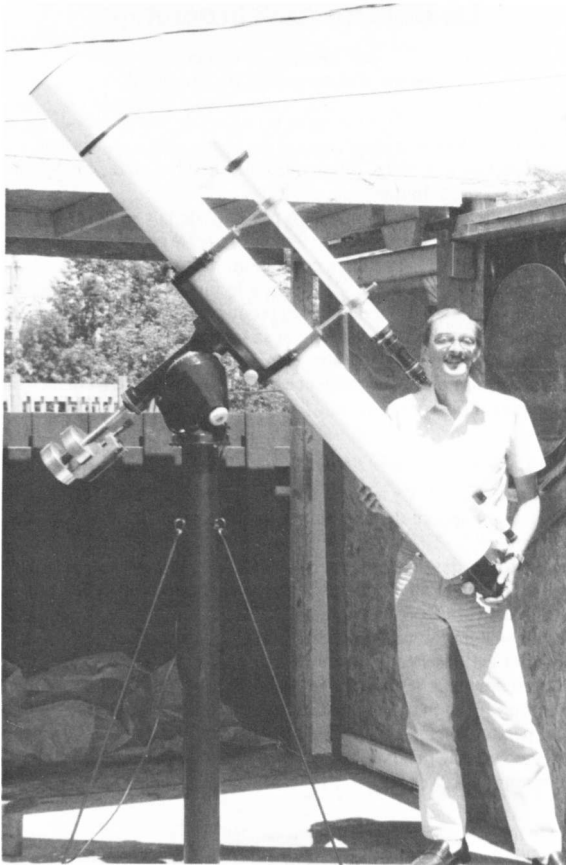
Des grossissements de 100X au pouce de diamètre sont sûrement possibles comme le dit la publicité d' Astrophysics. J'ai personnellement obtenu régulièrement de bonnes images entre 300X et 400 de grossissement et à une reprise, pendant quelques minutes de seeing parfait, la Lune s'est montrée capable de supporter entre 600X et 700X.

Les Étoiles

Les étoiles brillantes ne présentent pas d'aberration chromatique, à peine Véga ($M_v = 0$) a-t-elle l'air un peu plus bleue que dans un réflecteur. Les binaires visuelles ne sont jamais tant observées par un amateur que quand il teste un télescope. Épsilon de la Lyre n'est même pas un challenge avec ce 6 po. Le compagnon d'Antares, que j'avais en vain tenté de voir depuis plus de 20 ans dans divers télescopes, est sorti de l'ombre un soir d'août 1987. Enfin 20 DRA séparation 1.27" selon P. Couteau est ma meilleure réussite de résolution complète.

Le Ciel Profond

Contrairement à une certaine croyance populaire il est faux qu'une longue focale est un handicap en ciel profond. En réalité l'absence d'obstruction centrale qui améliore le contraste, est avantageux. Je suis en train de revoir tous les objets Messier et je constate que mon Celestron-8 n'est pas plus efficace que ma lunette de 6 po. J'ai même pu facilement détecter la nébuleuse planétaire NGC 2438 qui se trouve dans l'amas ouvert M46, je dois avouer que j'avais un filtre nébulaire, mais tout de même! La même chose dans le cas des nébuleuses des Pléiades et dans celui de la nébuleuse du Voile dans le Cygne qui ressortent bien. La galaxie M33 apparût clairement même sans filtre. Un soir j'ai pu comparer M13 dans ma lunette et dans un Odyssey 13.1 po. Eh bien! si l'image du Odyssey montrait plus d'étoiles faibles en périphérie du noyau, ce dernier n'était pas mieux résolu. La forme du "Y" couché, parfois visible en surimpression au noyau de M13, fut observée à plus d'une reprise.



Marc Gélinas et sa lunette apochromatique 6" F:12 et lunette guide 60 mm bricolée.

Enfin la conclusion que je tire de l'utilisation de la lunette 6 po F:12 d' Astrophysics est très positive. L'étude planétaire est emballante avec cet instrument, le ciel profond est grand ouvert et la qualité de la monture laisse la porte ouverte pour l'astrophoto. En fait je suis convaincu qu'une lunette de 4"2 à 6" est l'instrument idéal pour un astronome amateur urbain. Il obtient une qualité de première classe pour le contraste, la résolution de 1" d'arc permis par le seeing est atteinte et il possède un instrument portable dans le cas des lunettes 6" F:8 et plus petites. Tout le champ de l'astronomie planétaire et solaire est à la portée d'une telle lunette de même que tout les objets brillants classiques tel que les Messiers et autres objets stellaires qui percent bien la pollution lumineuse moyenne.

Intimidated

by Dennis Ryan
Montreal Centre

To begin with, the fact that you are reading the *Newsletter* means that your interest in astronomy is strong enough to have committed yourself to at least a year's membership in the RASC and that's great. But here's a blunt question. Are you, in reality, intimidated by the tremendous surge in the technology that has affected the sciences, including astronomy? Are you really a "non-technical" person whose fascination with the skies stems perhaps from some "metaphysical" reason and while you might find reading about the latest in the physics of black holes interesting, you don't begin to comprehend the mathematics involved?

Welcome to the club. When I became interested in astronomy twenty years ago, the technology that astronomy uses today was still in its infancy. As the technology developed, I learned, but I would be the first to admit that my knowledge remains at a rather basic level and that if I would have become a member today, I would feel intimidated too. But even if you are just starting out, don't feel that your lack of knowledge means you must remain on the outer edges of astronomy if you want to get more involved.

The first step to greater involvement is simply to learn the language. Any hobby you might engage in has its own vocabulary, its phrases and terms, and astronomy is no different. Astronomy has its own language, and fortunately, there are a number of basic books currently available that can ease you into astronomical language and terminology so that you can engage in a decent conversation with a basic background.

And remember, Centre members are not there to intimidate you either, and the active ones will certainly bend over backwards to help you to learn, and become a more involved astronomer.

But amateur astronomers are not mindreaders, and they can't help you to learn if you don't ask. I have known situations where people have joined a Centre for a year and then not renewed. In some cases I had met these people when they had first paid their fees and I had got the impression, if they themselves had not admitted it, that they felt overwhelmed by the amount of knowledge in astronomy.

How does one get more involved? I got deeply involved by becoming a member of the Montreal Centre's Board of Directors and the editor of its newsletter. That implies deep involvement, and it is. For me, being the Centre's newsletter editor, is especially satisfying. And actually getting out to observe the skies is a thrill all its own.

By the way, you might be wondering how a non-technical person like myself can be editor of a Centre newsletter, when articles in that newsletter might contain some technical terminology and/or mathematical equations. The answer is that I have two able assistants who proofread each month's edition, offering suggestions, correcting mistakes, and making numbers more palatable.

As one who has little involvement in the technological side of astronomy except for a broad understanding of how everything works, I understand the feelings of those who do feel intimidated. It is a natural feeling. But whether by helping out on a Centre newsletter, or one of the other projects a Centre might have planned, or putting typing skills to work when they are needed, or offering to help lift telescopes out into the open sky, the resources are there for you to learn, and to become an involved amateur. That's why the RASC exists.

Totality in the Philippines

Randy Attwood
Toronto Centre

A year ago, at the General Assembly held in Toronto, I announced that the Toronto Centre was organizing an expedition to view the March 18, 1988 total solar eclipse from the Philippines. Many people were quite skeptical about our plans because of the ongoing political unrest and violence on

those islands. I am pleased to report that the 23 members of the expedition travelled in complete safety and observed 3.3 minutes of totality.

Ralph Chou helped me out with the organization of this trip. Other members were Betty Robinson, Robert May, Anne Waterhouse, Peter Baird, Michael Daly, David Mills, Michael Watson, Helen How, Tim Shelton, Bob Bruynestyn, David Foot, Joyce Feinberg, Neil Rogers, Chris and Liz Malicki, Jim, Carrie and Cheryl Low, Jennifer Owen, Andrew Lowe of the Calgary Centre and Bill Chan of Philippine Airlines. In preparation, I attempted to find out as much information as possible about our destination – the island of Mindanao. External Affairs said that it was not a good idea to travel there due to political unrest. Unfortunately, all the information I could gather was through the media and all the media news was bad. However, I had not heard of any problems from the tourists I talked to who had travelled to the Philippines in the last year, so after a meeting with the expedition members in January, we decided to go to Manila and decide at that point whether or not to continue. We would keep our eyes and ears open. It was a good plan but totally unnecessary. We experienced no trouble during our trip at any time and I would not hesitate to return.

After an extremely long series of airplane flights, we arrived in Manila on 14 March. The highlight of our few days here was a tour of the Malacanang palace where we viewed on display 1000 pairs of Imelda Marcos' 3000 pairs of shoes.

After a few sunny days on the beach at our resort on the island of Cebu, we left for our eclipse site in the city of General Santos. As we waited for our 5:00 am flight, we watched Mercury and then the waning crescent moon rise, only 28 hours before totality.

In General Santos, we were welcomed by a troupe of Muslim dancers in colourful native dress. An eclipse task force were our guides for the entire stay. For the rest of the day, we selected our site and toured this city of 201,000 people. It appeared that the city was expecting thousands of tourists for the event. Because of the media reports of violence, only a few hundred came. That night, we were guests at an outdoor feast and musical festival. One young fellow had written a song of welcome about the eclipse. In attendance was Defense Secretary General Fidel Ramos as well as other members of the Aquino government.

Eclipse day dawned partly cloudy. We travelled to the site and set up our telescopes just in time for first contact. Our site was the roof of a three-storey building on the campus of Mindanao State University. As the eclipse started, the clouds had dissipated and it looked pretty good. Fifteen minutes before totality however, the sun was obscured by cloud. I thought our string of clear sky eclipses (seven in a row) was about to be broken. As the minutes ticked down, the crescent sun was visible in blue sky with a solid cloud bank slowly moving towards it.

The approaching shadow of the moon could be seen in the west two minutes before totality. Shadow bands were easily visible 60 seconds before totality. The diamond ring and the first 100 seconds of totality were seen through a small hole in a nearly totally overcast sky. Two large prominences were visible, one being a large loop. The corona was, as always, spectacular and breathtaking. It was quite misshapen with several large streamers. Halfway through totality, some light clouds overtook and covered the sun. The backlit clouds, glimmering in the coronal light, were spectacular. The corona and prominences were easily visible up to third contact. A heavily cloud-filtered diamond ring signaled the end of totality. Immediately after totality, the sky became totally overcast.

There was an even mix of eclipse rookies and veterans on this trip. The equipment and photography programs varied with each observer. The important thing is that everyone got some record of the eclipse and we were treated with a spectacular view of one of the best solar eclipses we've ever seen.

What's next for the Toronto Centre eclipse chasers? Well, the next total eclipse is in July 1990. At the recent General Assembly in Victoria, meteorologist Jay Anderson commented on this eclipse, which will best be seen from Finland with the sun being only 4 degrees above the horizon. I think all but the fanatics are thinking that the July 11, 1991 eclipse, visible from Hawaii and Mexico will be the next one to travel to. Finally an eclipse closer to home!

(Reports on this trip as well as photos from the expedition appeared in the July 1988 *SKY & TELESCOPE* and *ASTRONOMY* magazines.)

Chairmen of RASC National Committees

Chairmen for the following committees were elected at the General Assembly in Victoria this past summer.

Awards: Mrs. Mary Grey c/o National Museum of Science and Technology, P.O. Box 9724, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 5A3

Budget: Dr. Bernt R. Chou, 1 Wilket Road, North York, Ontario M2L 1N5

Centenary: Mr. Peter Broughton, 31 Killdeer Crescent, Toronto, Ontario M4G 2W7

Centennial Fund: Mrs. Mary Grey (see above)

Comet Halley Time Capsule: Mr. Michael Watson, 441 Davisville Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4S 1H7

Computer Use: Mr. Franklin Loehde, 11107-63 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5W 4E3

Constitution: Mr. Michael Watson (see above)

Editing: Dr. A.H. Batten/Dr. J. Tatum, c/o Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, 5071 W. Saanich Road, R.R. #5, Victoria, British Columbia V8X 4M6

Executive: Dr. Lloyd Higgs, do Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory, P.O. Box 248, Penticton, British Columbia V2A 6K3

Finance: Dr. Bemt R. Chou (see above)

Historical: Dr. Peter M. Millman, National Research Council, Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0R6

Honorary Members: Mrs. Mary Grey (see above)

Library: Mr. Brian Beattie, c/o David Dunlap Observatory, P.O. Box 360, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4C 4Y6

Membership Survey: Mr. James T. Himer, 339 Woodside Bay SW., Calgary, Alberta T2W 3K9

Mini-Handbook: Dr. Alan H. Batten (see above)

National Newsletter: Mr. Ian G. McGregor c/o McLaughlin Planetarium, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C6

Nominating: Mrs. Mary Grey (see above)

Poster: Mrs. Susan Bolton, 326 Palmer Avenue, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4C 1P3

Property: Mr. Brian Beattie (see above)

R.A.S.C. Seal: Mrs. Mary Grey (see above)

