



# NOVA

NEWSLETTER OF THE VANCOUVER CENTRE RASC

VOLUME 2004 ISSUE 6

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2004

The Lunar Eclipse	1
Proposed Observing Site	2
President's Message	3
Observing Sites	4
Upcoming Events	6
National Reps' Report	8
2005 Council	11

## Looking Ahead

Remember, you are always welcome to attend meetings of Council, held on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm in the G.S.O.

**Nov. 9:** Dr. John Hutchings of the HIA and Canadian Project Scientist for the Webb Telescope: "The James Webb Telescope and Canada's Role in it."

**Dec. 14:** AGM; Lee Johnson talks about filters.

**Jan. 11:** Dr. David Crampton, DAO, on what the early universe looked like when seen by Gemini/HST.

## Next Issue Deadline

Material for the January Nova should be submitted by Monday, Jan. 3, 2005. Please send submissions to:

Gordon Farrell  
(gfarrell@shaw.ca)

## The Lunar Eclipse

by Doug Montgomery

On Wednesday, October 27th we were blessed with two rare events. There was a full Lunar eclipse, and a clear night to see it. The club had two events planned for the evening: one at the GSO, and the one I attended at Colony Farm with the GVRD in Coquitlam.

The night did not start out well when I was running a little late and the traffic was backed up to get on the Port Mann bridge. It took an extra forty five minutes to get across the river that night.

Finally getting there, I was greeted by Craig Breckenridge, who had already chosen the best areas to set up our scopes. It was quite far (for me) to carry our scopes and equipment. On one trip to my car I heard my name called by Steve Whitehouse. He brought his wife and twin boys out to see the eclipse in one of his refractors. A little while later, Bruce Teskey showed up with

his Dobsonian (I am not sure if it was a ten inch or an eight inch). Soon we were all set up and ready for the public.

One of the things that has changed over the years that I have been going to public astronomy nights is digital photography. Every time I set up there is someone with a digital camera asking me if I think their camera will work on my scope. Both Craig and I have clock drives on our scopes so the digital cameras work well, even just hand held. The people always ask for my E-mail address but I have never been sent a photo. But that's OK, I can take my own.

By the time we were set up, the eclipse was well under way and getting quite dark. I still get a big kick out of the expression on a child's face when they see the moon in a telescope for the first time. They light up and smile or gasp, "it looks so

continued on page 7

## Proposed Club Observing Site

by Jason Rickerby

Burns Bog in Delta has recently become relatively secure from development, and therefore may be a relatively dark-sky location available for the long-term. It may be time for RASC Vancouver Centre to establish a permanent observing site centralized within the Lower Mainland.

Here are some of the reasons to consider a permanent site:

- Potentially the club has 3 Dobsonian telescopes, a 14", a 16" and a 17.5". These are large instruments that can require time-consuming setup and overall are not well suited to the loaner program.
- Lack of club participation in activities outside monthly general Meetings.
- There are issues with the existing CAROp site:
  - The location in the UBC Research Forest is

considerably “up-the-valley” for most Vancouver Centre members.

- Light pollution from the south is ever increasing.
- The trees around the facility greatly restrict observing from the site when outside the dome. In other words, members can go up to the AOMO to start a nightly run on the 16" Meade SCT, but it is not a good site to observe with your own 'scope or a club loaner 'scope.
- Other than showcasing the AOMO, this is not a good public outreach site.
- In the last number of years there have been considerable concerns and accessibility issues due to the forest fire risk at this location.
- The club has no reasonable

storage facility for seldom-used books or equipment. We have limited space at the GSO—the club needs storage elsewhere that does not require the kindness of council members ☺. CAROp is too out-of-the-way to be considered for storage.

The majority of Burns Bog in Delta has recently been acquired by municipal, provincial and federal levels of government with the intention of preserving the bog in its wilderness state. The area of Delta containing Burns Bog is currently the darkest region of the Lower Mainland, and with this recent change in ownership it should remain so. This region can also be considered somewhat central to the Lower Mainland, with good access via Highway 99 (George Massey Tunnel), Highway 91 (Alex

continued on page 6



*Heavens and Earth  
Science and Nature Ltd*

TeleVue, Celestron, Orion, Sky-Watcher, Antares, 1000 Oaks, ScopeTronix...  
info@heavensandearth.com • www.heavensandearth.com • Toll Free: 1-866-537-6532

## President's Message

We lucked out again with the Total Lunar Eclipse on October 27. The Moon rose in penumbral eclipse with umbral contact starting at 6:14 PM, just in time for people to get off work and set up their telescopes. For the second year in a row, the weather cooperated and we had a great show. This one was a much deeper and longer eclipse than in 2003, with totality lasting 82 minutes. Four of our members took their telescopes out to Colony Farm to help with a GVRD event. Lynn Castagner of GVRD Regional Parks, Central contacted me to pass on thanks for the expertise and enthusiasm of our members, which added greatly to the GVRD event. I would also like to thank them for doing such a great job representing the Vancouver Centre. The estimates of attendance ranged between 400 and 600.

Another Total Lunar Eclipse event was held at the GMSO, in cooperation with the Space Centre. They had four telescopes outside and we provided at least another eight. Thanks to all of you who turned out. In addition, David Dodge ran the big scope in the dome

continued on page 7

## 2004 Vancouver Centre Officers

### President

Bill Ronald 604-733-7036  
ronaldb@shaw.ca

### Vice-President

Nicole van den Elzen 604-501-2656  
nicole@deepskyobjects.ca

### Secretary

Ron Jerome 604-298-3292  
jerome3292@shaw.ca

### Treasurer

Marc Verschuere 604-986-1485  
marcver@shaw.ca

### Librarian

William Fearon 604-939-1895  
williamfearon147@hotmail.com

### National Representative

Pomponia Martinez 604-215-8844  
pomponia@telus.net

### Membership

Dan Collier 604-732-6046

### Chair, CARO Committee

Bob Parry 604-215-8844  
robpar@telus.net

### Director of Telescopes

Phil Morris 604-734-8708

### Public Relations

Norman Song 604-299-7924  
norman\_song@telus.net

### Speakers

Barry Shanko 604-271-0615  
barry.mail@intouch.bc.ca

### Merchandising

Doug Montgomery 604-596-7058  
moondoug@home.com

### Nova Editor

Gordon Farrell 604-734-0326  
gfarrell@shaw.ca

### Webmaster

Jason Rickerby 604-502-8158  
rickerby@dccnet.com

### Greeter/Trustee

Lee Johnson 604-941-5364

### Trustee

Sally Baker 604-324-3309

## About RASC

The Vancouver Centre, RASC meets at 7:30 PM in the auditorium of the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre at 1100 Chestnut St., Vancouver, on the second Tuesday of every month. Guests are always welcome. In addition, the Centre has an observing site where star parties are regularly scheduled.

Membership is currently \$51.00 per year (\$26.00 for persons under 21 years of age) and can be obtained by writing to the Treasurer at the address below. Annual membership includes the invaluable Observer's Handbook, six issues of the RASC Journal, and, of course, access to all of the club events and projects.

For more information regarding the Centre and its activities, please contact our P.R. Director.

NOVA, the newsletter of the Vancouver Centre, RASC, is published on odd numbered months. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Vancouver Centre.

Material on any aspect of astronomy should be e-mailed to the editor, mailed to the address on page 5, or uploaded to SpaceBase™ at 604-473-9358, 59.

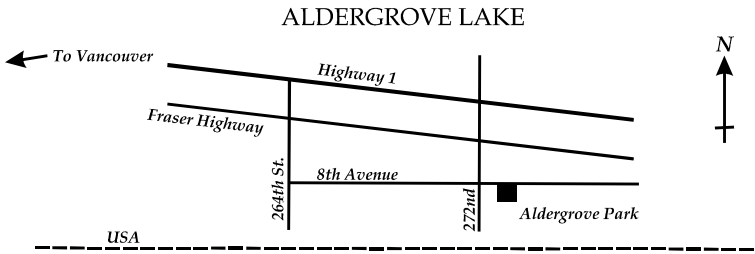
## Advertising

Nova encourages free use of its classified ads for members with items for sale or swap. Notify the editor if you wish your ad to run in more than one issue.

## Commerical Rates

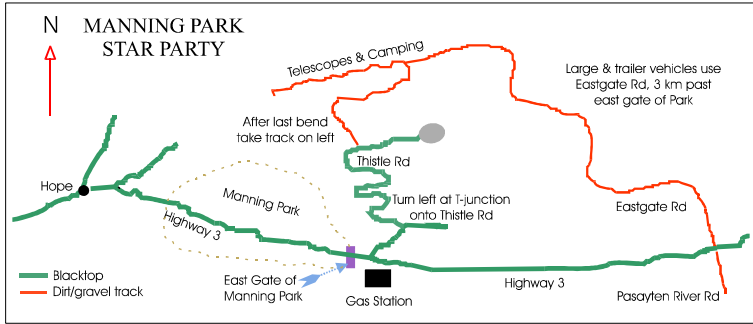
1/2 Page: \$25.00 per issue  
Full Page: \$40.00 per issue  
Rates are for camera-ready, or electronic files. Payment, by cheque, must accompany ad material. Make cheque payable to: RASC Vancouver Centre.

# Observing Sites

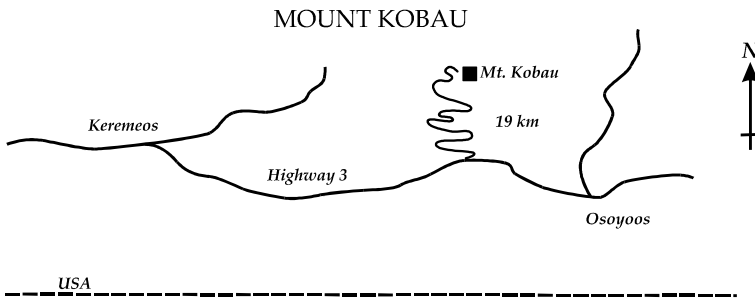


Dale McNabb Observatory in Aldergrove Lake Park (RASC Vancouver Centre's regular viewing site)

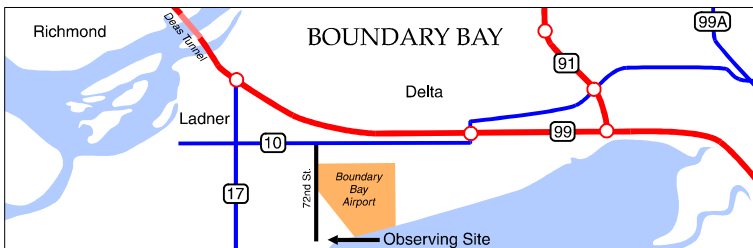
Contact Mike Penndelton (604-888-1505) or Howard Morgan (604-856-9186)



Site of the annual star party organized by the RASC Vancouver Centre



Site of the annual Mt. Kobau Star Party organized by the Mount Kobau Astronomical Society



Site of the regular Thursday night star party. On the dike at the foot of 72nd St.

## FOR SALE

Used, home made, Newtonian Reflector, manual adjustment, 7" mirror, 41" tube, excellent condition and comes with the following:

- Steel tripod w/shelf for accessories
- 25 mm Meade lens
- 10 mm Omcon lens
- 1 ¼ Celestron filter
- 3 vibration suppression pads

Asking \$395 for everything. Please contact Kim at 604-273-8442.

## ASTROCOMPUTING

**SpaceBase™** (604-473-9358,59). Affiliated since 1992 with RASC Vancouver, our link to RASC Net, RASC Members only chat area. Future data distribution hub for CARO Project. Features include latest HST images, current world space news and astronomy programs. Provides a file uploading facility for submitting articles and imagery to Nova.

## LIBRARY

The centre has a large library of books, magazines and old Nova's for your enjoyment at the GSO. Please take advantage of this club service and visit often to check out the new purchases. Suggestions for future library acquisitions are appreciated.

### RASCVC on the Internet

<http://members.shaw.ca/rascvan/>  
or <http://www.rasc.ca/vancouver>

## H.R. MACMILLAN SPACE CENTRE

The Pacific Space Centre Society is a non-profit organization which operates the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre and Gordon M. Southam Observatory. Annual Membership (\$30 Individual, \$65 Family) includes a newsletter, Discounts on Space Camps, special programs and lectures, Vancouver Museum Discounts, and free admission to the Space Centre. Admission to the Space Centre includes: Astronomy shows, Motion Simulator rides, multimedia shows in GroundStation Canada, and access to the Cosmic Courtyard Exhibit Gallery. For Membership information, call Mahi Jordao at 604-738-7827, local 237 for information. You can also reach them on the Internet at <http://www.hrmacmillanspacecentre.com/>

## MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES!

New members, did you know? The Vancouver Centre has 8 telescopes available for loan free of charge! We have telescopes ranging from 60mm to 10" diameter. For more information see Phil Morris, Director of Telescopes in the lobby of the GSO *after* the members meeting. All telescopes are to be picked up and returned at the GSO. The loaner period is for one month, to be returned after the next meeting. Telescopes are not allowed to circulate outside of these meetings. You can now reserve 2 different telescopes per year and use what is left at the end of the meeting anytime. Phil can be reached at 604-734-8708.

Your greatest opportunity as a member of the R.A.S.C. is to take advantage of the company of other enthusiasts to increase your knowledge, enjoyment and skill in astronomy.

The best thing you can do to gain the most from your membership is to get active! Take in the club meetings; engage other members with questions; come out to observing sessions (also known as "star parties"), and, by all means, volunteer to take part in our many public events.

Observing takes place at the Dale McNabb Observatory in the Aldergrove Lake Park, located in Langley, on 8th Avenue, just east of 272nd Street. We are there most clear nights. Contact Mike Pennelton at 604-888-1505 or Howard Morgan at 604-856-9186.

**RASC**  
**1100 Chestnut Street**  
**Vancouver, B.C.**  
**V6J 3J9**  
**604-738-2855**

# Upcoming Events

---

## December

14 – AGM

---

continued from page 2

Fraser Bridge) and Highway 10—thus providing convenient access from Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, Richmond, Surrey, Langley and of course Delta.

While the Bog itself may not present a suitable location, the area south of Highway 99 and Highway 10 may bear consideration. Currently several members regularly observe from the South end of 72nd Street in Delta and enjoy reasonable views of the Milky Way and a good South horizon. Drawbacks to this specific site are as follows:

- Low altitude, close to water. Dew accumulates quickly in the Spring and Fall.
- Some light pollution from green houses.
- Sky glow from Ladner and to the North (Vancouver to Coquitlam).
- The nearest existing washroom facilities are in Ladner or at the intersection of Highway 10 and Highway 99.

With the above caveats, the 72<sup>nd</sup> Street location is remarkably good for being 20 minutes from Vancouver.

There has been some discussion about an observing site somewhere between Lions Bay and Squamish but this does not really lend itself to greater accessibility, and then there is the question of development activities for the 2010 Olympics impacting the area. Not to mention, members outside of Vancouver cannot consider a site on the Sea-to-Sky highway as readily accessible due to distance.

The advantages to RASC Vancouver Centre members having a readily accessible site with a building (roll-off roof?) are:

- Convenient access to the larger club observing instruments, setup and ready to go.
- Potential relocation of AOMO to increase membership usage.
- Public Outreach events.
- Use and storage of other club instruments and equipment.
- On-hand resources to support workshops and activities such as:
  - How-to sessions for new telescope owners
  - Observing Techniques
  - Observing Certificate Groups

- Education Outreach to schools
- Virtual Star Parties (telescope collimation)
- Coordinated observing programs (Variable Star, Supernova Search, etc.)
- Astrophotography
- Star Parties
- Warm up room for long observing sessions
- Piers and electricity for members with equatorial mounts
- And best of all, you are only 5 to 30 minutes from home!

If you can assist with any of the following, it would be greatly appreciated:

- Contacts in Public or Private sector organizations that can assist the club with acquiring a site.
- Organizations interested in donating resources to support this project (eg. Building materials).

If you can help or have feedback on this proposal, please contact Jason Rickerby, Craig Breckenridge or Doug Montgomery, or anyone else on council. ★



continued from page 3

for public viewing, with a video camera on a piggyback scope which sent a continuous image to a projector in the classroom area. Also in that area were hot coffee and goodies provided by Pomponia and Bill, with donations covering our costs. Our thanks go to them for handling that job. Attendance was estimated to be between 600 and 800.

The turnout was not as good for our Sidewalk Astronomy Evening on September 25. We met at the Inuit Inuksuk statue at English Bay under partly cloudy skies. There were good views of the nearly Full Moon and views of other objects came and went.

Our six telescopes sometimes outnumbered the visitors. It was a bit like a small Vancouver Centre star party with people having time to look through each other's telescopes. It was particularly enjoyable for me to look through Brian Morse's binocular eyepiece setup, at least when I could get Pomponia to give it up.

In December I will be stepping down as President. I want to thank everyone on Council and the general membership for helping me and making my time as President so enjoyable. I think we had a great team and got a lot accomplished in the last two years. We hosted a fantastic

General Assembly to celebrate our 100 Royal Years. We held many public events such as the Sidewalk Astronomy nights and also the exceedingly popular MarsWatch and the Total Lunar Eclipse events, in cooperation with the Space Centre. Council won't be totally rid of me because I will hang around to kibitz as Past President. The good news is that I will be able to get on with a lot of those projects that I never quite got to during the last two years. The bad news is that my wife tells me that not all of the projects can be astronomy related. She has her own list.

– Bill Ronald ★

continued from page 1

close!" That puts a smile on my face. We had line ups for a couple of hours while the moon was dark, the people from the GVRD told us there was about four hundred people registered, so not a bad turnout.

Just as the moon started to come out of the shadow the

crowd started to thin out. Two or three of the organizers asked me if they could take some pictures through the scope, and I gladly let them. They were very thankful and grateful we showed to help. At about nine thirty, we noticed most of the people had left and the parks people were packing up. We

quickly followed their lead and were packed up and ready to go home at ten.

I would like to thank all the people at the GVRD for having us and a special thanks to Craig, Steve, and Bruce for coming out and helping with the show. ★

Photo by Gordon Farrell



## **RASC National Representatives' Report for October 2004**

by Pomponia Martinez

Hello everyone.

For those new to the RASC, you may wish to know that Vancouver Centre presently has two representatives that participate in the RASC's National Council. Doug Montgomery and I are the present reps. Official minutes of meetings can be found at [www.rasc.ca](http://www.rasc.ca) under the "Members" section.

The most recent National Council meeting took place on October 30, 2004. Doug and I participated via teleconference from Vancouver. There were about 22 voting Council members on site at the Toronto meeting and 12 teleconferences. I think Peter Jedicke, our new President, did a great job chairing the meeting. Peter is trying to get better communication going amongst National Council by having as much debate and clarification of issues ahead of the meeting as possible, using email.

If you have questions or suggestions about issues or services that you would like your reps to bring to council's attention, please feel free to let either Doug or I know.

The following were the major items raised at this recent

meeting:

1. A new task force (Task Force 21) was struck to study, develop and propose options for Council's consideration to help ensure the long-term financial security of the Society, given the reality of the current annual deficit. It's quite a large team which includes the Chairs of most Committees and five other advisors, three of which were appointed by Council at the meeting. So, I think we can safely say that all bases will be covered by the team, which will be chaired by Peter Jedicke! The Committee was asked to bring forward its likely modest budget request within 30 days.
2. The Finance Committee reported a likely deficit for year end, showing a \$25,000 deficit mid-Oct. The Finance Committee requested a tighter budget process that would see an early Budget being outlined in January of 2005, instead of March.
3. **Council is looking for a volunteer Editor for the Observer's Calendar.** So if you are an Astrophotographer with an aptitude for manipulating images, we would like to

hear from you! Rajiv Gupta will be retiring from this role after the 2006 edition, and would like to work with a new Editor over a coming transition period.

4. **A new volunteer is needed to produce the Annual Report.** It was approved at this Council meeting that the upcoming Annual Report will be reduced to its constitutional minimum and that the remaining contents will be made available at the RASC web site. This is an effective cost savings measure reflecting the low approval rating that the report received in the recent survey.
5. The 2005 Observer's Handbook has been shipped and Rajiv Gupta was appointed Handbook editor for another term.
6. Astronomy Day is scheduled for Saturday April 16, 2005.
7. A new "Sustaining" Membership category was endorsed by Council. This new membership fee will initially be set at 2x the Ordinary Membership fee, with half of the fee being eligible for a tax receipt. This is intended to complement the existing

continued on page 10



# RIVER GEMS

Rocks, Gems, Minerals & Fossils

Rivergems would like to extend the invitation out to all RASC Members to come and see our New Large Collection of –

## “Rocks from Outer Space”

We have a large collection of Meteorites from 5 grams to 1250 grams!  
Different locations, and the last witnessed fall.  
A sight to see!

Rivergems has other products of interests:

- Minerals
- Fossils
- Rocks
- Canadian Ammolite
- Silver and Gold Jewellery
- Megalodon Teeth
- Dinosaur Teeth, Eggs, Fossils

**Located in Historic Steveston (2nd Floor)**

**220-12240 second avenue**

**Richmond, BC**

**V7E 3L8**

**604 241 gems (4367)**

**[www.rivergems.com](http://www.rivergems.com)**

continued from page 8

donation process. It will be brought forward in more detail at the 2005 GA for approval.

**8. David Levy is looking for a technical skilled volunteer** to participate in a remote telescope initiative that he is exploring with the Astronomical Society of the

Pacific. Let us know if you are interested in lending a hand.

**9. Next National Council meeting is set for February 26, 2005.**

All in all, it was a very busy and productive meeting, lasting some 8 hrs. Doug and I had breakfast when everyone in

Toronto got their lunch break, so it made for a bit of a long day, but we feel we were able to save some travel costs in the process.

Let us know if you are interested in volunteering for any of the aforementioned activities and we will keep you posted on progress. ★

---

## Members' Gallery

---



**Lunar Eclipse**  
Gordon Farrell

afocal Canon Powershot S400  
Celestron G5  
with 35mm eyepiece  
8 sec. at ISO 50

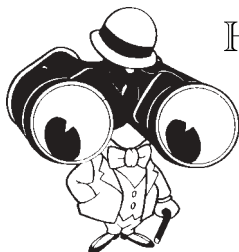
# RASC Vancouver Centre Council for 2005

Position	Name	Phone	email	Comments
President	Ron Jerome	604-298-3292	jerome3292@shaw.ca	Confirmed
Past President	Bill Ronald	604-733-7036	ronaldb@shaw.ca	No choice...
Vice President	Pomponia Martinez	604-215-8844	pomponia@telus.net	Confirmed
Secretary	Brian Morris			Confirmed
Treasurer	Marc Verschueren	604-986-1485	marcver@shaw.ca	Confirmed
National Rep. #1 & Marketing	Doug Montgomery	604-596-7058	moondoug@shaw.ca	Confirmed
National Rep. #2 & Webmaster	Jason Rickerby	604-502-8158	rickerby@dccnet.com	Confirmed
Director of Telescopes	Phil Morris	604-734-8708		Confirmed
Councillor & Membership	Dan Collier	604-732-6046		Confirmed
Councillor & Librarian	William Fearon	604-939-3154	williamfearon147@hotmail.com	Confirmed
Councillor & NOVA Editor	Gordon Farrell	604-734-0326	gfarrell@shaw.ca	Confirmed
Councillor				
Councillor & Public Relations	Bruce MacDonald			Confirmed
Speaker Coordinator	Barry Shanko	604-271-0615	barryshanko@telus.net	Confirmed
Honorary President	Dr. John MacDonald			Confirmed
Trustee	Sally Baker	604-324-3309		Confirmed
Trustee	Karl Miller		JKmiller@direct.ca	Confirmed
C.A.R.O. Committee				
Chairman	Bob Parry	604-215-8844	robpar@telus.net	Confirmed
Member	Ron Jerome	604-298-3292	jerome3292@shaw.ca	No choice
Member	Marc Verschueren	604-986-1485	marcver@shaw.ca	Confirmed
Member	Eric Fuller	604-540-2373	erichalfbee2002@yahoo.ca	Not confirmed
Member	Dan Collier	604-732-6046		Confirmed
Light Pollution Abatement Committee				
Chairman	Chris Dolman	604-707-0089	cdolman@telus.net	Confirmed
Education Committee				
Chairman & host of Lee's Amateur Hour	Craig Breckenridge	604-437-3103	craig.breckenridge@shaw.ca	Confirmed

## RASC MERCHANDISE

Available for purchase after meetings:

Calendars	\$14.00
Golf Shirts	\$30.00
Sweat Shirts	\$30.00
Centenary Mugs	\$ 7.00
Beginners' Guides	\$15.00
Observers' Guides	\$20.00
Cloth Crests	\$11.00
Lapel Pins	\$ 6.00
L.E.D. Flashlights	\$22.00



## HARRISON SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS LTD.

**Telescopes - Binoculars  
Microscopes & Accessories  
Weather Instruments**

DEALER FOR

**ZEISS • PENTAX • CELESTRON •  
BUSHNELL/BAUSCH & LOMB • SKYWATCHER •  
OLYMPUS • STEINER**

CD-ROM Astronomy Skymaps for PC's  
"Like New" Consignment Equipment

**1859 West 4th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6J 1M4**  
**tel: 604-737-4303 fax: 604-737-4390**  
**e-mail: harscope@direct.ca**

## Vancouver Telescope Centre

Telescope, Binocular, Microscope Specialists  
**PROPRIETOR JOHN HARTLEY**  
2565 Yew Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6K 2E3

### New

Telescopes, Binoculars, Spotting  
Scopes and accessories by

**MEADE**

**CELESTRON**

**BAUSCH & LOMB**

**OMCON-KOWA**

**BUSHNELL**

**SWAROVSKI-STEINER**

**SWIFT-PENTAX**

**CARL ZEISS-NIKON**

**SKY WATCHER**

**VISTA ANTARES**

Assorted eyepieces, barlows,  
star diagonals 0.96" - 2"

New and second hand

Visit our Web site at

[www.vancouvertelescope.com](http://www.vancouvertelescope.com)

e-mail: [john\\_hartley@telus.net](mailto:john_hartley@telus.net)

### Second Hand

JMI NGC Micro-max (C8/GP mount)	\$ 300.00
Meade 4" Ring Tube C/Weight	\$ 45.00
Meade APO Universal Thread Adaptor	\$ 39.00
Meade 2080 8"SC + many accessories	\$ 2500.00
Meade Pictor CCD Autoguider model 201XT	\$ 599.00
Meade 10" f/4.5 Starfinder/equatorial mount plus accessories	\$ 1500.00

Now in stock: Pentax XL Eyepieces