

NOVA

NEWSLETTER OF THE VANCOUVER CENTRE RASC | VOLUME 2010 ISSUE 1 | JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

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Looking Ahead

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

Jan. 14: Alan McConnachie of the DAO: Galaxy archaeology in the nearby Universe.

Feb. 11: Open House at BAA (see article for details & map).

Mar. 11: TBA.

Next Issue Deadline

Material for the March Nova should be submitted by Monday, Mar. 1, 2010. Please send submissions to:

Gordon Farrell (gfarrell@shaw.ca)

Title image: Jason Rickerby

Open House at Breckenridge Anderson Astronomical Ltd.

by Craig Breckenridge

Thursday February 11th, 7:30 PM – 10:00 PM

#6 - 8980 Fraserwood Court
Burnaby, BC (a block south of Boundary and Marine)

About three years ago, a chance conversation with a co-worker

ing getting permits to erect the building?” That started a series of phone calls to people I knew as the number of people with the resources to do this is actually fairly small. One of my contacts turned up with a name and email address. A short exchange of emails and it looked like I would



at Dynamic Structures started with: “Do you know anyone who is going to build a telescope manufacturing facility in Aldergrove, because they are investigat-

be the manager of this new facility. And then my computer suffered a fatal motherboard error. I lost everything I had on it as the disk drive suffered damage from

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IMPORTANT: The February meeting will NOT be held at the Planetarium. We will instead have a tour of Breckenridge Anderson Astronomical Ltd.'s facility in Burnaby (details above; see map above)

I didn't arrive at the Merritt Star Quest until the evening of Sunday, September 13th. The skies had cleared up since the Mount Kobau Star Party but there was still smoke lingering around from the summer forest fires. The first evening of observing was cut short when a 25-day-old waxing crescent Moon lit up the night sky around 2 o'clock in the morning. The Moon had ended one evening of observing but it did provide a rewarding view just two mornings later when a slim crescent rose around 4:30 am with Venus following just three degrees behind.

Doug Montgomery arrived in a three-ton moving van towing his new camping trailer. He hadn't planned on renting the van but his vehicle broke down on the trip up to the star party. With vehicle repair work being done in Merritt, the van was the only vehicle available to tow his trailer.

Alan Jones left the Star Party as the winner of a TeleVue Ethos eyepiece.

One week after returning from the Merritt Star Quest, I was at another Star Party. This was one of the many Urban Star Parties hosted by the SFU Astronomy Club. Autumn is not a prime observing time on the west coast but the skies were clear and I was able to observe Europa slip behind Jupiter. At times the seeing steadied and allowed me to just detect the Giant Red Spot on the surface of

the planet. I believe we shared the night sky with around 75 people that evening.

On Sunday, September 27, Vancouver Centre hosted the third annual Paul Sykes Memorial Lecture at the HR MacMillan Space Centre. A group of 130 people attended to hear Dr. Neil Turok's talk, "What Banged?" a review on the Big Bang and how the universe began. This amateur astronomer has a ways to go before he can understand how the vast universe we observe with our infant technology could possibly originate from nothing.

In October, a group of ten interested people attended the Silk Purse Arts Centre in West Vancouver to hear Harvey Dueck talk on measuring the distance to the stars. The presentation was held outdoors but an overcast sky didn't allow any observing that evening.

On October 23rd, David Dodge made a presentation at the Roundhouse Community Centre to 30 people. His talk, "Myths to Megapixels," covered the development of astronomy from the ancient Egyptians right through to modern techniques and planned observatories to observe the night sky. When I left home that evening, it was raining and I was not expecting to do any observing. I only brought along a small 6" Dobsonian telescope. After the presentation, the skies had cleared and we did manage to do some observing for about

50 people down on the False Creek sea walk.

The most interesting object of the evening was Jupiter with its four Galilean Moons. The weather was not too good but we were able to point out a few deep sky objects and a number of double stars.

On November 13th, we were at the Silk Purse Arts Centre again to help promote a textile exhibit hosted by the centre. The show had a celestial theme and Ed Hanlon, a member from the sunshine Coast, put together a slide presentation on auroras. The weather did clear up and we were able to get outside and have about 30 people look through our telescopes.

I was fortunate enough to have the time to get up to Simon Fraser University and participate in two more astronomy workshops in November and December. The SFU astronomy program has seen the donation of 85 telescopes to groups and individual families. More than 2000 people participated in the workshops. Please watch the Starry Nights @ SFU website if you are interested in attending one of their Urban Star Parties.

Once again I would like to thank all of you that helped to achieve the goal of sharing 1,000,000 Galileo Moments with the public. The last time I checked the IYA 2009 website the total count of was 1,311,255. ★

President's Message

As I pack my suitcase in anticipation of our trip, it looks like I will leave my telescope behind. The terrorist act in December that has once again affected US air traffic has made carry-on luggage a potential problem. I usually put my 80mm refractor in a lawn chair bag well insulated with foam. The rest of the gear fits nicely in box in my backpack and both reside in the overhead compartment in an aircraft. The mount is collapsed into my suitcase (some reassembly required). Now virtually everything will have to go into the belly of the aircraft, which puts my scope at risk. There is also a charge for extra bags as well as a limit on the number of bags. As I result, I am looking forward to Vancouver Centre putting on a portable telescope making workshop. The objective would be a nice, tidy, all inclusive package that would fit easily into a suitcase.

The genesis of that idea was actually a couple of articles written by Gary Seronik for *Sky & Telescope* (I refer you to the August and September issues of 2009). Gary had issued a challenge to readers in March to find the one who had made the most compact 8-inch travel scope. He featured the competitors in the first and selected a winner in the second. It turns out that the competitor

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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 Thursday of every month. Guests are always welcome. In addition, the Centre has an observing site where star parties are regularly scheduled.

Membership is currently \$70.00 per year (\$41.00 for persons under 21 years of age) and can be obtained by writing to the Treasurer at the address on page 5. 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 or mailed to the address on page 5.

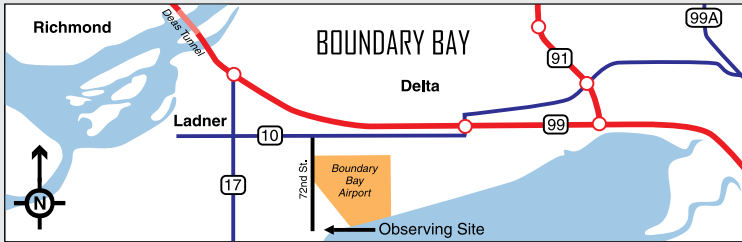
Advertising

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.

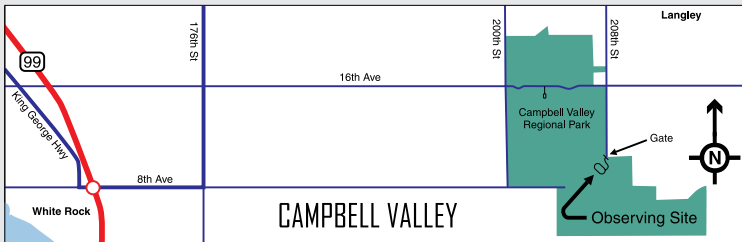
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1/4 Page: \$15.00 per issue
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Rates are for electronic or camera-ready files. Payment, by cheque, must accompany ad material. Make cheque payable to:
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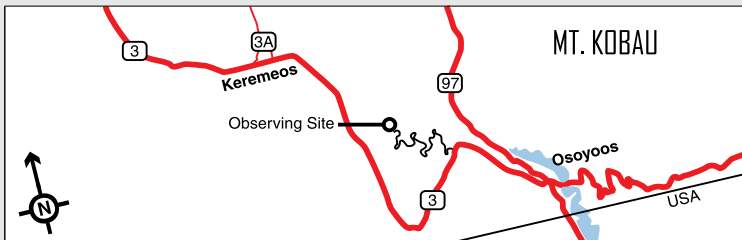
OBSERVING SITES



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



Our alternate observing site. Contact Bruce MacDonald (604-882-3820) to see if this site is in use.



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

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from Calgary, Carole Benoit, had participated in a telescope making workshop organized annually for Calgary Centre by a talented designer named Phil Johnson.

I met Phil this year at Mt. Kobau, where I gather he has displayed his handiwork on previous occasions. I approached him with the prospect of coming to Vancouver for a weekend where we would host a workshop. In Calgary, the centre members

work on their scopes over the winter so there is lots of time for all the participants to design and construct individual projects under Phil's watchful eye. Our plan is to limit the design choices to one or two possibilities. All the hardware would be ordered ahead of time and the framework would be pre-cut. Participants would assemble their scopes over a couple of days while being instructed on the 'whys' and 'wherefores' that contribute to a workable design.

Those with ambitions to do more would have the opportunity to benefit from Phil's experience.

Discussions with Phil are ongoing at this time but we are hopeful that we will have a firm commitment for April or May (I am not back from my travels until early April and I don't want to miss out on this). The costs of the workshop would simply be the materials and preparation costs if there are any. The mirrors would be the

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Important Notice!!!

PAID PARKING IS COMING TO THE SPACE CENTRE!

Effective Feb. 1, parking in the HR Macmillan Space Centre's lot will be metered. At the time of publication, we had not yet received confirmation of the rates (hourly or an evening flat rate). The RASC-Vancouver Council is aware of the burden this will place on our members who attend the monthly meetings and we are considering our options.

Please note we have no meeting at the Space Centre in February, so this would come into effect for us as of the March meeting.

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major expense as none would be ground during this workshop. In the meantime, members with an interest should talk to Howard Trotter or Pomponia.

The University of British Columbia will be hosting The World At Night exhibition January 4, 2010 – Jan 30, 2010 in the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre. For more info on the TWAN project, visit

http://twanight.org/newTWAN/about_us.asp. Our centre has contributed funding as one of the sponsors and will be provid-

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LIBRARY

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

RASC-VC on the Internet

<http://rasc-vancouver/> or
<http://www.rasc.ca/vancouver>

Details of upcoming meetings and events can be found at our Meetup group at:

<http://astronomy.meetup.com/131/>

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, \$80 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 Bob Parry, Director of Telescopes in the meeting room of the GMSO after the members meeting. All telescopes are to be picked up and returned at the GMSO. 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 two different telescopes per year and use what is left at the end of the meeting anytime. Bob can be reached at 604-215-8844.

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 Boundary Bay on the dike at the south end of 72nd St. in Delta (see map on p. 4). We are there most clear Friday/Saturday nights. Contact Jason Rickerby at 604-502-8158.

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

February

11 – Tour of Breckenridge
Anderson Astronomy's facility.

April

19-25 – International Astronomy
Week I

August

7-15 – Mt. Kobau Star Party
12 – Perseid meteor shower

September

4-11 – Merritt Star Quest

October

11-17 – International Astronomy
Week II

December

9 – AGM

For Sale

ASTRONOMICAL TELESCOPE FOR SALE

\$1800 or best offer

• INTES 'MK65' model F/10 150MM MAK-CASSEGRAIN

- superb optical performance. Optics made in Russia. Tube exterior has been powdercoated wrinkle-black & interior lined for anti-reflection; fixed primary mirror (virtually immune to collimation error)

[minimum magnification w
Televue 32mm is 46x; max magnification ~300x w Barlow]

- OTA has Losmandy dovetail mount
- Custom mounted on Losmandy GM-8 mount
- Crayford type 1 1/4" diam focuser; made by JMI
- Celestron 8x50 Finder w 12V LED reticle illumination & dew shield. **Illuminated Polaralignment reticle & calculator incl**

• Losmandy GM-8 German Equatorial mount w 12V motor drive.

Uses 12VDC or AC adaptor or car battery. Made in USA.

- tracks beautifully with full Periodic Error Correction
- autoguiding unit interfaces w Losmandy controller; uses 'Guide' shareware (included); runs on any DOS-computer (not included).

- 2 counterweights

- hand-controller

- standard Losmandy aluminum tripodvery stable

- accessories tray, mounts between tripod legs, foam-lined (white so you can see what's on it)

• Scope & all accessories are fitted into Stanley rolling toolchest

• entire Losmandy pkg, excepting tripod, is fitted into single, sealed carrying case, lined with thick ethafoam

Extras

• Adaptor plate, 1/4" 6061 aluminum: permits main scope & camera to be simultaneously mounted & balanced independently; or mount main scope & guide scope (this plate mounts directly to Losmandy dovetail; allows two scopes to be mounted in parallel & balanced independently, each using a Losmandy dovetail)

• several 1 1/4" eyepieces.....32mm Televue, 15mm Orion, 30mm Baush & Lomb Plossl, 18mm Baush & Lomb Plossl, 12mm Baush & Lomb Plossl, Meade 11mm Guiding eyepiece, 2x Barlow lens

• soft foam dew-shield, electrically heated (12V, 4W)

• various electrical cords and adaptors eg. cigarette lighter power plugin

• custom-machined camera mount; allows camera to be mounted easily to Losmandy S-Steel counterweight shaft

** I'll include several hours of setup and usage of this fine instrument, plus advice in the care & feeding.

**

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the excess voltage that went coursing through the system. A check of the local phone books didn't yield anything and I couldn't remember the email address I had been exchanging with. I could remember his name though but any avenue I tried did not bear any results.

In the meantime, I was asked by Mel Bartels if I was interested in participating in a new group based out of California Polytechnic that was endeavouring to change the manner in which large telescopes (1 – 2 metres) were designed and fabricated in order to make them more accessible to amateurs. This is exactly the area of telescope design that I am interested in so I gladly joined the Alt-Az Initiative. Things went along well and, one day, one of the members (Tom Krajcki) made the

comment that he was down in Chile setting up some telescopes for the very person I had been in

you!”

Needless to say, after much hard work on both our parts, we are in



contact with regarding setting up shop in Aldergrove. I, of course, immediately contacted Tom and asked if he had the fellow's contact information and would he please give mine to him. Tom did even better; he gave my phone number to my missing contact. The first phone conversation went like:

“Hi, it's Craig. Do you remember me?” (A year had gone by without contact)

“Of course, when I got up this morning I knew I had to contact someone and that someone was

the midst of setting up a facility in Burnaby (it's closer to my home)

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Local artist Stacy Sakai visits BAA

Although I have been involved for the last few years, the efforts of many volunteers and organizers such as Antony Overton, Duncan Munroe, Eric Fuller and Bob Parry has laid the foundation for the observatory. I am looking for any information on the history of the observatory. If there are any members that have any past photos or stories to tell, I would appreciate a copy.

The past year has been a time for learning. Training sessions have been successful in getting a few members interested in making use of the observatory and encouraging a number of others that are

interested in seeing the facility and helping out in other ways.

The computer programs we are using are helpful in locating areas that need to be improved on to get better image results.

Astrophotography is a big part of the observatory and since the old Art Holms observatory was cleared away there have been a few members out to use the cement pad for observing outside.

Over 400 man-hours of training, work parties and observing was recorded at the observatory from November 1, 2008 to October 31, 2009.

The current focus is to get the

most from the equipment we currently have available and work needs to be done on improving the quality of our images. In the New Year, I will be working at having weekend sessions for members that would like to find out a bit more about what we are doing.

Future projects:

- Complete a set of images of the moon at different ages (phases) to have available at sidewalk astronomy events.
- Learn how to record and image occultation events.
- Learn photometry and how to image variable stars. ✨

AOMO Report

by Wayne Lyons

Welcome to the New Year and a new decade. I am looking forward to continuing the efforts initiated in IYA 2009. It has been personally rewarding to be able to help others learn about and enjoy observing our universe.

Although there was no training in December, I did manage to get up to the observatory on about two occasions when the weather cooperated. After scrambling to get good images of the Moon for the LCROSS impact by NASA, I

have been working at getting better images of the Moon.

The photograph taken here is a mosaic of 24 images combined with MaxIM DL.

Our weekly observatory training sessions will continue this year. They are very informal and any of our members are welcome to attend. Please contact me if you would like to find out more about our observatory. I would also like to have some weekend observing sessions at our site in the research forest and I will be working with our observatory committee

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Mars 2009-12-27

RASC - AOMO

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to make this happen.

Due to bad weather, I missed the occultation of Mars with the Bee Hive Cluster on November 1st, 2009. The retrograde motion of the planet will give us another opportunity to see the planet pass just three degrees North of the cluster in the first week of February, 2010. Although this

conjunction will not be as spectacular as the one last November, it should still be well worth observing with a good pair of binoculars. There will be yet another opportunity to

observe this conjunction in mid April, 2010 after resuming its regular motion through the sky. I am hoping to get a better image of the planet as it approaches its closest proximity to our planet

since December of 2007. It will reach opposition on January 29th and be observable as an evening star until mid May, 2010. ★



NGC 7331

Courtesy RASC Van - AOMO

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where we are manufacturing 0.8m Equatorial Fork Mounts through to 1.5m Equatorial telescopes and 1m to 2.5m Alt-Az telescopes. The first telescope we have collaborated on is sitting

in Maui, soon to be housed in a roll-off roof observatory on Hale Akela. It remains the property of my partner and I. The second telescope is under construction at this time and parts will be on hand at the Open House noted

above. Optical figuring equipment is also on hand but will not likely be fully installed yet. Optics for the 1.3m telescope are available for display.

I do hope you will come out and see my new shop. ★

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ing some educational programs in conjunction with the month-long show. Details will be available from the Meetup site, <http://astronomy.meetup.com/131/calendar/12102186/> and from

our website as well. I encourage you to attend the exhibit and support our activities if you can.

I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year on behalf of Council and Clear Skies, although, given the time of year, it would be

more realistic to say Only Partly Cloudy Skies. Let the nights be clear! ★

– Ron Jerome



Moon (11 days old)
AOMO – Wayne Lyons
26 December, 2009



The Orion Nebula M42 and Running Man NGC 1977 - SXVF-M25C C14 Hyperstar 12 - 2 min images Maxim DL - PS2 - James Black

Orion Nebula (M42) and Running Man (NGC 1977)
James Black

Proud To Serve Vancouver's Astronomical Community



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