

# NOVA

NEWSLETTER OF THE VANCOUVER CENTRE RASC | VOLUME 2008 ISSUE 5 | SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008

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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.

**Sept. 11:** Members' Night.

**Oct. 9:** RASC-VC member Craig Breckenridge: The Large Binocular Telescope.

**Nov. 13:** Larry Reeves of MDA presents a travelogue of his trips to Russia's Baikonur Cosmodrome.

## Next Issue Deadline

Material for the November Nova should be submitted by Monday, Nov. 3, 2008. Please send submissions to:

Gordon Farrell (gfarrell@shaw.ca)

Title image: Jason Rickerby

## Mt. Kobau Star Party Report 2008

by Bob Parry

This year's Mt. Kobau Star Party was earlier than most in the recent past, beginning on the August long weekend and going until Sunday, August 10<sup>th</sup>. This year was slightly

issues as I paid that debt last year with a flat on the trailer and on the truck.

Tuesday night was a wonderful night with the Milky Way bright



Photo by Bob Parry

Crepuscular rays due to ash from Alaska's Kasatochi Volcano

different for Pomponia and I as we both left on Tuesday. Pomponia often has business to deal with and has come later in the week. We had an enjoyable drive to Mt. Kobau with our 18-ft travel trailer arriving on the mountain around 5:00 PM. This year there were no tire

and visible from horizon to horizon. Pomponia's 12-inch dob and Ron Jerome's 16-inch were having a great time finding faint fuzzies with M82 being especially entertaining. The active part of the galaxy, which is pouring vast

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amount of energy from the core, was very visible. This is very evident in photographs but it is the first time that I have seen it visually—quite a treat. Everyone was enjoying the evening and some stayed up until the sky got too bright to observe.

Unfortunately, that was the last good night for us. Wednesday night was completely clouded over and we went to bed early. I got up again around 1:00 AM and stuck my head out of the trailer and low and behold there were stars. I grabbed my binoculars and went out to take a look at the heavens. There were sucker holes, but very large ones. How-

ever, I did not think they were large enough to warrant getting my scope operational so I laid out on the grass with my bins and looked straight overhead at Cygnus and had a wonderful time tracing the dark lanes in the Milky Way. The sky, where it was clear, was the most transparent that I can ever remember seeing. The reports that one can see the North America Nebula in binoculars turn out to be true. I was amazed to see the

Gulf of Mexico portion very clearly and I can put that in my log. The clouds came back and it was now well past 2:00 so I went back to bed.

On Thursday, we went down to Osoyoos and had a shower at the Husky Truck Stop. After several days in the dust at the top of Mt. Kobau, the \$7 for a shower is the best money you can spend. I have heard it said that technology

ing. However, this was not very promising as the clouds were very dense and only Jupiter was visible on occasion. Pomponia was tired and went to bed while I went socializing at Ron and Anne's. We were having a great time solving all the world's problems when a knock on the door came with a request to turn the outside light off as there were stars! Ron and I filed out of the trailer and sure enough

the sky was clear. We uncovered Ron's scope and started hunting down the usual suspects. Wayne came by and we decide to go up to his camp and check out the Veil. We scoped the Veil from East to West and back—a view I never tire of. One the



Wayne Lyons and his award for Best Daytime Photo

peaked with the Hot Shower. After a time in the Kobau heat and dust, I am a believer. My hat goes off to Wayne Lyons—who drove us down to town—for camping since Saturday night before heading in for a shower. I'm afraid I really like the comfort and warmth of our trailer and at my ripe old age do not think I would want to spend that much time in a tent. We returned to the top of Mt. Kobau hoping for a good night of observ-

neighbouring observers brought his Ethos over so of course we all had to have a look. They are amazing, but my budget cannot accommodate one of those. We tried to find the Crescent nebula, to no avail, so Ron and I went back to his scope. Using his Argo Navis setting circle we soon nailed Van Gogh's Ear, as the Crescent Nebula is known locally—a much better name in view and a perfect de-

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Photo by Ron Jerome

## President's Message

It's hard to believe that September is here, already! The summer went by quickly and I only really had one or two good days of observing in August. The best day was the Tuesday evening that Bob and I got to the Mt. Kobau Star Party. The sky was dark with glitter from the Milky Way. My favourite targets at Star Parties are in Sagittarius, which is low on the southern horizon. With my 12" Lightbridge Dob, I was literally bumping into M22, a breathtaking globular cluster in Sagittarius, as well as M8, the Lagoon Nebula and M20, the Trifid Nebula. M17, the Swan Nebula, was another catch as was the spiral M81 and M82, a beautiful edge-on galaxy near the Big Dipper. But that was about it for observing. The following star party days were dogged by smoke from the south and ominous clouds which eventually delivered some unwelcome rain! But we are a pretty hardy bunch. Vancouver Centre attendees turned out as promised Saturday morning on August 9<sup>th</sup> to chop fruit for a gigantic fruit salad, flip at least 160 pancakes, roast over 200 sausages and serve coffee for everyone atop the mountain. In addition to Vancouver members, I wanted to thank in Anne Jerome for pitching in with such enthusiasm. I know our breakfast was greatly appreciated by Mount Kobau attendees.

**I am very pleased to report that Vancouver has now been registered as a charitable or-**

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## 2008 Vancouver Centre Officers

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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.

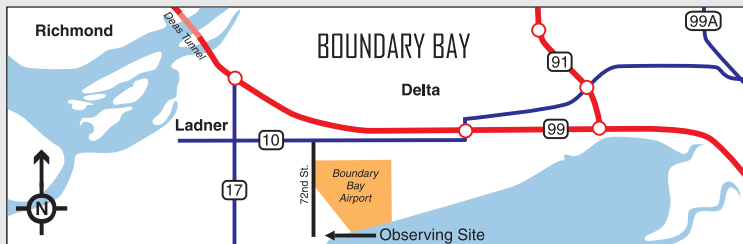
## Advertising

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.

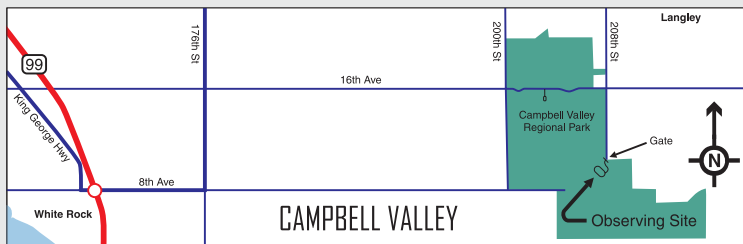
## Commerical Rates

1/4 Page: \$15.00 per issue  
1/2 Page: \$25.00 per issue  
Full Page: \$40.00 per issue  
Rates are for electronic or camera-ready files. Payment, by cheque, must accompany ad material. Make cheque payable to:  
RASC Vancouver Centre.

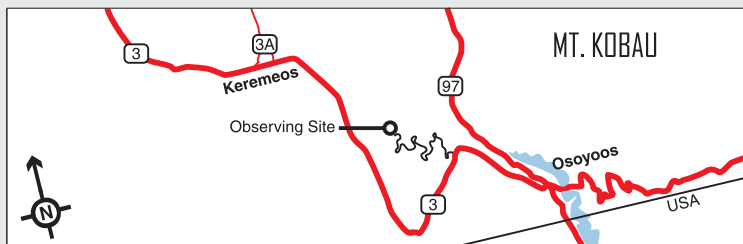
# OBSERVING SITES



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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## ganization in British Columbia.

This means that we are now able to accept donations directly through Vancouver Centre. I wanted to acknowledge our Treasurer, Bruce MacDonald, as well as Ron Jerome and Norman Song who have put in a lot of effort to make this possible.

Another positive development on Council has been the appointment of Robert Reppel as Council Member responsible for

Webmaster duties. Robert is now working with Andy Shen, an SFU student volunteer and Gil Biderman of the RASC to re-vamp our website to make it more user-friendly. Robert and Gil have also posted our upcoming events on a new website, [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com), under the Vancouver Astronomy meetup group, which can be found under the science area of the site. Robert will be giving us a demo of the new RASC site and the meetup group at the October 9<sup>th</sup>

RASC monthly meeting.

Planning is underway for our International Year of Astronomy 2009 activities. Again, if you would like to be involved in this project in any way, please let me know or you can also contact Ron Jerome ([jerome3292@shaw.ca](mailto:jerome3292@shaw.ca)) who is coordinating our IYA 2009 activities.

**Just a reminder to join us for the upcoming Paul Sykes Memorial Lecture on September 13<sup>th</sup>**

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**at 7:00 in Room 201 of the Hennings Physics building at UBC. Dr. Rosaly M.C. Lopes from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, will be speaking on "Mapping the Lakes and Rivers on Saturn's Moon Titan" and will show us just how similar the Earth is to the largest moon in the solar system.**

If you are interested in discussing RASC issues and priorities for 2009, Council will be holding its annual planning session at 6:00pm at the GMSO on October 16<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to contribute your ideas to the session, please contact me.

Weather in September has been great! So I hope to get some good observing in over the next few months. Bob will be talking about new scopes in our Loaner program, so now is a good time to try one out!

Best wishes,

– Pomponia ★

## 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://www.pcis.com/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, \$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**

## September

13 – Paul Sykes Memorial Lecture: Rosaly Lopes – Mapping Titan's Lakes and Rivers

20 – Sidewalk Astronomy at the Inukshuk at Sunset Beach

## October

16 – Annual Planning Meeting

## December

11 – AGM

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scription.

Friday night was a lost cause with rain throughout most of the night. It did stop, thank you Mister Weatherman, Saturday morning for the second annual Pancake Breakfast sponsored by RASC Vancouver Centre. With Pomponia making pancake batter as fast as she could, Anne making delicious fruit salad and as much coffee as we could make, the breakfast was a big hit. Everyone on the moun-

tain really appreciated it and thanked everyone for putting it together. I think that myself and the other “visible” workers got the praise which should have gone to Pomponia and Anne with special thanks to Dana Rickerby for the sour dough starter even though she, Jason and family could not be there this year. Without their hard work, it would not have been such a success.

This year's Mt. Kobau was not as successful from a weather

standpoint as previous years but, as usual, was a great social gathering of observers from all over the West. Next year will be a bit different because of the RASC General Assembly being held that weekend at Cyprus Hills in Saskatchewan. Jason Rickerby is on the Mt. Kobau executive and will keep us informed of the changes that will happen for Mt. Kobau 2009.

Until then, clear skies. ✨



Photo by Suzanna Nagy

Ronan Kerr, youth member of RASC Vancouver Centre and Winner of the Grand Prize in the Raffle at the Merritt Star Quest.

12-inch Dob donated by Vancouver Telescope.

## Mt. Kobau Gallery



Photos by Ron Jerome

Proud To Serve Vancouver's Astronomical Community



# Vancouver Telescope Centre

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