

# NOVA

NEWSLETTER OF THE VANCOUVER CENTRE RASC | VOLUME 2011 ISSUE 5 | SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011

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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 Ray Whittick Lounge.

**Sept. 8:** David Halliday, President of Dynamic Structures: "In Focus"

**Oct. 13:** Kaspar von Braun, NASA Exoplanet Science Institute, Caltech: "Transiting: Extrasolar Planets — An introduction and more"

**WED, Nov. 9:** Ray Jayawardhana: "Rocks, Ice and Penguins: Searching for Meteorites in Antarctica"

## Next Issue Deadline

Material for the November Nova should be submitted by Monday, Oct. 31, 2011. Please send submissions to: [novaeditor.rascvancouver@gmail.com](mailto:novaeditor.rascvancouver@gmail.com)  
Title image: Jason Rickerby

## Summer Star Parties

by Alan Jones

### Mt. Kobau Star Party

The Mt. Kobau star party is different every visit and 2011 did not disappoint. Every year, I meet new people and reacquaint with friends I see only at star parties. The journey from Vancouver is pleasant but longish in my nearly collector-age vehicle, intended primarily for camping. The last stretch is gravel road that requires patience to go slowly. I arrive late this year and somewhat worried about the "red light only" sign (after 10 pm). Whew, just made it. The moon was setting but no one likes to set up in the dark and draw the ire of fellow astronomers accustoming their eyes to darkness.

I find a spot using red light, pull in with all lights off and meet my new neighbours, both old friends and new. Camping set up is easy, just pop the top and I'm done. This year I'm determined to do something better about collimation; all opinions and ideas are welcome. Are my recent soft views due to poor sky or poor collimation or something else? I

haven't seen crisp views in a long time and Kobau has the sky potential and the collective expertise to reveal an answer.

My neighbour to the east, Don, is from Quesnel. He is a confessed new enthusiast for astronomy and recent graduate of a course hosted by his local RASC centre qualifying him to operate their 24-inch SCT. Don shows me his binocular turntable. It's a wonderful device made of PVC pipe, straws, electrical tape, hose clamps, a Costco lawn chair and a plywood circle on a turntable bearing. You get into it like climbing into a small sports car. Adjust the 10x70 binocs and you are comfortably immersed in the cosmos.

Ted Allen is on the other side with his Obsession 20-inch. He beckons us to look at M81 and 82, a pair of my all-time favourite galaxies. After looking in the big scope, I have high hopes of good views though my 16-in, just have to carefully collimate. I get back to my scope and later invite Don over to look at some other deep

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**NOTE: The October meeting may be moved to a different location. The November meeting will be on Wednesday, Nov. 9, location TBA. Watch Meetup for details.**





## President's Message

As I start to write this message, it's nearing 2AM on the Saturday of Labour Day weekend. This will be the last day of my family's first summer in rural south Okanagan, much of it to be spent in the usual ritual of tidying and packing that comes with the end of summer vacation (though with time for a hike into the woods with my son Alexandre). Tomorrow we will drive back to Vancouver and into the real world.

Many an amateur astronomer has been born under the deep dark skies of a rural summer, not to mention the countless childhood memories that are forged when the Milky Way is seen to trace its glorious summer arc through the zenith. No wonder that for so many members of our Vancouver Centre, as with thousands of RASCals across the country, the urge to get under a rural sky has its greatest power in the summer.

Annual summer star parties in isolated rural locales are held throughout North America. The Mount Kobau Star Party (this year's 28<sup>th</sup> edition having run from July 30 until August 7), and the Merritt Star Quest (which started on August 27 and wraps up today), both draw many of our members. Mind you, not even summer skies can compromise the commitment of your Council and other member volunteers to bring astronomy to the public at convenient locations in and near to the urban light swamp that is Vancouver! (Full confession: my own public outreach efforts this summer

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## 2011 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 \$73.00 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.

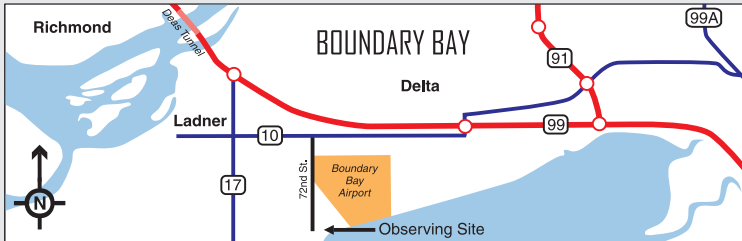
## Advertising

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.

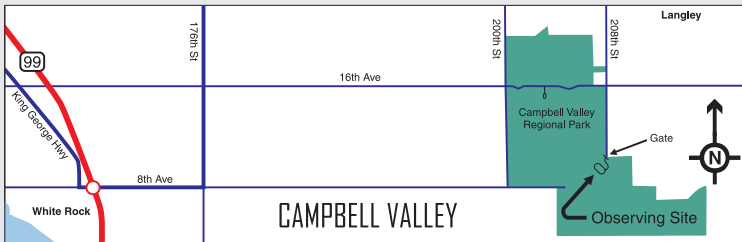
## Commerical Rates

1/4 Page: \$15.00 per issue  
1/2 Page: \$25.00 per issue  
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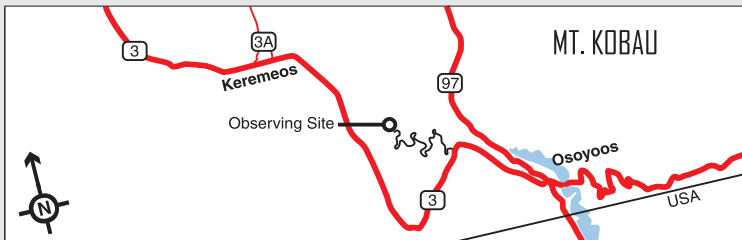
# OBSERVING SITES



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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have been confined to a keyboard ☹.)

RASC Vancouver participated at the New Westminster Grimston Park “Summerfest” on July 16; at the Metro Parks Deas Island Regional Park “Starry Night” on August 13; and at Metro Parks “All Night Stargazing” at Aldergrove Lake Regional Park on August 19. (by the way, this makes four events so far this year at which Metro Parks and Vancouver Centre have partnered to bring astronomy to thousands of people. We started with Metro

Parks annual “Night Quest” at Pacific Spirit Regional Park back on March 19, and held our very rainy Astronomy Day at Aldergrove Lake Regional Park on May 7, with Metro Parks awesome logistical support.)

As I reported in the July/August edition of NOVA, your Council decided to devote our July and August public meetings at the Space Centre entirely to our “What’s Up?” program, which is tailored to newcomers to astronomy (especially young ones!). The back story is that attendance by members at summer

meetings has historically been on the low side (owing in part to the need that so many of us have to scratch that rural summer sky itch), and there always exists the temptation for Council to cancel the summer meetings, so that its members can partake to the fullest in the rural summer sky odyssey. (Another confession: while others on Council have done good much work this summer, I’ve been fixed under south Okanagan skies >:).) On July 14, Bob Parry, well known to our members as

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a past President and Director of Telescopes, took our audience on a tour with “Robots of the Solar System”, and on August 11, your Education Chair, “Mr. Stargazer” Bill Burnyeat, gave our audience an introduction to the celestial treasures of summer skies, and a look ahead to astronomical treats of autumn. Both meetings were very well attended, with many young families present, and Canadian Telescopes once again donated a telescope door prize at each meeting, in support of our ongoing efforts to bring young people into astronomy.

With summer nearly over, RASC Vancouver is gearing up for a very exciting fall season, chock full of A-list guest lecturers, star parties, and special events. Here are just two examples of what’s in the offing.

Our September 8 public meeting brings a distinguished guest lecturer to the Space Centre: David Halliday, President of Dynamic Structures. Mr. Halliday was appointed to the Order of Canada in December 2010 for “advancing the field of astronomy, notably through his leadership in the design and construction of some of the world’s largest telescope observatories.” Your Council recently and unanimously approved a motion to elect Mr. Halliday as an honorary member, as provided under our bylaws. We are honoured that Mr. Halliday has accepted. A formal presentation of his honorary membership will take place just prior to his lecture, which is entitled “In Focus.”

Our annual Paul Sykes Memorial

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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.com> 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 H.R. MacMillan Space Centre Society is a non-profit organization operating the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre and the Gordon M. Southam Observatory. Annual membership (\$30 individual; \$80 family) includes newsletter, discounts on Space Camps, birthday parties, lectures, Museum of Vancouver admission, plus free admission to the Space Centre. Admission includes: multi-media Planetarium productions, interactive demonstrations and hands-on exhibits. For membership, contact Gayle Seaman 604-738-7827 (ext 221) or [star@spacecentre.ca](mailto:star@spacecentre.ca)

<http://www.spacecentre.ca>

## 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 the 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.

Your greatest opportunity as a member of the RASC 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  
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V6J 3J9  
604-738-2855**

## October

1 – Paul Sykes Memorial Lecture:  
Jon Lomberg: “My Work with  
Carl Sagan.” SFU Burnaby  
Campus @ 2:30pm, room TBA.

## December

8 – AGM

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Lecture will take place this year on Saturday, October 1, at Simon Fraser University, and will be given by Jon Lomberg, a world-renowned astronomy artist and speaker. Lomberg has done many high-profile astronomy art installations and works of scientific artistry, including for the Voyager “Golden Record” and a beautiful rendering of the Milky Way galaxy for NASA, illustrating the search region for the Kepler spacecraft exo-planet survey.

In addition to delivering the Sykes lecture, Lomberg will be at SFU for consultation on a very exciting project... but I can't reveal what that is about just yet :). But come to the Paul Sykes lecture to hear Lomberg talk about his 25 years of collaboration with Carl Sagan, a stellar example of how the arts and sciences can inform each other, and the public. You might also find out what's going on under the stars at SFU, with the essential support of Vancouver Centre!

Finally, to close out this column, why am I writing this column at 2AM (oops, make that 5AM now), besides trying to surprise NOVA editor Gordon Farrell by submitting a President's message ahead of time (for once!)? I'm trying to capture every last deep-sky photon that I can get into my camera before the end of this summer of celestial bliss ☺. ★

Howard Trottier  
President, RASC-Van  
Professor of Physics, SFU

## Two More Telescopes Donated to RASC Vancouver Centre by Steve Coleopy

RASC-Vancouver Centre has been very fortunate to be recipients of many generous donations from our members, as well as from the public. A few months ago, Howard Trottier, RASC-Van President, wrote about a 10-inch Dobsonian telescope that was bequeathed to us by June Kirkcaldy. June's telescope will become part of our Loaner Program.

For those who may not be aware, RASC-Vancouver Centre has over a dozen telescopes of various sizes and types, from home-made to computer controlled, that members of our Society can borrow free of charge for a month at a time. The room they are stored in at the Gordon MacMillan Southam Observatory (GMSO) is open for borrowing and returning telescopes after each of our monthly meetings at the H.R. MacMillan

Space Centre.

Over the summer, two more telescopes have been donated to us.

The first telescope has been donated by Rose Blamey (and family), the daughter of William (Bill) Salter. Mr Salter was apparently quite the handyman. He made the telescope in the early 60s. The tube is approximately 5 feet long with a diameter of 4 inches, made from a sonotube, a form that is used to pour concrete into to create pillars. The pipe equatorial mount is constructed from pieces of steel piping he had apparently found on the side of the road, and the legs appear to be similar to a surveyor's tripod. Apparently the “eye piece” was from an old movie camera. Mr. Salter was very creative and could make something out of nothing. Rose tells

us, “Dad was a computer repairman for IBM so he had access to all sorts of bits and bobs. He made the telescope when we lived in Kitimat so we had lots of clear skies to look at.”

Mr. Salter's family wanted the telescope to go to a good home where it will get lots of use. We trust our loaner program will fill that request nicely.

The second telescope has been donated by Kevin Key. It is Carl Wetzlar Model 114E (D-60/F-910) refractor. The telescope is on an equatorial mount and it is small and light enough to be easily moved around by a child. Two eyepieces and a barlow lens came with the telescope. The only thing missing is the finder scope, but that won't present a problem for our ace

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We RASC members from Maple Ridge were kind enough to bring the west coast cloud and rain to Merritt with us on Monday afternoon. We were quickly informed by all those who would speak to us that the skies had been clear and calm all weekend long and that obviously we had made the difference. We were therefore banished to the east end of the pit. We camped next to Dave Walley from Oliver who is an Okanagan RASC member.

The weather on Tuesday was of the type that inspired the "Ancient Mariner" so I didn't even bother to set up my equipment and Mark and Doug had their equipment hiding under tarps. We were not too optimistic for any great viewing that night.

We hunkered down that night to play a game of stump the astronomer with a quiz show from Mark's iPad. The "collective" managed an inspiring score of 83%. It did pass the time nicely and when the game came to an end we had Dave announcing that you could see stars.

A few more layers of clothes and we were outside and staring away at a gorgeous Milky Way. It was not great viewing but to a star starved coastal boy it was heaven. We all suffered a bit of "star shock." What to look at first?! We spent about an hour sucker hole jumping until it socked in again. Then we declared it to be bed time.

Wednesday was teasing us with periods of sun which drew out Doug's new solar scope. We mounted it on my EQ3 and got to see

some spots and small prominences. I actually changed into shorts and tank top long enough to gross out all within range.

Sometime that afternoon (time is meaningless at Merritt) Suzanna arrived, followed soon after by Wayne and Gayle. Suzanna set up a rather unique tent-within-a-tent home next door while Wayne and Gayle set up their beautiful new trailer next to Doug. Our community was growing.

Suzanna and Wayne must have brought some better luck as the weather that night was really nice. It stayed reasonably warm, still and very clear. An ideal night for imaging. Unfortunately, they both brought some "Dobsonian star dust" with them which quickly infected all the electronics within range. Dave's new mount burned out a drive motor, Doug could not change the location on his new mount and Mark and I frustrated ourselves with EQ mounts that fought us to obtain alignment.

Doug finally gave up on electronics and jumped into his Dobsonian life raft and had a very enjoyable night of object chasing. I found "third time lucky" in achieving alignment and was able to get in some great viewing of various Messier and NGC targets. Mark gave his new Astro Track a workout with his modified Canon T1i taking the photos. He hasn't had a chance to process them yet but from what I've seen on his camera screen, I am very impressed.

Having driven up and set up

camp that day, Suzanna packed it in early. Wayne followed shortly afterwards and then Doug, Mark and Me. It was still beautiful and clear as we were watching Orion start to peek through the trees when I realized the roof of the Mini was sparkling with frost. Pretty, but cold. I almost succumbed to laziness and didn't tarp my telescopes, however Mark reminded me of the unpredictability of the mountain weather so I got busy and covered my stuff up. When I woke up a couple hours later to the pitter patter of rain on the tent, I gave a silent "thank you" to Mark and fell back to a peaceful sleep.

On Thursday morning, we woke up to the other face of Merritt weather. The wind had shifted to the south and was blowing a strong gale with what I am sure were hurricane-force gusts. It was also surprisingly cold and made life a tad unpleasant. The weather saved its worse for after I took an afternoon nap. During a very nasty bout of gusts, it managed to do some real damage around the pit. Suzanna's tent was moved two feet along the ground with all of her stuff in it. George from the Fraser Valley club had his 8" scope blow over, causing considerable damage. Our hearts go out to him. The administration tent self-destructed to the point its parts are now available for re-purposing. One of the freshly cleaned-out houses also tipped over. It is now only usable for the altitude-impaired.

As night came on, we kept hop-

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ing for the skies to clear and the wind to die. We did have some beautiful sunset clouds and some flashes of lightning over the northern horizon. We whiled away the time playing another game of stump the astronomer, this time with the added ringer of Wayne and Gayle and Suzanna, and managed a score of 81%. We probably wouldn't have done that good if not for the help of Wayne and Suzanna's hemp chips.

We seemed to collectively decide it was a binocular night as leaning into the wind created one leg of a tripod. The skies did clear and again we were treated to the darkness that only Merritt seems to be able to offer within reasonable driving distance of home.

While Wayne was using his laser pointer to instruct some young friends of Ronan's about the constellations, Doug was tracking down Comet Garradd near the coathanger. Just as Doug found it, Wayne pointed at the coat hanger and bulls-eyed the comet. Talk about accurate pointing with a laser. We were all impressed with Wayne and the finding of the comet.

I got to get some wonderful views through Doug's Dob that night. M13 was spectacular as was M22, M8 and M16 in and around the teapot. I used my binoculars to view the Pleiades and Jupiter as well as to search out some of the views that Doug had showed me through his scope. Even though the view through the binos is not near the spectacular view through Doug's scope, there was satisfaction in finding these same objects on my own.

I also got to view a few of the Messier objects that Suzanna was knocking off of her Messier list. She was making an impressive dent in her list that night. The views through her Dob were impressive as well.

About 2 o'clock it started to cloud over again so it was early to bed again. This morning it was sunny with cloudy periods and we were laying on rocks warming our bodies in anticipation of another great viewing night. In the meantime, Suzanna set up the RASC solar scope and treated us all to some lovely views of the Sun. It is giving us a good show today. Doug has set up his new Lunt solar telescope as well so we get to do lots of solar viewing. We watched several beautiful prominences grow and spread along the edge of the sun. There were also six to seven sunspots to be seen. Very satisfying.

Saturday turned into a sunny warm day. We had been joined by more RASC members that arrived both Friday and Saturday. Harvey Dueck and Blair Fulop camped on the west end, wanting to take advantage of the slightly better eastern horizon. At the annual meeting held at 2pm in front of the warm up tent, it was announced that a new attendance record was set at 103. After business was taken care of came the draw for the door prizes. As a fair number of people had already left, it turned out that everyone at the meeting won at least one prize. We then got together for a group photo taken by Harvey.

We all anticipated a great night of viewing after the Moon set. It

was up until 9:45 when it gracefully dipped behind the western ridge amongst a stand of trees. I watched it through my telescope as it created an almost "Bateman" painting sort of view. All I needed was a wolf outlined in the moonlight. One striking thing we found while viewing the Moon was a row of craters with their rims highlighted by the Sun in just such a way that it resembled a necklace of sparkling diamonds. A great start to an astronomer's night.

Once it became dark enough, Mark set about imaging the comet Garradd. I think he imaged it for nearly three hours and from what I saw on his screen of the unprocessed image, I think he has a keeper. He then shifted his attention to Stephan's Quintet. He got an hour's worth of imaging in before it started to become too light. Harvey has told me that he observed the quintet through three different telescopes. He had looked through his own 15", Mark Mac's (from FVAS) modified 16" LightBridge and Blair Fulop's 18" Obsession.

Suzanna continued her hunt for Messier objects as well as the occasional diversion to hunt down a few NGCs. She also found Kemble's Cascade with Mark's binoculars.

I spent some time observing the comet as well as Jupiter's moons' motions. As morning was coming on, I observed M42 through my 150 Mak with my 15mm eyepiece. It looked like a 3D black and white photo. It just seemed to pop out at me. Just in case you can't tell, I was very happy. It convinced me I wanted to stay another night.

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As usual, this report is already past deadline so I will conclude my report on my stay at Merritt this year by declaring this star party to be a great success. The sky was so dark that even walking around by

starlight was a dreamy experience. Sometimes it was enough just to lie back in Mark's reclining chair and admire the Milky Way in all its splendour. I could appreciate the sky and see the constellations as my ancestors must have. Every person

should have the chance to experience this stirring experience not just once, but any time they wish.

Clear skies my friends. ★

(with help from Mark Eburne and Doug Montgomery and Harvey Dueck)

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sky favourites. The skies are great—maybe the scope wasn't the problem. The next thing I know it is first light and time to try and sleep.

The next day, Don invites me to try his unicycle. No thanks. He rides off to tour the mountain but I do take him up on an offer to use his mountain bike to get to cell reception. I later learned that Bell and Telus are on the same network and that one can walk a few hundred metres from camp and get perfect reception! Wayne Lyons arrives in the afternoon. We see five white pelicans fly overhead, heading south.

I am able to identify them because I had just studied them on Nazko Lake north of Alexi Creek a couple weeks ago. I get brave and relocate the secondary in better alignment with the focuser. Ted brought over his portable soldering iron and we re-solder the cooling fan connection. It is Zen and the Art of Telescope maintenance in the field.

I register and meet the MKSP volunteers, learn about the Okanagan centre telescope and keen interest by their membership. I notice the "Sunspotter" on display. It is a 0.6-meter folded telescope designed

to project an image of the sun on a white card for study and tracing. Students and other interested people can follow the sunspots across the surface of the sun over several days and compare the image and progress



across the sun's surface. I make a note to share this with Steve, our director of telescopes.

I attended Paulsen's binocular talk and I highly recommend it. Our group all saw both Neptune and Vesta along with many Messier objects in an hour through binoculars. It was all we could do to keep up with the whirlwind tour, star hopping from object to object.

The last night for me I wander up the hill to get the blood circulating and to see what Lee, Ken and Gary are up to. Lee shows me his new-to-him travel scope and we try out our

different eyepieces on clusters and galaxies in Cassiopeia and Pegasus. I meet Jack and learn he has a 12-in binocular scope. Where have I been? It was a winner of the MKSP technical excellence award in past years and his picture is in the handout this year. It's also been in *Sky and Tel*. I am blown away by the views through a binocular telescope of that size. It is a marvel of engineering and construction. This makes an amazing Kobau finish for me. I break camp a few hours later and head home before the closing ceremonies, leaving good friends behind for next star party. That's only a couple weeks away in Merritt.

### Merritt Star Quest

Merritt 2011 offered much improved weather from last year. Normally, I'm lucky to catch the weekends and maybe a day either side. This year I had the week off although part of it was already competing with MSQ. As usual, with working in the day, I struggled to leave in time to arrive before dark. I think I see Harvey Dueck pass me south of Merritt. We arrive and decide to set up adjacent to

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each other. Between setting up and wandering around, I see Gary has completed his modified geodesic dome cover. It is the product of many sketches and friendly discussions over coffee and crummy past weather and, of course, Gary's perseverance. We are both excited about it and he shows me the electrical conduit and fittings. We marvel at its strength—no need to tear it down if the weather changes.

The seeing is great that night and Harvey and I tune up our scopes and go for our targets. I'm tired and can't make the full night. We can say we 'looked at the supernova in M101' but were unable to identify it. We did find the bubble nebula in both scopes, though. Working with another person, either viewing in the same scope or with two different scopes, is a great way of confirming. We decide to relocate our scopes closer together for the next night.

The next day is the official first day so we help set up the warming tent and say hello to all our good friends from Merritt Astronomical Society and Fraser Valley Astronomical Society. Whoops, out of propane—add one unscheduled trip to Merritt to the agenda. That night, Harvey and I have enthusiastic guests and it is great fun to give a tour finding familiar objects and enjoying them all the more. We observe Comet Garradd in a new position in Sagitta from last night. My quest for better

collimation continues. Our guests retire and Harvey and I are left to explore fainter fuzzies of Stephan's Quintet. I still am unable to stay awake for the full night but the skies are great.

When familiar friends depart, it is time to meet new ones and make better friends with acquaintances. I meet Nelson from RASC Victoria as he arrives. I learn he organized their summer star party and that he is sketching views of the Herschel 400 list. He shows me his easel and drawings later. I have a nice visit with Ken while listening to the birds hunting in the field as dusk deepened in that transition between day and night.

As night approaches, I spot Gary Wolanski, an inspiration to me in building telescopes. It is like old friend's week. It is amazing how nice folks these are that look at the stars and share their knowledge and camaraderie. I almost forget to set up for the night. I return later to visit with Gary and Blair and 'we' find 252 and then go look at the "sampler" in the tail of Draco, three galaxies presented face on, edge on and oblique. We wonder about the moisture in the upper atmosphere and remember excellent viewing of other nights. Up at the zenith we try the veil and decide it's not so bad as we marvel at the multiple wisps. I walk back to my scope to find Orion presented for observation. There is a light wind.

The next day includes more visiting and comparing equipment and set-ups. There are many opportunities for learning. I had corresponded with Darrel Abrams of FVAS because I was impressed by his satisfaction with fans to wash away the surface warm air above the primary mirror. He lent me a *Sky and Tel* magazine from 2000 with an article by Alan Adler discussing removing the boundary heat layer. I'm working out a way to incorporate that into my scope. I say hello to Mark Eburne and Leigh Cummings, who arrive that day. I have to leave early the next day and, luckily for me, the sky is cloudy so I can catch up on some rest.

Both Merritt and Mount Kobau are excellent local BC opportunities for amateurs of any level to find people of similar interest. It is fun to inspire each other to keep looking and seeking new objects. I realize all the more that the local outreach events are practice runs that help hone the equipment list and inspire new people to enjoy this great endeavour. I encourage everyone to attend our local star parties to learn more, share what they know and encourage other enthusiasts. I'm always grateful to the experienced astronomers that take the time to share with me. ★

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telescope repairers.

Mr. Key heard about RASC and wanted to donate the telescope to

our loaner program so it can be used and enjoyed.

We want to thank our generous donors, and assure them their gifts

will be used and enjoyed for years to come. ★



Photos by Harvey Dueck and Mark Eburne



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