NOVA
NEWSLETTER OF THE VANCOUVER CENTRE RASC
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Putting Your RASC Membership to Work for You!

by Marla Daskis

How do you get good value for your money from your membership? Read on to find out what opportunities you have to put your membership to work!

Lectures

We host public lectures featuring local and international astronomers at the SFU Burnaby campus, 7:30pm on the second Thursday of every month. These go on rain or shine so are an especially good way to meet fellow enthusiasts and connect for a chat on topics of all kinds. Many members stay after the lecture to network with each other. Details on each month's lecture are posted a couple of weeks before on Meetup, our website, and social media. Lectures cover a variety of topics—and even a show and tell for different kinds of telescopes!

Library

After each lecture, the SFU Trottier Observatory is opened by members for access to the library and telescope loans. The library has books on every aspect of astronomy available for free loan—come and check it out! If you have questions about what's available or the loan process, please contact William, our librarian, at library@rasc-vancouver.com.

Telescope Loans

The telescope loan program is a great way to explore the options you have if you're looking to buy your own telescope. There are a lot of different kinds out there, and each have pros and cons. In addition to coming to Starry Nights to see the different types of telescopes there, or talking to members after the monthly lecture, you can contact Rick, our telescope director, to see what's available for loan. You can try a telescope out for at least a month (longer if there's no waiting list) and figure out if that's the type you want to buy. This is a great, no-risk way to get into equipment!

Starry Nights (in partnership with SFU)

The SFU Astronomy department hosts Starry Nights at the Burnaby campus, every clear Friday night, and RASC volunteers are there with telescopes. This is essentially a weekly star party—come and talk to the volunteers, who are happy to talk telescopes and observing. The Trottier Observatory is open as well for everyone to have a look at what's up in the sky. If you're interested, join Meetup to be notified—due to weather constraints there's a "go/no-go" decision posted on the Friday as to whether Starry Nights is on or not.

Astronomy Day (in partnership with SFU)

The other big yearly event at SFU is Astronomy Day—a celebration of all things astronomy. Solar telescopes are set out by the observatory (weather permitting) and there are booths, activities and information on a multitude of topics. Family-friendly, this event is great if you're looking to get a sampling of everything.

Events in the Lower Mainland

SFU isn't the only place where astronomy happens—there are events around Metro Vancouver over the course of the

continued on page 5

NOVEMBER 12 **SFU**
We will be hosting a "Show and Tell-escope" event at the HR MacMillan Space Centre. See Meetup for details.

DECEMBER 10 **SFU**
Our AGM followed by Charles Ennis speaking about asterisms. See Meetup for details.

JANUARY 14 **SFU**
A talk by NASA Solar System Ambassador, Michael Borghese. See Meetup for details.

Members' Gallery



NGC 7536 - The Bubble Nebula by Nik Langroudi

Taken from Nik's balcony (Bortle 6) over two weeks in mid-October. Mallincam VRC10, ZWO ASI2600MM, ASI220Mini, Starizana APEX L Reducer, SVBONY SV227 5nm SHO filter and Antila RGN Filter, Skywatcher EQ6-R Pro mount, 10x60RGB, 16x600 Ha and 48x600 SII & OIII. Processed in SetiAstro Suite Pro, Pixinsight and Photoshop.

NGC 6888
The Crescent Nebula
by Nik Langroudi

Taken with a 24" remote telescope in California during the last week of September 2026. 10x60 RGB, 10x600 SHO. Processed in SetiAstro Suite Pro, Pixinsight and Photoshop.



President's Message

by Nolan Smith

It's the time of year we look ahead to 2027 and back in 2026 on our accomplishments. Did you meet your astronomy goals for 2026? There is still time and hopefully clear nights to complete them! If you didn't set goals, make a quick list for 2026 and make time to think about what you want for 2027 and write them down and work off that list. Even if you don't complete it, you will learn about how much you can achieve and adjust your goals or priorities.

As a society, one of our documented objectives is "**to stimulate and promote and increase knowledge in astronomy and allied sciences.**" We do this through multiple methods: monthly meetings, public outreach, telescope loaners, imaging group, library, the Vancouver RASC Observatory and the NOVA.

At the beginning of the year, the council made the decision to focus on our paying members with regards to the above objective. We set two meetings just for talking about

continued on page 4

About RASC

The RASC Vancouver Centre meets at 7:30 PM on the second Thursday of every month at SFU's Burnaby campus (see map on page 4). Guests are always welcome. In addition, the Centre has an observing site where star parties are regularly scheduled.

Membership is currently $114.00 per year ($71.10 for persons under 21 years of age; family memberships also available) and can be obtained online, at a meeting, or 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 or mailed to the address below.

Remember, you are always welcome to attend meetings of Council, held on the first Thursday of every month at 7:30pm via Zoom. Please contact a council member if you would like to attend a council meeting.

2026 Vancouver Centre Officers

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Past President Robert Conrad

At Large Michael Levy, Rob Lyons, Tyler Palmer

Library

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

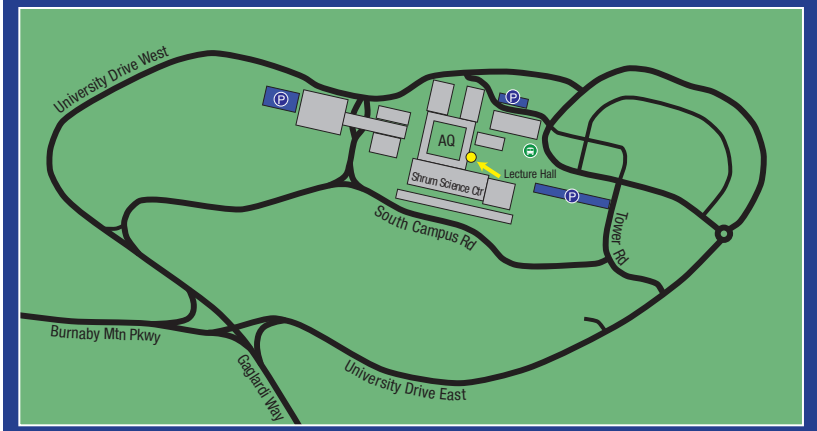
On the Internet

rasc-vancouver.com
astronomy.meetup.com/131/
www.facebook.com/RASC.Van
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Map to Meeting Site



Our SFU meetings are in the Academic Quadrangle, usually near the southeast corner next to the cafeteria, as indicated by the arrow on the map.

Pay parking is available at several locations located around campus (indicated as "P" on the map).

continued from page 3

telescopes. It was obvious owners love to talk about their gear and judging by the long conversations after the first meeting, members loved to make shopping lists for what gear to buy. We also had two members present about their astrophotography. I appreciate a detailed review of findings from the latest space-based astronomical scientific instruments but hearing from our own members is fantastic! Thanks for stepping up! I believe these member-based meetings are very helpful in fulfilling our society's objective. Your feedback is the only way to know for sure. Please send us or let us know if you have a topic you would like to share.

Other monthly meetings included topics such as:

- Smart Telescopes, the Future of Astrophotography?
- The Big Picture: A Filmmaker's Approach to the Universe
- Searching for Nature's Magnifying Glass with the Euclid Space Telescope
- Bringing the Night Sky to Life: The Vera Rubin Observatory
- The Roman Space Telescope and the Golden Age of Astronomy
- Exploring Our Horizons: Working with NASA Data
- Capturing emission nebulae using a modified camera, even under light-polluted skies

Thanks to Andrew Ferreira for organizing all these great speakers!

For Public Outreach, we hosted and supported many events again this year: Perseid Meteors with Metro Parks, SFU Starry Nights, Astronomy Day at SFU, and Canada Day in Maple Ridge, as well as multiple, smaller events for schools, Girl Guides and other groups. If you know of a group or event that could use some astronomical enlightenment, let us know and we will do our best to accommodate. Thanks Suzanna Nagy and Norry Dogan!

Our telescope loaner program has had a significant number of donations this year. So many, in fact, we will have to remove the less popular and less suitable telescopes. This program is a key part of increasing knowledge in astronomy by providing access to telescopes to our members! Thanks to Rick Schneider for doing a great job on this!

The Imaging group is very active in WhatsApp and regular technical and practical meetings to advance knowledge in this dedicated group. Although Kai Hui was not the chair for this group, he has been a huge part of its growth and success in meeting the society's objective to increase knowledge within our members.

The Vancouver RASC Observatory is our largest single program and telescope. It takes a huge number of volunteer hours to maintain and continuously improve. I believe this program stimulated an increase in astronomy knowledge for all of the many volunteers and members who had had a chance to work and visit

continued on page 5

continued from page 4
this place. There has been so much to learn! Specifically, this year has seen a huge improvement to the power and remote connectivity of the telescope and hosted multiple groups. In 2027, if all goes as planned, we hope to have a visual observatory to go alongside the current imaging setup. Thanks to Alan and the many others who have contributed to this.

I haven't covered everything we do as a society but you may have noticed a pattern. We do things to promote astronomy and it takes volunteers to do it. In December, we will have our AGM and there are open positions we need to fill. Please reach out to anyone on council if you are interested.

National Representative - represent our centre at the national level; attend bimonthly meetings and report back to council.

Membership - manage new, expiring and renewing members for our centre; work with National membership on any issues members have.

Merchandise - manage orders and sales of RASC and centre merchandise like shirts and toques; manage door prize draws at monthly meetings.

Clear Skies! ✸

continued from page 1
year where RASC volunteers are happy to share their knowledge of the cosmos. As an example, in Aldergrove Regional Park each August, Metro Parks hosts an event to view the Perseid Meteor Shower. This is a great chance to catch shooting stars in action, in a family-friendly location.

Regional Star Parties

We are proud to host our own Nahatlatch Valley Star Party in September of every year. Watch our website for information on dates and registration. Our neighbouring RASC Centre on the Sunshine Coast hosts a Star Party each summer and invites RASC Vancouver members to participate. In the interior near Osoyoos, the Mount Kobau Star Party is a favourite among members. Closer to home, the Starry Nights events are star parties too! These events are a great way to meet and interact with astronomers of all abilities, chat about gear and technology, and make friends in the community.

Social Media and Website

You can find us on Facebook and Instagram (look for RASC Vancouver). Our website, rasc-vancouver.com also has lots of content to explore—take a moment and check it out. For example, the resources section has links to lots of good information for newcomers.

Vancouver RASC Observatory (members only!)

Our observatory is in Maple Ridge, with a large telescope configured for astrophotography. The site has a viewing pad for members to set up telescopes during events. RASC members are no-

continued on page 6

Membership has its Privileges!

Are you tired of looking at the same objects again and again (planets, moon, etc.)? Is your telescope collecting dust because it's hard to locate deep sky objects? Would you like to bring your observing to a stellar level? Our observing director leads the Vancouver RASC observing group and invites you to join by sending an email at observing@rasc-vancouver.com. Some of the benefits of belonging to this group include:

- Hands on training on how to operate the SFU Trottier observatory
- Weekly observing sessions at the observatory or at dark sky locations
- One-one-one coaching on how to locate thousands of objects in the night sky
- Attend small interactive seminars on a range of topics including failsafe star-hopping, charting challenging objects and understanding the motions of the cosmos
- Learn to make your telescope dance by locating objects such as asteroids, nova, and supernovae
- Spectroscopy and imaging training from Howard Trottier and an opportunity to collaborate on observatory research projects
- Updates on observable sky events happening during the week like asteroid/comet/deep sky conjunctions
- Access to observing guides and lists that Robert Conrad created that took hundreds of hours to create and will help with planning observing sessions
- Knowledge and expertise from other observing group members
- Learn how to quickly and efficiently find and star-hop to deep sky objects using a range of binoculars and telescopes

Upcoming Events

December
10 – AGM

continued from page 5
tified via email of events. We are also working on a visual-only observatory at the site, with work in progress at the moment.

Imaging

If you want more information or to learn about imaging, there's a very active imaging group at RASC Vancouver, with all levels and abilities represented. There are people with lots of equipment and expertise, and others with modest equipment just starting out, and a few of us with no equipment at all! All the image data that the group gets from sessions on the Trottier Observatory are available for processing, as are data from group sessions at the VRO. The group has access to the Trottier Observatory on Tuesday nights, usually remotely. For more information and to join, contact Kai at imaging@rasc-vancouver.com to be added to the mailing list for imaging sessions and other information.

Publications and NOVA Newsletter

What about publications? Well, we all get the Handbook, and access to the *Journal of the RASC* online. In addition, some of the content from the now-discontinued *SkyNews* magazine is being published in the *Journal of the RASC*. These two publications are created at the national level and are a benefit for all members. Any member can submit information to be published in the *Journal* as well, and there are some very interesting articles. Find the *Journal* at https://rasc.ca/journal.

In addition, RASC Vancouver Centre publishes its own newsletter six times a year, with informative articles and images from our members. Anyone can contribute—send your submissions and/or photos to Gordon at novaeditor@rasc-vancouver.com. Current and back issues are available on our website at https://rasc-vancouver.com/nova-newsletter-archive

Certificate Programs

On the RASC national website, rasc.ca, you can check out the certificate programs. Complete a series of observations, record the data, and submit to the national committee for review. You'll get a pin, certificate and recognition in the *Journal*. There are several certificates to choose from, at all levels, and lots to learn while completing one!

Light Pollution Abatement

We can all play a part in reducing light pollution, thus helping the environment and enabling the continued enjoyment of night skies. It is possible to make a difference, both on a personal level and as an advocate. To get your membership working on this topic, check the RASC Vancouver website for tools and information, and contact Leigh at lpa@rasc-vancouver.com to get involved.

Volunteering Opportunities

Finally, another great way to connect with others and give back to the community is by volunteering with the RASC. As a member, you're able to sign up for opportunities as much or as little as works for you, and we're always happy to have the help, share knowledge and have fun! Our centre is entirely volunteer-run, and there is no shortage of things to do. Activities range from helping with events like Astronomy Day and the Perseid Meteor Shower event at Aldergrove Park, to helping out at Starry Nights, working at a booth meeting the public, showing off a solar telescope, or helping with the upkeep of our own observatory. If you'd really like to get involved, volunteer for council! And you don't need to be an expert either; just be willing to show up and help out. It's a great opportunity to network with others and learn! For information on volunteering at events and to be added to the volunteer list, contact our Events coordinator at events@rasc-vancouver.com. If you are interested in joining council, please contact Nolan at president@rasc-vancouver.com.

Questions?

If you have any questions about your membership or your benefits as a RASC Vancouver member, send Marla an email at membership@rasc-vancouver.com.

Clear skies, everyone! ✸

Imaging Group News

by Marla Daskis

Meetings and Presentations

It's been a busy couple of months for the Imaging Group. Meetings are well attended and we have lots of active discussion on WhatsApp.

Jim talked about programming in PixInsight using PixelMath and Javascript during the September meeting.

In October, Nik presented his experience with SetiAstro Suite Pro, for both deep sky and planetary images. Kai demonstrated using the new blind solver Pixinsight script called SkySolver and also the free LightRoom clone from ArtCraft to the 19 members who attended online.

Join the group on November 19 to explore how 3D printing has enhanced and complemented our hobby. Several members of the group will share what they have done and talk about several different 3D printers and what types of filament to use.

If you are experienced with 3D printing, come and share your experience! If you are new, come and get an introduction into this amazing hobby! Please note you must be a RASC member to join the Imaging Group.

On the WhatsApp group, you can now follow specific areas of interest by topic—don't lose track of the conversation!

Kai and the other group members are always willing to share their knowledge and journeys in astrophotography. If you have questions or suggestions for meeting topics, or want to be added to the WhatsApp group, please send an email to Kai at imaging@rasc-vancouver.com.

Trottier Observatory Sessions

The weather hasn't really cooperated for our Trottier sessions, so we are hoping for opportunities moving forward. As always, if you are interested in learning how to use the Trottier scope, please contact the imaging group email and we will follow up with more information. Having a reliable group able to attend Tuesday evening sessions ensures our opportunities to access this world-class telescope continue.

Vancouver RASC Observatory News

The Vancouver (RASC) Observatory (VRO) steadily improved through 2026. We now have a fully functional solar power array with generator backup. We have remote monitoring and control of the telescope and the power system. An all-sky camera enables us to check the weather for remote observing sessions, since our experience has been that the weather on site can differ quite a bit from the local forecast!

Recent work includes maintenance on the telescope mount, camera, dome and the grounds. After a fire smoke summer and fall, we enjoyed a bonus clear sky night for an all-members event in October. Our weather opportunities for clear-sky, limited-moon observing mean short notice invites before a weekend when more members can attend. Previous events included members of our centre's imaging group capturing the Wizard Nebula and combining the image from multiple astrophotography rigs.

With the shorter, rainier days, the observatory shifts to winter operations mode. We tidy the grounds and empty the water reservoir. We conserve our solar energy by reducing all unessential loads and monitor the daily solar energy capture and battery levels. In summer, the batteries are fully charged before noon. At this time of year, it can take the entire day or several days during dark, rainy conditions to fully recharge.

The longer we operate, we discover issues and work to resolve them. Significant progress was made this year towards a more smoothly operating observatory with grounds available for member observing and astrophotography. We are already planning events for next spring.

None of this year's progress would have been possible without significant volunteer hours by members Bart, Rick, Alan, Carl, Tyler, Kerry, Marla, Ron and others, and the financial support of an anonymous donation through the Vancouver Foundation. Thank you, everyone!

Members are welcome to participate in maintaining and learning more about our club's observatory. Contact the Observatory chair of the Vancouver centre council. ✸

Imaging Group Meetings:

- 3rd Thursday of every month
- Quarterly In-Person at SFU
- Contact Imaging@rasc-vancouver.com to be added to email list for invites.

Benefits:

- Like-minded people to share with
- Range of skills from beginner to expert
- Active WhatsApp group chat
- Access to world-class imaging equipment
- Member viewing at VRO

Please note: You must be a RASC Vancouver member to join the imaging group.



NGC 6946 - The Fireworks Galaxy by Phil Lobo

NGC 6946, also known as the "Fireworks Galaxy," is a spiral galaxy in the constellation Cepheus. It is among the 10 percent of galaxies that are called 'grand design' galaxies, which have well-defined spiral arms. NCG 6946 has a magnitude of 8.8, though its face-on orientation results in a low surface brightness that can make it challenge to observe. It is found close to the border between Cepheus and Cygnus, and is highest in the sky for best viewing during the late summer or early fall. It might be seen in 3- to 4-inch telescopes, but an 8-inch or larger telescope is needed to begin to see details. As a bonus for locating the galaxy, the attractive 7.8 magnitude open cluster NGC 6939 is within the same 1° field of view, lying just to the north-east (not shown in the photo).

At a distance of roughly 22 million light years, NGC 6946 is located in the Virgo Supercluster, though it was once thought to lie within our galaxy's local cluster. NGC 6949 is a 'starburst' galaxy. A starburst galaxy produces stars at 10 to 100 times the rate of a normal galaxy, though this lasts only 10-100 million years, which prevents all its gas from being used up quickly. The Fireworks galaxy is known for its high rate of supernovae production, around 10 in the last 100 years, compared to about 2 supernovae occurring in the Milky Way over a typical 100 year period. It was discovered by William Herschel in 1798. (The image was captured at the Merritt Star Quest though an 8-inch Newtonian.)