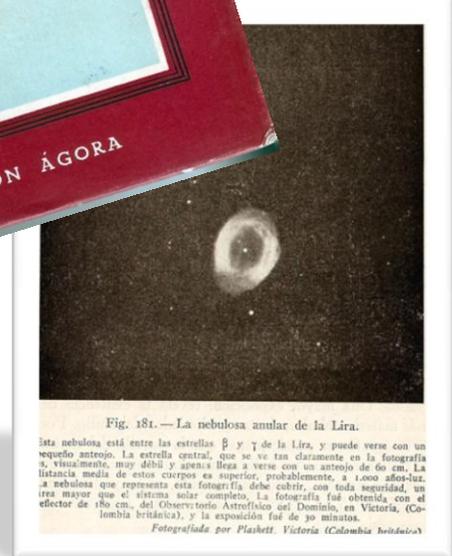
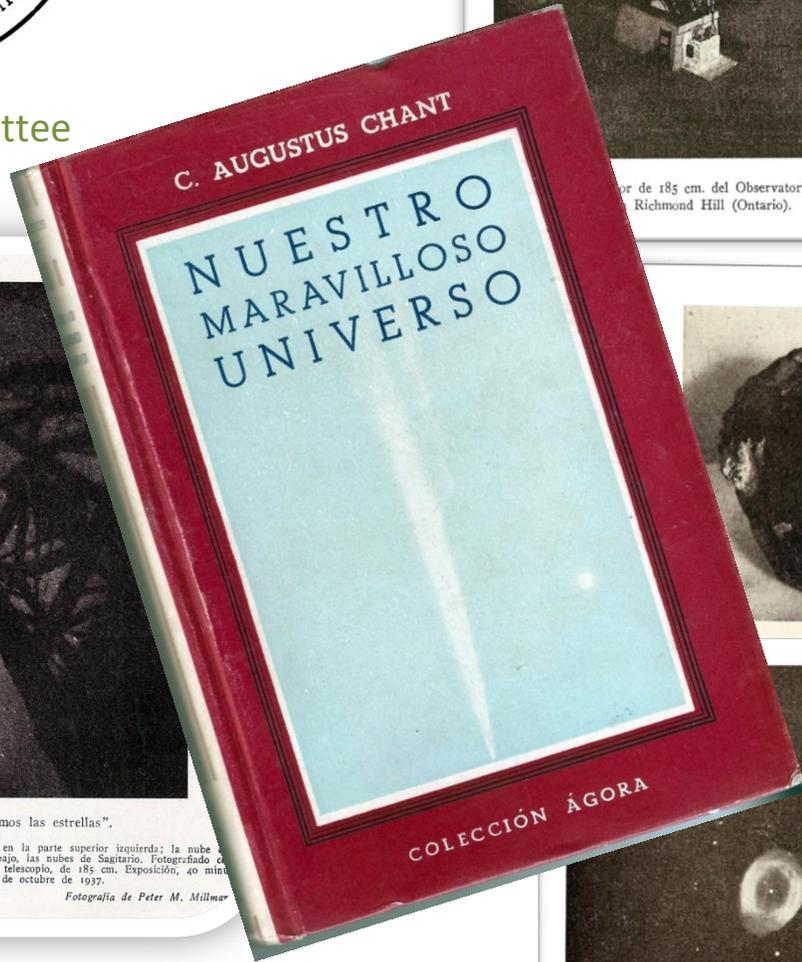
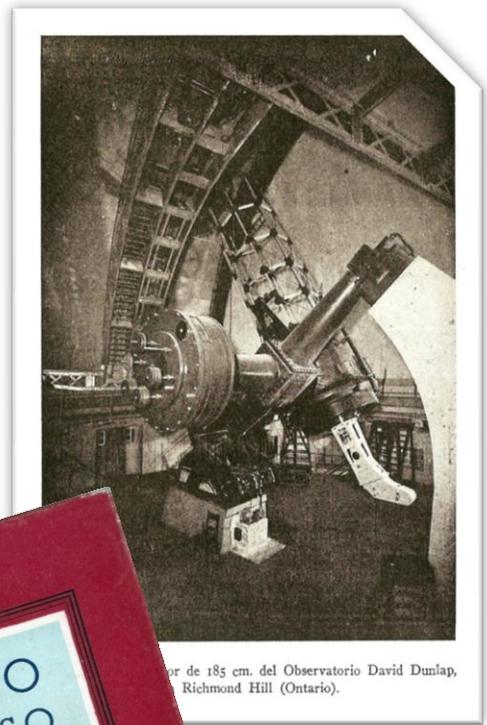




RASC History Committee



# [2014 JUNE 20 COMMITTEE REPORT]

- \* joint CASCA Heritage & RASC History Committees' project (p. 2)
- \* Archives building complete collection of C.A. Chant's Universe (pp. 2-3)
- \* historically important Canadian astronomy videos to become available on RASC YouTube channel (p. 4)

***Joint CASCA Heritage Committee and RASC History Committee Project: Professor Richard A. Jarrell Memoir***

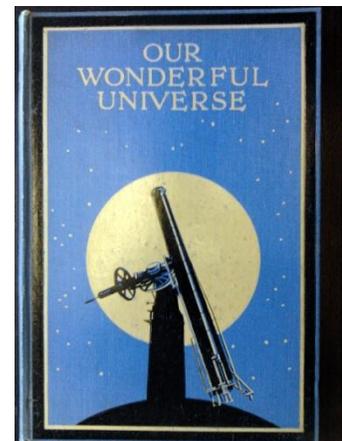
Late last year the Canadian astronomical world lost a major scholar of the history of Canadian astronomy and astrophysics, Professor Richard A. Jarrell (1946-2013) of York University. Rich's expertise extended from the period of Kepler to the period of the Kepler Space Telescope, and among his many important and ground-breaking contributions to the history of Canadian astronomy was the production of the first significant narrative of that history, *The Cold Light of Dawn: a History of Canadian Astronomy* (Toronto–Buffalo–London: University of Toronto Press, 1988). Rich was also a leading figure in Canadian Science and Technology studies, and made contributions to similar studies of the culture of Éire. He was a long-time member of both CASCA and the RASC.

To commemorate and make better-known Rich's contributions, the Heritage Committee of CASCA and the History Committee of the RASC collaborated on a memoir exploring his work in the history of astronomy. This project was led by the Chair of the RASC History Committee, and complements the shorter obituary which appeared in *Cassiopeia* 160 (Vernal Equinox 2014; <http://www.kcvs.ca/martin/astro/ecass/issues/2014-ve/index.html>), produced by the CASCA Heritage Committee led by its Chair. The bi-committee collaborative memoir has been accepted for publication in *JRASC*, and will appear in the 2014 August issue (108, 4).

Formal and informal cooperation at the “Society” level does happen from time to time between CASCA, the association of the professional astronomical community in Canada, and the RASC, now the principal Canadian amateur Society in “English” Canada. This occurs most frequently in the area of education and public outreach (EPO; IYA2009, the BIYA Committee, the transit of Venus promotional glasses, and the genesis of the tri-society Qilak Award are the outstanding recent examples), but formal cooperation is less usual at the committee level, in spheres in which it is feasible at all. In the universe of astronomical history and heritage such collaboration is occasionally practicable, as is shown by the positive results of this memoir project, which was virtually frictionless in execution. This bodes well for the future.

***C.A. Chant's Universe in the Archives***

One of the great publishing successes of Canadian astronomy, perhaps *the* publishing success of the first half of the twentieth century, was C.A. Chant's introductory text *Our Wonderful Universe: an Easy Introduction to the Study of the Heavens*. The book was first issued in 1928, and a second “updated” edition appeared in 1940. Not only was the volume available throughout the British Empire, the United States, and the rest of the English-speaking world, but editions also appeared in German (1929), Czech (1929), Polish (1931), Spanish (1946), and French (1952). It's not often remembered today, but apart from occasional news service pieces, Chant's volume was the principal medium through which astronomically uninformed audiences outside the borders of Canada learned anything of Canadian astronomy, and acquired their visual imagery of Canada's professional research equipment, astrophotography, and meteorite specimens—not to mention amateur astronomers posing with their equipment!

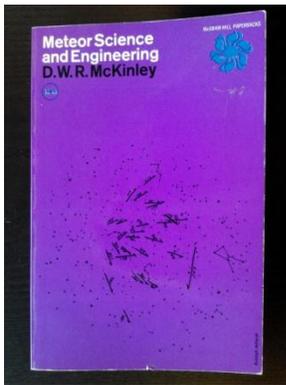




It had always seemed a shame that the RASC, an institution Chant did so much to build, only possessed in latter decades examples of the second English and the French editions. Thanks to some judicious hunting on the international antiquarian book market, the Society now owns five of the seven editions; copies of the original English, and the German and Spanish editions now join their sisters listed above. These are available for consultation (in one place!) by Society members and qualified researchers. The Czech (*Divy Vesmíru, úvod ve studium nebeských zjevů*) and Polish (*Cuda wszechświata, łatwy wstęp do poznawania nieba*)

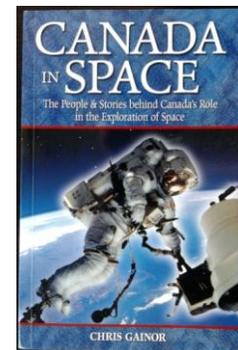
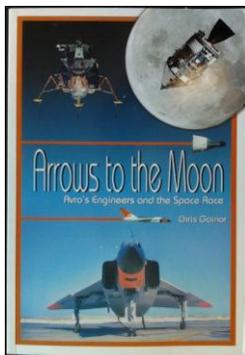
editions remain to be acquired. It has generally been assumed that Chant's book is pretty much the same regardless of the language of publication, but preliminary examination by the Archivist suggests that this is not the case. It is to be hoped that someone may eventually undertake a study of Chant's *Wonderful Universe*, extending to the different language choices of the translators, currency or non-currency of the updates, and the layout strategies.

### *Other donations and acquisitions*



Through the generous gift of a History Committee member our Archives Rare Book Collection now has a copy of D.W.R. McKinley's *Meteor Science and Engineering* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961). McKinley, Associate Director of the Radio and Engineering Division, NRC, and later Vice-President (Laboratories), was a scientific colleague of and collaborator with Peter Millman. McKinley's book was arguably the most significant astronomical monograph published by a Canadian scientist up to that time, and astonishingly it is still considered an authoritative treatment worth consulting by scientists currently in the field, an unheard of feat for a monograph over half a century old. It was never reprinted, and copies can be quite scarce.

With the purchase of two volumes by committee member Dr. Chris Gainor, a lacuna has been filled; *Arrows to the Moon: Avro's Engineers and the Space Race*, Apogee Books Space Series 19 (Burlington ON–Wheaton, IL: Apogee, 2001), and *Canada in Space: the People & Stories behind Canada's Role in the Exploration of Space* (Edmonton: Folklore, 2006). The author has undertaken to autograph these copies when he's next in town.



### *Historic Canadian astronomy videos for RASC YouTube channel*

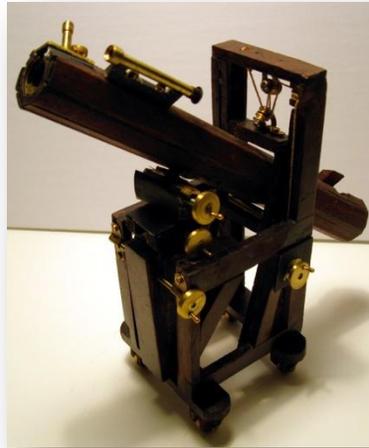
In the course of a conversation in March of this year, Robert Dick, Chair of the LPA Committee, mentioned that he had an archive of approximately one hundred video recordings of speakers at RASC or RASC related events which he had made in the period 1990-2006, featuring people such as Gene Shoemaker, Halton Arp, Clyde Tombaugh, Leif Robinson, Rich Jarrell, Richard Herd, Alan Guth, Geoff Marcy, and Bob Garrison. Rob indicated his desire to offer these to the RASC to be made available online, after being converted from their antiquated analogue format to modern digital equivalents. The RASC Board of Directors suggested these videos could be hosted on the Society's YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/RASCANADA>), which would help round out our offerings, and make these talks available to an international audience (and possibly help raise the Society's profile). Bill Wagstaff, Rob's Ottawa Centre colleague, volunteered to do the digital conversion and editing of the tapes, while also ensuring that Rob's original raw files are transferred to DVD from tape to ensure their continued longevity.

We are most grateful to Rob for his foresight in recording these speakers in the first place, and for his generosity in offering the recordings to us, and to Bill for his time and expertise in making them as presentable as possible for modern audiences.

### *Presentations*

Chris Gainor, "The Nuclear Roots of ICBMs", delivered at the international conference Embattled Heavens: The Militarization of Space in Science, Fiction, and Politics, in the Henry Ford Building, Freie Universität Berlin, on 2014 April 10 ([http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/fmi/astrofuturismus/veranstaltungen/C\\_Heavens/EH---Program-Booklet-PUB-1.pdf?1396816607](http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/fmi/astrofuturismus/veranstaltungen/C_Heavens/EH---Program-Booklet-PUB-1.pdf?1396816607)). This event was organized by the Die Zukunft in den Sternen: Europäischer Astrofuturismus und außerirdisches Leben im 20. Jahrhundert (<http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/fmi/astrofuturismus/index.html>). A summary of the presentation can be found at <http://www.canadianspace.ca/2014/05/embattled-heavens-icbms-and-beginnings.html>.





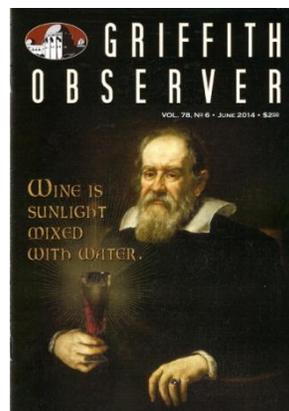
### ***Publications***

Barry Matthews, with R.A. Rosenfeld, “Telescopes in Miniature”, *JRASC* 108, 3 (June 2014), 112-113

R.A. Rosenfeld, “Reverse Engineering an Astronomical Image”, *JRASC* 108, 2 (April 2014), 76-78

R.A. Rosenfeld, “A Note on the History of Miniature Telescopes”, *JRASC* 108, 3 (June 2013), 113-115, 118-119

R.A. Rosenfeld, “Meteors Like Flasks, Wine-consecrated Foundation Stones, & Noble Liquors Reflecting the Æther: Sparkling Notes from the Cultural Interaction of Astronomy and Alcohol”, *Griffith Observer* 78, 6 (June 2014), 2-15<sup>1</sup>



### ***Awards***

Former Committee member and Society President Mary Lou Whitehorne has received the Society’s Service Award ([http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/NAC142\\_Awards.pdf](http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/NAC142_Awards.pdf)), which will be presented during the awards ceremony at the GA banquet in Victoria this year. We congratulate Mary Lou on her award.

### ***Other activity***

The Archivist is part of an informal working group with Ernie Seaquist (ACURA Executive Secretary, and past Chair of the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics, University of Toronto), Lee Robbins

(Librarian, Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics, University of Toronto), and Paul Greenham (Ph.D. student, IHPST, University of Toronto), to recover the histories of artifacts from the David Dunlap Observatory, which now form the historical collections of the Dunlap Institute of Astronomy and Astrophysics.

Later this month, two Committee members, Peter Broughton, FRASC, and the Archivist, will appear on a panel during the upcoming Victoria GA, on “The Plaskett Telescope and the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory project”. Doubtless the outcome of the panel will figure in the next Committee report.

The Archivist was invited to join Professor David Turner of Saint Mary’s University in researching the intriguing 19<sup>th</sup>-century celestial ceiling at St. John’s Anglican Church, sited in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Lunenburg ([http://www.casca.ca/ecass/issues/2005-me/features/turner/Stars%20of%20St\\_John%27s.html](http://www.casca.ca/ecass/issues/2005-me/features/turner/Stars%20of%20St_John%27s.html)— an introductory “*status questionis*” to 2005). Turner and Rosenfeld have identified the likely model for the ceiling, and the two figures most likely to have been in charge of its design. Their work has also raised more questions than furnished answers, which must mean they are doing something right.

### *Changes*

We thank two retiring Committee members, Mary Lou Whitehorne and Dr. Roger Ceragioli, for their work on the Committee. Mary Lou is taking a well-deserved “retirement” from Society affairs, although she may return to serve in other capacities when she is rejuvenated (or has forgotten why she is taking retirement!), and Roger is leaving retirement (!), having moved back from Vancouver to Tucson to rejoin the famed Stewart Observatory Mirror Lab (<http://mirrorlab.as.arizona.edu/>), where his duties as a Technical Specialist on the Polishing Team are keeping him fully occupied, to say nothing of his work producing editions of important texts in the history of astronomical optics.

Clark Muir (KW Centre), will be joining the Committee formally when the Committees are reconstituted at the GA. Committee members will be familiar with Clark’s recent important work published in *JRASC* on the Great Meteor Procession of 1913 (105, 4 [August 2011], 167-175; <http://tinyurl.com/okxgrha>), the scandal which rocked the firm of Alvan Clark & Sons (107, 6 [December 2013], 248-249, 252-254; <http://www.rasc.ca/sites/default/files/private/jrasc2013-dec-lr.pdf>), and accounts of Canadian sightings of the Great Leonid Meteor storm of 1833 which had not hitherto been reported in the literature (108, 2 [April 2014], 66-69, 72-73; <http://www.rasc.ca/sites/default/files/private/jrasc2014-apr-lr.pdf>). Clark is possessed of an unerring historical sense, considerable stamina for research, and an enviable ability to find matter of significance which the rest of us have somehow overlooked. It is with great pleasure that we will welcome him on to the Committee at the upcoming GA.

## *Acknowledgements*

We wish to thank the staff of the Society Office for their support for the various initiatives and programs presented in this report. We also wish to acknowledge Walter MacDonald's crucial continuing work in cooperation with the Committee to digitize our Archival holdings to the benefit of the entire RASC.

Respectfully submitted,

R.A. Rosenfeld (unattached), Chair

### *Committee members (as of 2014 June 29)*

Dr. Roy Bishop, FRASC (Halifax)

Dr. Robert Garrison (Toronto, consultant)

Eric Briggs (Toronto)

Renata Koziol (Society Office)

Peter Broughton, FRASC (Toronto)

Barry Matthews (Ottawa)

Robert Duff (London)

Clark Muir (KW Centre)

Dr. Chris Gainor (Victoria)

R.A. Rosenfeld (unattached), Chair

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<sup>1</sup>By way of explanation, the Society's Archivist can offer none as to how he came to write the first survey of astronomy and alcohol—certainly a dubious “distinction” if true. The Archivist blames Ed Krupp for the genesis of his article. Ed has publicly admitted that: “Some kind of Surgeon General's Warning should be printed on the cover of this month's *Griffith Observer*...The intoxicating elevated spirits featured...have the capacity to dilute a sober approach to astronomical history”. The incoming President of the Society has offered to investigate why the Society's Archivist has never been seen to drink anything stronger than *very* strong coffee.