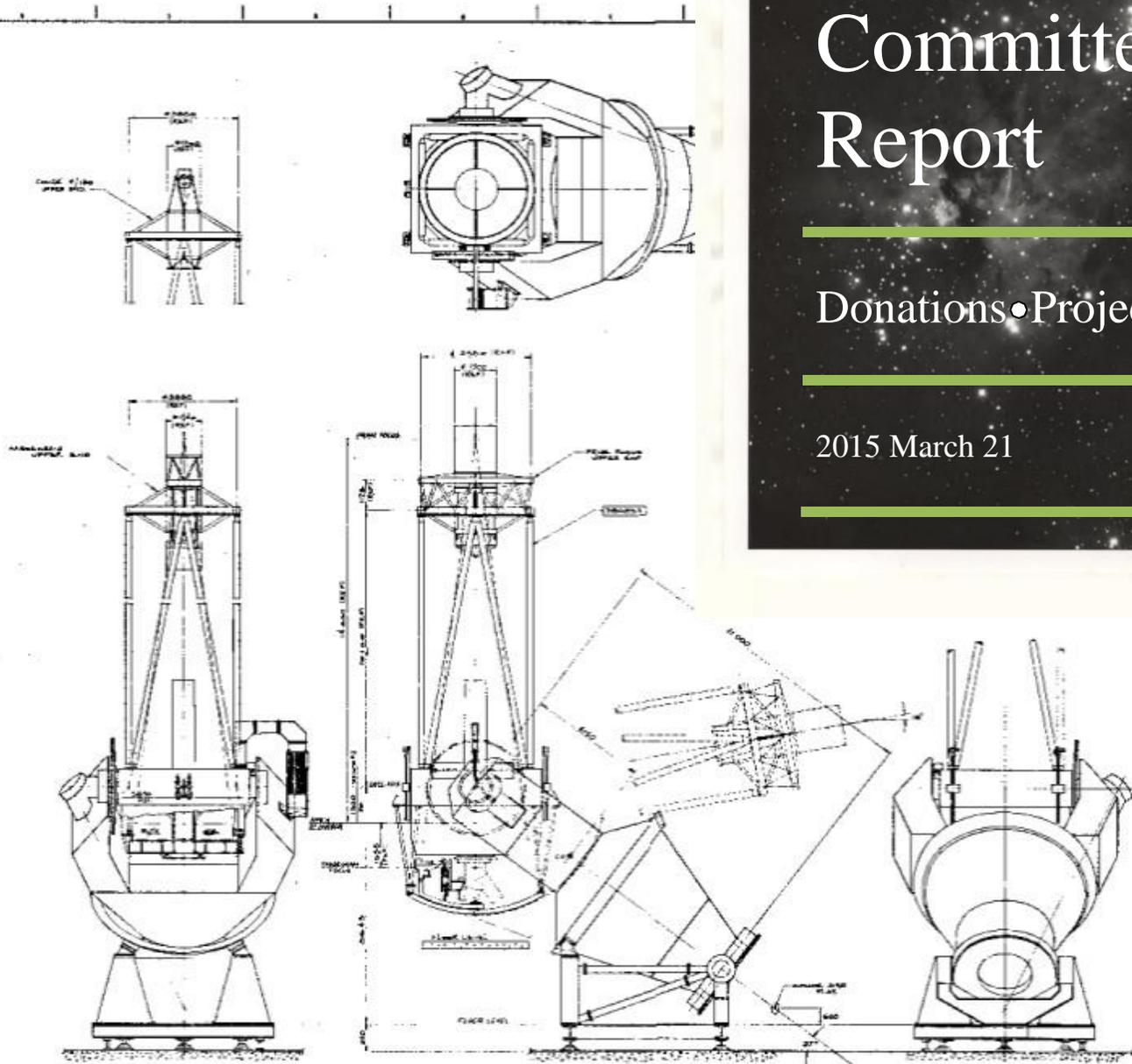


# NC151: History Committee Report

Donations • Projects

2015 March 21



PROPOSED TELESCOPE  
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT

*Images from the publications of the NRC Associate Committee on Astronomy; see pp. 2-3 below*

## ***Projects***

The main Committee business since the last report submitted to the Board on 2014 November 8 has been the discussion of possible projects for the Society to mark significant anniversaries this year, and in 2018. This has resulted in a separate document by the Archivist issued for 2015 March 21

([http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/NAC151\\_2015and2018\\_Projects.pdf](http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/NAC151_2015and2018_Projects.pdf)), building on those discussions and the earlier presentations in reports of 2014 January 31

([http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/2014Jan31\\_History.pdf](http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/2014Jan31_History.pdf)), and 2014 November 8

([http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/NAC144\\_History.pdf](http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/NAC144_History.pdf)).

Fourteen months ago comments were invited from the Board of Directors, the National Advisory Council, and all Society members on the ideas in the earlier presentations. That invitation, renewed several times since, has resulted in virtually no response. Perhaps the latest document will fare better.

## ***Donations***

Several very significant donations have been received in the period covered by this report. The late Professor Richard Jarrell's heirs have most generously donated to the RASC Archives two collections from his working collections. The first consists of the files of copies of historical documents (with some original materials) he compiled for writing *The Cold Light of Dawn: a History of Canadian Astronomy*. (Toronto–Buffalo–London: University of Toronto Press, 1988; on the significance of this work, see

<http://adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2014JRASC.108P.156R>), along with drafts of some of his important papers on the history of Canadian astronomy. The broad range of materials includes copies of documents by or about Canadian astronomers and their projects from American and British institutional collections, including such interesting items as David Dunlap's will, the letters of George Ellery Hale to Canadian Astronomers, and the correspondence between John A. Brashear Co. Ltd., Warner & Swasey Co., and the Crown for the construction of the DAO. Thanks to this gift we now have copies of many of the original letters sent by the RASC to prominent foreign astronomers, to match the replies which we have in the Archives. The copyright for most of these artifacts does not reside with the RASC, so we will not be able to make them publicly available on [rasc.ca](http://www.rasc.ca), but they do provide an excellent resource for research.

The second gift from the Jarrell family is the grey literature publications of the NRC's Associate Committee on Astronomy. These include items such as the official Committee reports from 1965-1985, documents on the proposed QEII telescope (1964-*ca.* 1968), the CFHT (*ca.* 1972-

1982), the Observatoire du Mont-Mégantic 1973-1979, the proposed refurbishment of the Algonquin Radio Telescope (1981-1984) to operate at mm wavelengths, the proposed Canadian VLBA (*ca.* 1979), Spacelab (1977), and the proposed Starlab (1981). These can be found at <http://www.rasc.ca/canadian-astronomy-archive>, and at <http://www.rasc.ca/canadian-space-science-archive> (note: access to these materials requires members to login to rasc.ca with their user name and password). All of these materials may also be consulted on-site at the Archives. Members and others wishing to use them should contact the Society's Archivist at <http://www.rasc.ca/contact/history>.

A third donation has been received from the anonymous donor of astromaterials. These have again significantly increased our holdings of meteoritical materials. These materials have now been accessioned

([http://www.rasc.ca/sites/default/files/RASC\\_Catalogue\\_of\\_Meteorites\\_3rd\\_supplement\\_JRASC\\_2015\\_1.pdf](http://www.rasc.ca/sites/default/files/RASC_Catalogue_of_Meteorites_3rd_supplement_JRASC_2015_1.pdf)), and are available to Society members for study in the Archives.

Progress continues on calendaring of the ACOM/MIAC Archive (on the donation, see [http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/NAC144\\_History.pdf](http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/NAC144_History.pdf), p. 2). When completed the document will be quite substantial. An article on the collection, and the uses to which it can be put is contemplated for *JRASC*.

### ***Presentations***

Roy Bishop, with Paul Gray, "A Brief History of the RASC Halifax Centre", Halifax Centre, 2015 January 16

Peter Broughton, "The War's Positive Impact on the Canadian Astronomical Community", delivered in the session "The Impact of the Great War on Astronomy and Other Sciences" organized by Prof. Virginia Trimble for the History of Astronomy Division (HAD) of the AAS, at the AAS 225th meeting, Seattle WA, 2015 January 4  
(<http://had.aas.org/meetings/2015aabstracts.html>)

Chris Gainor, " Looking at the History of the Hubble Space Telescope", Victoria Centre, 2015 February 11

### ***Publications***

Roy Bishop, "A Brief History of the RASC Halifax Centre", *Nova Notes* (February 2015) 46, 1, 3-5 (<http://halifax.rasc.ca/documents/novanotes/current.pdf>)

Peter Broughton, "We can duplicate 1918 feat", *Toronto Star* 2015 January 21  
([http://www.thestar.com/opinion/letters\\_to\\_the\\_editors/2015/01/20](http://www.thestar.com/opinion/letters_to_the_editors/2015/01/20))

[/we-can-duplicate-1918-feat.html](#))—positive support for the TMT project, citing Canada's efforts to build the DAO in times of financial stress as a precedent, in response to a *Toronto Star* piece urging the Canadian Government to support the project (<http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2015/01/19/is-a-telescope-canadas-new-avro-arrow.html>)

R.A. Rosenfeld, "Astronomical Art & Artifact: RASC Catalogue of Meteorites—Third Supplement", *JRASC* 109, 1 (February 2015), 36-38

### ***Other activity***

Eric Briggs has been engaged on constructing a rather useful sounding research tool:

I have been busy at some indexing work for the Toronto Centre archives, but a good deal of the data flows from the National RASC or Canada in general. I have used Excel to make a searchable index of SkyNews Magazine that is complete back to 2003, with a few gaps going back to 1995. Also mostly complete is an index of Terence Dickinson's columns for the Toronto Star from 1982 to 2005. A few years ago I completed indexing the Toronto Star astronomy columns that were written by Millman, Hogg and Hogg between 1940 and 1981. The Star newspaper also had an astronomy column from 1928 to 1930 with no byline but good astronomical knowledge. I have also copied indexes for JRASC into Excel from 1970 to the present. I have a complete index of the RASC Toronto Centre newsletter from 1948 to the present.

Works still in progress include indexes of astronomy columns from the defunct Toronto Telegram newspaper, although I already have a complete index from 1951 to the folding of the paper in 1971. The Telegram also had an astronomy column in at least 1929 and 1930 by John Robinette Collins, that I am following. I am also working backward through the National Council minutes to get a list of all motions and action items, for now complete back to 2007.

I had to slightly adapt Dr. Fernie's index of the David Dunlap Doings (newsletter from the observatory) into the Excel format, but that is also searchable. I located indexes of Sky & Telescope and Astronomy magazines from outside sources.

With the completion of this project (if it can be completed, instead of disappearing down a geometric progression of smaller and smaller holes) if you're curious about an astronomical keyword, for example 'Kormendy' or 'Oso Observatory' you can use Excel's search engine to see if that word or phrase was ever described in any of the above. This is not just a perspective on Canadian amateur astronomy, it's also an index of Canadian astronomers' comments on worldwide astronomical events of different epochs. (*email E.B. to R.A.R 2015 March 10*)

Chris Gainor's research team has won the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center contract to write the history of the post-launch era of the Hubble Space Telescope, and to create an associated archive (<http://www.rasc.ca/news/chris-gainors-team-wins-nasa-contract-hubble-history>). The history will be a successor volume to Robert W. Smith's *The Space Telescope: A Study of Nasa, Science, Technology, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). This is a very prestigious contract, and a major project.

Clark Muir's indefatigable searching through historic news papers has paid off yet again. He has uncovered the history of the largest aperture telescope (20-inch primary mirror) in Canada around the turn of the century, how it was produced, and what happened to it. He has also found that the mirror is extant. He is tentatively scheduled to speak on his work to the Sudbury Astronomy Club in April. We look forward to the resulting publication.

After serving on the History Committee for a decade, and occupying the post of Chair for the greater part of that period (2005-2011), Barry has decided to take a well-deserved retirement from the Committee. Barry's record of service can be reviewed at <http://www.rasc.ca/sites/default/files/ServiceAward2010.pdf>, and at [http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/History\\_NC112.pdf](http://www.rasc.ca/system/files/private/History_NC112.pdf). On behalf of the Society, the Committee wishes him the best as he continues to explore the world of miniature models of historically significant telescopes.

### *Acknowledgements*

We wish to thank Julia Neeser, RASC Marketing Coordinator, Renata Koziol, Office Administrator, and Randy Attwood, FRAS, Executive Director, for assistance during the period covered by this report. A particular thanks is due to the RASC Webmaster, Walter MacDonald, for the time-consuming work of digitizing our historical material. It is no exaggeration to say that without Walter's unstinting work to give our artifacts a digital life, the historic legacy of the RASC would have no digital existence.

Respectfully submitted,

R.A. Rosenfeld, Chair

Committee Members:

- \*Randy Attwood, FRASC (ED)
- Dr. Roy Bishop, FRASC (Halifax)
- Eric Briggs (Toronto)
- Peter Broughton, FRASC (Toronto)
- Robert Duff (London)
- \*James Edgar ex officio (President, Regina)
- Dr. Chris Gainor (Victoria)
- \*Dr. Robert Garrison (Toronto, consultant)
- \*Renata Koziol (Office Administrator)
- Heather Laird (Calgary)
- Clark Muir (Kitchener-Waterloo)
- Randall Rosenfeld (Unattached), Chair

\*=non-voting members