

BULLETIN



OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

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Ian Levstein, Editor

We welcome your comments on the *Bulletin*. Email them to the Editor at [bulletin@rasc.ca](mailto:bulletin@rasc.ca).

➤ EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

BY IAN LEVSTEIN

### RASC President Resigns

On 2008 April 5, RASC President, **Scott Young**, resigned. In the days that followed, the Executive responded and an interim President was appointed. The official announcements are linked below:

[Scott's Resignation](#)

[Interim President Appointed](#)

➤ NEWS @ RASC.CA

### 2008 GA - Early Bird Registration Ends

Early Bird Registration for the 2008 General Assembly is now complete and Regular registration rates are now in effect until **June 15**. After June 15, on-site rates will apply. Stay tuned [here](#) for updated news and information about this year's exciting General Assembly.

### Spring Astronomy Day

Don't forget [Spring Astronomy Day 2008](#) on **Saturday, 2008 May 10**. Forward your events to the Education Committee via [Brian Battersby](#), for addition to the Education Committee's Web page.

### 2009 Observer's Calendar - Call for Images

Astronomical images of all types are invited for consideration for publication in the 2009 *Observer's Calendar* including: deep sky, solar system, and dramatic astronomically-themed landscapes. Images can be prime focus, piggyback, eyepiece projection, or fixed tripod; and recorded on a digital/CCD camera or film.

Submitted images must be of sufficient quality and resolution to reproduce well at 10" x 12.5" and must be compatible with the "landscape" orientation of the calendar images. Generally, this will mean a resolution of at least 1200 pixels tall.

If you already have a gallery of images on your Web site, send me the link, but also direct me to your favourites. Both well-known and obscure objects are published in the calendar, so to avoid having the same objects used too often, I will be screening for those that may have appeared in recent years.

Please email submissions to me at: [dlane@ap.stmarys.ca](mailto:dlane@ap.stmarys.ca). While I have a bottomless email box, it's best to send me jpegs first. If your image is selected, I will request a full resolution tiff version. The deadline for submissions is **2008 May 17**.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

**Dave Lane**, Editor, *Observer's Calendar*

## ➤ ACROSS THE RASC

### **MacDonald Bags a Second Supernova**

RASC Kingston Centre member, **Walter MacDonald**, has discovered his second Supernova. This is the official announcement:

SUPERNOVA 2008bw IN UGC 11241

Further to CBET 1293, E. Guido, Castellammare di Stabia, Italy; W. MacDonald, Winchester, ON, Canada; and T. Puckett, Ellijay, GA, U.S.A., report the discovery of an apparent supernova (mag 18.0) on an unfiltered CCD frame taken with the 0.60-m reflector at Ellijay on Apr. 21.29 UT in the course of the Puckett Observatory Supernova Search. SN 2008bw is located at R.A. = 18h26m50s.46, Decl. = +51°08'16".6 (equinox 2000.0), which is 5".0 east and 4".9 south of the center of UGC 11241. The new object was confirmed on multiple combined CCD frames taken by Puckett with a 0.60-m reflector on Apr. 22.25 (the new object at mag 18.0). Nothing is visible at this position on images taken by Puckett on 2007 May 12 and 2004 Aug. 10 (limiting mag about 20.0). SN 2005cy also appeared in this galaxy.

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2008 April 22 (CBET 1346) Daniel W. E. Green

### **Asteroid Named for RASC Member**

In honour of his long-time contribution to the observation and study of variable stars and his part in compiling and publishing *A History of Amateur Astronomy in Japan*, RASC member **Osao Shigehisa** now has a minor planet bearing his name. According to the Minor Planet Circular dated 2008 March 21, Asteroid 8736 was named for Shigehisa, a life member of the Society living in Japan. He joined the RASC in 1978.

The minor planet was discovered by Takao Kobayashi at the Oizumi Station, Gunma, Japan on 1997 January 9 (1997 AD7).

Details about Minor Planet 8736 Shigehisa can be found [here](#).

## International Sidewalk Astronomy Nights -- Edmonton Centre

Edmonton Centre members undertook an extraordinary sidewalk astronomy outreach on the weekend of April 11/12. Ten sidewalk astronomy sessions were held in six different locations over the two evenings. No fewer than 40 Edmonton Centre members participated in these events, including a dozen who were involved on both nights. All told, some 1000 members of the public enjoyed views of the First Quarter Moon, Mars, and Saturn - and under nearly ideal weather and sky conditions. On Saturday, many people enjoyed a view of the "Werner X" which was perfectly placed on the lunar terminator.



Left: Edmonton Centre members set up telescopes for the public at St. Albert Place (Photo: **Murray Paulson**)

Right: The Werner X (Photo: **Massimo Torri**)

Story: **Bruce McCurdy**



## Toronto Centre Hosts Open House at Observatory

RASCals in Central Ontario are cordially invited to take in the Toronto Centre's annual Open House and Awards Picnic to be held at the Carr Astronomical Observatory (CAO) near Collingwood, Ontario on **Saturday, 2008 May 29**. Overnight camping is available and a pot luck dinner / BBQ will be a featured part of the program. Observing opportunities will also be on the agenda once the sun goes down (weather permitting of course!). If you are not a member of the Toronto Centre and are interested in attending, please drop us a line at [president@toronto.rasc.ca](mailto:president@toronto.rasc.ca) with your name and RASC membership number and we will provide you with information on this year's event and directions to the CAO.

## The Other Lunar X - by Alister Ling

Or should that be "X-squared"? I was delighted to find out recently that there is a second "Lunar X" feature. Many RASCals will remember Dave Chapman's "The Lunar X-files" article in April 2007 J<sub>RASC</sub>. It highlighted the "Werner X" or "Purbach Cross". A second lunar X was brought to my attention by Dana Thompson of Ohio:

*"I have informally named this post last quarter Lunar illumination the Curtiss Cross, after astronomer Robert E. Curtiss of New Mexico, USA. I believe Mr. Curtiss is the first known person to image this apparition. It has been reported that on 1956 November 26, Mr. Curtiss was taking test shots of the moon with a Mitchell 35mm motion picture camera coupled to the rangefinder of his 16-inch reflector telescope, when he photographed what looked like a small white cross. A photo from the 35mm film was later published in Sky and Telescope Magazine in June, 1958. I have verified that this event is visible at a CoLong of approximately 194.0 +/- 1.0 (after last quarter) and is visible for a few hours. It can be seen quite well (even with a small*



telescope) close to the terminator."

As with the Werner X, the Curtiss Cross is not a true feature but the result of the play of light and shadow created at sunset over the terrain. It is a 42km wide feature that happens to surround Fra Mauro H at W15, S4, a little north and east of the center of Fra Mauro itself. Unfortunately, this is right on the border of Rukl charts 42 and 43.

I encourage fellow RASCals to have a look and image this interesting "clair-obscur" effect in the upcoming months. As can be seen in the table, none of the occurrences for the rest of the year are ideal, in the sense of having the Moon well above the horizon in darkness at the best time. However, it remains to be seen just how many hours on either side of this still leave one with the impression of an "X".

Image caption: The Curtiss Cross, CoLong ~194. Location-wise, it surrounds the small crater Fra Mauro H. The crater at the top is Copernicus in this annotated, north up image by Dana Thompson. Reprinted with permission; taken 2006 July 19, 10h20m UT.

The next occurrences of co 194 degrees in 2008 are as follows:

Date	UTC	Situation (North America)
May 28	15h 17m	Daylight, above horizon
June 27	02h 19m	A few hours before moonrise
July 26	13h 13m	Daylight, above horizon
August 25	00h 26m	A few hours before moonrise
September 23	12h 22m	Daylight, above horizon
October 23	01h 14m	A few hours before moonrise
November 21	15h 01m	Daylight, above horizon
December 21	05h 27m	Barely before rising at night

## ➤ THE SKY THIS MONTH

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### What's New in the Sky

Readers are encouraged to check out the [Northern Skies](#) section of the RASC Web site. Thanks to **Gary Boyle** for keeping us all in the know!

## ▷ DATES TO REMEMBER

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- **2008 May 10** - Spring Astronomy Day 2008
- **2008 June 27** - National Council Meeting (Toronto)
- **2008 June 28-30** - RASC General Assembly at York University, Toronto, ON
- **2008 June 30** - RASC Annual Meeting at York University, Toronto, ON
- **2008 July 4-6** - Star-B-Q 2008, Calgary Centre
- **2008 July 25-27** - CAFTA 2008, C.F. de Montreal
- **2008 August 8-10** - 2008 Butterpot Star Party, St. Johns Centre
- **2008 August 28-31** - 2008 Saskatchewan Summer Star Party
- **2008 August 29-31** - RASCals Star Party, Victoria Centre
- **2008 October 4** - Fall Astronomy Day 2008



### **The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada**

136 Dupont Street, Toronto ON M5R 1V2 CANADA

Tel: (416) 924-7973 Fax: (416) 924-2911

Member Service: [mempub@rasc.ca](mailto:mempub@rasc.ca)

Visit Us at: [www.rasc.ca](http://www.rasc.ca)

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