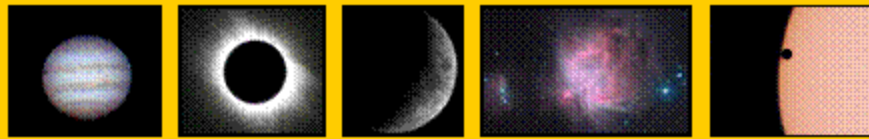


BULLETIN



OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

November 2012 - Volume 7, Number 11

David Garner, Editor

We welcome your comments on the *Bulletin*. Email them to the Editor at bulletin@rasc.ca.

A PDF version of the *Bulletin* is available [here](#).

A Web-based version of the *Bulletin* is available [here](#).

➤ Editor's Notebook

by David Garner

November's Sky

According to the 2012 [Observer's Handbook](#), Venus is bright in the early morning eastern sky whereas Mars sets in the early evening western sky. Jupiter rises in mid-evening and Saturn reappears in the dawn twilight by mid-month. Uranus and Neptune will be visible throughout the evening. The next full Moon is November 28th and is at its smallest size this year.

➤ News @ RASC.ca

And the RASC Member Survey 2012 Winners are...

by [Deborah Thompson](#), Executive Director

Thank you to all of you who generously took the time to participate in our recent member survey. We will utilize our findings to continue to find new ways to serve you better and improve member value. Top level findings of the survey can be found by logging on to the Members Area of the website, clicking the Resources page and under Member Resources you will find the results attached here www.rasc.ca/content/resources.

From the survey respondents, we drew for three special RASC prizes. The winners are:

1. RASC T-shirt + the 2013 Observer's Calendar: **Robert Brann, Regina**
2. RASC T-shirt + the Beginner's Observing Guide: **Adrien Takada, Calgary**
3. RASC t-shirt + Toque: **Bob Bowser, New Brunswick**

Congratulations!

By the way, the latest issue of the RASC Membership Development News is available [here](#).

The Canadian Space Summit

by [Peter Jedicke](#), London Centre Honorary President and Past Society President

join us for the 14th annual

Canadian Space Summit

Western University
London, Ontario
November 14-16



Keynote Speakers:

Dr. Jack Mustard,
Brown University

Dr. David Beatty,
NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Dr. Pascale Ehrenfreund
The Elliot School of International Affairs

Perry Edmunson
COM DEV

Dr. Bonnie Schmidt,
Let's Talk Science

Dr. Pete Worden,
NASA Ames Center Director



Banquet Speaker:
Dr. Peter Smith
Principal investigator for
the 2008 Phoenix Mission
to the Martian arctic



Public Talk:
Harrison "Jack" Schmitt
Apollo 17 Astronaut, the
last man to arrive on
the Moon

register by Nov 1 - css2012.uwo.ca



Presented By:



For more information, check out <http://css2012.uwo.ca>.

Observer's Calendar 2013

by [Deborah Thompson](#), Executive Director

\$15.95 Member's Only Price (regular price \$17.95) plus S&H and applicable taxes.



The *Observer's Calendar* features spectacular astro-images taken by amateur astronomers. Produced each year by volunteers, the monthly grids have information on rise and set times, lunar phenomena, conjunctions, eclipses, meteor showers, historical events, star party dates, and more!

Visit the RASC estore:

<https://secure.rasc.ca/source/orders/custRASCEstore.cfm?section=unknown&activeSection=Orders>

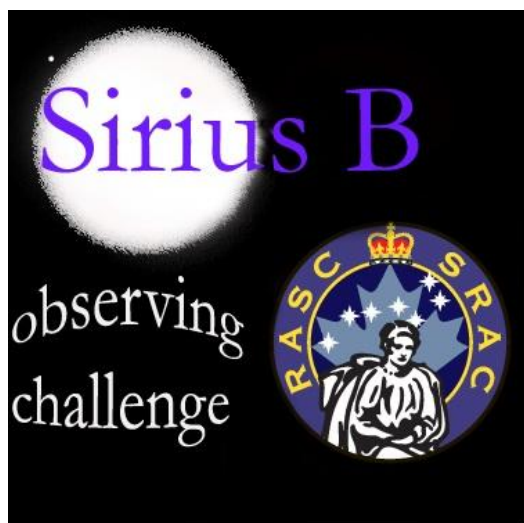
The perfect holiday gift! *Limited quantities. Order today!*

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Email: mempub@rasc.ca

Serious Observing Challenge!

by [Clark Muir](#), K-W Centre; [Chris Beckett](#), Observing Committee; [Randall Rosenfeld](#), RASC Archivist;



On 31 January, 1862, Alvan Clark, the great telescope maker, and his son Alvan Graham, pointed their new 18.5-inch refractor into the constellation Canis Major and were rewarded with the first visual detection of Sirius B, the white-dwarf companion of the brightest star in the heavens. Matching their observing feat 150 years later is still a challenge.

The orbital period of the pair is just under 50.1 years. This means that Sirius B has completed three revolutions around Sirius since it was first seen by the Clarks. As we enter the season when the star is again placed for nocturnal observation, why not mark the anniversary by trying to detect this seldom seen object? If you do happen to succeed, you will have seen a telescopic vista similar to that which brought delight to the discoverers.

The separation between the two stars is currently more than 10 seconds of arc (it was approximately 10" at discovery). This will continue to increase slightly until the year 2025 when the separation will reach 11.2". At magnitude +8.5, Sirius B is a full 10 magnitudes fainter than Sirius A at magnitude -1.44, making this a wonderful challenge for any observer. Visit <http://rasc.ca/sirius-b-observing-challenge> to learn more about the historic discovery, what it led to, and resources to aid in your own discovery of this star.



JAAVSO's 100th Anniversary Issue

by [Eric Briggs](#), Toronto Centre

The American Association of Variable Star Observers, a group having a good deal of fellowship with the RASC, has published the centennial edition of the Journal of the AAVSO.

This edition (<http://www.aavso.org/jaavso-v40n1>) highlights the people who have made contributions to the RASC large and small, such as John Percy, Doug Welch, David Turner, Bill Herbst, Owen Gingerich, Albert Jones, and Bryce Croll. One of the more interesting contributions is from Dr. Maria Cahill from Edison State College: 'The Stars Belong to Everyone: Astronomer and Science Writer Helen Sawyer Hogg (1905–1993).' Dr. Cahill's dissertation in 2009 was also on the subject of Helen Sawyer Hogg.

➤ Across the RASC

Outreach Activities at the Victoria Centre

by [Sherry Buttner](#), 2nd VP Victoria Centre

For most of this year, Kim Rempel (William Head Institution librarian) and I have been grinding away and jumping through the administrative hoops to hold an astronomy outreach session with the residents of William Head Correctional Institution in Metchosin, B.C. Our efforts were realized this evening (September 20) with Mark Wheen (of Pearson College), Michael Wheatley, Michel Michaud, Sid Sidhu, and myself of the RASC Victoria Centre attending. Thanks guys!

After signing in and clearing security, we started off doing an indoor PowerPoint presentation for the residents for about an hour before heading out onto the grounds for sky viewing. During the PPT presentation, several residents asked some really great questions, and seemed to be genuinely interested in --and enjoyed learning about-- astronomy. About 20 residents attended; more wanted to attend but were in rehearsal with the institution's theatre.

We then had our scopes ferried out to the observing site, which was pleasantly dark considering we were inside the grounds of a federal penitentiary. Coffee was offered to us, and we were joined by the residents who attended the indoor presentation, and another 15 more or so after their rehearsals were over. These guys were really into it! We viewed the old standbys: M31, M13, Albireo, etc, and the waxing crescent Moon that was rapidly sinking into the trees. At my telescope, I think the residents most enjoyed just manually cruising through the Milky Way overhead! The ooohs and aaahs were very good to hear. The depth of their questions was inspiring, and their respectful attitude, admirable.

After almost two hours, it was time to pack up and leave, but not before almost every resident offered their sincere thanks, shook our hands, and signed a nice Thank-You card. It was a very unique and rewarding outreach experience. I hope we are invited to return...it was fun!

Exploration of the Whitecourt Impact Crater

by [Charles O'Dale](#), Ottawa Centre

Interesting article: Gillian Sullivan and Chuck O'Dale describe their exploration of the Whitecourt Impact Crater after attending the 2012 RASC GA in Edmonton: <http://ottawa-rasc.ca/wiki/index.php?title=Odale-articles-Whitecourt>

Montreal Centre Opens Bellevue Observatory

by [Andrew Fazekas](#), Dir. Communications Montreal Centre

The Montreal Centre is excited to announce the official opening of a new public-access astronomical observatory in the western tip of the island of Montreal in Ste.Anne-de-Bellevue.

The only regular public-access astronomical observatory in the city, the Bellevue Observatory is located at the picturesque Morgan Arboretum - which boasts the darkest skies on the entire island - making it an ideal place for urban stargazing.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially mark the opening of the Bellevue observatory was held on October 23rd with special guest attendees such as the director of the arboretum, Dean of McGill's Faculty of Environmental Sciences, mayor of the local borough, and representatives from the Canadian Space Agency.

The project has taken nearly ten years and has been funded by grants from various Quebec government minister offices, McGill University's Physics department and Morgan Arboretum. At the heart of the observatory is a Meade 14" LX200 telescope generously donated by the Centre's honorary president Dr. David Levy - former Montrealer and one of the most prolific comet discoverers in history.



Operating from their historic downtown location on the side of Mount Royal behind the Molson Stadium for more than 50 years, the Centre decided to move to the darker skies of the 600-acre Morgan Arboretum five years ago because of poor access and the growing problem of light pollution in the centre of the city.

Following on the heels of the opening of the dome, the Centre is currently working on attaining RASC's Urban Star Park designation for the Morgan Arboretum – which would be a first in Quebec.

Check out a short video of local CBC News coverage of the event:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=23xfHvsGLtM

➤ The Sky this Month

What's New in the Sky

Members 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.



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