



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

➤ Editor's Notebook

by David Garner

January's Sky

In early January, Mercury is well placed in the evening sky and Venus is still shining brightly in the morning. Mars is rising in the morning sky, whereas Jupiter rises in the east in late evening. We have a new Moon on the 10th of January and a full Moon on the 24th. Look for the Moon to occult Aldebaran on the 20th.

For more details, check the *2016 Observer's Handbook*. Don't forget to check out Gary Boyle's [Northern Skies](#).

➤ News @ RASC.ca

Our Patron of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

by **James Edgar**, RASC President

We applied for viceregal patronage some time ago, and we are pleased to announce that:

His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, has accepted to become Patron of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

Patronage has the following requirements. The organization must:

1. have aims and objectives that are aligned with the institutional or personal themes and interests of the governor general;
2. be national (or international) in scope;

3. have active programs that are implemented on an annual basis;
4. be financially responsible

The governor general plays a key role in promoting national identity by supporting and promoting Canadian values, diversity, inclusion, culture and heritage. As such, the governor general is patron of many community, charitable, military and cultural associations, as well as public service organizations, lending them vital support and recognition for their outstanding contributions to society.

What does it mean for the RASC to have the governor general as patron?

- Viceregal patronage brings the support of the governor general to the mandate of the organization and the organization's commitment to promote and pursue its objectives
- Viceregal patronage recognizes the organization's outstanding support to society
- Viceregal patronage brings prestige to a worthy cause and a deserving organization

This is a great honour. With this support, we will continue to follow our Society's Vision, Mission, and Values.

James Edgar
President

The electronic 2016 Observer's Handbook by **James Edgar**, RASC President

Attention all you Observers!

The electronic version of the *2016 Observer's Handbook* is now available to RASC members for the same low price as last year –\$10 for the data file, plus an activation code good for two installations. The electronic version is available at www.drmz.net/rasc/DRMZ/OH2016.drmz

A **Javelin** reader is required to access the file, plus payment must be made before obtaining the activation code. To arrange payment and get the activation details, contact the Society Office either by email at mempub@rasc.ca, or call during the day **1-416-924-7973**.

The Javelin software has recently been upgraded to conform to the latest versions of Windows and Mac, plus it is suitable for iPads, iPhones, and Android devices.

Nominations for Awards

by **Glenn Hawley**, Chair, RASC Awards Committee

This year the General Assembly is being held in London Ontario on the Victoria Day weekend (May 24th) rather than the usual Dominion Day weekend (July 1st).

Accordingly, it is important that nominations and citations for awards be delivered in good time.

This is especially true for awards for which there may be a competition from which only one winner shall emerge.

The Awards Committee has received one citation for a Service Award thus far, and is hoping for more.

Call for Images 2017 RASC *Observer's Calendar*

by **Paul Gray**, RASC *Observer's Calendar* Editor

Astronomical images and sketches of all types are invited for consideration for publication in the 2017 RASC *Observer's Calendar* including: deep sky, wide field, solar system, astronomical sketches and dramatic astronomically themed landscapes.

Images can be prime focus, piggyback, eyepiece projection, or fixed tripod; and recorded on a digital/CCD camera, film, or webcam. Submitted images must be of sufficient quality and resolution to reproduce well at 9.5" x 12" and must be compatible with the "landscape" orientation of the calendar images. Generally, this will mean a resolution of at least 3825 x 3028 pixels for the print-ready tiff. We will also consider making a quilt or mosaic of lunar/planetary webcam captured images (so as not to over magnify an individual image for publication).

If you already have a gallery of images on your website, send me the link, but **please also direct me to your recent 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 the past 3 years.

Please email submissions to me at [Paul Gray](#). While I have a bottomless email box, it's best to send me jpegs first. If your image is selected, we will request a full-resolution tiff version. Full-resolution tiffs will be required for use in print. The deadline for submissions is 2016 February 28. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at the above-mentioned email address.

The Year at a Glance – 2015

by **James Edgar**, RASC President

Our Society does wonderful things, many of which go unnoticed. To all those tireless volunteers working away in the background, we give a nod and a hearty "Thank You!"

Here are some of the things we noted throughout 2015, accomplishments and happenings:

- Early in January, a proposed Anti-Harassment Policy was considered by the Board of Directors. A Working Group formed by the Board brought forward a proposed policy that was eventually adopted as Policy G24
- The Board accepted a revision to the Society's Vision, Mission, and Values statements
- We offered a new version of the popular planispheres on the eStore
- The Directors voted to grant \$1000 to a Mi'kmaw Moons research and outreach project undertaken by Dave Chapman and Cathy Leblanc
- The Charlottetown Centre dissolved due to insufficient members

- We were invited to participate in the 20th Anniversary issue of *SkyNews* magazine, which we did with a special ad and letter to the editor
- Early in February, we began the process to upgrade our www.rasc.ca website to Drupal 7, hiring a contractor who completed the work in June
- The Board approved a new Publications Policy C11, outlining editor responsibilities, as well as compensation—a first!
- April brought an invitation from the Prime Minister's Office to attend a major announcement whereby the Government of Canada would fund nearly \$250 million for the dome of the Thirty Metre Telescope, plus the Adaptive Optics System to be designed at the National Research Council's headquarters in Victoria.
- The Toronto Centre accepted the donation of ownership of the David Dunlap Observatory
- On Good Friday, we received news that *SkyNews* magazine was for sale, which happily resulted in the RASC purchasing the magazine in late June
- As a result of concerns that smaller Centres may not meet the minimum number of members to retain Centre status, the Board revised the Policy Manual (C6) to remove the minimum-number requirement.
- The Society upgraded all of the computers at the Society Office in May, installing new hardware and software, plus a new backup system. We also engaged a fulltime technical-support person.
- The Board accepted and approved a new policy creating a Special Projects Program
- An Awards Working group met over a period of months and returned a report on our Awards structure, recommending some changes, including long-service recognition
- The RASC conducted the first tour of many more to come, with a week in Southern California, visiting observatories and points of interest

- A new Fundraising Committee was formed to function as one of the Society's Permanent Committees
- Orders of *Observer's Handbooks* have increased over previous years, with a new buyer in Kalmbach Publications (*Astronomy* magazine); a second order late in December for 200 more Handbooks made for a welcome surprise
- Society membership levels exceeded all other years, with numbers now above 5000
- Finally, late in December, we received notification from the Governor General, David Johnston, giving acceptance of our invitation for him to be our patron (see the report elsewhere in the Bulletin)

There are probably some events missed or overlooked, but this gives a great flavour for the activities of the Board and the Society overall. Happy New Year!

James Edgar
President

Society Election Information

by **Robyn Foret**, RASC 2nd Vice-President

Current Election Information - 2016 Board of Directors Election

The 2016 General Assembly is scheduled earlier than usual, hosted by the London Centre May 20 – 22. Coincidentally, our Treasurer's term is up, expiring on 2016 May 22. As a result, the Nominating Committee is communicating to the Membership well in advance in the hope that more of you will have time to consider a Board position.

Participation on the RASC Board of Directors is a leadership experience that provides a rich opportunity for personal and astronomical growth!

- Be part of our leadership team at The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

- The Nominating Committee is seeking at least three candidates to run for the Board of Directors
- The President, 1st Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer will be drawn from the ranks of the Board, which will include the three members chosen in this election and six members who were elected in 2014 and 2015 for terms expiring in 2016 and 2017.

In addition to our regular Board of Directors' positions, we are looking for candidates with a strong financial background who may be interested in the Treasurer's position.

The nominating committee will be pleased to answer questions from any member of the RASC about this election process. The Nominating Committee can be reached by mail through the Society Office of the RASC, 203 - 4920 Dundas Street W, Toronto ON M9A 1B7 or by email at arforet@shaw.ca

Robyn Foret, Chair, Nominating Committee RASC

December Solstice 2015 CASCA Newsletter

by Eric Briggs, RASC, Toronto Centre

The December Solstice 2015 edition of the Cassiopeia Newsletter, from the Canadian Astronomical Society/Société Canadienne d'Astronomie, has been published (<http://casca.ca/?p=6741>). The newsletter includes an update from Canada's academic astronomers on the situation at the Thirty Metre Telescope, an update on the Mauna Kea Spectroscopic Explorer (which will replace the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope), and observations by the BRITe constellation of five nanosatellites, two of them Canadian, which are doing variable-star photometry from Earth orbit.

Talks in the Ottawa Area

by **Robert Dick**, Chair, Light-Pollution Abatement Committee

For those who may be in the Ottawa area, there will be a couple of presentations about the impact of artificial light at night.

Robert Dick (RASC-LPAC) will be speaking on the evening of Wednesday, January 13, starting at 6:30 pm until 8 pm. to the local chapter of the IEEE, He will be will be using outdoor lighting as an example where something good can have unforeseen side effects. The talk is tentatively titled “Between Silos”—Unexpected Impacts of [Outdoor Lighting]. The location will be announced in January. Contact kexing.liu@ieee.org.

Robert will also be teaching a short course at the University of Ottawa: The Biology of Darkness.” It is intended to give students a better understanding of how evolution has made our biology dependant on the natural environment and how lighting the night impacts the ecology. The three-evening course will be on February 4, 11, and 18 between 7–9 pm., 12th floor of the Desmarais Building, 55 Laurier Avenue, East (parking in the basement). Contact www.continue.uottawa.ca (613-562-5800 x6530) for registration.

➤ *Bulletin Photo of the Month*

M42

by **Dan Meek**, RASC Calgary Centre



This is a 6 -hour image taken with a TeleVue 127is telescope and a QSI583wsg CCD camera.

Thank You to our Sponsors!

by **Julia Neeser**, RASC Marketing Coordinator

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada has a unique partnership with our friends in the astronomy industry. We are now offering companies the distinction of becoming a charter sponsor of the RASC, Canada's pre-eminent amateur astronomy organization. This offer is available only to those industry leaders who recognize the value in being associated with the amateur astronomy community.

<http://www.rasc.ca/rasc-sponsors>.



What's New in the Sky

Members are encouraged to check out the **Northern Skies** section of the RASC website. Thanks to Gary Boyle for keeping us all in the know. Julia Neeser creates “The Solar System” monthly with data from James Edgar’s “Skies” newspaper articles at <http://www.rasc.ca/observing>.



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