

RASC History Committee Report NC183



2018 June 29

This report is marginally briefer than the previous report¹, given the relatively short time span covered.

Renovated Archives' Open House

On 2019 May 12, an open house was held between 13:00-16:00 to celebrate the official opening of the newly renovated space for the Society's Archives (and the CASCA Archives). Over fifty Society members (chiefly from the Toronto, Mississauga, and K-W Centres) attended, along with others curious about the Society and its activities. The National President of the RASC opened the event, followed by the local MP James Maloney (Etobicoke Lakeshore), representing the Federal Government. Mr. Maloney announced that the RASC had been successful in its application for funding for two of the coveted Federal Canada Summer Jobs placements. Mr. Maloney also recounted that, like many RASC members, he had started out with an interest in astronomy as a youth.

Randy Attwood, FRASC, Executive Director of the RASC, then spoke on the projected uses for the Archives space, and how it can serve to effectively enhance the Society's mission in a variety of ways. Finally, the Society's Archivist introduced those present to some of our more notable artifacts, including a first edition of Voltaire's *Éléments de la philosophie de Newton* (1733), a second edition of Jean-Jacques d'Ortous de Mairan's epochal *Traité physique et historique de l'aurore boréale* (1754), the "Astronomical Index", a manuscript notebook by the Rev'd T. W. Webb (*ca.* 1855-*ante*1885), the Society's 101.6-mm O.G. Thomas Cooke and Sons refractor (1901), and the reproduction of Galileo's clock mechanism by Society member Nat Cohen (Halifax Centre), recently donated by Dr. Roy Bishop, FRASC, of this Committee (the clock mechanism made a great impression on those present).²

Among notable Society members present were Peter Broughton, FRASC (Toronto Centre), and Chris Malicki (Mississauga Centre), Assistant Editor of the *Observer's Handbook*. Integral to the success of this event was the dedicated hard work of Julia Neeser, RASC Office Manager, and Renata Koziol, RASC Accounting Manager, both in planning, and onsite. Lisa Di Veto, RASC Fundraising Consultant, provided key advice for the event.

Many present remarked on the success of the open house. At least one of those present thought it reminiscent in some respects to the "At Home", an annual event of the Society's during the early decades of the last century (continuing to 1959), and one from which the institution of the Society's General Assembly eventually developed.³

¹ https://www.rasc.ca/sites/default/files/NC181-182_%20History_Committee_Report_ver2.pdf.

² Described in detail in the reference *supra*.

³ For the RASC's At Homes, see R. Peter Broughton, *Looking Up: a History of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada* (Toronto—Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1994), p. 167; <https://www.rasc.ca/looking>. An early invitation can be found at: <https://www.rasc.ca/sites/default/files/At-Home-1916.pdf>.



Archives awaiting guests

©RASC



MP James Maloney
addressing crowd

©RASC

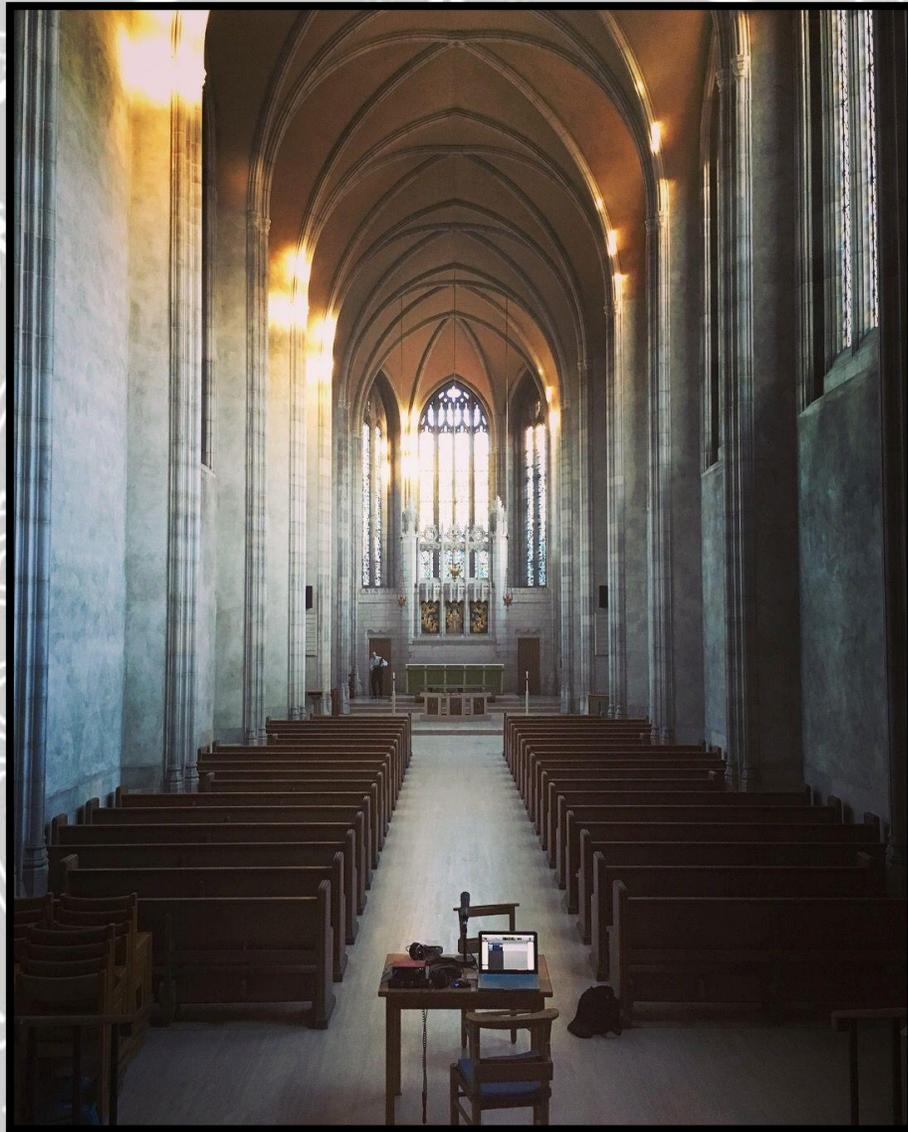


Archivist explaining
some archival arcana to
resolutely awake guests

©RASC

Podcasting the history of Canadian astronomy

The Society's RASC 2018 Podcasts continue on aspects of the history of the Society over the past century and a half; details can be found at <https://www.rasc.ca/rasc-2018-podcasts>. The latest podcast, on *Mapping the Sky*, will be released towards the end of this month. The recording locations of the Toronto based crew have tended to be in historical buildings belonging to institutions approximately contemporary with the RASC (this has not been intentional); the latest atmospheric but perhaps unlikely recording location is shown below. The recording team wishes to thank the Rev'd Andrea Budgey for trusting them not to do anything non-astronomical in the space. In what is probably a first for a RASC podcast, when the Archivist and the producer moved the portable studio to the far end of this space, they recorded the podcast seated in elaborately carved chairs from *ca.* 1500, chairs that were made when Copernicus was alive (unfortunately the twin *cathedra* are not visible in this image).



©Chelsea Body

Cultural Connections

Progress has been made on several RASC 2018 art shows which will feature images and artifacts from the Archives.

The card for the exhibit “150 Years of Astronomical Imagery: Royal Astronomical Society of Canada” which will be at the Homer Watson House & Gallery during September 9 to October 21 has been released. Clark Muir (K-W Centre) is the RASC PI on this project, and the local RASC sponsoring group is the K-W Centre. The University of Toronto Archives and Records Management has offered to lend the original of Gustav Hahn’s important painting of the Great Meteor Procession of 1913 February 9, which will be displayed next to the framed Archives’ copy of the relief half-tone print published as the frontispiece to JRASC VII, 3 (2013 May-June).⁴ In addition to images from our Archives, the show will feature contemporary astrophotography and astrosketching by K-W Centre members. All RASC members who will be in the Kitchener-Waterloo area during the run of the show are invited to attend. The opening reception is on September 16 from 2 to 4 PM.



**Homer Watson
House & Gallery**
519-748-4377 | homerwatson.on.ca

Fall Exhibition: Science & Art
150 Years of Astronomical Imagery
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
Exhibition Dates: September 9 - October 21, 2018
Opening Reception: Sunday, September 16 | 2 - 4 pm
Artist Talk: Saturday, September 29 | 1-3 pm
Quinn, Matt, *Silent Lake*, Photography

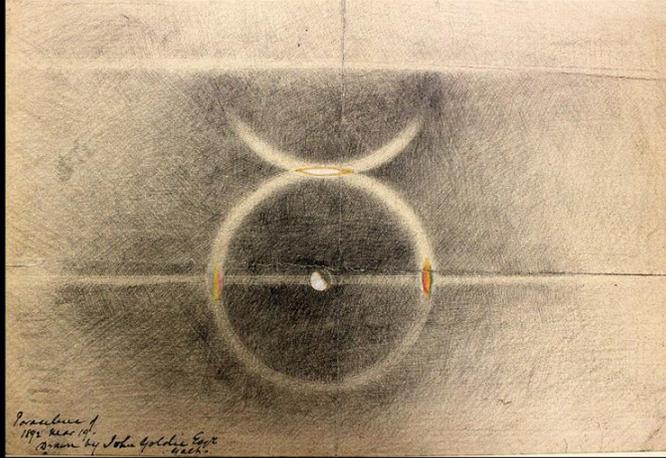
The Propeller Gallery (<https://www.propellerctr.com/>), one of the leading Queen Street galleries in the arts district of Toronto, is presenting “Out of This World—Art inspired by all things astronomical. Propeller Gallery presents a juried exhibition celebrating 150 years of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada”. The exhibition runs from July 4 to July 22, and the opening reception is on July 5, from 7 to 10 PM. All RASC members are welcome to attend this show as well.

⁴ <http://adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2011JRASC.105..167R>.

Out Of This World

Art inspired by all things astronomical

Propeller Gallery presents a juried exhibition celebrating 150 years of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.



Transit of Venus 1874, John Goldie Esq.



30 Abell Street, Toronto, M6J 0A9
Wed-Sat 12-6 | Sun 12-5
<http://propellerctr.com>

Opening Reception
Thursday July 5th, 7-10pm

Exhibition Runs
July 4 - 22, 2018



Participating Artists

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Michael Black Cosmos One
Linda-Marlena Bucholtz Ross From space I saw Earth
Linda-Marlena Bucholtz Ross Pegasus, Delphinus and La Voie Lactée
David Cumming Newton's First Telescope
Chris Domanski Hypothetical vision of Galaxy
Trinley Dorje We Are Stardust
Dan Falk Easter Island Eclipse
Maya Foltyn 99 Moons
Peter Friedrichsen Sun and Shore
Susan Gaby-Trotz South Pole - Jupiter
Susan Gaby-Trotz South Pole - Venus
Susan Gaby-Trotz South Pole - Earth
Aryan Ghaemmaghami Mother Earth
David Griffin 2cascade2
Xianda Guo, Charlotte Mueller, Sinead Lynch, Ramona Fluck, Christoph Blapp, and Jayanne English The Power of Colour for Revealing Dark Matter
Diana Hamer Corraling Baryons
Diana Hamer Central Force Problem
Diana Hamer Cosmic Horseshoe
Chris Harms Sat.10001</p> | <p>Angela Julian Purple Helio 2
Adam Kolodziej Dark Matter
Irena IRIKO Kolodziej Morning Star
Nancy Lalicon Two Stars and a Comet
Michelle Letarte Crab Nebula, Homage to Dr Robert Garrison
Michelle Letarte N66, NGC 346, in memory of Bob Garrison
Elizabeth Lopez Mars Evening Sky
Shannon Leigh Io
Trevor McKinven Jupiter Swirling
France McNeil voyage dans la lune
Giuseppe Morano Spacetime
Sarah Moreau Stargazer
John Ming Mark Midnight Sun
Joseph Muscat Planetude
Pria Muzumdar Life out There!
Pria Muzumdar Is that Life out There?
Neeko Paluzzi MOON (prototype)
Frances Patella Dark Matter
Donna Wells Gibeon (side1)
Donna Wells Gibeon (side2)
Donna Wells Seymchan
Donna Wise Numbers of Music & Poetry</p> |
|---|--|

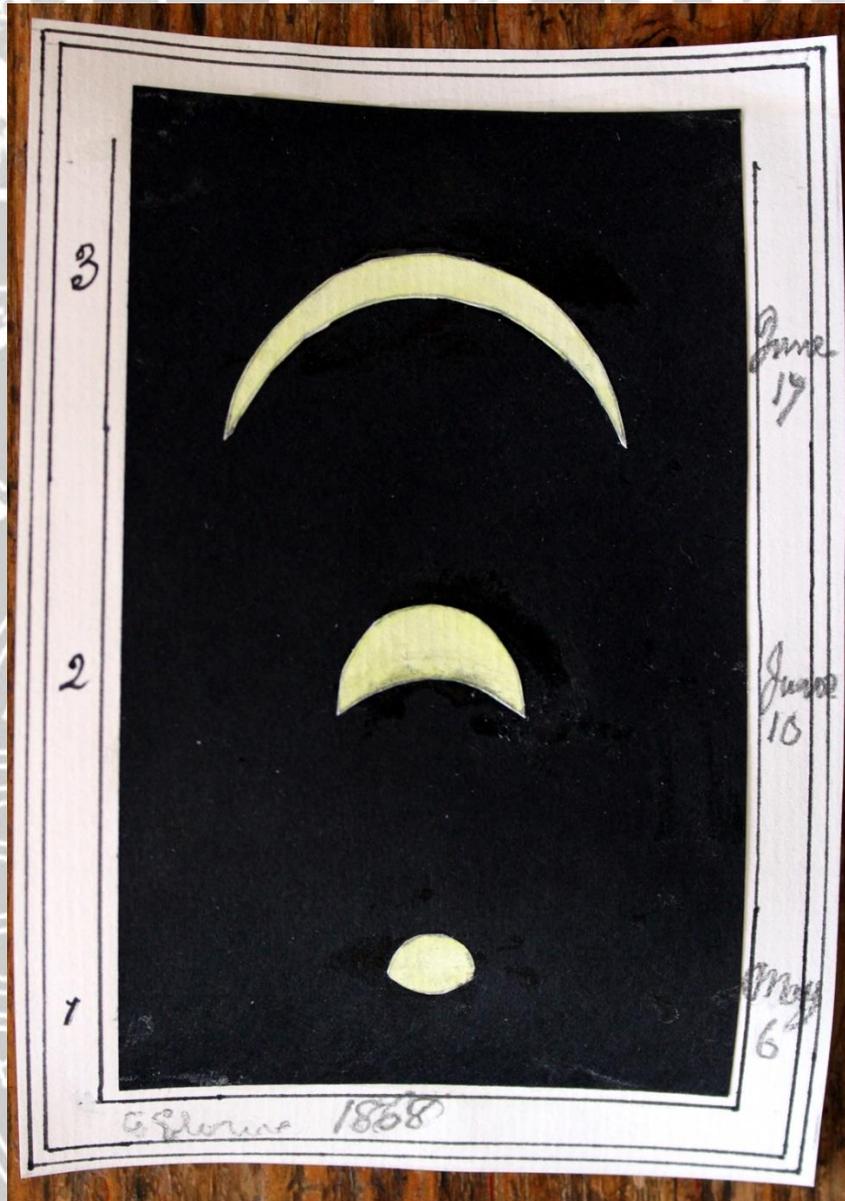
With archival work from the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

Special Events

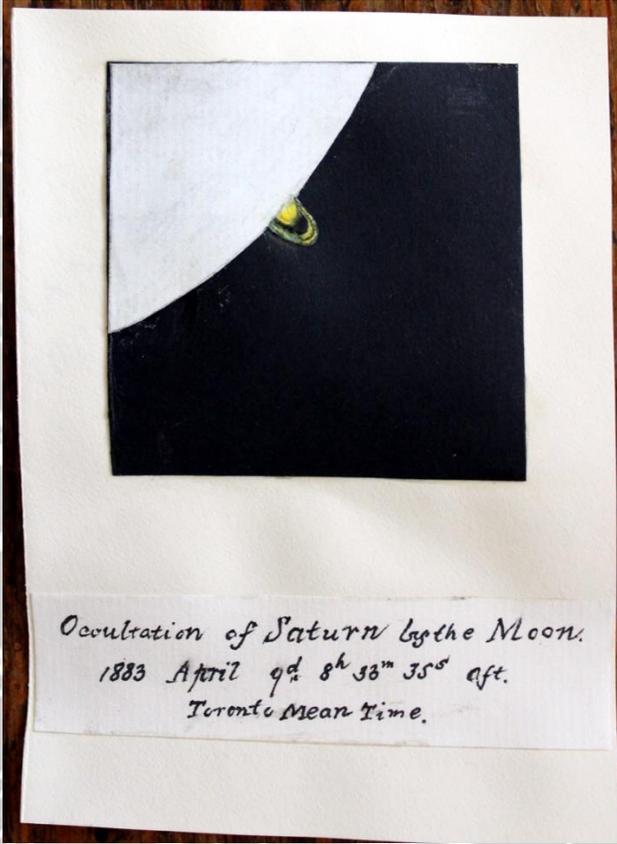
- Saturday July 14th, 1:30-3pm** - Panel on Understanding Astronomical Images
Saturday July 21st, 7pm - Artist Talks & Star Party in Lisgar Park

30 Abell Street, Toronto, ON M6J 0A9
(416) 504-7142 | galleries@propellerctr.com

The Archivist was reluctant to lend any of the originals of our 19th century observational art to “Out of This World”—partly for conservation reasons, but principally because the pieces the jury most wanted are still attached (precariously) to the album into which they were pasted in the 1890s! His solution was to commission hand-made facsimiles of the art. The facsimiles are shown below. The cost of the facsimiles has been donated by the Specula astronomica minima.



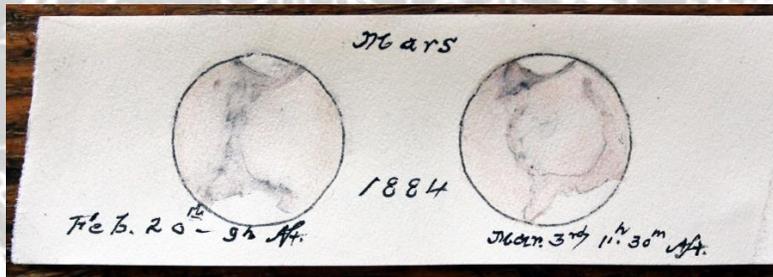
Hand-made facsimile of Andrew Elvins Cytherian phases, 1868



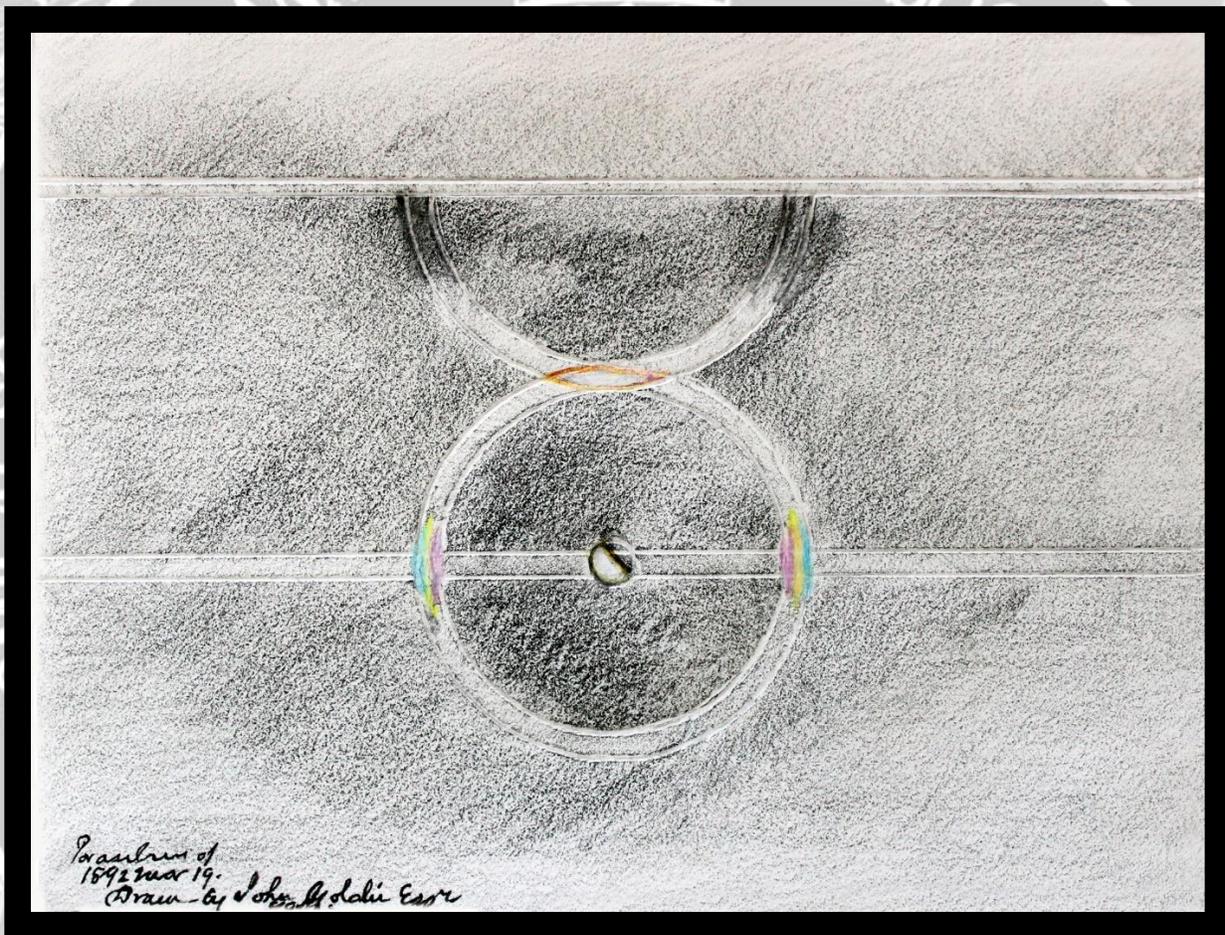
Hand-made facsimile of A.F. Miller occultation of Saturn, 1883



Hand-made facsimile of A.F. Miller satellite transits of Jovian moons, 1885



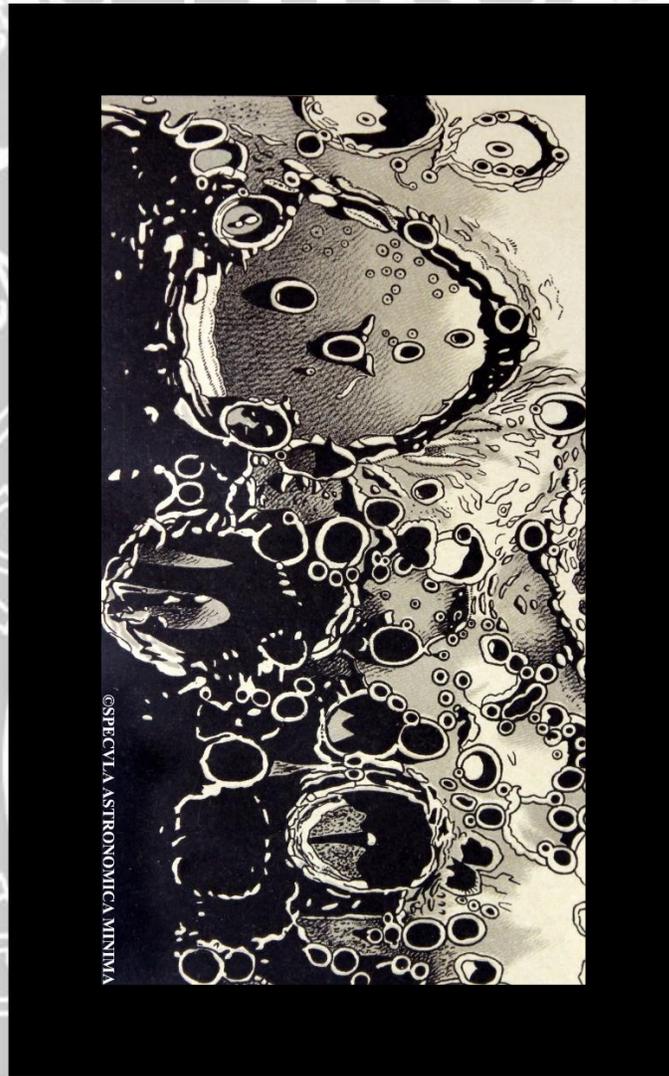
Hand-made
facsimile of
Andrew Elvins
Mars, 1884



Hand-made facsimile of John Goldie Paraselene, 1892

Viewing the Moon Across Time

Also under the aegis of our sesquicentennial programming, the observational component of RASC 2018 was launched this month (<https://www.rasc.ca/viewing-moon-across-time>). It is a rather ambitious invitation to use surviving materials from the “golden age” of visual solar-system observation (often defined as spanning the Victorian period to WWII, coterminous with the genesis and early years of the RASC) to craft contemporary observational programs. The pages of the project suggest a variety of approaches based on experimental and cognitive archaeology, available material resources, a protocol, and goals for participants. It is offered as the closest way any of us might get to observing alongside Andrew Elvins and colleagues.



Clavius and area by Julius Schmidt 1856, from Weiss 1892.
Reproduced courtesy SPECVLA ASTRONOMICA MINIMA

Publications

R.A. Rosenfeld, "The RASC's National Sesquicentennial Celebrations", *JRASC* 112, 3 (2018 June), 105-111

Presentations

Peter Broughton, "John Stanley Plaskett - Northern Star", invited speaker for the opening plenary session of CASCA 2018, 2018 May 23, University of Victoria (http://astrowww.phys.uvic.ca/~karun/UVicOutreach/CASCA2018/CASCA_2018_program_May21.pdf)

Peter Broughton, "Who was John Stanley Plaskett?", Royal BC Museum, 2018 May 26

Peter also delivered a presentation on J.S. Plaskett to the DAO staff during this period

Eric Briggs, "History of RASC at the David Dunlap Observatory", delivered at the official opening of the David Dunlap Observatory under the stewardship of the city of Richmond Hill, 2018 June 13 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCnif5u24yw&feature=youtu.be>)

Other activity

Chris Beckett (unattached) observes that:

"I've been teaching my Astronomy class as usual and completed one 4 week session this Spring, gave a brief talk on the history of planetary observation before showing ~100 members of the public our Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn and Mars at Grasslands National Park... At one point we spoke about a 150 history project with an observational twist. During the research for our Symposium I came across the observing list from the 1943 OH, which lasted at least until 1967 when we run out of OH scans. That's an interesting list as it contains a variety of what are considered challenging objects, such as, the North American, Horsehead (B33), Snake (B72) among other easier objects such as the double cluster and Coma Berenice by '67. I believe all the objects now find a home in one list or another, however this is an original list and foundational to observing in Canada".

Andrew Oakes (unattached) reports that he'll be:

"Speaking at the 4th Early Career Conference for History of Physical Science, sponsored by the American Institute of Physics, alongside a history conference sponsored by the European Physical Society, in San Sebastian, Spain, October 17 to 21, 2018. My topic is: Early 20th-Century Astrophysics in Canada: John S. Plaskett's Leadership from 1903 to 1935.

And congratulations are due to Andrew, for:

"At the University of Toronto's Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology [I've] had my thesis proposal approved for my upcoming PhD dissertation. The

working title is: “On the Founding of Canadian Professional Astronomy—Clarence Chant at the University of -Toronto””!

Dr. Mark Tovey (London Centre) reports:

“Last night [2018 May 18] we hosted Barry Colgrove, his wife Marlene, and his daughter Sarah, at the Cronyn Observatory during the May RASC London Centre meeting. I gave a talk illustrating some of the Colgrove models and introduced Barry Colgrove, who told stories about the Colgrove family, together with some show and tell. There was a high level of engagement from RASC London Centre members throughout.

We then opened the newly reconstructed Colgrove workshop and Dale Armstrong took photographs of the Colgrove family and RASC London Centre members in and around the new exhibit. It was a lot of fun.

Tonight (May 19, 2018) I'll be giving a shortened version of the same talk for the Saturday Public Star night at the Cronyn.

I attach a photograph showing a side-by-side comparison - the workshop on October 25, 1940, and on May 18, 2018 (taken by Dale Armstrong). On the left, W.G. Colgrove. On the right, his grandson, Barry Colgrove”.



W.G. Colgrove
October 25, 1940



Barry Colgrove
May 18, 2018

©Dale Armstrong

Finally, Clark Muir, a long-serving member of our Committee, has agreed to accept the position of Vice Chair of the History Committee.

Acknowledgments

The Committee wishes to thank Julia Neeser, Office Manager, Renata Koziol, Accounting Manager, and Randy Attwood, FRASC, Executive Director, for support during the period covered by this report. Thanks are due to Walter MacDonald (RASC Webmaster) for valiantly continuing to digitize our archival heritage during cloudy nights and the peculiar vagaries of the provincial electoral process. We also wish to thank Lisa Di Veto, RASC Fundraising Consultant, for looking for ways to enhance the Archives resources.

Respectfully submitted,
R.A. Rosenfeld, Chair

Committee Members:

- *Randy Attwood, FRASC (ED)
- Chris Beckett (Unattached)
- Dr. Roy Bishop, FRASC (Halifax)
- Eric Briggs (Toronto)
- Peter Broughton, FRASC (Toronto)
- *Colin Haig (RASC National President, Hamilton)
- Dr. Karen Finstad (Ottawa Centre)
- Dr. Chris Gainor (Victoria)
- *Renata Koziol (Accounting Manager)
- Heather Laird (Calgary)
- *Barry Matthews (Ottawa Centre, observer)
- Clark Muir (Kitchener-Waterloo), Vice Chair
- Andrew Oakes (Unattached)
- Randall Rosenfeld (Unattached), Chair
- Dr. Mark Tovey (London)

*=non-voting members