

Nova Notes

The Newsletter of the Halifax Centre
of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada



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PO Box 31011, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3K 5T9 www.halifax.rasc.ca halifax@rasc.ca

Astrophotos

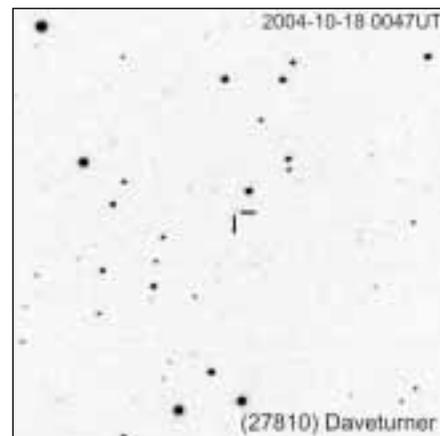
This shot was taken from my house in Dartmouth, on the night of Sept. 30 at 11:40 p.m. It was taken with my 8" f/7.5 dob at 86X with an 18mm Tak LE eyepiece. The camera is a Canon A70 and was held up to the eyepiece.

– Michael G.



The hard working volunteers at the recent SCO work party take a break, see next page.

– Sergio Grbac



Dave lane sent me this image of our Oct. meeting speaker David Turner – OK it was asteroid (27810) dave Turner! – Dave L

Another Successful Work Party at SCO

On September 26th another successful SCO work party was held, as always it was well attended and the usual maintenance work was completed, along with some upgrades. The weeds and rotting logs were removed from the driveway area, the paint was refreshed, and new wood preservative was added to the rolloff. Other upgrades that have been implemented over the past few months are the addition of the patio block walkway between the rolloff and the warm room, and who could forget the addition of all new carpeting! SCO looks like it is in tip-top shape for the coming winter months. Thanks to EVERYONE who took the time to participate.

Thanks to Sergio Grbac for the pictures.



The Murray Cunningham Astrophotography Award

Congratulations to Calum Ewing on winning the first award!

The Murray Cunningham Astrophotography Award was established by the Halifax Centre in 2003 to promote interest among centre members in astrophotography, including digital imaging. The award is named after Dr. Murray Cunningham, one of the centre's founding members and long-time Honorary President, who always displayed a sense of wonder and marvel when looking at the photographic achievements of Centre members.

Rules

1. Subject: The award will be given annually for photographs and digital images taken in a given calendar year. While photographs and digital images will be considered, submissions must be in the form of a print (see Rule 3).
2. Eligibility: Any member of the Halifax Centre in good standing is eligible. Previous winners are eligible after a five year lapse (i.e. the 2003 winner would be eligible for the 2008 award).
3. Submission of Entries: A call for submissions will appear in the last issue of Nova Notes for each year. Entries should be submitted to the Centre's First Vice-President no later than the last day of February of the following year, or mailed to the Centre in an envelope marked "Attention First Vice President" postmarked no later than the last day of February of the following year. A maximum

of three images may be submitted by each eligible member. Submissions may only be made by the person who actually set up the equipment and took the exposure.

Images shared at meetings, posted on personal or RASC web sites, or appearing in Nova Notes, are acceptable. Images which have been previously published (magazine, book, calendar, etc.) or otherwise have been widely circulated are ineligible.

Submissions must be accompanied by a brief description of the equipment and processing used in its production.

Submissions are to consist of a print, measuring between 5x7 inches and 8x10 inches. Commercial printing of negatives, slides, or digital images to the photographer's satisfaction is permitted.

4. Judging: The winner will be selected by a committee that will be chaired by the First Vice-President and consisting of three members of the Centre, appointed by the Centre's executive. Judges cannot be immediate family members of candidates. The committee chair will circulate the submissions to the other members of the committee, so that, as much as possible, the submissions remain anonymous.

Images will be judged based on composition, subject matter, aesthetics, and technical merit. If the judges feel that no suitable images have been submitted, they have the option of not granting the award.

5. Prize: The winner will receive as a prize one book, or telescope accessory, of the winner's choice, to a maximum value of \$75 (including taxes) ★

See Calum's picture at <http://halifax.rasc.ca/gallery.html>



Blair MacDonald sent me this image of M33 taken at Dave Lane's ARO star party. Sum of ten 30-second exposures, and heavily processed.



Nova Notes

*The Newsletter of the
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PO Box 31011
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3K 5T9

Articles on any aspect of Astronomy will be considered for publication.

Nova Notes is published bi-monthly in February, April, June, August, October and December. The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Halifax Centre.

"Letters to the Editor" or letters to our resident expert "Gazer" are also most welcome.

Contact the editor at the following:

Michael Gatto
agatto@ns.sympatico.ca
453-5486 (Home) 482-1013 (Work)

Nova Notes is also available as a PDF file on our centre's website at www.halifax.rasc.ca

Material for the next issue should reach the editor by Dec. 15

September 2004 Meeting Report

by Pat d'Entremont

A Slimeball Observer (SO) – in case you haven't heard – is one who chooses observing over attending a meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. And SOs do so unapologetically and unabashedly. Why, they even have baseball caps with the lettering "SO" proudly embroidered in bold white letters.

SOs come out at night, near the New Moon, when it is clear, and when there is a meeting of the RASC. Only they are nowhere near the other RASC members...

September 17, 2004 turned out to be a cloudy night, thankfully, for if it hadn't been, some SOs would have been at St. Croix instead of St. Mary's, it being not too far from the new moon. As it were, the room at SMU was packed, this being the first meeting since the summer break.

President Stephen Tancock, nearing the end of his second and final term, called the meeting to order shortly after 8 p.m. He talked of new rates (\$50/year, still a deal), of benefits of membership (RASC Journal, Observers Handbook, use of the observatory, book and scope borrowing privileges, etc.). Lifetime memberships are \$1,000; if you live 20 years beyond payment date, you win.

Privacy

In England they pronounce it pree'-va-cy; here we pronounce it pry'-va-cy. Either way, it's a hot topic in this electronic age, trying to keep Big Brother at bay. And now thanks to Pat Kelly and Mary Lou Whitehorne, we have our very own privacy policy.

Membership Survey

Dave Lane got up to talk about the RASC national membership survey, and showed slides on key issues, comparing the Halifax vote to the National vote. We seemed to track pretty close to the national vote on most issues. Dave stressed that this survey was not intended to be a plebiscite, but rather a way to gauge members' values. A healthy 20% returned the surveys, 35 from Halifax. One issue that got a lot of attention was the national deficit

(been a while since I heard that term). It appears that most people would support rates going up to help with costs. Another point that was mentioned was of putting things like the annual report online rather than mail it out, but there are bylaw changes that would be required.

Some meeting scribes would, at this juncture, depart from merely reporting the facts, to opine on why don't we just change the bylaws, place the annual report online, up the rates, and move on. But not me.

Nova East

After break, it was announced to a round of applause that over 100 people attended Nova East this year. Unfortunately, there was lots of cloud but those who stuck it out lucked out on Sunday evening.

Light Pollution Success Stories

Roy Bishop made a presentation on some recent successes he has had in the light pollution department. Thanks to his perseverance, bright lights in Blomidon National Park, the church at North Grand Pré, and another site down the road were replaced by lower-wattage full-enclosure fixtures.

His before-and-after photographs spoke for themselves. The photos after the fixtures were changed used longer exposure times yet revealed a much darker site. In fact, you could see star trails in these shots where you only saw a glare prior to that.

Roy also showed us diagrams of the various light fixtures that are commonly used.

Nominating Committee

Gary Weber is the chair of the nominating committee, and he made a brief presentation to ask if anyone was interested in filling in a couple of vacancies on the executive.

He talked of his brother Guido and his "ways", and also pointed out that once you complete your turn on the executive, you have the right to sit in Hecklers' Row during the meetings.

Blair's Images

Blair MacDonald showed us some images he had taken at Dave Lane's place a week earlier, as well as a picture of M8 & M20 (Lagoon & Trifid Nebulae)

that he took with film and got transferred to CD. It was very nice!

One In A Million

Sherman Williams is the one person in Nova Scotia known to have seen the June 8, 2004 Transit of Venus. He got up to tell us about this experience. It turns out he got three brief glances, each only a few seconds. But he did it.

Well, Hello Mary Lou

Mary Lou Whitehorne chairs the National Educational Committee, and is seeking input from teachers and people at large regarding their needs. These surveys have been mailed to each centre, and there are many extra if anyone is interested. She also mentioned that there is a grant of \$22,000 earmarked for translating Skyways in French for the Quebec market.

Severe Weather

Dave Tindall tells us that on September 30 at 8 pm at SMU, Kerry Emmanuel will be doing a talk on severe weather.

Lost and Found

One problem with losing your glasses is you need your glasses to find them. Someone left a pair of glasses at Nova East. If they are yours contact Darren at darren.talbot@ns.sympatico.ca.

Work Party

This fall's work party (more party than work, so try to make it) will be held on September 26, at SCO. Since this is where the work needs to be done, we felt it was an apropos venue.

A bedit a bedit a bedit t-t-t-t-that's all folks. ☆

SCOPE FOR SALE

Celestron First Scope 76 EQ

Brand new in the box, never opened.
(Won as a prize in the QE2 Lottery.)
\$200.00

Please call Margaret Cox 422-4646

Halifax Centre Privacy Policy

Adopted September 17, 2004

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada is required, by federal legislation, to have a privacy policy to address the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information in the course of its commercial activities. That policy can be found in the members' section of the national web site. A copy can also be obtained by contacting the Halifax Centre's national council representatives. The Halifax Centre's policy is in addition to the national policy.

The Halifax Centre receives your contact information and membership status updates from the society's National Office. If you wish to review or change any of your information, please contact the National Office directly for assistance.

Your name, address, telephone number, membership category, membership

status, and, if available, your email address, are kept on the Halifax Centre membership list. The Halifax Centre requires this information to maintain its services to members, and to facilitate the coordination of Halifax Centre astronomy-related activities. These include, but are not limited to: operation of the Centre's library and observatory, Centre awards and contests, and fund raising activities.

The membership list is available to members of the Centre's executive and may be made available to members of Centre committees whose membership may include some Centre members who are not on the executive. The membership list is not available to anyone else. Your information will not be given, loaned, traded or sold to any other person, organization, or entity for any reason.

Centre members who subscribe to the Centre's e-mail list, should keep in mind that information in their e-mail signature files will be viewed by other members of the list.

The Nova East organizing committee mails out information to the members of the Minas Astronomy Group (MAG) and the Nova Central Astronomy Club (NCAC), as neither of these clubs has a newsletter. Members of the Halifax Centre receive notification of Nova East through Nova Notes, the centre's newsletter. To save on mailing costs, the centre membership list is provided to the Nova East organizing committee so that they can check to see which MAG and NCAC members are also members of the Halifax Centre, and thus receive Nova Notes. While the Halifax Centre is one of the organizers of Nova East, any additional personal information collected by the Nova East committee (e.g. registration information) does not fall under the Halifax Centre's privacy policy.

The Centre's privacy officer is the Centre president, who should be contacted regarding the Centre's privacy policy. ★

The Earth Centered Universe™ Planetarium and Telescope Control Software

New
V4.0
Released!

The Earth Centered Universe Pro (ECU) has been the Canadian choice of amateur astronomers for over a decade. This practical tool for astronomy enthusiasts — known for its ease of use, reasonable price, rich feature set, and lightning fast speed — has been upgraded yet again. See our web site for a complete list of features and to take advantage of the free demo version.

★ **NOVA** ★
Astronomics

Just a few of the features:

- Includes the Sun, Moon, Planets, and over 200,000 asteroids and comets. **Easily download new comets and asteroids from the Internet** from within ECU! Includes powerful animation features.
- Stellar databases include the Yale Catalog (9100+ stars), SAO Catalog (245,000+ stars), Tycho-2/Hipparcos Catalog (2,400,000+ stars), and the **Hubble Guide Star Catalog** (15,000,000+ stars). Also reads the amazing **US Naval Observatory S-2.0** Catalog which contains 525,000,000+ stars to fainter than 19th magnitude!
- The huge deep sky databases include the respected 10,500+ object Saguaro Astronomy Club database and the 73,000+ galaxy strong **PGC Catalog**.
- Other databases include the **General Catalog of Variable Stars** and the **Washington Visual Double Star Catalog**. Add your own objects, too!
- **Prints highly-configurable, high-quality star charts**. Now includes a new split-chart feature and charts can be printed in full colour.
- Powerful interface to most computerized telescopes including the Meade **LX200** and **Autostar series**, the Celestron **NexStar**, most Digital Setting Circles, and many more. Many more telescopes are supported through complete support of the **ASCAM** initiative.
- Includes an image viewer and hundreds of astronomical images.
- **Price: CDN\$79.95+\$4.50P&H+GST/HST** (see web site or call for upgrade prices)

A customer had this to say:

"I received the new release of ECU (V4.0) and loaded it on my telescope computer. The new features are very nice additions to the most efficient planetarium program with telescope control on this planet"

- Richard M., New York

RASC Special
Only \$55 (save \$35!)

(includes GST and P&H)

Send a copy of this ad with a cheque to Nova Astronomics, PO Box 31013, Halifax, NS, B3K 5T9 (Offer expires Dec 31, 2004)

website: www.nova-astro.com

e-mail: info@nova-astro.com

phone: (902) 499-6196

RASC Moncton Annual Astronomy Conferences

by Paul Gray

The RASC Moncton centre invites you to join us for our Annual Astronomy Conferences on November 20th at Universite de Moncton. Directions will be available in the near future on our website. The event starts at 11 a.m. following the Moncton RASC annual meeting. Five great speakers will present interesting and informative talks, plus there will be a swap session!

- 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Debra Tigner
“Supernova Hunting”
- 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch, Swap Shop
& Buy and Sell Session
- 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Dr David Turner
“The Origin of the Constellations”
- 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Curt Nason
“Bird’s Eye View of the Night Sky”
- 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Damien Lemay
“Meteorites” (French talk)
- 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Peter Ceravolo
“The Making of Comet Odyssey”

There is no fee to attend the conferences or take part in the swap session. A soup and sandwich buffet style lunch will be available for a fee of \$10 per person. Advance payment is preferred for the lunch and a cheque or money order can be made out to the RASC Moncton Centre in the amount of \$10 per person. If paying for more than one person please include a list of names for those buying lunch. Please mail your cheque or money order no later than Nov.10th and mail it to:

Emma MacPhee
26 Wilson Avenue
Riverview, NB
E1B 2V8

If you wish to buy lunch and pay on site before lunch you may but you MUST notify Emma MacPhee by phone or email no later than November 17th. njemsm@rogers.com or (506) 386-1516.

Following the events the speakers are taken out to supper with members of the centre and its council for some time to chat and socialize. Reservations have been made for up to 30 people and you are welcome to join us as well.

See you in Moncton!

Image from ARO (Abbey Ridge Observatory)

I've added a few pictures to my webpage lately, see www.davelane.ca/aro/images2.html. Probably the most interesting is the colour image of NGC6946 with the supernova in it, shown here with the SN market. Dave L.

Bill Thurlow's Memorial Donations A request for Proposals

Early this year the Halifax Centre lost one of its most active and well-known members: Dr. Bill Thurlow. Bill bequeathed to the Centre his 8" Meade telescope system, which has a polar mount, an SBIG auto-guider, and a number of accessories. In addition, the Centre has received over \$3000 in memorial donations in Bill's honour.

The Centre must now consider the best and most appropriate way to use Bill's bequest. The executive committee wants to hear from you, the Centre members, on how we might use these resources. We are looking for ideas and suggestions that would properly honour Bill's contributions to the life of the Halifax Centre. He wanted his gift to benefit the Centre, its members, and its goals.

There are many directions we could take. An obvious choice would be to enhance the observatory at St. Croix for our own use and for outreach opportunities with schools, youth groups and others.

Please take some time to think about this. Proposals, along with an implementation plan, should be submitted in writing to Steve Tancock (centre president) by e-mail

shelley.steve@ns.sympatico.ca

or by regular mail

Halifax Centre RASC
PO Box 31011
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 5T9

Submissions should be received no later than December 31, 2004.





Part of your membership in the Halifax RASC includes access to our observatory, located in the community of St. Croix, NS. The site has grown over the last few years to include a roll-off roof observatory with electrical outlets, a warm-room and washroom facilities. Enjoy dark pristine skies far away from city lights, and the company of like minded observers searching out those faint fuzzies in the night.

Members' Night

Every weekend closest to the new Moon there is a Members' Night at St. Croix. The purpose of members' night is to attract members from the centre to share an evening of observing with other members. It's also a great night for beginners to try out different scopes and see the sky under dark conditions. For more information or transportation arrangements, please contact the Observing Chairman Craig Levine at 852-1245. *Dates for Members' Nights for the following few months are:*

November 12 (13 rain date) ☆ **December 10** (11 rain date) ☆ **January 7** (8 rain date)

Directions from Halifax

(from Bayers Road Shopping Centre)

1. Take Hwy 102 (the Bi-Hi) to Exit 4 (Sackville).
2. Take Hwy 101 to Exit 4 (St. Croix).
3. At the end of the off ramp, turn left.
4. Drive about 1.5 km until you cross the St. Croix River Bridge. You'll see a power dam on your left.
5. Drive about 0.2 km past the bridge and take the first left (Salmon Hole Dam Road).
6. Drive about 1 km until the pavement ends.
7. Drive another 1 km on the dirt road to the site.
8. You will recognize the site by the 3 small white buildings on the left.

Become a St. Croix Key Holder

For a modest key fee, members in good standing for more than a year who have been briefed on observatory can gain access to the St. Croix facility. For more information on becoming a key holder, contact the Observing Chairman Craig Levine at 852-1245.

RULES FOR THE 17.5" SCOPE (OR ANY RASC SCOPE AT SCO)

On Members' Nights the 17.5" scope must be shared by all members. The 17.5" scope can be used by anyone, but all views have to be shared with anyone interested in taking a look.

On non Members' Nights the scope can be used by individuals wishing to work on personal observing projects. Members should try to limit their use to under 45 minutes when other members are waiting to use it. Preference will be given to members who send an email to the hfxrasc list, or call the observing chair on the night they want to go out. If no one else wants to use the scope then feel free to use it all night, but it would be considerate every so often to ask members there if anyone has been quietly waiting to use it.

Please contact the Observing Chairman Craig Levine for more information or to book the scope at 852-1245.

Meeting Announcements

Halifax Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada



November 19th

Annual General Meeting, plus former Halifax Centre president David Tindall will be giving a Handbook Talk.

December 17th

Topic to be determined, check the website www.halifax.rasc.ca for the latest information.



Meetings begin at **8:00** P.M.

Members of the general public are welcome.

All members—but especially new ones—are invited to come to the meetings 20 - 30 minutes early to participate in our new informal “Meet and Greet”. It’s a chance to ask questions about astronomy, the RASC, memberships, or to just say hello.

Room 176 Loyola Building
Saint Mary’s University (*See Map Below*)

The Halifax RASC

Executive meetings

begin at 7:00 P.M.,

and members are

welcome to attend.



Halifax RASC Executive 2004

<i>Honorary President</i>	Dr. Roy Bishop	
<i>President</i>	Steve Tancock	465-4092
<i>1st vice-president</i>	Pat Kelly	798-3329
<i>2nd vice-president</i>	Pat d’Entremont	497-1153
<i>Secretary</i>	Andrea Misner	425-5074
<i>Treasurer</i>	Paul Evans	423-4746
<i>Nova Notes Editor</i>	Michael Gatto	453-5486
<i>National Rep.</i>	Pat Kelly	798-3329
<i>2nd National Rep</i>	Mary Lou Whitehome	865-0235
<i>Librarian</i>	Alex LeCreux	404-5480
<i>Observing Chairman</i>	Craig Levine	852-1245
<i>Councilor</i>	Shawna Mitchell	865-7026
<i>Councilor</i>	Gary Weber	454-8264

Meeting Location

Meetings are held every third Friday of the month, except for the months of July and August. Meetings take place in room 176, Loyola Building (#3 on map) at Saint Mary’s University.

1. McNally
 2. Sobeys Building
 3. Loyola Academic Complex
 4. Loyola Residence
 5. Patrick Power Library
 6. Science Building
 7. Burke Building
 8. Bookstore
 9. Alumni Arena
 10. The Tower
 11. Rice Residence
- P = Parking

