

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Halifax Centre
Friday, December 11th, 2015

The 11 December 2015 meeting of the Halifax Centre was the Annual General Meeting.

President Paul Grey welcomed the members and guests and provided opening remarks.

Business of the AGM

1. Approval of 2015 Agenda – moved by Paul Heath, Second by Pat Kelly, motion carried.
2. Approval of 2014 AGM Minutes – moved by Jim Millar, Second by Pat Kelly, motion carried.
3. Appointment of a new auditor - The Centre's auditor stepped down just prior to this year's audit. Dave Lane was volunteered as the replacement auditor for the 2014-15 fiscal year. Appointment moved by Pat Kelly, second Tony Schellinck, motion carried.
4. Report of President – Paul Gray gave a report and the text is in Nova Notes.
5. Report of the 1st Vice President – Paul Heath has provided a written report to be printed in Nova Notes.
6. Report of the 2nd Vice President – Ian Anderson has provided a written report to be printed in Nova Notes.
7. Report of the Secretary – Chris Young has provided a written report to be printed in Nova Notes.
8. Report of the National Representative – Pat Kelly has provided a written report to be printed in Nova Notes.
9. Committee Reports:
 - Observing Chair & What's Up (Sean Dzafovich) – report will be provided in Nova Notes.
 - St Croix Observatory (Alex Lecreux) – report will be provided in Nova Notes.
 - Nova Notes - Tony Schellinck gave a report and the text is in Nova Notes.
 - GA 2015 (Quinn Smith) - Pat Kelly gave the report for Quinn and the text is in Nova Notes.
 - Library (Andy & El Hasler) – report will be provided in Nova Notes.
 - Nova East (Roy Bishop) - report will be provided in Nova Notes.
10. Auditor's Report – Dave Lane gave the auditor's report.
11. Report of Treasurer - Jim Millar provided a brief report and the full report will be printed in Nova Notes.
Acceptance of the Report was moved by Jerry Deveau, second by Dave Lane.
12. Election of Auditor – nomination of Gregg Dill was moved by Pat Kelly, seconded Tony Schellinck, motion carried.
13. There were no matters to be considered for adoption by special resolution of the Centre.
14. There was a call for nominations from the floor for the 2016 Executive and there were none. The slate of volunteers for the 2016 Executive was as follows:
President – Paul Gray.
1st VP – left vacant.
2nd VP – Ian Anderson.
Recording Secretary – Judy Black.
Treasurer – Jim Millar.
Nova Notes Editor – Tony Schellinck.
National Rep – Dave Chapman.
Librarian – Andy & El Hasler.
Observing Co-Chair – Sean Dzafovich.
Observing Co-Chair (SCO)- Tony McGrath.
Councillor Quinn Smith.
Councillor – Chris Young.
Councillor - Paul Heath (focusing on Outreach).
Councillor – Pat Kelly.
The executive positions were carried by acclamation.
15. As there was no other business the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Chris Young.

The following Reports from the committees and executive were published in the January/February 2016 edition of Nova Notes.

Halifax Centre President Report, 2015

Well, 2015 is now behind us, along with the successful RASC General Assembly that we hosted and another Nova East. It has been a very busy year for our centre I must say that we have pulled off a great year.

Looking back, we all know how much time and energy the General Assembly took from many of our volunteers. A GA is not a small undertaking with a budget in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 range and about 140 people involve counting guest and our volunteers. Many members from across the RASC came to Nova Scotia and had a taste of our lifestyle and food and went away with many great memories. The talk I hear now 6 months later is still one of a job very well done! Congrats and thank you to all of you in the Halifax Centre who helped in anyway making it a great GA! Special thanks to Quinn and Pat for pulling it together and being our fearless leaders!

Nova East was a huge success once again. We must thank Roy Bishop first and foremost for stepping up to pretty much chair the event to make sure that it would all come together while so many of us were preoccupied with the GA. Just for note we are seeking a chair for the 2016 Nova East so if you are interested, please contact me. Nova East this year was a hit on many fronts; first of all we had clear skies and no rain! Observing was done and enjoyed by many. Our keynote speaker was Alan Dyer who awed many of us with his images and his techniques. A new twist this year was a club/NE BBQ. For those who were not able to make it you missed an awesome potluck where members we potluck everything but the meat which was paid for by the club, steaks and sausage. With over 60 people being fed and some food left over I think all were full and looking forward to doing this again next year.

Nova Notes as your reading now also saw a new look his year thanks to Tony and his great work. It's refreshed and has new content each month thanks to a few columns now and is always a good read. There is also discussion happening at the club executive level to maybe returning to printing NN for all as we are in a very good cash position at this time and, being a not-for-profit, we need to spend some of our funds. More to come on this in the New Year.

Speaking of the New Year, we need to look ahead now that 2015 is behind us. It is time to refocus our club and direct our energies into new goals. One of these is the long overdue update of our clubs website. A new template based on a national RASC template will soon be available to centres and we plan to use it. If you have any web-based skills ad would like to help out by setting up the site or simply helping add the content contact us.

I will wrap this report up for now, but plan to have a brief update in each issue of Nova Notes this year. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions or ideas for our club from meetings to events. The centre is what you/we make it.

Clear skies,
Paul Gray

Halifax Centre 1st Vice-President Report, 2015

There were a number of outreach events coming up in January. I remain on the Board as the RASC representative for the Young Naturalist Club/Halifax. I am planning to revamp the Library Talks in the new year.

	Library talks	Anyone out there? (Lower Sackville) Constellations (Alderney Landing)
	Youth Groups	Young Naturalist Club re: General Astronomy Presentation / Night sky tour (York Redoubt)
	BGO Tour Guide	
February	Library Talks	Seti Alpha V (Pat Kelly @ Alderney Gate) Astronomy with Binoculars (Woodlawn) Two-Eyed Seeing (Dave Chapman & Cathy LeBlanc at Halifax Central)
		Herring Cove Brownies Madeline Simmonds Sparks
		Night Sky Astronomy Adventure (Shubenacadie Wildlife Park)
	BGO Tour Guide	

March –	Preparations for RASC GA	
June	BGO Tour Guide	
July	RASC GA Volunteer	
August	Keji Dark Sky Week-end Nova East	
September	BGO Tour Guide	
October	Display	Hal-Con Week-End
November	BGO Tour Guide	
December	TBD	

Respectfully Submitted,
Paul Heath, 1st Vice-President

Halifax Centre 2nd Vice-President Report, 2015

a) Calendar Sales for Fiscal 2015

Fiscal 2015 started with delivery of 40 2015 Calendars which because of exorbitant delivery costs the previous year (2014), the retail price to members was adjusted to \$18 and to non-members at \$20 to give some margin. At these prices, the calendars did not move and into February we were forced to sell the remainder at a discount, even to give away the last in March. We had a poor profit margin for the lot.
This difficulty in F2015 led to the current strategy in 2016: With a much-reduced unit cost, to sell all calendars at a simple \$15 and to limit quantities available. I can just now report that even before this December meeting, we were completely sold out of the calendars sent to us this October.

b) Other Items for Sale

Aside from some solar filter material sold in October 2014 and again at Nova East, sales were pretty much dormant. It is my hope that we widen the store of available products for sale, both from National Office Sources, (Official RASC items) and other types of astronomy related merchandize for sale to members. I do not foresee loading up with many of any one type of merchandize. For example, we were overwhelmed with unsold T-shirts in the 1990's when we got out of merchandizing.

c) Comptroller Role

I took on the role of Comptroller to assist the new Treasurer so that accounting is jointly overseen by the two of us. I no longer handle the money, but I still have close tabs on the Centre's internal affairs.

d) Tracking of Membership

I also track membership stats monthly as well as Nova Notes printed subscribers and report to the Nova Notes editor on a regular basis. There is a fair draw on printed subscriptions, (currently 15) but some are from new members who may be unaware the publication is available online.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ian Anderson, 2nd Vice President

Halifax Centre Secretary Report, 2015

The principal duty of the secretary is to provide minutes, agendas and meeting announcements for the Centre. An additional duty is to book meeting rooms through SMU for meetings – there was a delay this year as we were unaware the new president of Saint Mary's requested a reapplication for SMU sponsorships. It took a little while for our fall request to get processed, but we have been welcomed back and are grateful to Saint Mary's for their very significant support.

There are typically 10 Executive Meetings a year which usually occur during the hour before the Centre Meeting. The business and topics discussed are varied and members are welcome to sit in if they wish. Motions are made with a quorum of the executive members which provide direction on policy, activities, support of observatory at St. Croix, our budget, and definition of any spending not covered in the budget.

Motions made this past year included:

- Donations to the International Dark Sky Association and the Clear Sky Clock". (\$50 each)
- Purchase of new bookkeeping software (Quicken)" (\$110)
- Offering a rebate on RASC membership fees to those taking the NOVA Program (\$20)
- To purchase a table at this year's HalCon and 2 day tickets and a meal for volunteers manning the table.(\$230)
- Decision to auction off the 17.5" Dobsonian. (with a reserve bid of \$1,200.00.) This will occur this winter with the membership being advised and invited to bid.
- To cover gas travel expenses for travel to the December Meeting, for the invited Handbook contributors. (Max of \$200)
- Depreciate the value of the library 25% due to age and lack of new books" (new book purchases are planned)

Our by-laws require that I advise you of the make-up of the membership of the Centre which as of September 30 we had a total of 150 members:

- 121 Regular
- 8 Youth (both associate and outright)
- 21 Lifers

The Secretary's position is for a maximum of 5 years which I have reached. There will be a new Secretary this year who will work with the President and members of the Executive and whom I will be pleased to assist. It has been my pleasure to work with all the members who have served on the Executive and thank you all for being patient with my late announcements and Minutes!

Respectfully Submitted,
Chris Young, Secretary

Halifax Centre Activity Report, 2015

The Halifax Centre of the RASC had a busy and successful year with regular meetings and a variety of Outreach events promoting astronomy to the public. The Outreach Committee and many Centre volunteers carried on with the activities and worked in partnership with Saint Mary's University, Dalhousie University, the Minas Astronomy Group, and the Halifax Planetarium in hosting and supporting many programs and activities.

Centre & Council Meetings

Monthly Centre meetings are held generally on the third Friday of each month, except for the summer months of July and August, providing 10 monthly meetings this year. The Council meets in the hour prior to the main meeting to discuss Centre business. These meetings are held in facilities provided by Saint Mary's University.

The Centre's library cart, which contains a diverse selection of books on astronomy subjects, is available to members at each meeting. The Meetings open with welcome to guests and visitors followed by announcements then the evening's main presentation with Centre business and a *What's Up* by Centre members. Refreshments and discussion follow the formal meeting.

The Halifax Centre continues hosting a series of speakers at each monthly meeting who gave interesting and informative presentations. Meeting attendance varies from approximately 30 into the 60's, depending on weather conditions. Presentations included:

In **January**, we had a joint presentation by our Honorary and new President celebrating the 60th Anniversary of our Halifax Centre along with Dave Chapman providing a brief talk "The Frugal Astronomer's Affordable Image-Stabilized Binoculars."

February had a presentation by our National President, James Edgar, on "Synthesis of Elements in Stars."

March, member Dr. David Turner presented on "The Eyes are Still Good Detectors!"

April's speakers were Quinn Smith, Patrick Kelly and Paul Gray on the upcoming RASC General Assembly.

May had member presentations on astrophotography, Nova East, other Maritime Star Parties and the Winter Star Party in Florida.

June, we had a BBQ and observing night at our observatory site in St. Croix.

September, we had photos and anecdotes on “What I did on My Summer Vacation” –including member Tony Schellinck’s account of teaching binocular observing at a flat planetarium (i.e. a movie theatre!).

October, astronomer Dr. Alex Filippenko was the guest speaker for the inaugural Dan MacLennan Memorial Lecture at Saint Mary’s which the Centre also participated. Dr. Filippenko lectured on Dark Energy and the Runaway Universe.

November held a talk by SMU professor Daniel Majaess speaking on VISTA Variables in the Via Lactea - VVV is scanning the Milky Way bulge where star formation activity is high.

December’s meeting was our AGM followed by a Book Launch and tour of the “2016 Observers’ Calendar” with editor Dave Chapman, guest editor Cathy LeBlanc, and guest contributor Chris Green.

Observing

The Centre has a dark sky observing site approximately 40 minutes from Halifax. The St Croix Observatory has a roll-off roof, warm room & WR facilities. The Centre has a 16"

Go-To Sky-Watcher Dob which is very popular. There are regular observing nights each month with “weather permitting” gatherings arranged ad hoc on the Centre’s web list.

Centre Newsletter - NOVA NOTES

Nova Notes, prepared by new editor Tony Schellinck, continued in its regular format with 5 editions in 2015. It is delivered in an electronic format through the Halifax Centre web site with notifications sent out on our List and a few paper copies mailed out on a subscription basis. The Newsletter contains articles, photos, astrophotos, poetry, meeting write-ups – all by Centre members. Publication will carry on through 2016.

Public Outreach

Along with the public observing sessions that have taken place in Halifax, many members have hosted their own observing session within their local communities. The Halifax Centre has continued to support the Halifax Planetarium and several of our members gave presentations throughout the year. Classroom and library talks continued largely through the work of Past President Paul Heath.

The Halifax Centre also had booths promoting astronomy at special public events including the RV Show, the Saltscapes Show, and Hal-Con (Atlantic Canada's premier sci-fi and gaming convention). We plan to participate in public events again in 2016.

Nova East Star Party, Smiley’s Provincial Park

This year's Nova East, Atlantic Canada's regional star party, was a success and had an excellent guest speaker, author and astrophotographer Alan Dyer, who gave 2 talks: “The Amazing Sky” and “Top Tips for Terrific Pix”. This star party is open to the public and shares the view with a field of telescopes and provides public talks for all ages.

Dark Sky Preserve Support

The Centre has also supported Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site which has been a Dark Sky Preserve since 2010. This summer Dave Chapman of the Centre again helped facilitate the Dark Sky Weekend, with presentations, talks, observing sessions including solar observing sessions, by Centre members and Keji Parks Canada staff. Parks Canada has worked hard to sustain and enhance Kejimkujik National Park in maintaining its Dark-Skies Preserve certification.

General Assembly of the RASC

The Halifax Centre was fortunate to be chosen for the 2015 GA and it was held at Saint Mary’s University. This year’s GA carried on the tradition of social events, poster and paper sessions by RASC members from across Canada. The Northcott Lecture, “Raiders of the Lost Galaxy,” was given by Professor Rob Thacker of Saint Mary’s University and the Plaskett Lecture was given by Dr. Anne Archibald of McGill University on “The End of Accretion...”.

The Banquet was opened by *The Women of the Shore*, a First Nation’s women’s drum group, and in addition to award presentations, Halifax Centre members Dave Chapman and Cathy LeBlanc of the Acadia First Nation gave an inspiring talk on “One Moon – Two Eyes”. The GA was a grand success and many thanks to co-chairs Quinn Smith, Pat Kelly and the GA Committee for hosting this event.

Goals for 2016

For the coming year, the Halifax Centre has committed to carry on many of the public outreach programs provided in 2015. The Halifax Centre, with the drive and dedication of its members, will continue the sidewalk

observing sessions, library talks, provide presenters for the Halifax planetarium, support Kejimkujik National Park, maintain the Halifax Centre and Astronomy Nova Scotia websites, which provide easy access to all astronomy event information in Nova Scotia.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chris Young
Past Secretary (2015) of the Halifax Centre

Halifax Centre Financial Report, 2015

Introduction to Unaudited Report (for December 11, 2015)

The year 2015 was another financial success for the Halifax Centre. We had operational income of over \$2,100 before depreciation and write offs. To help to keep our surplus from being too large we continued to write off our equipment at approximately 3%. Our library has not been renewed or kept up over the last number of years and many of the books are outdated. The executive decided to write down the library by 25% of its estimated value. Nova East had only a small profit this year as it was expensive but well worth it to bring in Alan Dyer as our keynote speaker. A very successful auction brought us a small profit. Hosting the RASC AGM provided a fair profit that kept us in the black overall.

Surplus of \$1,344.44 for Fiscal 2015

The Centre continues to be successful and solvent. We are holding our own with membership and Nova East continues to be successful. We continue to follow good accounting procedures by depreciating our assets over time. We will need to invest significantly in our library so that it maintains its value to the membership. I am recommending to the Executive and membership that we review our holdings and remove badly outdated books and look at getting more books that meet the current and future interests of our membership. Astrophotography and lunar observing come to mind.

Details of the 2015 Income Statement

REVENUE:

- a) Membership Fees \$2,874.30:** By year-end, 120 regular, 5 youth, and 7 family status members had signed for the year - comparable to 2014 when we had 119, 3, and 14 respectively.
- b) Donations \$400.00:** This is half the \$800 value of the telescope and eyepieces given to us from the Vanderberg Estate. We paid Richard's son Ian an additional \$400.00.
- c) Educational / Outreach \$660.00:** The Nova Course was offered this year. 11 paid participants at \$60 enrolled in the course.
- d) Interest \$176.00:** Investment certificates earned 1.45% on an average \$12,016 invested, plus a minuscule \$1.29 was received in the bank account. In 2015, money earned less interest during the year. The story is a continued interest rates collapse paid on fixed investments. Our most recent GIC earns at a rate of 0.40%. The interest revenue plan started only three years ago is already obsolete.
- e) Sales of Merchandise (Gross) \$804.50:** These were RASC calendar and solar filter sales at Nova East.
- f) Nova East (net) \$424.79:** Nova East's record of continually outdoing itself was broken with the additional expense of flying in special guest speaker Alan Dyer from Alberta. This net amount presumes camping fees estimated at \$300 owing to the province of Nova Scotia which were unpaid as of year end.
- g) Printed Nova Notes Subscriptions Earned \$120.13:** This is what printed newsletters earned this year from members subscribing to hardcopy. 48 printed copies were credited here. This price increased 42% in fiscal 2015. The increase has been reflected here as printed copies are renewed at the higher price.
- h) Miscellaneous \$13.07:** This is strictly US\$ premiums received from membership and Nova East fees.

EXPENSES:

- a) Meetings \$197.96:** Pat Kelly did well to keep treat spending under \$200.00 Meeting treats cost us \$175.25 (excluding the June gathering at SCO) but our March speaker cost us \$22.71 to feed.
- b) Newsletter \$472.86:** NN's expenses were enhanced by the special GA edition printed in July.
- c) Cost of Goods Sold \$557.85:** The cost to us of the RASC Calendars sold and the portion of Solar Filter material sold at Nova East.
- d) Equipment and Supplies \$210.94:** These were expenses mostly associated with trade shows we attended in the late winter.
- e) Office Administration \$342.29:** New accounting software was also purchased at a cost of \$103.49. The rental of the PO Box was \$197.00 this year, with postage going up otherwise.
- f) Educational Activities (Outreach) \$1,285.01:** This is up considerably in 2014, nearly half was gas reimbursements to participants who went to Keji in August and other assignments (\$579.96). \$448.50 were costs related to the Atlantic Outdoor Sport RV show last winter.
- g) Legal Expenses \$30.25:** Our cost to register with Joint Stocks of Nova Scotia, unchanged from 2014.
- h) Insurance \$1,208.00:** Insurance for SCO was up a bit in 2015.
- i) Awards and Donations \$0.00:** No activity.
- j) Observatory - Operating \$260.80:** This includes the usual gift to Mr Carmichael, a couple of work crews during the year. A BBQ, some propane, and the odd item. It also includes taxes to Hants County.
- k) Asset Depreciation \$878.87:** The outgoing treasurer took a 3% slice out of observatory assets before he passed the books on to me. I in turn slashed the library holdings 25% before closing the books for 2015.
- l) Miscellaneous Expenses \$56.62:** This was strictly our annual membership fee to the IDA in October.

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Halifax Centre			
Comparative Balance Sheet			
Years Ending September 30, 2015 and September 30, 2014			
September 30, 2015 Activity to: September 30, 2015	Years Ended		Amount of Increase or (Decrease) during 2015
	September 30, 2016		
	2015	2014	
Assets			
Cash	\$6,218.10	\$4,862.03	\$1,356.07
Cash Box (Not in account)	-	-	-
Accounts Receivable	1062.73	-	1062.73
Prepaid Other Expenses	303.86	-	303.86
Merchandise Inventory	201	93.37	107.63
GA 2015 Account	2773.64	-	2773.64
Investments	12000	13000	-1000
Accrued Interest on Investment Certificates	65.07	131.31	-66.24
Prepaid GA 2015 Expenses	-	343.21	-343.21
Library Estimated	1557.96	2077.28	-519.32
Observatory Equipment	12342.52	11902.07	440.45
Miscellaneous Estimated	320.05	320.05	-
Total Assets	\$36,844.93	\$32,729.32	\$4,115.61
Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	\$2,707.47	\$-	\$2,707.47
Prepaid Nova Notes Subscriptions	160.41	96.71	63.7
Total Liabilities	\$2,867.88	\$96.71	\$2,771.17
Capital			
Nova East Working Equity	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$-
GA 2015 Working Equity	-	-	-
Common Equity	28977.05	27632.61	1344.44
Total Capital	\$33,977.05	\$32,632.61	\$1,344.44
Total Liabilities and Capital	\$36,844.93	\$32,729.32	

Details of the 2015 Balance Sheet

ASSETS:

a) Cash \$6,218.10: On September 30, 2015, our TD Bank cash balance was \$6,218.10. Revenue from National Office for September \$442.73 and \$602.00 in income for the GA are what make up the accounts receivable of \$1,062.73. There was 2,773.64 in the GA account on 30 Sep 2015. Cash held by members was nil. This figure includes profits from Nova East.

b) Merchandise Inventory \$201.00: A bit less than ½ of a sheet of solar filter material remains. In addition are two toques and a book on astronomy purchased as Gazer prizes which were never awarded.

c) Prepaid Expenses \$303.86: \$230 of this was the fee for participating in HalCon which took place at the end of October 2015, well into the next fiscal year. Also, the annual donation to the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) for 2016 was paid in August to take advantage of a matching donation campaign in place at the time. Both these pre-paid expenses appropriately show as temporary assets

d) Investments and Accrued Interest \$12,065.07: The Centre held 3 GICs on September 30th, 2015:

- a 15-month GIC with the TD Bank which yields 1.55% on a principal of \$4,000. This certificate matures on April 22, 2016 paying \$75.02 at maturity. It has accrued \$41.37 in fiscal 2015.
- a 15-month GIC with the TD Bank which yields 1.26% on a principal of \$4,000. This certificate matures on August 2, 2016 paying \$62.98 at maturity. It has accrued \$20.65 in 2015.
- a 12-month GIC with the TD Bank yielding 0.40% on a principal of \$4,000. It matures on July 22, 2016 and will

earn \$16.00 for the year. It has accrued \$3.05 since that date.

e) GA2015 Account \$2,773.64: The GA2015 account was nearly ready to close as of year end and contained \$2,773.64. There were some accounts receivable and payable still outstanding at that time. In early December 2015 the GA's books were closed and balance of \$1,386.17 was transferred to the main bank account. This represents the income for the GA which was considered excellent for our efforts at hosting the 2015 GA in Halifax.

f) Estimated Library \$1,557.96: This new value reflects the second major depreciation of estimated library value since 2010. Again, no purchases or adjustments were made in this asset in 2015. We have not spent money for the Library in a number of years.

g) Observatory Equipment \$12,342.52: After depreciation of observatory equipment of \$359.55 the addition of the Vanderberg telescope and eyepieces valued at \$800 was added to the category.

h) Estimated Miscellaneous \$320.05: There were no adjustments to this asset category in 2015.

LIABILITIES:

a) Accounts Payable \$2,707.47: At year-end, we had not paid the Nova Scotia Department of Parks and Recreation for the Nova East camping nights. By the time this report is published it is hoped this issue will have been resolved one way or another. There were also about \$2,400 in accounts payable for the GA outstanding.

b) Prepaid Nova Notes Printed Subscriptions \$160.41: Forty-eight printed copies remain to be prepared before this obligation is discharged. Subscriptions to printed issues increased in late 2015 from 2014's 41 printed copies at year end. A printed copy has a value of about \$3.34.

EQUITY:

a) Nova East Reserve Equity \$5,000.00: This reserve is capped at \$5,000.00.

b) Common Equity \$28,977.05: Common equity rose by \$1,344.44 from 2014, or the difference of revenues over expenses. It is equivalent to about \$10.19 per member for a \$23 "investment".

Summary and Recommendations:

I am pleased to take over as Treasurer this year. Ian Anderson left a very large void that I am attempting to fill. He has been a great help in the transition. I hope that he will continue to be my advisor. I will be presenting a budget to the new executive in January that will help to fulfil Ian's recommendation in last year's report for a predictive budget. Once it is approved, it will be possible to provide quarterly reports to the executive.

Our auditor has resigned, and we have been unable to have the records audited at this time. I ask the membership to appoint a new auditor who can audit the current year's books and the upcoming 2016 financial statements.

I have enjoyed this year and look forward to serving you for another year as your Treasurer. Thanks to Ian Anderson, we have a stable financial position that I will endeavour to maintain with the rest of the executive.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Millar, Treasurer
Halifax Centre

Halifax Centre National Council Representative Report, 2015

The Society is finally starting to get a handle on its new governance structure. With the Board having all of the decision-making power, determining the best role for the National Advisory Council has been a priority. In the past, almost all of the business discussed at National Council meetings had come, not from the Council, but from the national executive and various national committees. One of the recent moves has been for the Board to change the national policy document to remove the "Advisory" from the Council's name, so it is back to National Council. The Council is still seen as valuable "recruitment tool" for potential future Board and national committee members.

Since the Board meets more frequently than the Council, it was felt that the best way to increase communication between the two bodies was to have the chair of the National Council act as co-chair of Council meetings along with the National President and it seems to be making a difference. I was volunteered for the position at the recent GA.

I was unable to attend the usual fall joint Board/ Council meeting due to a technical issue (the WebEx platform we used dropped my computer's operating system between the GA meetings and the fall one) and several of us only discovered this a few minutes before the meeting was due to start! I was invited to participate as an observer at the December 7th Board meeting and there are some issues that I will be taking to the National Council for discussion including a review of family memberships and the effect, if any, of national fundraising efforts on Centre fundraising.

One thing worth reporting is that Society membership is now above 5000 for the first time and up about 800 in the last seven years!

Respectfully Submitted,
Patrick Kelly, National Council Representative

Halifax Centre Nova East Report, 2015

Nova East, Atlantic Canada's largest annual star party, was hosted by the RASC Halifax Centre and Minas Astronomy Group on the weekend of August 14 - 16, 2015. For the 16th year it was held at Smileys Provincial Park in central Nova Scotia, although this was the 29th "Nova East", the first several having been held in New Brunswick's Fundy National Park beginning in 1987.

The theme for Nova East 2015, astrophotography, was chosen in view of the keynote speaker and special guest, Alan Dyer, from Calgary, Alberta. Highlights of Nova East 2015 included the following presentations:

The Amazing Sky, by Alan Dyer
Planetary Astrophotography, by Art Cole
Top Tips for Terrific Pix, by Alan Dyer
The Evolution of Digital Photography, by Brian Giffin

And the following special events:

Planet Walk, by Paul Heath
Nova East Auction, hosted by Quinn Smith and Pat Kelly
A BBQ/Social on Saturday afternoon
The annual Door Prize Draw, hosted by Dave Chapman
Introduction to the August Night Sky, by Paul Heath

And the sky? Friday night was clear and dark, although dew was a problem for some telescopes. Saturday night started off cloudy, cleared for an hour after midnight, but then became cloudy again.

Respectfully Submitted,
Roy Bishop

Halifax Centre Observing Report, 2015

I have received notice of one Centre member completing an RASC observing certificate this year (Melody Hamilton; Finest NGC). If I have missed any, please notify me at sdzafovic@gmail.com and I will include the names in the written report in Nova Notes.

The NOVA program is currently on hold pending a rewrite of the Explore the Universe Certificate, which will replace the now out-of-print Beginners Observer's Guide. Once that is complete, the Nova program will be upgraded as well.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Dzaovic, Halifax Centre Observing Chair

Halifax Centre St. Croix Observatory (SCO) Report, 2015

SCO hosted 80 visitors this year as recorded in the logbook. I know there are others that didn't make it into the log. The breakdown by month is as follows:

- January: 2 visitors
- February and March: No visitors, too much snow!
- April: 3 visitors
- May: 8 visitors
- June: 28 visitors

We held a Summer Solstice meeting at SCO on June 20th. By my count there were 23 in attendance though folks were coming and going and could have missed a few. We had a lovely day weather wise and enjoyed a BBQ together. There was a review of how to use the 16" scope and as it got darker the group took part in some lunar and planetary observing. The SQM recorded at 11:30 pm was 21.2.

- July: 2 visitors
- August: 6 visitors
- September: 6 visitors

A briefing on the use and care of SCO and the 16" scope was provided to a member who was eligible for key possession. I also spent the day doing some exterior maintenance clearing brush and trees and mowing where needed.

- October: 12 visitors

On October 12th, Dave Chapman hosted a training session on the 16" scope for 3-4 members. A total of 9 were in attendance either taking part in the training or observing.

- November: 1 visitor
- December: 2 visitors

Due to an unexpectedly busy year with personal and work travel requirements, I was unable to provide the level of service SCO required and still have some outstanding small jobs to complete in the coming months. Although I am stepping down at this time, I will remain available to assist the incoming SCO manager as required and continue to check in on the Observatory as I am nearby.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alex LeCreux, SCO Manager

Halifax Centre Library Report, 2015

The Library has not been as active this year as years past due my having had to be away in Australia on family matters and the book cart suffering from re-occurring flat tires. Now the library is back in service as I am back and the cart is fixed (thanks Paul Heath).

The executive has also committed to refreshing the library and has given the library a budget to add new books. The library is interested in having Members propose titles for consideration and some preliminary suggestions are as follows:

- Barnard - "A Photographic Atlas of Selected Regions of the Milky Way".
- Nasim – "Observing by Hand: Sketching the Nebulae in the Nineteenth Century".
- Barentine – "The Lost Constellations: A History of Obsolete, Extinct, or Forgotten Star Lore".
- Harrison – "Imaging the Sun Using a Digital Spectroheliograph" (available March 2016).

I will be posting an invitation for book suggestions on the List and look forward to receiving suggestions. The Library is back with new life, and I look forward to sharing our Centre resources with you this year.

Respectively submitted
Andy Hasler, Librarian

Halifax Centre Nova Notes Report, 2015

ISSUE	CONTENT	COVER PHOTO
January / February	16 pages – 10 pages of reports, 3 pages of A Brief History of the RASC Halifax Centre by Roy Bishop, member profile Karen Hamblin, meeting reports	NGC 6946: The 'Fireworks Galaxy' (Keith Walker, July 2014)
March/April	12 pages - new cover format – Theme: Comet Lovejoy - three new columnists (see below), meeting reports, RASC GA update, two pages of Comet Lovejoy photographs, National Advisory Council Report and the Invitation to Keji Dark Sky Weekend.	Comet Lovejoy (Paul Evans)
June / July	20 pages – Special issue for GA Assembly - Ode to Hubble: HUBBLE'S UNIVERSE by Martin Hellmich, three columns, reprint of A brief history of RASC Halifax by Roy Bishop, Time Lapse Astrophotography by Jerry Black – member profile of David Griffith - Kejimkujik National Park and Historic Site as Nova Scotia's First Dark Sky Preserve by Quinn Smith, Happy Birthday SCO: Member Thoughts by Roy Bishop, The Astronomy Nova Scotia webpage by Dave Chapman - 150 copies printed for GA and another 50 or so saved for general distribution.	M42 - Orion Nebula (Dave Lane and Greg Palman)
September / October	12 pages – theme: Viewing the Universe in a Different Way - Mike Boschat's Experience as a Radio Astronomer, Member Profile: Tim Doucette, three columns, meeting reports	Jupiter, Venus and Mars (Michael Boschat)
November / December	12 pages – theme: All about Outreach, how to create out-reach in a small community by Wayne Mansfield, Beneath a Dome, Darkly — Reaching audiences on cloudy nights by Patrick Kelly, two columns, Member Profiles: Andy and Elli Hasler, meeting reports	NGC 896 (Tony Schellinck)

Columnists/Regular Contributors

Lunatic Ramblings by Dave Chapman
Starlight and Semiconductors by Art Cole
The Universe's Symphony of Sound by Matt Paine
Member Profile by Tony Schellinck
Meeting Reports by Jim Millar and Chris Young

Between 6 and 15 copies printed each issue – the number of members paying for a hard copy is increasing.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tony Schellinck, Nova Notes Editor

RASC General Assembly (GA) Report, 2015

The Halifax Centre was pleased to have hosted the 2015 the RASC General Assembly this summer. The event was held at Saint Mary's University between July 1st and 5th and was the culmination of several years of planning by a very dedicated group of Centre members. Putting on such an event is a major undertaking by any Centre, and to be done by a relatively small Centre as ours (we have approximately 160 members), speaks to the excellent participation of the membership.

We had several goals at the outset of the GA planning. One was to have a "down home" event where (when possible). We would use local speakers and arrange the events around the Nova Scotia and East Coast way of

life. We also wanted to include the First Nations heritage from these shores, and I must say the participation of the "Women of the Shore" (a First Nations drumming group) was one of the highlights of the GA. We also hoped to have a low-cost event (or at least as low as possible) and break even, or even make a little money for the Centre. I think that as we look back on the event, we succeeded in all those goals.

It was always appreciated that a GA is both a social event as well as a working conference. We tried to mix the two so that delegates would both enjoy the social aspect of the GA as well as feel that future planning for the RASC was well taken care of. From the reports we heard, both during the event and afterwards, I think we also achieved that goal as well.

In the end we had a total of about 110 delegates attend the GA, and all social events were well attended. The only negative comments we were aware of were regrets by some of the delegates for not participating in the "Wine and Tides" tour.

The final event of the GA, the Banquet, was attended by 130 delegates and guests all of whom were enthralled by the smudging and drumming ceremony that preceded the banquet and occurred outside on a beautiful sunny afternoon. In fact, the weather throughout the event was just wonderful. On the day of the "Wine and Tides" tour, the bus left the University in cloud and drizzle, and drove into bright sunshine before even leaving the city limits. We couldn't have asked for more!

My thanks go out to my Co-Chair, Pat Kelly, and to all the members of the GA planning committee and the many, many volunteers who made the 2015 (and the Halifax Centre's third GA) such a successful event. Thank you all!

Respectfully Submitted
Quinn Smith (GA Co-Chair)

Halifax Planetarium Report, 2015

Public shows in 2015 (by RASC)

26 shows to 98 Children, 591 Adults (double shows counted as "2")

Community and other shows: 5 shows to 6 Children, 66 Adults Total: 31 shows to 761 people

Contributors:

- Pat Kelly - 10 shows
- Tony Schellinck - 12 shows
- Quinn Smith - 4 shows
- Chris Young - 5 shows

Thanks to Stephen Payne of the Dalhousie Department of Physics and Atmospheric Science for supplying these numbers and working with the RASC volunteers to mount an impressive array of shows.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tony Schellinck