

RASC, Halifax Centre – AGM & Members' Meeting

Saturday, December 5, 2020: 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM

[Via Zoom - Meeting ID 996 2912 8249](#)

Time	Item
1:00 PM	<p><i>Annual General Meeting (AGM)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome & Opening Remarks <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Approval of 2020 Agenda b. Approval of Minutes of December 7, 2019 AGM c. Appointment of Auditor for 2020-2021 Audit 2. Reports <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Q&A regarding pre-circulated reports b. Approval of reports as presented (with any amendments) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Report – Judy Black • VP Report – Paul Gray • Secretary Report – Peter Hurley • Auditor Report – Ian Anderson • Treasurer Report – Gregg Dill • National Council Representative Report – Pat Kelly • Dark-Sky Preserve Committee – Dave Chapman • Governance Committee Report – Judy Black • Librarian Report – Wayne Harasimovitch • Nova Notes – Charles White • Nova East Report – Judy Black • Observing Chair Report – Dave Chapman • Outreach Chair Report – Paul Heath • St. Croix Observatory (SCO) Report – John Liddard 3. Call for Nominations and Election of 2021 Board of Directors <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Nominating Committee Report – Peter Hurley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board-Approved Appointed Positions • Nominations for Board of Directors • Elections for positions 4. Adjournment of AGM
1:30 PM	

Time	Item		
1:30 PM	<i>Members' Meeting</i>		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome & Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo Montage • 2021 Calendars & ETU Guides for sale 	Information	Judy Black Paul Gray
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Special Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The RASC Calendar – Front to Back</i> 	Presentation	Paul Gray
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Outreach Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food for the Soul 	Information	Paul Heath
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. News from the Board 	Information	Judy Black
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What's Up in December? 	Information	Dave Chapman
4:00 PM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Adjournment 		
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	ASTRO-CHAT	Fun in Conversation!	

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Halifax Centre
Annual General Meeting (AGM)
Saturday, December 5, 2020 – 1:00-1:40 PM
via Zoom ID# 996 2912 8249

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Judy Black welcomed the 29 members to the meeting and thanked them for coming. She then provided opening remarks.

1. Approval of 2020 Agenda

201205AGM-Mot01:

It was moved by Blair MacDonald and seconded by Joanne Cook to approve the 2020 AGM agenda as circulated.

CARRIED.

2. Approval of 2019 AGM Minutes

The minutes of the 2019 AGM had been pre-circulated to members.

201205AGM-Mot02:

It was moved by Mary Lou Whitehorne and seconded by Paul Heath to approve the minutes of the 2019 AGM as circulated.

CARRIED.

3. Appointment of a New Auditor

Gregg Dill spoke with Ian Anderson, the Auditor for 2019-2020. Ian has agreed to have his name forwarded for re-appointment for 2020-2021.

201205AGM-Mot03:

It was moved by Gregg Dill and seconded by Dave Lane to appoint Ian Anderson as Auditor for 2020-2021.

CARRIED.

Board Reports

(Note: Reports in their entirety will included in the Jan/Feb 2021 edition of Nova Notes)

Judy Black noted the reports from the Board and the appointed positions had been circulated as part of the AGM agenda circulated on December 1, 2020. She apologized to Paul Gray for not including his report in the collated report.

201205AGM-Mot04:

It was moved by Mary Lou Whitehorne and seconded by Bob Russell to accept the pre-circulated executive and appointed position reports as they were sent by email.

CARRIED with 1 Abstention.

Dave Chapman stated how proud he is of the Centre for all the observing programs followed and certificates earned. The Centre, which is a medium-sized Centre that only represents 1/15 of the population of the RASC, accounts for 25% of all certificates earned across Canada – an amazing achievement. Members noted the Centre's success in this regard was on his shoulders, i.e., his continuing involvement in and promotion of observing and the RASC programs in his *What's Up?* and in outreach and media events he attends. Dave thanked members for the shout-out.

Judy Black noted the Treasurer's and Auditor's reports were missing from the compilation. Gregg Dill is working with Ian Anderson and that this is an unbalanced financial report but once a re-audit has been done, the numbers will probably not change much. He noted that Judy will forward both the Treasurer's

and Auditor reports to members following the meeting. He proceeded to highlight the following on the income and expense statements:

A) Income:

- Membership fee revenue had increased probably to the time of year that members renewed.
- Educational Activities income due to GA video edits by Halley Davies that received a special RASC grant.
- Sale of merchandise had an increase, a majority from sale of ETU Guides; kudos to Tony Schellinck who sold more than his share of this publication.
- Nova East shows a negative \$100 was due to purchase of door prizes prior to cancellation of the event.

B) Expenses:

- Meeting treats have decreased due to no face-to-face meetings since April.
- There was the added expense of a Zoom subscription that balanced the lack of treats.
- Legal expenses were none last year due to their inclusion in office expenses.
- Educational Activities included \$500.00 of the \$832.00 for payment to Halley Davies. In essence, there was only \$332 compared to almost \$1,200 the year before.

C) Balance Sheet:

The Centre had \$14,000 in GIC investments at the beginning of the year. With \$6000 of the GICs cashed in, cash was up to \$9,496.99 bringing us in essence to the same place as last year as far as the bank is concerned. There is no comparative between 2019 and 2020 offered until a re-evaluation has been conducted early in 2021.

Ian Anderson had provided a letter with an attached Auditor's report. Accounting programs and accounting procedures had been discussed. Ian has not seen the hard copy of the books, but he was forwarded records and transaction reports of all accounts, the general ledger, bank statements and RASC reports via email. Ian also noted that he and Gregg will correct errors from 2018, 2019 and 2020, and will provide a 3-year report in the Jan/Feb 2021 edition of Nova Notes. Gregg stated he appreciated Ian's commitment to trying to make the most of what was presented to him and to Dave Lane for his work two years ago.

Gregg stated the Centre is not sustainable as an organization. We have been cashing in our GICs to maintain the Centre's activities. Without new sources of revenue, we will continue mining our investments. There are numerous Life members (20 of the 173 (11.5%) of members) who do not contribute fees to the Centre. Gregg was thanked for the hard work he has done as Treasurer to get us back on track. It was noted there have been periods of spend and save, and that one of the revenue streams suggested was a key fee. The possibility of increasing membership fees was suggested. Judy Black noted the Board had discussed this earlier in the year but, given the pandemic and the possibility of some members losing jobs, it was felt the increase would be left for discussion in May 2021.

201205AGM-Mot06:

It was moved by Gregg Dill and seconded by Mary Lou Whitehorne to accept the financial and auditor reports as presented.

CARRIED.

Call for Nominations and Election of 2019 Board of Directors

The Board had approved appointments at their deliberations of November 26, 2020. Judy Black stated Mary Lou Whitehorne continues to be the Honorary President until December 2023. The list of individuals who were appointed was also noted:

National Council Rep
DSP Committee, Co-Chairs
Observing Chair

Judy Black
Dave Chapman, Tony Schellinck
Dave Chapman

Outreach Chair
SCO Manager
Librarian
Nova Notes, Co-Editors
Nominating Committee
Governance Committee
NE Planning Committee

Paul Heath
John Liddard
Wayne Harasimovitch
John McPhee, Lisa Fanning
Peter Hurley
Judy Black
vacant

The Nova East Planning Committee requires a Chairperson to begin the planning process for Nova East 2021 in February/March 2021. Additional members to the planning committee were also welcomed.

Judy Black explained that according to Bylaw #1 (2017) now enacted, there could be no less than five and no more than 10 on the Board. She thanked Tom Crosman and Paul Gray who are stepping down from the Board for their service and commitment to the Centre's work and Objectives.

There were 3 call for nominations from the floor for the 2020 Board of Directors. The slate of nominees for the 2020 Board of Directors was then presented as follows and included two new members (*):

Executive Committee

President – Judy Black
Vice-President – Patrick Kelly
Recording Secretary – Peter Hurley
Treasurer – Gregg Dill

Directors

Paul Heath
Matthew Dyer
Wayne Harasimovitch
David Hoskin
Tim Doucette*
Kathy Walker*

There being no further nominations, the 2020 Board of Directors positions were approved by acclamation.

Adjournment

071218AGM-Mot07

It was moved by Joanne Cook to adjourn the AGM.

Members were invited to socialize and enjoy the Christmas treats provided.

2020 Reports, RASC Halifax Centre

President

2020 is soon going into history and with it my first term as President will come to an end. Had I known the challenges 2020 would bring, I may have had second thoughts. However, the incredible team on the Board of Directors and its committees was a drawing card and I would not have wanted to miss the challenges and excitement.

Nova East was presented in a whole new way due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In lieu of the on-site event, the speaker's series of talks on Zoom with *March of the Planets – COVID Cancelled!* as the theme.

Nova Notes once again is one of the best Centre newsletters in the RASC. A special thanks to Charles who, after three years as Editor, is stepping down from that role. Many thanks also goes to those who submitted articles over the past year.

Outreach and observing events at the Halifax Centre again were vast – or at least until March 22 when the provincial State of Emergency was called. Congratulations and thank you to volunteers who stepped up at events once the emergency measures were modified to allow for small groups.

On October 24, 2020, members approved going forward with an electrical upgrade to ensure the site is up to 2020 electrical standards. Many thanks to John Liddard, SCO Manager, and Dr. Roy Bishop for spearheading this project. Also, thanks to the SCO Fundraising Committee for implementing a fund development plan to ensure the project goes forward (Blair MacDonald, Matthew Dyer, Gregg Dill). The Centre thanks Minas Energy and K-Line Construction for their generous offers and their time to make the upgrade come to fruition.

One major change this year was how meetings were held. Our Members' Meetings continued by using the RASC's Zoom webinar feature. Halifax Centre, because the pandemic was not short-lived, approved the purchase of a 1-year Zoom meetings-only membership that has been used for Centre meetings and virtual observing and astro-imaging sessions. Using Zoom has meant members anywhere in the province could participate, Board and committee members outside Metro did not have to travel to attend, and RASC members from across Canada and the USA's Eastern seaboard could also participate. It also provided recruitment capabilities outside the Metro area. The use of Zoom will be evaluated in 2021.

This was the second year we have been meeting on the first Saturday afternoon at 1 pm of each month except July and August. Meetings were held initially at Saint Mary's University and then hosted on Zoom. Social time with fellow members is important but COVID-19 unfortunately put a stop to meeting in person and for the dinner afterwards. However, in November, the Astro-Chat was introduced at the end of the meeting where members were welcomed to stay online for an informal, non-recorded session. This will continue in 2021 to be part of the meeting agenda.

I would like to thank all the volunteers on our Board and its committees, and to our members who volunteered for our outreach and observing events. A special thank you to Paul Gray and Tom Crosman who are stepping down from the Board and to Charles White who is retiring as Nova Notes Editor.

Here is the list of 2020 RASC Halifax Centre team whose efforts made the past year possible.

Board of Directors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• President: Judy Black• Vice-President: Paul Gray• Secretary: Peter Hurley• Treasurer: Gregg Dill• Directors: Tom Crosman, Matthew Dyer, Wayne Harasimovitch, Paul Heath, David Hoskin, Patrick Kelly	Nova East Planning Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chair: Judy Black• Members: Dave Chapman, Gregg Dill, Liz Greenough, Wayne Harasimovitch, Patrick Kelly, Chris Young• Consultants: Paul Gray, Mary Lou Whitehorne
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<p>Appointed Positions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Honorary President: Mary Lou Whitehorne •Co-Editor, Nova Notes: Charles White •Deep-Sky Preserve Committee: Dave Chapman •Governance Committee: Judy Black •Librarian: Wayne Harasimovitch •National Council Representative: Patrick Kelly •Observing Chair: Dave Chapman •Outreach Chair: Paul Heath •SCO Manager: John Liddard 	<p>Dark-Sky Preserve Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Chair: Dave Chapman •Members: Paul Gray, Melody Hamilton, Peter Hurley, Tony Schellinck, Chris Young
<p>Communications Strategy Task Team Dave Chapman, Judy Black, Patrick Kelly</p>	<p>Nominating Committee Peter Hurley (Chair), Chris Young, Judy Black (ex officio)</p>
<p>Governance Review Committee Judy Black (Chair), Paul Gray, Gregg Dill</p>	<p>SCO Fund Development Committee Blair MacDonald (Chair), Matthew Dyer, Gregg Dill, Judy Black (ex officio)</p>

We have an incredible Centre for which we should all be proud. A sincere thank you to everyone for the support and expertise you provided to me and my fellow Board members in the past year. I look forward to working with you and for you in the coming year.

Stay safe. Stay healthy. Look up, the skies are open.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Black, President
RASC, Halifax Centre

Secretary

The principal duty of the secretary is to provide minutes, agendas, and meeting announcements to the Board of Directors and to the Members of the Centre. An additional duty is to book meeting rooms through St. Mary's University for our meetings. We were welcomed back to SMU again this year and we are grateful to SMU for this support.

But COVID-19 arrived in early 2020 and on March 22, 2020 the Government of Nova Scotia declared a provincial State of Emergency to help contain the spread of the virus, and public gatherings were prohibited.

As a consequence, we adopted using Zoom, a web-based computer video conferencing tool to host our Members', Board and committee meetings virtually and it appears to have been a great success. We even began using Zoom for virtual observing sessions.

Members' Meetings are held on the first Saturday of the month, unless that falls on a holiday. Members' meetings were held at SMU until March 2020 and in April we moved to using Zoom. The Board of Directors would meet earlier in the same day as the Members' meeting until April, but the Board thereafter moved to meeting using Zoom on the Thursday before the Members' meeting.

There were other consequences of COVID-19. The annual Nova East Star Party was cancelled but all six of the guest speakers agreed to deliver their presentations as Zoom meetings. The annual BBQ at SCO was cancelled. The Kejimikujik Dark Sky weekend was also cancelled but because the Park campgrounds

were closed for renovations. The subsequent Dark-Sky event planned at Kejimikujik was also cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. New guidelines for the use of our St. Croix Observatory (SCO) during COVID-19 were also developed. There were a number of virtual observing sessions held using Zoom.

There were 10 regular Member's meetings, 6 in-person meetings held at SMU and 4 held using Zoom. There were also 10 regular Board of Directors meetings, 4 held using Zoom. There were also 2 special meetings of the Board held to discuss the possibility of providing electrical power to SCO.

COVID-19 provided significant challenges to us all in 2020. The membership and the Board of Directors all rose to the challenge and we did an admirable job of dealing with those challenges.

The membership of the Centre as of the September 30 totaled 173 members (up slightly from 170 last year):

- 15 Family Regular
- 5 Family Youth
- 20 Life
- 127 Regular
- 2 Regular USA
- 4 Youth

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter Hurley, Secretary
RASC, Halifax Centre

Auditor

The attached Financial Statements have been prepared by the treasurer and myself in recent days after discussions about accounting procedures and problems which have arisen from an unbalanced report.

The Revenues and Expenses have been reviewed carefully and we believe they are an accurate representation of the Centre's fiscal performance over the past year. Note that the Balance Sheet only shows the current standing of the Centre at the end of September 2020. No comparison between 2020 and 2019 is offered. This is because we are not confident of the figures presented in the 2019 Balance sheet.

We believe a loss of \$318.88 occurred in 2020. This includes allowances made for more depreciation expensed to reduce the library holdings and the value of the observatory. Unsold 2020 calendars were also written off at year-end to the amount of about \$163.

I have not seen any supporting documentation except for bank statements to verify these numbers. The work to this point has been to establish a preliminary treasurer's report which can be used as a guideline during the AGM of December 5th 2020.

I have recommended that as the statements of 2018 and 2019 were also out of balance, the Treasurer and I will correct these errors over the coming weeks and present a three year report which will be published in the February 2021 Nova Notes (NN 5201) which is the Centre's official archival resource.

Changes to FY 2020 are possible during the reconstruction of prior years' financial reports which were never printed in Nova Notes. Therefore these reports are presented at this time on an unaudited, unverified and preliminary basis only. We do not expect the information for 2020 when it appears in Nova Notes will differ much from what has been presented here.

Respectfully Submitted,

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY of CANADA, Halifax Centre
COMPARATIVE INCOME STATEMENT
YEARS ENDING Sept 30, 2020 and Sept 30, 2019

Last Updated December 1, 2020 Activity to: Sep 30 20	I I I I	Years Ended September 30	I I I I	Amount of Increase or (Decrease) during 2020	I I I I	
		2020	2019			
REVENUE						
	R	Y	A			
Membership Fees	121	3	14	\$2,906.56	\$2,949.96	(\$43.40)
Donations & NE Don.				100.00	67.50	\$32.50
Educational Activities				500.00	50.00	\$450.00
Interest				315.22	212.62	\$102.60
Sales of Merchandise				1,610.00	690.00	\$920.00
Nova East				(100.07)	1,025.40	(\$1,125.47)
Nova Notes Subscr Earned*				176.00	182.00	(\$6.00)
Total Revenue				\$5,507.71	\$5,177.48	\$330.23
EXPENSES						
Meetings Treats				\$124.24	\$248.71	(\$124.47)
" Zoom Subscription				197.29		197.29
Newsletter				0.00	60.35	(60.35)
National Office Processing				95.48	68.52	26.96
Asset Depr & Loss Write-off				466.52	492.44	(25.92)
Equipment & Supplies				0.00	0.00	0.00
Merchandise purchases				1,130.70	886.25	244.45
Office Administration				361.14	455.27	(94.13)
Legal Expenses				31.15	0.00	31.15
Educational Activities				832.20	1,186.93	(354.73)
Insurance				1,462.00	1,385.00	77.00
Awards & Donations				120.00	385.28	(265.28)
Operating Expenses - Observa				1,016.66	1,641.97	(625.31)
Miscellaneous				0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Expenses				\$5,837.38	\$6,810.72	(\$973.34)
Surplus or (Deficit) on Oper				(\$329.67)	(\$1,633.24)	\$1,303.57

Treasurer

Introduction:

The year 2019 - 20 was an unusual but successful year financially for the Halifax Centre. We had an operational surplus of approximately \$311 before depreciation and write offs. This compares to a deficit of \$1,633 last year on the same basis. Our outreach activities were curtailed due to COVID-19. Nova East that usually contributes about \$1,000 to revenue, was held as an online event. We also continued to write

off our equipment at a rate of 3% and library holdings at a rate of 10%.

Deficit of \$318.88 for Fiscal 2019 - 2020

The Centre continues to be successful and solvent. However, new sources of revenue will be required in future years to maintain our solvency. In a normal year with higher educational activities expenses, our deficit would be \$700 to \$1,000 higher based on previous years expenses.

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Halifax Centre Comparative Income Statement

Years ending September 30, 2019 - September 30, 2020

	Years Ended September 30		Amount of Increase or (Decrease) During 2020
	2020	2019	
Revenue:			
Membership fees:	3026.78	2949.96	76.82
Donations:	175.00	67.50	107.50
Edu. Activities:	500.00	50	450.00
Interest	315.22	212.62	102.60
Sale of Merch.:	1610.00	690.00	920.00
Nova East (Net):	(100.07)	1025.40	(1125.47)
Nova Notes Prints:	157.00	182.00	(25.00)
Miscellaneous:	3.00	0.00	3.00
Total Revenue:	5686.93	5177.48	509.45
Expenses			
Meeting Treats:	124.24	248.71	(127.47)
Zoom subscription:	197.29	0.00	197.29
News Letter:	0.00	60.35	(60.35)
Deprecation and write off:	629.67	492.44	137.23
Purchase of Merch:	1130.70	886.25	244.45
Office Administration:	361.14	455.27	(94.13)
Edu. Activities:	832.20	1186.93	(354.73)
Insurance:	1462.00	1385.00	77.00
Awards and Donations:	120.00	385.28	(265.28)
Nat. Office Processing:	100.76	68.52	32.24
Operating Expenses SCO:	1016.66	1641.97	(625.31)
Total Expenses:	6005.81	6810.72	(804.91)
Operational Surplus (Deficit):	(318.00)	(1633.24)	1314.36

Details of the 2020 Income Statement REVENUE:

Membership Fees \$3,026.78: Membership fees were approximately the same as last year. At year end we had 163 members, down from 170 the previous year.

Donations \$175.00: Donations made by members when renewing their annual membership.

Educational / Outreach: Grant from National Special Projects Program for 2015 GA video editing project led by Dave Chapman. The editing was done by Halley Davies.

Interest \$315.22: GIC interest was higher this year as a result of staggered maturity dates.

Sales of Merchandise \$1,610: The two items we sold were RASC calendars and Explore the Universe guides.

Nova East (net) (-\$100.07): Purchase of gifts before the decision was made to hold Nova East online. They will be held in hopes of Nova East 2021.

Printed Nova Notes Subscriptions \$157.00: Three fewer members requested printed copies this year.

EXPENSES:

Meetings \$124.24: Meeting treats were provided at the end of meetings for only 6 months.

Zoom subscription \$197.29: NN's expenses are up this year. This is caused by increased postage and printing costs. We are now subsidizing each issue by about \$6, up from \$5.

Purchase of merchandise \$1,130.70: Purchase of Explore the Universe guides accounted for the increase.

Office Administration \$361.14: Mailbox rental was the major expense (\$229)
Educational Activities (Outreach) \$832.20:

The major expense was \$500 to edit the 2015 GA videos. SkyNews and centre brochure printing are also included.

Insurance \$1,462.00: Insurance for SCO increased by \$77.

Awards and Donations \$120.00: We continue to donate to the Clear Sky Clock website and the International Dark Sky Association.

Observatory - Operating \$1,016.66: Propane and furnace servicing were the major expenses. It also includes taxes to Hants County and the usual gift to Mr Carmichael.

Asset Depreciation \$629.67: We continue to depreciate equipment at 3% per year and library books at 10% per year. Thirteen 2020 unsold calendars were written off in addition to the depreciation of observatory and library assets and holdings.

**Royal Astronomical Society of
Canada, Halifax Centre
Balance Sheet**

Dec. 4 2020 Year Ended, Sept. 30, 2020

Assests:

Cash:	9496.99
Accounts Receivable:	560.00
Investments:	8000.00

Library Estimate:	1296.31
Miscellaneous Estimate:	320.05

Total Assets: 30102.89

Liabilities:

Accounts Payable:	0.00
Other:	0.00

Total Liabilities: 0.00

Capital:

Nova East Working Equity:	5000.00
Common Equity:	25102.89

Total Capital: 30102.89

Total Liabilities and Capital: 30102.89

Details of the 2020 Balance Sheet ASSETS:

Cash \$9,496.99: This is the balance in our chequing account compared to \$3,843.76 last year. The increase is a result of cashing \$6,000 of GICs in anticipation of the SCO electrification project. We also had \$560.35 in accounts receivable for September membership fees owing from National Office.

Merchandise Inventory \$877.08: This includes 2021 calendars, Explore the Universe, guides and a small quantity of mylar film.

Investments \$8,000.00: We have two-\$4,000 GICs that come due in June 2021. Interest is counted at maturity.

Estimated Library \$1,296.31: We did not purchase any new holdings this year.

Observatory Equipment \$10,429.19: After depreciation of observatory equipment of \$322.49.

LIABILITIES:

No outstanding liabilities at year end.

EQUITY:

Nova East Reserve Equity \$5,000.00: This reserve is allocated for upfront costs before Nova East receives income from its various sources.

Common Equity \$25,102.89: Common equity was reduced by an operating deficit of \$318.88.

Summary and Recommendations:

This year will be remembered for the impact COVID-19 had on our activities – some positive and some negative reflected in our small operational deficit. I was pleased to serve as Treasurer again this year. I thank our auditor, Ian Anderson, for his rigorous review of the books and look forward to working with him to resolve the anomalies he detected.

In a normal year with higher educational activities expenses, it is my opinion that our ongoing deficit is unsustainable.

Respectfully submitted,
Gregg Dill
Treasurer, RASC - Halifax Centre December 5, 2020

National Council

These are the main activities for 2020:

- a. The Centre Manual should be finished in time for the first meeting of 2021
- b. National Finances: It is expected that the 2020 budget will break even or have a small surplus. Revenue is projected to be \$938,000, up about 20% from last year, mostly due to increases in revenue from membership fees, publication revenue, and the robotic telescope. Expenses are projected to be \$920,000, a 2% increase. SkyNews, in its new form, is expected to break even. A surplus of \$18,000 is expected.
- c. iMIS System Upgrade/Replacement: This is the system used to keep track of memberships, run the on-line store, etc. It has been replaced with a new system that will be easier (and cheaper) to maintain, plus come with modules for tasks that we cannot currently do on iMIS. The new system will start going into effect in early 2021.
- d. By-law Changes: There were some housekeeping changes made at this year's AGM. More substantive changes will be coming for the 2021 AGM.
- e. Policy Manual Changes: There are also plans to change Policy G23, which is related to the complaints and mediation process. There have been some cases in the past year and there have been problems with the mediator process. As written, there is no provision to prevent cases which are "frivolous or vexatious", to use the proper legal term. These changes may simply be to allow the Board to decline appointing a mediator in such cases.
- f. Green Laser Pointer: The RASC has had its certificate extended for another year by Transport Canada. It runs from June 30, 2020 to June 30, 2021.
- g. National Committee Changes: There have been changes to a number of committees, the main ones being that the Fundraising Committee no longer exists, its functions now being done by staff; the Publications Committee has become the Editorial Board, to ensure consistency between existing publications as well as to help produce new ones; the new Next Generation Committee, to look at getting more younger people involved in the RASC; and, the Nominating Committee, which is now made up of the entire Board. Fundraising had brought in \$19,000 in August, and this year, to date, we had received almost \$270,000. Last year's total had been \$275,000. The Nominations Committee is now the entire Board.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Patrick Kelly, NC Representative
 RASC, Halifax Centre

Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) Committee

Things have been quiet on the DSP front in 2020 owing to the closure of the Kejimikujik front country campground (which includes the Sky Circle) for major renovations. As a result, there was no Dark Sky Weekend in 2020. Alternate activities were discussed, but the pandemic put an end to that. The DSP backcountry was accessible as usual.

Access to the front country will resume in spring 2021, and the DSP is scheduled for August 13–15, 2021. We are looking forward to seeing the new washrooms and completing a lighting audit, which would normally have been done on Fall 2020.

Boxing Rock Brewery issued a limited run of Dark as Keji beer, and Dave Chapman assisted in the creation of 6 collectible constellation cards that promoted the DSP and the RASC.

In 2021, the DSP Committee will be co-chaired by Dave Chapman and Tony Schellinck. Other members include Peter Hurley, Paul Gray, and Melody Hamilton.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dave Chapman, Chair
RASC, Halifax Centre

Governance Committee

I would like to thank my fellow members on the Governance Committee, Paul Gray and Gregg Dill, for the work accomplished in the past year.

No changes to the Bylaw #1 nor the Objectives were recommended.

As of December 7, 2019, adjustments were made to the *Reporting Mechanism* in several of the appointed positions. All appointed positions, except National Representative and the Honorary President, had their responsibility regarding Board meeting attendance changed to “May attend RASC Halifax Centre Board meetings”, and that all retained the reporting mechanism statement:

1. Attendance at RASC, Halifax Centre Board meetings as set by the President of the RASC, Halifax Centre Board:
 - If an elected Director: Mandatory attendance at Board of Director meeting.
 - If not an elected Director: Attend Board of Directors meetings when invited to address the Board, when a request to address the Board has been approved, or as a guest.

With the recommendations from the Committee, the Board of Directors approved the following additions to the RASC Halifax Centre policies found in *About Us* on the RASC Halifax website.

- a) **Policy G8: RASC Halifax Centre Astroimaging Contest** – (Adopted March 7, 2020) This changed the astroimaging contest from that of Nova East to one of the Halifax Centre, thereby opening to Nova East registrants (regardless of home address) and any resident of Nova Scotia.
- b) **Policy G9: RASC Halifax Centre Guidelines Regarding In-Camera Sessions** – (Adopted May 21, 2020) Because confidentiality is a fiduciary responsibility of the Board of Directors, a policy was developed regarding the process of holding such sessions and the consequences of not maintaining confidentiality.
- c) **Policy G10: Policies Regarding Permitted Commercial Activities at RASC Halifax Centre Meetings and Events** – (Adopted June 18, 2020) This was based on a policy approved in 2020. It provides guidance when asked by an outside entity to display and to perhaps sell merchandise.

Respectfully Submitted,
Judy Black, Chair
RASC, Halifax Centre

Editor, Nova Notes

Four editions of Nova Notes have been published as of the AGM, with a range of 9 to 13 pages per issue, 43 pages in total. No June edition was published. The editions have been thin this year with article, photo, and sketch submissions down for a second straight year. The issues tended to include only meeting reports, the Centre Showcase and Food for the Soul. A few single one-off articles were published as well. There were no recurring columns.

I would like to give my thanks to the following for their contribution in 2019-2020:

- *Article Contributors:* Dr. Roy Bishop, Judy Black, Michael Boschat, Paul Heath, Pat Kelly, Fiona Morris, Charles White
- *Photo Contributions:* Jerry Black, Michael Boschat, Barry Burgess, David Chapman, Art Cole, Jason Dain, Jeff Donaldson, David Hoskin, Blair MacDonald, Charles White

- *Sketchers:* Dave Chapman, Michael Gatto

I look forward to what Nova Notes will have in it in the year ahead for the new editors taking the reins as this is my final year, after 3 years of editing Nova Notes.

Respectfully submitted,
Charles White, Editor
RASC Halifax Centre

Nova East Star Party



Due to COVID-19, the 34th consecutive Nova East camping event planned to be held at Smiley's Provincial Park during the weekend of August 21 – August 23, was cancelled; however, speakers agreed to a series of presentations.

Given the focus on Mars this year and the prominence of Jupiter and Saturn in the sky at Nova East, the theme was “March of the Planets”. When the pandemic changed plans, the theme was slightly modified to *Nova East – The COVID-19 Edition!*

Many thanks to John Read for the 2020 logo design that, due to COVID, was then overwritten with “COVID Cancelled”. It featured the planets in relative position to the Sun as they would during the August 23rd weekend. The process for on-demand printing from any printing source was described on the website; John Read provided a video on how to order a t-shirt through Vistaprint.

2020 NE Planning Committee (NEPC):

Members included Judy Black (Chair), Gregg Dill (Treasurer), Pat Kelly (Registrar), Chris Young, Dave Chapman, Wayne Harasimovitch and Liz Greenough. Consultants were Mary Lou Whitehorne and Paul Gray. There were three meetings – one face-to-face planning meeting held February 15, and four Zoom meetings held March 21, April 25, May 9 and May 23. The success of Nova East 2020 was because of the dedication, imagination and prep work done by each of the members during the planning and implementation phases of this event.

Speaker Series:

Despite the camping event being cancelled, our six speakers participated in a series of 1-hour talks each Tuesday, beginning on August 4. Our speaker for the public talk, Andrew Fazekas, will be invited to next year's Nova East when he can also attend as a participant.

- Aug 4 – Kathy Walker: *Beginner Image Processing for Astrophotographers*
- Aug 11 – David Hoskin: *Astrophotography of the Moon and Planets*
- Aug 18 – Fiona Morris, Keegan Oickle: *RASC – the Next Generation*
- Aug 25 – Tony Schellinck: *Summer/Fall Challenge Using Binoculars*
- Sept 1 – Paul Heath: *Walk the Solar System (How-to)*

The September 8 presentation by Pat Kelly (*All About Mars: The Science of What You're Seeing*) was moved to September 12 as part of the Members' Meeting.

Astrophotography Contest:

The ***Astrophotography Contest*** continued as a RASC Halifax Centre photo contest with its winners awarded at Nova East. Thirty-four photos were judged in three categories with specific criteria for use by adjudicators Blair MacDonald and Mary Lou Whitehorne. The categories, number of submissions in each category and the winners were:

- Deep-Sky/Prime Focus (11 submissions): Jeff Donaldson – *IC 1805 / Heart Nebula*

- Solar System (5 submissions): David Hoskin – *Aristoteles and Eudoxus, the 'Bike Wheel' lunar craters*
- Wide-Field (18 submissions): Jason Dain – *Milky Way Bayswater*

The **People's Choice Award** winner, Jerry Black, was awarded a \$50.00 Atlantic Photo Supply gift certificate for his *Observing NEOWISE in Solitude*.

Blair, on behalf of APS and Halifax Centre, announced the winners at the October 3, 2020 Members' Meeting. APS subsequently sent each winner an email explaining how to arrange for a canvas-wrapped print of their winning image. A letter of thanks was sent to the adjudicators for their time, and to APS for their generous donations.

Other Considerations:

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, speakers presented their talks through a Zoom speaker series. Aspects of the camping event were obviously cancelled – field observing sessions, telescope medics, registration desk, astro breakfasts, potluck BBQ, and door prizes. Look forward to their return in 2021!

Special recognition was given on September 24 to RASC Halifax Centre members that were presented with RASC certificates and awards since the previous Nova East. The list is included in Dave Chapman's Observing report.

The Task Chart acted as a guide for the 2020 Nova East Planning Committee and provided the timeline for planning the event. This document was used throughout the planning process and was revised to reflect the COVID-altered event.

Terms of Reference - Nova East Planning Committee:

No changes to the Terms of Reference are suggested.

Date of 2021 Nova East:

As approved by the Board of Directors at a prior meeting and is now included in the 2021 RASC Calendar, Nova East 2021 will be held August 6-8 provide COVID-19 does not affect the event for a second year. The New Moon is on August 8.

Chair, 2021 Nova East Planning Committee:

I am stepping down as Chair of the Nova East Planning Committee due to responsibilities as President and as the National Council representative for Halifax Centre. A chair for the 2021 Star Party is needed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Judy Black, Chair
RASC, Halifax Centre

Observing Committee

Despite (or perhaps because of) the pandemic keeping us at home, Centre members have had a banner year, earning 7 observing certificates of about 30 Canada-wide. Considering our medium size, this is remarkable. Here's the list:

Explore the Universe
Stewart Cameron
Dave Chapman
Lisa Ann Fanning (New Jersey)
Karen Hamblin
Troy Sweeney

Explore the Moon

Tony Schellinck

Finest NGC Objects
Tony Schellinck

Isabel Williamson Lunar Observing Program
Melody Hamilton

Melody and Dave are active on the national Observing Committee. Melody has also been granted permission to review EtU submissions from members of the Minas Astronomy Group, not all of whom are RASC members.

Observers are reminded that there is now a new intermediate RASC observing program on Double Stars, for which one can earn a certificate (see <https://www.rasc.ca/double-stars>).

What's Up? presentations are posted to the Centre website on the first of each month (except July and August) and are presented "live" at the monthly meetings.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dave Chapman
Chair, Observing Committee
RASC, Halifax Centre

Outreach Committee

The year began well but Covid-19 shut us down quickly. Despite having to cancel many events, we did manage to complete a number of outreach events. With the use of online formats, we presented Astronomy to many.

In January, we did another successful night at York Redoubt for the Young Naturalist Club with 109 participants, all family groups.

Nova East Star Party had seven live online presentations, all recorded for our YouTube channel.

Tony Schellinck moved his SCAN presentations online:

- Astronomy on the Cheap (15)
- Is our Flat Earth at the Center of the Universe (100 +)

International Observe the Moon (InOMN) was presented online on October 23rd with Jerry Black and Blair MacDonald using their cameras and telescopes and Dave Chapman as moderator/host. This was recorded for our YouTube channel.

The team also presented other online observing and astroimaging sessions that were recorded for inclusion on the RASC Halifax YouTube channel:

- Explore the Moon Virtual Lunar Observing Session: Dave Chapman and Blair MacDonald (April 29)
- Exploring ImagesPlus: Blair MacDonald (April 11)
- PixInsight Workflow: Jeff Donaldson (May 2)
- Introduction Image Processing using ImagesPlus: Blair MacDonald (May 5)
- ImagesPlus, Session 2: Blair MacDonald (May 29)
- Informal Online Imaging of M27 and the Butterfly Nebula: Jeff Donaldson and Blair MacDonald (August 19)

Wayne Harasimovitch and Peter Hurley worked on our behalf with the Discovery Centre for an astronomy weekend on September 26-27. With the proper Covid-19 protocols, it went well with 442 registered to

attend the event. Besides Wayne and Peter, other volunteers at the event were Judy and Jerry Black, Michael Boschat, Daphne Themelis and Paul Heath.

Dave Chapman offered two presentations at the Deanery Project:

- Sea Light Sky Light event (30 mixed ages)
- Explore the Moon (20 mixed ages)

I began a youth Intro Astronomy program at the North Preston Recreation Centre; after 2 weeks in, it was shut down by Covid-19.

Again, with initiative and innovated ideas, Halifax Centre has continued to present Astronomy to many.

I would like to thank everyone who put in the effort to make our events a success.

Respectively Submitted,
Paul Heath, Outreach Chair
RASC, Halifax Centre

Manager, St. Croix Observatory

The Covid-19 has played a significant impact on the user of the St. Croix Observatory (SCO) for 2020. As a result, the annual BBQ had to be cancelled for the 2020 season. However, current social gathering restrictions still allow for limited use of SCO by members as long as they adhere to the provincial guidelines.

2020 has provided opportunity to attend to some maintenance that has been required. In March, some much needed maintenance was performed on the propane furnace as a leak had been detected. The maintenance also included a replacement of the thermocouple sensor, starter, and thermostat that enables the furnace to be started much easier than before. The leak resulted in a noticeable loss of fuel in the propane tank and after the repairs were made the tank was refilled. In the fall we were able to get some new paint on the lower sections of the observatory fascia boards as well as the window and door frames of the warm room.

The most significant announcement regarding SCO has been the almost unanimous decision to connect the facility to the Minas Energy electrical grid. This connection will provide the observatory and warm room with a permanent connection to AC power that can be used by telescopes, new interior and exterior lighting, potential security systems, internet connectivity, sky cameras, etc. It also now provides us with the ability to migrate way from fossil fuels to heat the warm room and use a clean renewable source of energy from the hydroelectric dam and wind turbines. Minas Energy is supporting the connection to their lines through their contractor K-Line Construction.

There will be some electrical contracting work required by the Halifax Centre in the warm room and observatory to be able to receive the electrical connection and ensure it meets the proper electrical codes specified by the province of Nova Scotia. After requesting a number of quotes for this electrical work, it has recently been decided to provide this job to DMac Electric.

As of Nov 29, 2020, K-Line has installed a pole on the SCO site that brings a line from the roadway that will eventually connect to the warm room. Discussions have begun with DMac Electric as to when the electrical work in the warm room and the observatory can commence.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Liddard, SCO Manager
RASC, Halifax Centre

Nominating Committee Report

The following appointments were approved at the Board of Directors meeting of November 26, 2020 and come into effect as of January 1, 2021.

Honorary President	Mary Lou Whitehorne
National Representative	Judy Black
Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) Committee, Co-Chairs	Dave Chapman, Tony Schellinck
Nova East Planning Committee	VACANT
Outreach Chair	Paul Heath
Observing Chair	Dave Chapman
SCO Manager	John Liddard
Librarian	Wayne Harasimovitch
Nova Notes, Co-Editors	John McPhee, Lisa Fanning
Nominating Committee	Peter Hurley
Governance Committee	Judy Black

The following is the list of nominations put forward to the Board on November 26, 2020 and to members as of November 27, 2020. The call for further nominations will be made at the AGM on December 5, 2020.

President	Judy Black
Vice-President	Pat Kelly
Secretary	Peter Hurley
Treasurer	Gregg Dill
Director	Matthew Dyer
Director	Wayne Harasimovitch
Director	Paul Heath
Director	David Hoskin
Director	Tim Doucette
Director	Kathy Walker

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter Hurley, Chair
RASC Halifax Centre