

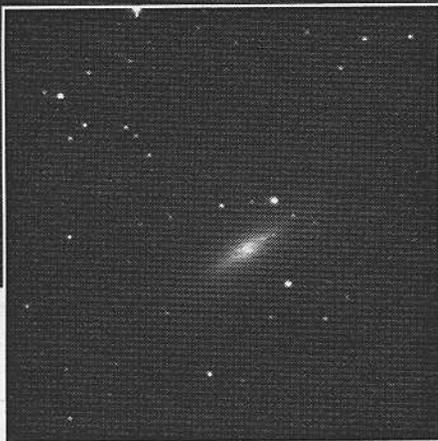
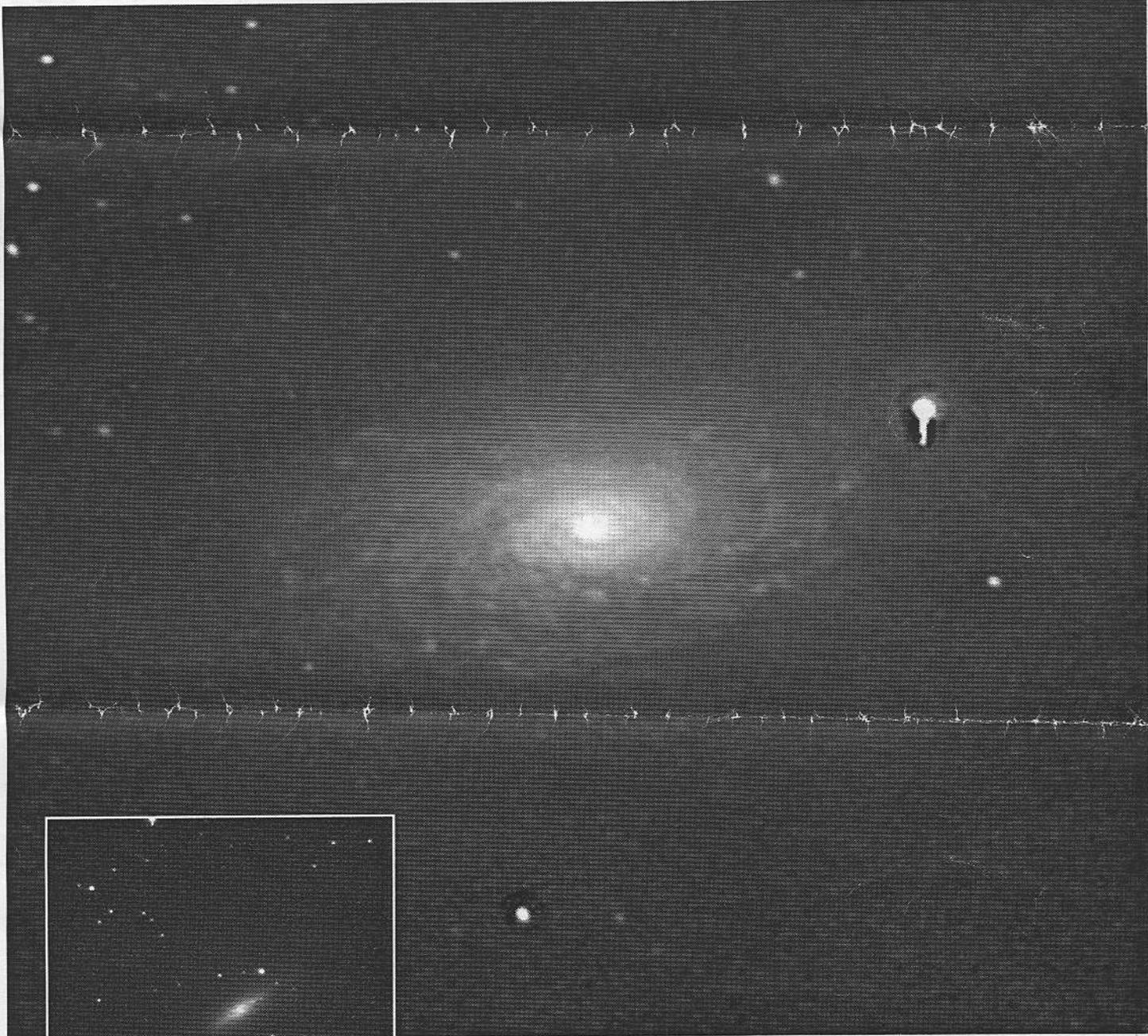
Nova Notes

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



June 24, 2004: After a month of cloudy weather and trips away I finally got some imaging done. I decided to shoot a couple of galaxies for reasonably long exposures using the ST9's built-in autoguider. Above you will find M63 in Canes Venatici. It was a 15 minute exposure (auto-guided). Processing included Maximum Entropy Deconvolution followed by log scaling. At left is M102 in Draco. It was a log-scaled 20 minute exposure (auto-guided). – Dave Lane

As heard on hfxrasc@rasc.ca...

If you're a member with email, why not become part of the Centre's email list? The list is a great resource for people looking for other members to observe with, for reminders of upcoming astronomical events, or for sharing information. Members who observe at

St. Croix usually post a notice to say if they'll be out that night. Log on to our website (www.halifax.rasc.ca) to get signed up and you too could participate in lively intellectual discussions, or at least read them!

Transit Reports

We did not see the transit at Evangeline Beach :-)

There were blue sky spots around 6 a.m., but after that the overcast was solid. The sun shone for a few minutes east of here, on the Cheverie shore (we could see the sunlight, but not the Sun).

The sun finally came into view at 8:55 ADT, briefly.

8 years less two days to the next transit!

Roy – rg@ns.sympatico.ca

Well, it's officially over and we saw not a thing on Citadel Hill. But we had fun. There were two people from Indiana, who were visiting folks in Maine and decided to take the Cat over to see the Transit. There was also a guy from the Calgary RASC who came over to Halifax just to see the transit.

It did give us a good chance to check out people's equipment as we normally only see glimpses of it in the dark, and we had the CTV crew with us to make things exciting. Craig was all wired up and seemed to be doing fine.

In fact, the only transit shots we saw were from the monitor behind Craig, and from printouts that people brought in from the Internet. All in all, some 20 or so people showed up. A few curious joggers and dog-walkers stopped by to see what was going on, some of them already familiar with the event.

You know, one has to be philosophical about these things. You have to get a certain level of satisfaction from the quest.

Especially if you live in Nova Scotia.

Pat – pdentrem@ddasolutions.com

Hi all,

We had about 20 or so people on Citadel Hill, with a dozen telescopes and cameras set up. We had at least one person, Mark, from the Calgary Centre, two folks from Indiana, and a Torontonion or two. Everyone kept their sense of humour as the sky teased us with occasional brighter patches of grey.

Timbits courtesy of Hillary May from Parks Canada at 5:15 A.M. were more than welcomed. CTV showed up with a Microwave truck and camera, and I did a piece for Canada A.M. and another for CTV Newsnet. That piece should run all day (Groannn!). So, like most others in Atlantic Canada, we observed the underbelly of the cloud deck. Thanks to everyone who came out.

See you in 2012!

- Craig

From Horton Bluff I got THREE MOMENTARY VIEWS of the transit of Venus!! Three very nice views, lasting less than a minute each! The cloud thinned sufficiently to grace my retina with Venus showing very nicely silhouetted against the Sun during intermittent parts of these minutes: 06:11, 06:21 and 06:31 (all ADT). From shortly before 6 a.m. the sky looked VERY promising. By 6:50 the prospects looked less hopeful.

The views (except for a brief naked eye view) were through my 60 mm (700 mm

focal length) Unitron refractor (28 mm eyepiece). The water vapour of the cloud did the filtering except for a few bright seconds during the 06:31 view. During the latter view I was enjoying a few wonderful seconds of that round dark disk against the cloud filtered Sun when I could see the cloud abruptly thinning and the Sun about to make a sudden burst in brilliance so I quickly slipped my filter over the objective. I got all of about 4 or 5 seconds of this filtered view when it fizzled into darkness.

At this moment, looking up from the eyepiece, I could see the solar disk through the thin cloud once again. For moments I could distinctly see the dark dot of Venus naked eye on the solar disk (a dark dot more distinct than most naked-eye sunspots that I have seen). I actually got to see Venus naked eye in transit!! Seconds later the cloud obscured the view and I haven't seen the Sun directly since. Later, when I concluded that the sky was actually worsening (misty rain even began to fall), I turned to the internet live coverage (some sites in Norway). I kept a close eye on the sky but it did not improve by the time of last contact.

Disappointed indeed that the sky did not clear for uninterrupted viewing, but delighted (ELATED!) that I was given a few brief moments to connect directly with Venus on the Sun!!

Sherman – sherm@glinx.com

Sorry to hear about the clouds. As I write this I sit under clear blue sky but before you flame me I should tell you that it cleared off nicely at 9:05 a.m. :(



Nova Notes

The Newsletter of the
Halifax Centre of the RASC

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 June. 15

We had sucker holes all morning here in Fredericton and we waited and waited for one to pass us. As it turned out we saw pillars of sunlight passing all around the SJ River valley from our perch on top of the hill at UNB. To the north and west there was a line of pink sky all along the horizon. We could see the clear sky less than a hour away but were dedicated to stick it out for the local media.

It is a very bad feeling to see a large clear spot coming your way and to see sunlight shining on buildings a few blocks away! Not even one peek :(

Paul Gray

Good morning Hfx RASCals,

I can report successful observations of the transit from Ottawa. We had almost 100 people at the Helen Sawyer Hogg Observatory at the Canada Sci & Tech Museum. Even I got up at 4:30 to set up for this one! The image in the 15" Warner & Swasey was great though it was about 20 minutes after sunrise before we could catch a glimpse of the Sun and Venus. Though not as visually stimulating as a solar eclipse, it was more exciting to me to see this event – and to actually have it clear.

Several Ottawa RASCals brought their scopes out too and we had a computer

link to the SmartScope located in the west end of Ottawa.

It's off to Tahiti in 2012 for Diane and I to view is from Cook's vantage point. Who's up for an expedition? Remember Cook learned some of his astronomy and surveying in Hfx harbour under J.F.W. Desbarre's tutelage so there is another reason to go.

Hope you had some success there too.

Randall Brooks – brooks@istar.ca

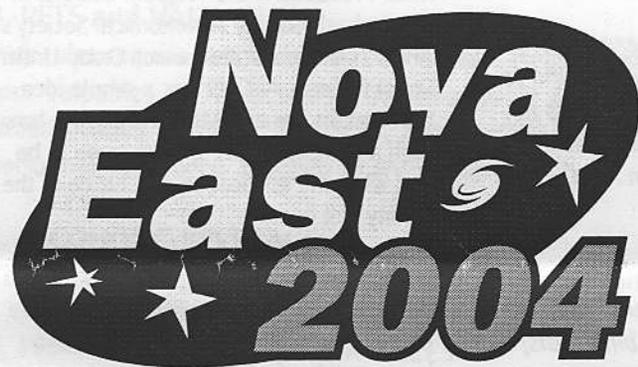
Chris B and I just got back from NB where we saw nothing but thick cloud, drizzle and fog the entire way from Halifax. We drove to Oromocto and turned around as conditions never really got better, just worse. We didn't even see the Sun on the drive back. Disappointing, but in 8 years we'll have another chance.

I want to thank Craig for doing a fine job organizing the observing group at the Citadel Hill and getting the opportunity to promote our hobby to the media and those watching. Did you make a reservation for June 6, 2012? :)

Darren



Citadel Hill transit observers group set up and hope for the best, photo by Dave Chapman.



Smiley's Provincial Park
Hants County, Nova Scotia

August 20–22, 2004

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Halifax Centre, The Minas Astronomy Group,
and The Nova Central Astronomy Club present

The 18th Annual Atlantic Region Star Party
August 20–22, 2004
Smiley's Provincial Park, Hants County, Nova Scotia



Nova East 2004 Program of Events

Friday, August 20th

Afternoon to Early Evening
Registration at the
information/registration tent

8:00 p.m.

Welcome, Announcements &
Introduction of NE Committee

8:15 p.m.

"Juan Dark & Stormy Night...and Other
Bedtime Weather Stories" Guest Speaker:

Peter Bowyer*

At the event tent

10:15 p.m. to ???

Nova East Observing
Observing Field

11:00 p.m.

Observing Workshop: Double Stars for
Small Telescopes. Host: Gary Weber

Near the Swings

Saturday, August 21st

Many events during Saturday's program
are public outreach events. The public is
invited to participate and learn about the
fun and interesting aspects of astronomy.

9:00 a.m.

Astronomers' Breakfast
Coffee and baked goods will be
available to registered attendees
Event Tent

10:00 a.m.

Group Photograph Observing Field

10:30 a.m.

Viewing Our Home Star (Public Invited)
An opportunity to look through properly
equipped telescopes to safely see our own
sun near an active part of the solar cycle.

Observing Field

1:30 p.m.

Nature Hike in Smiley's Park.

Host: Sherman Williams

Gather at Event Tent

2:00 p.m.

Workshop: Thermal Management of
Newtonian Telescopes Host: Gary Weber
Event Tent

3:00 p.m.

Workshop: Astrophotography

Techniques

Host: Blair MacDonald & Darren Talbot

Event Tent

4:00 p.m.

Collimation Clinic - bring your telescope

Host: Craig Levine, Darren Talbot

& Gary Weber

Event Tent

8:30 p.m.

Saturday Night's talk: ARGUS

(Public Invited) Host: Mike Proebstle*

Event Tent

10:00 p.m.

The Draw for Door Prizes

Host: Daryl Dewolfe

Event Tent

10:15 p.m.

What's Up in the Night Sky

(Public Invited) Host: Craig Levine

Event Tent

10:30 p.m. to ???

The Night Sky Through a Telescope

(Public Invited)

A variety of telescopes and experienced
amateur astronomers will be on hand to
presents views of fascinating objects in
the night sky. Information Hosts will be
available at the Registration Area.

Observing Field

11:00 p.m.

Observing Workshop: Binocular Sky Tour

(Public Invited - bring your binoculars)

Host: John Jarvo

Workshop Area

Sunday, August 22nd

9:30 a.m.

Bannock and Coffee

Host: Gary Weber,

Daryl DeWolfe and others

Campsite

11:30 a.m.

Workshop: On Looking Through

A Telescope Host: Roy Bishop

Event Tent

12:30 p.m.

Workshop: Patience, Persistence

and Brain Chemistry

Host: Pat Kelly

Gather at Event Tent

2:00 p.m.

Tour of St. Croix Observatory

Host: Craig Levine

Gather at Event Tent

Speakers

Peter Bowyer is Program Manager and
Senior Meteorologist with Environment
Canada's Canadian Hurricane Centre in
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. With over 20
years of experience and author of two
books on marine weather, Peter will be
giving us a very informative talk on the
one element that makes us decide to go
observing or not, the weather!

- What makes the weather?
- Variability of the weather in our region.
- Defining forecast accuracy; it depends on the client.
- Remembering Juan: the warnings, the weather, and the "when & where" of the next Juan.

Mike Proebstle is the Program Director of
the Wabash County Astronomical Society's
ARGUS (Astronomical Research Group Under
Stars) Project. ARGUS was a simple idea
that caught fire and Mike will explain how
such a comprehensive project came to be
and what the application and future of the
facility will be.

Other Presenters Other people involved in
delivering the program segments for Nova
East are, with the obvious exceptions, a
loose gaggle of ragamuffin amateur
astronomers who spend too much money
on their equipment and too little time
observing the night sky.

Traditionally, at previous Star Parties, some
of the astronomers have always stayed for
Sunday night observing. Nova East campers
are welcome to stay another night on your
site (camping fee payable to the Park Office).

Please note that all times are approximate
and somewhat flexible. Impromptu events
may be scheduled. Please check the mes-
sage board at the Event Tent.

Bringing the stars to the public is a legacy of every Nova East Star Party. To that end, Nova East 2004 is offering a wide selection of "sidewalk astronomy" events which are open to the general public, Nova East attendees, and Smiley's Park users. They include a Solar Observing session, a What's Up? talk followed by a Night Sky Observing Session with telescopes, and other impromptu events to be announced on site. In addition, Nova East registrants have access to an evening Astro-Talk by a

special guest speaker, Solar Prominence Viewing using a H-Alpha filter, Astronomers' Breakfast, Astronomy Workshop(s), tours of the St. Croix Observatory, two evening group Observing Sessions, and a chance to win some neat door prize draws. Nova East Registrants have on site parking (if Camping) or adjacent site parking (if non-Camper). Otherwise, parking is at the Park Entrance.

Nova East Etiquette

To make Nova East an enjoyable and safe experience for everyone, we would appreciate your co-operation in following these Star Party rules of etiquette:

1. RED LIGHTS AT NIGHT

White lights ruin our night vision and our ability to see the night sky. Please cover flashlights and/or car lights with a red filter. Please don't operate a naphtha or propane lantern on the site after dark.

2. CARS AT NIGHT

For Nova East campers, please don't move on site vehicles at night. Better yet, move your vehicle to the nearby non-camping parking area ahead of time for an easy departure. Parking for non-camping Nova East attendees is available inside the Park near the observing site. Check at the Nova East Information Tent for directions.

3. PETS and VALUABLES

Park rules require pets to be kept on a leash. Please protect your valuables as Nova East is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. However, Park staff, and selected Nova East personnel, have been assigned to ensure site security.

4. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

No alcoholic beverages are allowed to be consumed on site.

5. PLEASE FOLLOW ALL PARK RULES

A copy of park rules are available at the park entrance.

Smiley's Park and Local Services

Smiley's Park Facilities

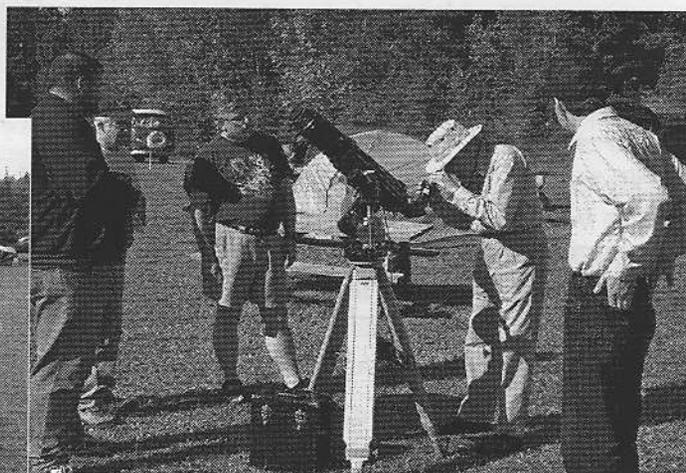
In the Park, over 100 campsites are available to the general public. Hot showers and flush toilets are at the main comfort station. Water, fire grills, picnic tables, a trailer dump station, and facilities for the disabled are also available. Firewood can also be purchased.

Local Services

Gas stations, Camping Supplies, Confectionary goods, and Hardware supplies are 5min. from Smiley's Park in the village of Brooklyn. Extensive services such as Malls, Restaurants, Banking, and 24hr services are in the town of Windsor, 15min. from the Park. The closest motel (but not the only one) is the Downeast Motel, 902-798-8374, also 15min. drive from the Park.

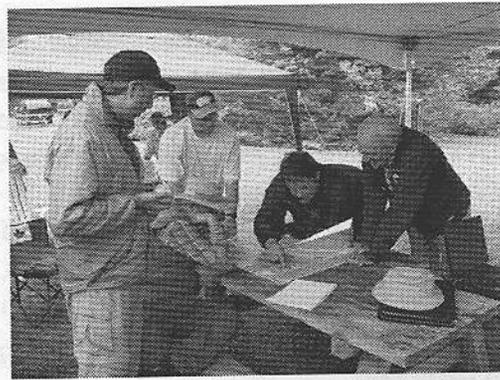
Nova East is presented by The Halifax Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, The Minas Astronomy Group, and The Nova Central Astronomy Club.

We hope to see you all at Nova East 2005 right here at Smiley's Provincial Park August 20th, 21st & 22nd!



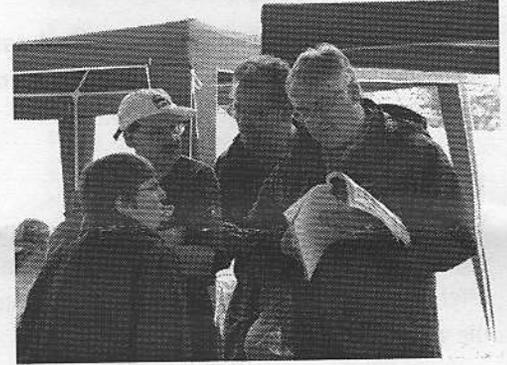
Campsite Reservation Information

This is a camping week-end so we encourage everyone to bring their tent or trailer. Once again, we have camp sites available adjacent to the observing site. To guarantee one of these sites it would be best to pre-register. All Nova East campers pay for and register their campsite with us – do not register at the Park entrance. Specific campsites will be assigned upon checking in at the Nova East Information Tent at the Nova East site in the Park. One vehicle per site. Non-camping vehicles are not permitted in the Nova East campers area. Nearby vehicle parking is available.



Promotional Items

A limited supply of Nova East T-shirts will be available at the star party. To avoid disappointment, it would be best to pre-order your Nova East 2004 T-shirt with your pre-registration. Your T-shirt will be then be waiting for you upon arrival at the Nova East Information Tent. There will be no orders after the July 1, 2004 pre-registration deadline.



To contact Nova East 2004

Visit our Website:

<http://halifax.rasc.ca/ne/>

E-mail us: novaeast@rasc.ca

Please return this form to this address by July 23, 2004, with a cheque payable to RASC, Halifax Centre.

Nova East 2004

c/o Dave Parsons 485 Basinview Drive Bedford NS B4A 1T3



Registration Form

Name: _____

Street or P.O. Box #: _____

City: _____

Province: _____

Postal Code: _____

Telephone #: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Fees

Attendance
\$15.00 for Weekend
(Single or Family attending)

weekend pass/passes X \$15.00 = _____

Camping
\$18.00/night
One vehicle and one tent/ trailer
permitted per site

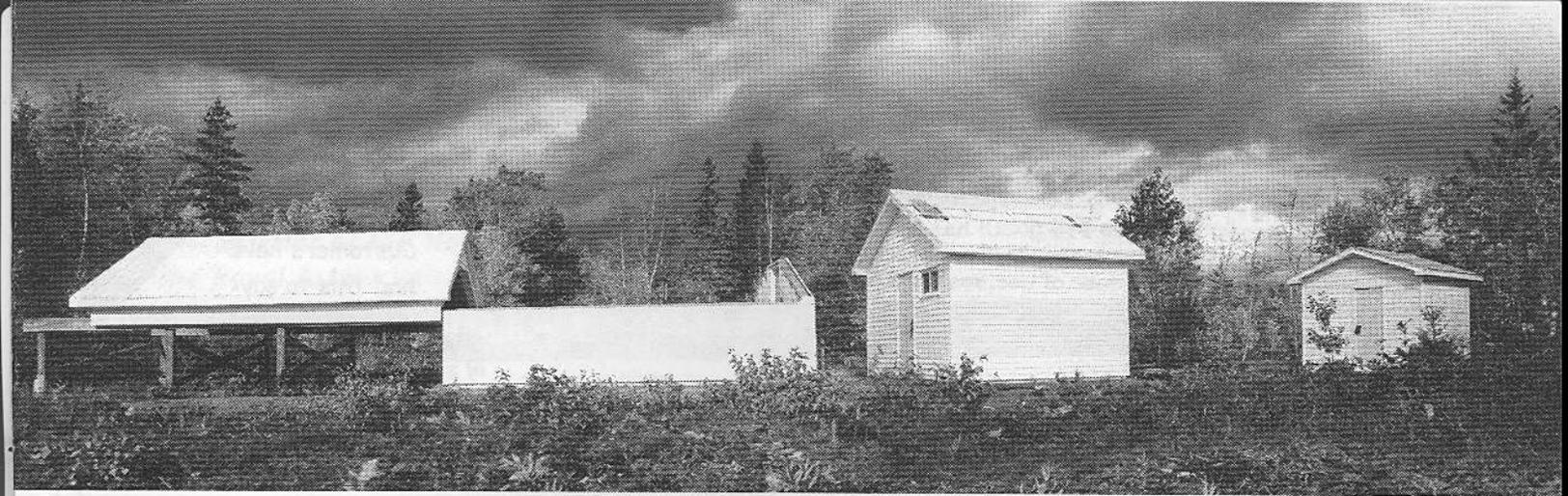
night/s X \$18.00 = _____

T-Shirts
All T-Shirts are \$15.00. Please
indicate the number of each
size you will need.

XL LG MD SM

Total number of shirts X \$15.00 = _____

Total Payment = _____



St. CROIX Observatory

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:*

See you at Nova East in August!

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.

The Earth Centered UniverseTM 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.

Customers have had this to say:

"Thanks again for a GREAT piece of software for the backyard guy. Having tried several, I keep coming back to ECU for the best all-around package for my use."
- Woody S., South Carolina

"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

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 Saguario 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 **ASCOM** 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)

NOVA
Astronomics

website: www.nova-astro.com

e-mail: info@nova-astro.com

phone: (902) 499-6196

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

... there are no meetings during the Summer months of July / August.

Halifax RASC Executive 2004

Honorary President	Dr. Roy Bishop	
President	Steve Tancock	465-4092
1st vice-president	Pat Kelly	798-3329
2nd vice-president	Pat d'Entremont	497-1153
Secretary	Andrea Misner	491-8668 x 4808
Treasurer	Paul Evans	423-4746
Nova Notes Editor	Michael Gatto	453-5486
National Rep.	Pat Kelly	798-3329
2nd National Rep	Mary Lou Whitehorne	
Librarian	<i>(We are currently seeking a librarian)</i>	
Observing Chairman	Craig Levine	852-1245
Councilor	Shawna Mitchell	865-7026
Councilor	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. Sobey 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

