

H O R I Z O N N

LA SOCIÉTÉ ROYALE D'ASTRONOMIE DU CANADA
New Brunswick Centre
THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA



Sep/Oct 2011

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PRESIDENTS REPORT

by Curt Nason

Welcome to the autumnal equinox; the days are still warm and the nights are longer for observing. We have completed a busy star party season, with weekend events at Kouchibouguac, Mount Carleton, Mactaquac and Fundy Parks. Thank you, Adrien Bordage, for the great amount of work you put in to organize the four star parties, and thanks to all those who assisted with the organization, talks and public observing. The summer also saw the Irving Nature Park in Saint John receive designation as an Urban Star Park from RASC National, the first in Canada. More than 100 people attended the observing events and ceremony on the Full Moon - Perseids weekend.

Of course, our Centre highlight for the summer came from Dublin, Ireland, with the news that Holly Ayles and Emily Baxter had won top prize in their age category at the International Statistical Literacy Poster competition. With an environmental theme for the contest, Holly and Emily brought recognition of light pollution as an environmental issue to the forefront with their submission entitled "La Pollution Lumineuse," which was based on Sky Quality Meter readings they had taken around New Maryland. Congratula-

tions, Holly and Emily!

We have much to be proud of as a Centre, and it is the dedication of our members that leads to our success. Renewal of membership is important for continued success, and I thank the following for their recent renewals: Bill Christensen, Chris Clayton, Donald Clendenning, Charles Doucet, Francis LeBlanc, Candace MacAfee, Armand St. Onge, David Simard (a 15 year member of the RASC), and Isabelle Simard.

Our next event is the Annual Meeting and conference on October 15 at the Wu Centre in Fredericton. We have an exciting line-up of speakers and I hope to see you there. Astronomy in New Brunswick is looking up!

EDITORS REPORT

by Paul Gray

Well Summer is now over and it is back to our regular meeting and events. I appologize for the lateness of this issue but computer issues delayed work on it.

This issue is again fairly large, mostly due to two large articles, enjoy them as they cover a lot of interesting astronomy related information!

In this issue you will also find information about the upcoming annul meeting on October 15th. This year it is at UNB, Fredericton in the Wu Centre. I encourage you to attend and hear the great talks. Thank you again to all those who contributed to this issue!

Clear skies, Paul Gray

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Cover Photo

By Paul Gray

This months photo is similar to last month but this is with a 18mm lens for a closer view of the Prancing Horse in the southern sky! Canon XSi, 18mm lens at F3.5 and 3 min exposure at 1600ISO. Taken from Mt Tiede, Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain.

**The Converting of Ed O'Reilly
by Stephen Tompkins**

SEPTEMBER 10, 2011.

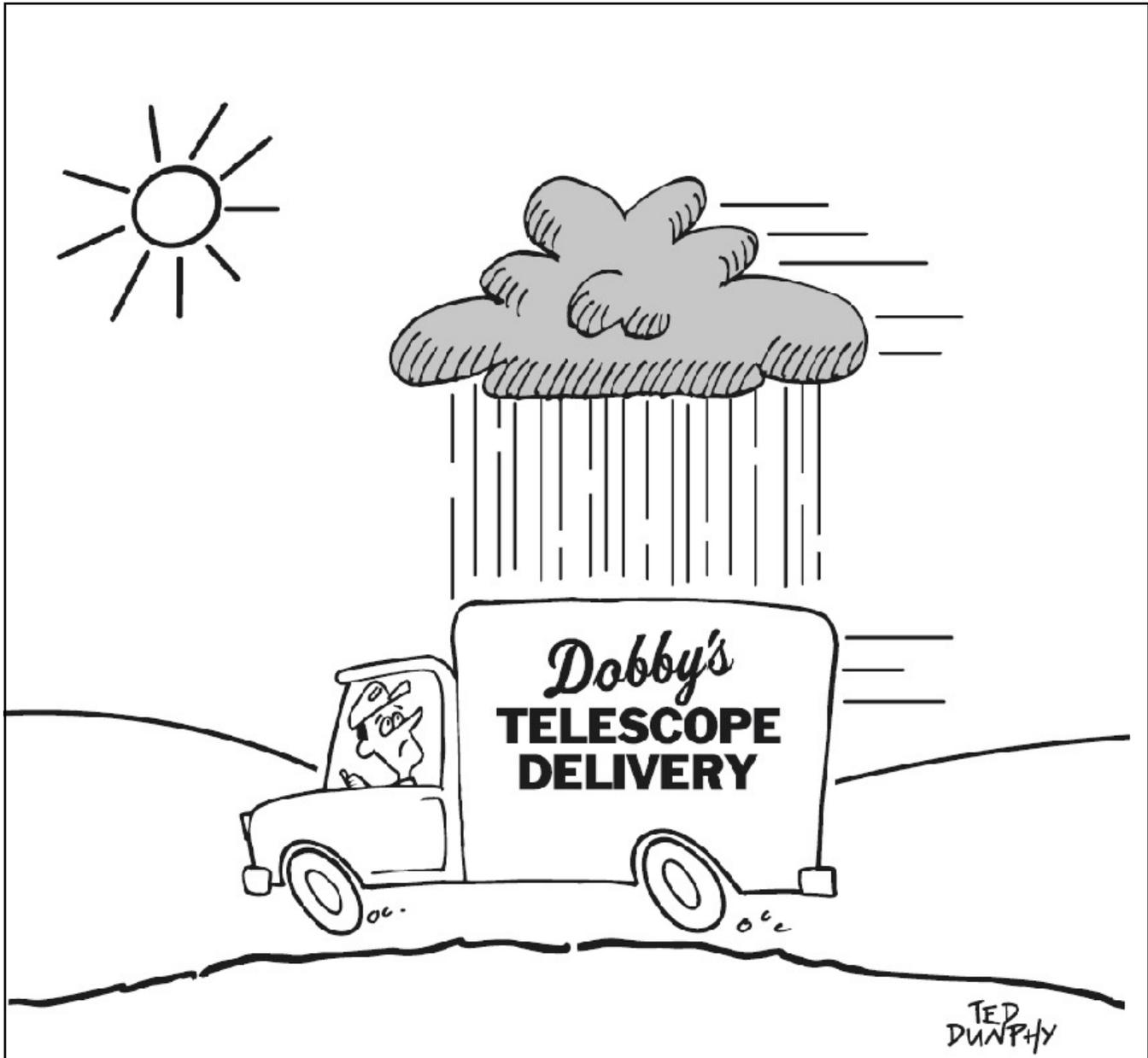
Ed, a long-time moon hater was helping me, Stephen Tompkins, do a star party at my house. The moon was full - more or less - as we set up. Ed started with, "we won't be seeing a lot with that dam moon out". I replied; "people love to see it in a scope, there is so much detail". The people came and went. Around 11:00 pm, we had the scope to ourselves. Ed started looking for some eye candy, while I went to retrieve my 8" aperture cover for the scope.

Adrien Bordage had told me two years ago that the moon would be much clearer if I stepped down the aperture to 8". Two years later I finally got the chance to try it. Ed thought we were nuts to even look at the moon; but it was my scope. First we used the full 20" aperture with Donald Clendenning's (co-owner of the Big Ass) Axiom LX 31mm 82 degrees no moon filter. WOW, I saw the dawn of a new day - next the 8" aperture WOH - so clear you could touch it. Ed looked and looked and looked again. Oh, my, WOH, that's better than a NASA photo, and so it was a convert of the best looking rock off Earth - Our Moon!

Imagine, all it took was the Big Ass 20", Donald's 31mm and Adrien's 8" aperture idea. I wonder who else I can convert.

Stephen Tompkins

PS: We had 16 people and a great time!



2011 Annual Meeting and Astronomy Rendezvous

This years Annual Meeting of the RASC NB Centre and Astronomy Rendezvous will take place on October 15th, in Fredericton, NB at the WU Centre on the UNB Campus. Directions and more information will be email to the membership in the coming week. As well as the morning meeting there will be 6 talks! All look very interesting and informative. As well all are welcome to join the group after the event for a Dinner out at local restaurant to mingle with the guest. Lunch will be taken at one of the cafeterias on campus, to be announced onsite.

Please come join us for a day of astronomy!

- 09:00 Annual meeting
- 09:45 Welcome and speedy What's Up (Curt)
- 10:00 NB Power talk (30 min) and questions (Chris: Name and talk title)
- 10:45 Dr. Harry Bohnsack - The Eye and Night Observing
- 11:30 Lunch at the UNB cafeteria
- 12:45 Kathryn and Paul Gray - Starmus Festival
- 13:45 Ted Gull - Eta Carinae
- 14:45 Break & Door Prizes
- 15:00 Dave Chapman - Astronomical Tour of New Zealand
- 16:00 Dave Lane - Amateur Variable Star Research at the Abbey Ridge Observatory

Starmus, Part 1 **by Kathryn and Paul Gray**

Wow! Amazing! Unbelievable! Those are 3 words to describe our adventure to the Starmus Festival, held on Tenerife in the Canary Islands. Starmus was the brainchild of Garik Israelian, a Spanish astronomer from the Canaries who wanted to do something special to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's first flight into space.

Starmus would bring together what is likely the greatest collection of the scientific minds of today in astronomy and space along with some of the most famous of astronauts and cosmonauts. It would be 5 days of pure bliss to any space or astronomy enthusiast and would rock each and every person who attended! In the next couple of articles of which this is part one Kathryn and I hope to share with you some of the experiences we had at this event as well as share some of what we have learned. Come with us on a journey to the stars!

Our trip to Starmus would begin on a Friday with an evening drive from Fredericton to Halifax where we were to stay with my parents for the night. They would be taking care of Kathryn's 3 younger siblings for the time we were in Spain, many



The Abama Golf and Spa Resort main entrance was inviting and grand. The staff were welcoming and always ready to serve in many languages. Photo by Paul Gray

thanks to the grandparents for doing this! Saturday morning would be relaxing as we took our time to pack for a 5pm flight from Halifax to Toronto, this would be Kathryn's first flight that she would remember and she enjoyed every minute of it. Our stopover in Toronto would be a couple hours, time to grab some supper, take Kathryn on a quick tour of Pearson Airport and finally at close to 10pm be on our red eye flight to Madrid, Spain.

Sunday morning around 11am we would arrive in Madrid after a long flight. Soon after departing we were served supper and following that the entire planned groaned as they announced the in-flight movie, Never Say Never starring Justin Bieber! Needless to say many on the flight decided that sleep was a better choice including Kathryn.

On Sunday we would have short

stopover at Madrid before boarding our 3 hour flight south to Tenerife. Starmus staff met us at the airport where a 1 hour drive to the Abama Golf and Spa Resort via a Mercedes with driver in tie would get us to our destination about 6pm local time, roughly 22 hours after we left Halifax! We were hungry as it was supper time and the driver took us to a road side rest stop he knew where we sampled some local cuisine for the first time. We knew we were in for a treat this week, the food was delicious.

Check-in went smoothly, being met at the car by the first door hop who took our family name from myself as another opened the doors for the girls and from that point on we were speaking to by name. As they escorted us into reception (see photo on page 3) we were offered champagne while we were processed and then given a short tour and briefing on the facility as our bags were delivered to our room! We checked in with the Starmus Registration and they were excited to meet Kathryn and see that she had arrived! We decided that we were all very tired but after 24 hours of travel that a dip in one of the 7 pools would be a good way to relax for an hour before a early bed time. We actually had the entire pool to ourselves! Little did we know it would be the last



Kathryn and Susan waiting at the opening for Starmus to begin! Kathryn's dress was made for this event and was a big hit! Photo by Paul Gray

night for a week where any of us including Kathryn would be in bed before midnight!

Monday morning we would sleep in till 8:30 adjusted well to the new time zone. It was down to brunch at 9am where you were greeted by staff offering strawberries and champagne as you waited to be seated. We would learn that we were there

the perfect week with the hotel only about 40% full thus we never really had to wait for anything at any of the food bars. The breakfast buffet was an amazing spread with a omelet/pasta bar, a egg/bacon/sausage bar with over several types of sausages to choose from (I tried something different each day). There was cereals and breads from all over Europe, a cheese bar

with over a dozen cheeses and the same for cold cut meats. Add in desert/pastry bar and well, no one was going away hungry!

That morning there were no scheduled events so it was relax time and get our bearings on the meeting rooms and locations. Lunch each day would be at the outdoor veranda resutrants with a view of the giant Koi pond and gardens. Lunch was always at 2pm, something else we would adjust to this week as meals were much later then we are used too.

Finally at 3pm Starmus would kick off with first a talk by Michael Williams, president of the International Astronomical Union about the top 10 discoveries of the last 50 years. Highlights included the CCD and the microwave background radiation. Next up was the panel of main organizers of Starmus including Garik with Brian May (Queen), Alexi Leonov, Buzz Aldrin and the directory of the observatories in the Canaries whose name I cannot locate right now. Each spoke for a few minutes about Starmus and what they hoped we all would take home from it.

Now it was Kathryn's turn, the reason we were here in the first place, the official opening! After the head table cleared

the stage Garik took the microphone and introduced our Kathryn as the young lady that discovered the supernova back in January and that she is only 10 years old. His enthusiasm for her was very visible and throughout the week he would always have time to give her a hug and time to talk with her as well as make sure all was well. With a round of applause Kathryn took the stage as Garik pulled out what was Brian May's chair for her to set in front of the microphone. She sat very poised looking strait ahead into the throng of media cameras and reporters, so many in fact that we only a few rows back could not see her were it not for the large screens on the wall broadcasting the event! She then in a very strong and clear voice thanked Starmus and Garik for the invitation to be part of the event and that she was very happy and excited to be here in Tenerife and at Starmus. She then announced that she was now pleased to declare the first Starmus officially opened and the room of 400 plus people erupted in applause and dozens of whistles! We are in Europe after all and with a hug Garik thanked her and to big smiles escorted her off the stage and back to us where we were seated. A big weight had been lifted off all 3 of us as we all were nervous about Kathryn's short speech. I must say Kathryn has grown a lot over the

last 9 months and is quite comfortable speaking to most anyone now.

With the formalities done it was time to get on with the talks. Our RASC owns Leslie Sage (author of Second Light in the RASC Journal) kicked things off with a talk about, "How Astronomy Has Changed, What it Means to be Human".

Jill Tarter, SETI guru and mother so to speak was next in the theme setting talk for the rest of the week. A look at SETI that really made us look at ourselves and our little earth and the challenge that is before us both in trying to find the signal from a distant world. The big problem is it could take centuries for us to finally hear one not because our technology is not good enough but because so few civilizations live long enough to communicate. If we want to be one of those we better figure out a way to survive infancy as an advance civilization! To begin with we better start thinking not as countries, or citizens of different nations but rather start thinking about ourselves as earthlings! This was Jill's challenge, go home and change your face book so that your listed as earthling rather then what race, or what country you are from. As she put it with the influential people and all the attendees there, it could start with us.



Kathryn talking to Jill Tarter about her supernova. Photo by Paul Gray

Next up, Michel Mayor who spoke about extra solar planets. Very interesting talk about the many different and strange types of planets that have been found and another great speaker. Michel was the lead astronomy who found the first extra solar planet, 51 Pegasus in 1995!

The second last talk of the afternoon was from Buzz Aldrin who spoke about going to the moon and why and how we can go to Mars. A smart man with ideas on how to do it and he wants to be involved in it when it happens. Watching him before and after with the media as well as seeing him and Alexi Leonov interact was worth the admission alone. One quickly saw how much these men who lead the way to space are such good friends.

Last up was Claude Nicollier, current NASA shuttle astronaut who has been part of service missions to the Hubble. What a first day of talks and the excitement in the air was electric. During breaks people would mingle with the speakers but in the break room they would be separated from the VIP's by a ribbon across the room. With Kathryn's VIP status we were all directed to that side of the room though we would not go to many breaks as Kathryn and Susan would only take in occasional talks and take more time to go to the pools and relax and play while I would try to attend most talks. It was not easy as there were many and the week was tiring as you will read. However one memorable break for me was when I spent 20mins sitting with Charlie and Dorothy Duke (Apollo 16) and Jim Lovell (Apollo 13) and his son Jeff. Leslie Sage joined me for this time and we both relished it!

Day one however was not over for us yet even though the talks ended at 7pm. We would get dressed up semi formal and be on a bus to go to a nice restaurant that is semi outdoors under the cover of a Banana plantation for the VIP Dinner. Cocktails at 8:30 for almost an hour and then we were seated for a 5 course dinner. The highlight of the night was during desert time when Jill Tarter came looking for Kathryn with a big hug and the statement, "I saw you on You Tube and you did a great job!". Jill would talk with Kathryn for almost 15 minutes about her interest and encouraged her to pursue what she wants but maybe some day think about going into X-ray or radio astronomy too.

Finally back on the bus it would be 12:30am before Kathryn would hit her bed with mom and dad not far behind. Day 1 was over and already we were blown away by the experience.

Day 2 would be our one day to sleep in as nothing was planned for the morning. We woke and went to breakfast and take a cab to the local airport 20mins away to pick up our rental car for the rest of our time on the island which would give us freedom to tour on our own in down time as well as the few days after the festival. That morning we would hit a supermarket to get munchies and snacks

for in the room and little fridge. This would be much needed as we adjusted to such late lunch and dinner times all week! We also would take a break and go Karting, Kathryn's first time but we are not sure who had more fun, her or Dad!

The day 2 events would kick off with lunch on the Veranda from 1-3pm. While the 3 of us were taken our seats we were joined by Ken Hodgkin, a Scott who a few years ago retired to the island and heard about the event only the week before! He lived only 5 km from the hotel! We would have a number of meals with him and he provided us with a DVD of some of the talks including Kathryn's opening. Many thanks to Ken and I hope to show a clip or two at a future meeting.

Following lunch it was off to the talks at 3pm. They started with Jack Szostak on the "Origin of Life on Earth" followed by Richard Dawkins with "Exobiology and Religion". Both were amazing and Dawkins made you simple realize that it all made sense.

Kip Thorne was 3rd up with his talk, "Black Holes, The Most Luminous Objects in the Universe but no Light?" This talk was one not to miss as Kip is the world leading guru on black holes and everyone learned a lot I am sure, I know



Kathryn tearing up the track on one of her hot laps. Photo by Paul Gray

he made my head hurt! He would dive into how he is currently studying binary black holes and how they are not be stable so that the larger one would consume the smaller. If this is the case then as the smaller one crosses the event horizon of the larger and accelerates the theory is that about 10% of the mass of the smaller back hole should be thrown clear of the two out into space. If this happens then even only 10% the mass of a small black hole is a lot

of mass thus there should be a wave made in gravity as a result! Kip is currently trying to detect and measure one of these gravity waves. He would explain how they do this with two lasers, 4km long at right angles to each other. What is amazing is the amount of movement in the laser they hope to detect is very small, anot 1/1000 the width of an atom!!

After the break we would hear from Sam Solanki and his talk, "Is the Sun to Blame for Global Warming?" The afternoon would end with two talks by Russian cosmonauts Yuri Baturin and Sergei Zhukov. We would have a couple hours before our next event so we took a 5 minute drive and took Kathryn to McDonalds for a taste of food from home. The girls tried Onion Rings at McDonalds and it was a nice break to get out and about before we had to get our warm clothes and go meet the bus for the last event of the day, the Star Party on Mt Tiede.

Departure was at 8pm for what would be our first trip up the mountain. This excursion would begin in daylight but would be a direct drive to the destination at a restaurant 2300m above sea level. The sky from inside the volcano's 40km crater was dark but not as clear as one would expect. It turns out the lack of the trade winds was not normal and we had a



Richard Dawkins keeping the audience thinking and awed. Photo by Paul Gray

lot of sand and dust aloft that was blowing off the Sahara Desert 180km east of us on the coast of Africa. As it was we enjoyed our views of Scorpius rising on its side and the grand view of the Milky Way 20 degrees higher than back home! Kathryn would do some interviews with a German TV crew that was shooting a documentary about StarMus and would do so daily.

Finally around midnight after an evening of refreshments, mingling and viewing we boarded the buses and were back home at Abama and finally to bed about 1am! Kathryn I do not think woke up for her walk from the bus to the room. With that day two of StarMus was over and so ends this Part 1 and there I so much we did not cover. More to come in part 2!

RASC 2011 Star Party Recap by Adrien Bordage

Well, unfortunately it's over. Our spring/summer star parties are done, for this year. I have to say that I am quite pleased with how all of them turned out, especially the weather. All were blessed with at least one night, and one day, of clear skies. Hence there was ample observing opportunities for both the public in attendance and for the astronomers.

I would first like to give a big thanks to several of our centre members that were on hand to help with tasks such as: French and English interpretation, setting up scopes and bins for public viewing, helping to coordinate the events, giving out starfinders, helping with telescope clinics, food preparation etc. In no particular order those members include: Emma MacPhee, Paul Gray, Ted Dunphy, Roger Pitre, Yvon Hachey, Eldon Rogers, Peter Jensen, Dave Beaudin, Steve Tompkins, Donald Clendenning, Chris Curwin, June MacDonald, Mike Powell, Fran and Roger Alborg, Curt Nason, Daniel Leblanc, Greg and Carol Gilmore. I am sure that there are others that I may have forgotten to mention, if so I apologize.

I would also like to apologize for the mixup at the Fundy Park StarGaze

concerning the refusal by the park to allow astronomers to bring RV's, and camper trailers onto the Chignecto South Campground. If we had been informed of this by the park staff in advance it would have negated the confusion.

I will look into having this hopefully corrected for future star parties at that campground in the future.

It is my hope that we can continue to have annual star parties at the four parks each and every year, and I plan to continue to help plan, coordinate, and implement each of those events. I am hoping that other members can help out as well. Having star parties at each of the four locations gives all members a fair chance to attend at least one of the events.

Kouchibouquac Spring StarGaze (May 20-22)

I unfortunately had to work on Friday evening so was not available for the What's Up talk presented in French by Yvon Hachey to a crowd of about 60 people. Apparently it was quite humid and muggy with overcast skies all night so unfortunately there was not any observing to be done.

I arrived in the mid afternoon on Saturday in time for the starfinder

giveouts and for part of the telescope clinic. Though it remained overcast throughout the day negating any chance of solar observing, it cleared up wonderfully immediately after the what's up talk in the evening for some of the steadiest viewing I have had in a long time. I had the newly completed Centre 8 inch F/6 dob rental scope in my possession to give it "first light" and I am pleased to say that the images looked quite good. Saturn looked very good with no image degradation even up to about 300X. Unfortunately it was rather cold with temps dipping just below freezing and I reluctantly hopped into the car to go to sleep by about 1am.

The skies were partly clear for some decent solar observing for the curious onlookers, including a reporter from ATV news. He did several interviews with park interpreters and park visitors that were present as well as with some of our centre members as well. This was great exposure for our centre. I unfortunately had to return home later in the afternoon on Sunday as I was due back to work on Monday morning, however some of our members (Roger Pitre, Fran and Roger Alborg and Eldon Rogers) stayed for Sunday night and I am told that it was wonderfully clear, not too cold, and well over 100 visitors showed up for viewing in the evening.

Overall it was a good weekend.

Mount Carleton Star Party 2011 (July 29-31)

WOW! Sorry I don't mean to shout but that sums it all up in one word. Again we had very excellent seeing conditions at Mount Carleton with some of the darkest skies in North America. For the second time in as many years I was able to observe my shadow being cast on the ground by the light of the milky way. Need I say more? This year the park reserved the open field near the park's main office building for just the astronomers to set up their trailers, tents, RV's etc. The advantages to staying on this site are: Access to electricity, washrooms with hot and cold running water, showers, and a private observing site to have an uninterrupted "all nighter" good old fashioned deep sky observing session. Also there is, possibly (yet to be confirmed), access to a couple bedrooms with single size bunks in the main building as well as a fully equipped kitchen. As well they are in the process of completing an on-site heated cabin which I suspect will have 2-4 bunks. One more advantage was free camping for three nights. Though not all of the astronomers took advantage of staying at this site but instead stayed at the Armstrong Brook site, it is my hope that at future events

most if not all of the astronomers will stay at the site near the main office.

On Friday evening it was unfortunately completely overcast and eventually we had moderate to heavy rain throughout most of the night. By mid afternoon on Saturday it started to clear so there was some decent solar observing opportunities and we were able to have the telescope clinic and starfinder giveout sessions. We had a ticket draw for one of the leftover "Galileo Scopes" and the young fellow who won it was delighted. Using the centre's scope with baader off axis solar film filter I and others were treated to one of the best sunspot groups I have seen in a long time. It looks like the sun really is waking up from it's seemingly prolonged slumber of inactivity. There was a string of about 25 individual spots stretching across nearly the full width of the sun. Wow!

Before supper time I anxiously went to the park registration/entrance building to coerce someone into letting me use their computer to check out the clear sky clock's prediction for the rest of the weekend for the North-Northwest parts of NB. Oh Yeah! That's what I'm talking about! Nothing but blue, light/blue bars for cloud cover and transparency until at least Monday morning. YES! I could not wait to let

everyone else know of the possibility of another weekend of some of the best deep sky observing they will ever get to witness. I recall gleefully “reminding” (more than once) those in attendance at the “What’s Up” talk on Saturday evening to be sure to stay for the observing after the talk. After the talk when the skies started to fully darken at the Armstrong Brook Campground my “moderately” aging eyes detected a naked eye visual magnitude of about + 6.2 after careful dark adaptation and scrutinizing the MVM chart as depicted in the RASC Observer Handbook, though I suspect someone with “younger, bigger” dark adapted pupils probably could have gotten to about +6.8, or better. The heavy dew as the night wore on was somewhat of a problem as it kept all observers scrambling to constantly “zap” their mirrors, finders, eyepieces etc., but it was a relatively small price to pay for the excellent deep sky viewing. There was approximately 30 – 40 visitors from the park that showed up for the viewing sessions. Thankfully the temps were fairly mild and the “no-see-ums” “bugged off” once it got colder near midnight or so.

I had my first view of Comet Garrard on this night in the centre’s 8 inch dob as it was passing through Sagitta, and it was readily apparent as a moderately bright smudge of light with a faint trace of

a tail perhaps ½ - 1 degree in length. I excitedly offered views of the comet to as many of the visitors, and other astronomers as I could. I also gleefully offered up views throughout the night until about 2am to the visitors of other deep sky objects such as m57, m51, m8, m20, m11, Saturn, etc. It’s funny that I often feel guilty in always concentrating on mostly just the “showpiece” objects when doing public observing sessions. However I just have to remind myself that I have never gotten an excited or satisfied voice of approval from someone looking at a really faint fuzzie through my scope, so perhaps my feelings of guilt are not necessary. I could hear many “Ooh’s”, “Oh My’s!”, and “Oh Yeah’s” from the direction of the other scopes in the observing area. Obviously the other astronomers and visitors were enjoying the views as well. Unfortunately fatigue got the better of me by about 2am and I prepared to retire for the night but not before I got a good look at Jupiter as it was about 20 degrees above the eastern horizon.

Sunday morning greeted us with partly cloudy skies but the clouds seemed to be mostly of the lower level cumulus type so we were able to have the repeat telescope clinic and starfinder giveout sessions outside the cookhouse at Armstrong Brook without worry. Using the centre’s

scope with baader off axis solar film filter I and others were again treated to some of the string of solar spots visible the previous day.

After another “What’s Up” talk in the early evening to a crowd of about 20 people we were treated to another night of clear skies though there was some intermittent patches of cloud throughout the night. However the dew was not nearly as much of a problem as the previous night so we were able to observe for longer stretches before having to de-dew our optics. Another pretty good night of observing.

Monday morning was starting to show signs of a turn in the weather, and it was just as well as I had to go home to “unload, unwind etc.” for the day to get ready to return to work the day after. All in all I would say it was another very, very good party at Mt. Carleton.

C.O.W. (Camping Observing Weekend) August 05-07

By far the best attendance from our membership was at this annual event held at the Mactaquac Provincial Park west of Fredericton. I must again give thanks to Paul Gray (master BBQ chef) for cooking up a very nice supper, and Ted and Karen Dunphy for providing the transportation

for the BBQ's, and to all those that brought the other wonderful food items. I suspect that the BBQ is one of the primary reasons that many of you return back to Mactaquac each year. It is certainly nice to have a quality meal during a camping weekend as living off of bananas, peanut butter sandwiches, apples etc., gets to be boring after a day or two.

I was particularly excited to give just second light to my newly acquired Orion 12 inch goto truss dob during the COW and I eagerly awaited the telescope clinic on Saturday to make use of the Hubble Artificial 5 star device on loan to me from Peter Jensen (thanks peter), to check, and recheck, the collimation and general optical assessment of my scope's optics, as well as other scopes that needed it. I must give thanks to Roger Pitre and Leonard Larkin for helping me with the telescope clinic.

It was a bit of a chore setting up the hubble device at the required distance from the scope to be tested and to simultaneously set up the scope for testing. This is where a second pair of hands, and eyes, and a set of walkie talkies (thanks Ted and Karen) came in very useful.

After the collimation and optical checks were done with my scope and



Roger's fine Celestron 11 inch SCT (boy, I hated to let that one go), I eagerly waited for the BBQ as the hunger pains started, and then after the BBQ (did I mention that the BBQ is great?) which to my gratified surprise included a birthday cake for my 50 somethin' birthday presented to me by my wife francine, I nearly regretted having to commit myself for the what's up talk later on as I just wanted to wait for the clear skies, grab some zzzzzzz's, and give my scope a good test run. However, as I got into the "What's Up" talk I could al-

most feel the excitement of the onlookers at the prospect of seeing in live view some of the objects that I described, and it was simply wonderful to see, and hear the excitement of those first timer's having a look at some of the wonderful deep sky delights awaiting them at the eyepieces of the telescopes graciously offered up by our members. Thankfully my new scope worked well optically and mechanically (the tracking feature is very useful by the way).

Thanks to all for another fun COW star party!

Fundy National Park Summer StarGaze

2011, Sept. 02- 04

First I must give thanks to Mike Powell for allowing me to share his spacious tent accommodations during this event. I give a "tip o' the hat" to mike for bringing along his spacious tent, foldable cots, and a sleeping bag for comfortable sleeping, and also for bringing his wonderful Antares 152mm F/6.5 finely corrected achro refractor on a beefy eq clock driven mount for some very nice views. The Chignecto South Campground was once again reserved for the astronomers though I was dismayed to find out last minute that we were not allowed to bring RV's., or camper trailers onto the site, no exceptions allowed.

I arrived at the park around supper time on Friday and after grabbing a quick supper in nearby Alma I was anxious to get the “What’s Up” talk over with near sunset and set up for some public observing at the field near the park’s golf course for some rewarding public outreach observing.

The skies did not disappoint, they were very clear and steady, however I was somewhat dismayed by the eventual intrusion of nearby lights from the golf clubhouse and nearby streets. I will likely look into having future public observing from the Chignecto South campsite instead, unless the park can get the lighting issues fixed near the golf course. I had my 20 X 80 binos with parrellogram mount and Comet Garrard was nicely situated just below the “hook” of the coathanger asterism and showed up very nicely. This was probably my most memorable view of comet Garrard all summer. Also the view was simply memorable in Dave Beaudin’s newly acquired WO Megrez 90mm Apo refractor on a sturdy Alt-Az mount.

The skies were partly clear throughout the day on Saturday affording us and park visitors some memorable views of sunspots, solar prominences, etc. We had a simply wonderful turnout of visitors at the



Chignecto South Campground for the Starfinder giveaway and we gave out 62 starfinders in total and “pitched” our society at every opportunity. The park supplied us with a BBQ and we were able to have a mini-BBQ with hot dogs, beef burgers, baked onions and mushrooms, soft drinks, bottled water, etc. for a much needed nourishment session.

Unfortunately the skies clouded over for Saturday evening with just short lived intermittent teaser clear spots, so af-

ter giving the now familiar “What’s Up” talk to the park visitors, I reluctantly returned back to the Chignecto South site, but not before first inviting park visitors at the talk to come to our site for observing should the skies somehow clear, to a night of inevitable cloud darkened skies with not much chance of observing.

Sure enough the skies remained mostly overcast throughout most of the night, at least until about 2am when I retired, but not before the whole seasonal star party frenzy was highlighted, at least for me, with myself and, Mike Powell, Emma MacPhee, Marilyn Bregg, Chris Curwin sitting around a finely stoked firepit (thanks Chris), and telling jokes, laughing, and dare I say giggling, for quite some time. I nearly forgot how much I enjoyed to just sit around with some much adored friends and simply joke around.

The skies actually cleared partly on Sunday for some good solar observing on Sunday by 11am so I was happy to offer my 20 X 80 binos for views of the nice sunspots for those wishing to look.

In the afternoon on Sunday I reluctantly returned home to get ready for another work week but I left with a feeling of content. A good ending to a fine summer star party season.

OBSERVERS' SCORECARD

	Explore the Universe	Messier	Finest NGC	I. William-son Lunar	Deep Sky Challenge	Dark Nebulae	Herschel 400	Levy Deep Sky Gems	Caldwell	Arp Galaxies	Abell Galaxy Clusters	Hickson
Gerry Allian	101	93										
James Ayles	37											
Adrien Bordage	100											
Bob Crossman		110	28									
Charles Doucete	110	110	110				65					
Ted Dunphy	102	110	110	51	10	8	265					
Colette Fortier	87	28										
Paul Gray	97	110	110	46	31	20	238					
Peter Jensen	12	73										
Don Kelly	110	110										
Mark Laflamme	106	30	2									
Danny LeBlanc		110	110				127		8	21	21	9
Emma MacPhee	78	110	110	5								
Curt Nason		110	110									
Mike Powell	70											
Detlef Rudolph	62											
Chris Weadick	71	26										

This section is intended to inspire our members to get out observing by promoting a friendly competition. The left column includes our members who have reported their successes to the scorekeeper, Paul Gray. To be included please contact Paul Gray at: editor@nb.rasc.ca

President/Président

Curt Nason
president@nb.rasc.ca

1st Vice-President/-Président

Adrien Bordage
firstvicep@nb.rasc.ca

2nd Vice-President/-Président

Marc Arsenault
secondvicep@nb.rasc.ca

Secretary/Secrétaire

June MacDonald
secretary@nb.rasc.ca

Treasurer/Trésorier

Mandy Bregg
treasurer@nb.rasc.ca

Past Pres./Président sortant

Peter Jensen
pastpresident@nb.rasc.ca

Councillors /Conseillers

Guy Arnold
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Website Chair

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