

# Saskatoon Skies

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

Vol. 42, No. 6

June 2011

## International Astronomy Day Events



Telescopes at the Lakewood Civic Centre, May 6



Barb Wright's crew of volunteers at the Farmers Market, May 7

Photos by Jeff Swick



Saskatoon Centre

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To view *Saskatoon Skies* in colour, see our Website:

<http://homepage.usask.ca/~ges125/rasc/newsletters.html>

# MEMBERSHIP? IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO JOIN!

**Regular: \$80.00 /year**

**Youth: \$41.00 /year**

**Associate: \$33 /year**

The Saskatoon Centre operates on a one-year revolving membership. You will be a member for the next 12 months no matter when in the year you join. If you do not want to join at this time, ask to get onto our FREE 3-month Temporary Membership list. You will receive regular mailings of our Saskatoon Skies newsletter and will be invited to participate in Centre activities. Members are encouraged to renew early to avoid disruption in publications. Renew through the membership coordinator, Mark de Jong, or renew through the National Office and let Mark know that you did!

## Benefits of Membership in the Saskatoon Centre

- knowledgeable & friendly amateur astronomers
- use of the Sleaford Observatory
- use of the U of S Observatory (after training)
- Saskatoon Skies Newsletter
- Observer's Handbook
- The Journal of the RASC (electronic format)
- SkyNews Magazine (bimonthly)
- use of the Centre library
- rent the Centre's Telescopes  
<http://homepage.usask.ca/ges125/rasc/telescopes.html>
- discounts to Sky & Telescope Magazine\*
- free, no-cost, no-obligation, 3-month temporary membership if you don't want to join right now!

\*New subscription or renewal of Sky & Telescope? Send new info or renewal notice, plus credit card # to Norma Jensen, 128 – 4th Street East, Saskatoon, SK S7H 1H8, or email her at [norj@sasktel.net](mailto:norj@sasktel.net).

## U OF S OBSERVATORY

The U of S Observatory is open to the general public every Saturday of the year. Admission is free. The observatory is located on campus, one block north of the Wiggins Avenue and College Drive entrance. On clear nights, visitors may look through the vintage 6-inch and tour several displays. Current events are recorded on the Astronomy Information Line at 966-6429.

### Observatory Hours:

January-February	7:30-9:30 pm
March	8:30-10:30 pm
April	9:30-11:30 pm
May-July	10:00-11:30 pm
August	9:30-11:30 pm
September	8:30-10:30 pm
October-December	7:30-9:30 pm

## SASKATOON CENTRE'S MAIN OFFICERS:

**President** – Jeff Swick, 373-3902  
**Secretary** – Ron Waldron, 382-9428  
**Vice-President** – James Gorkoff, 644-1343  
**Treasurer** – Norma Jensen, 244-7360

## Bottle Drive & Canadian Tire \$

By Colin Chatfield

If you cannot make it to a meeting but would like to contribute your Canadian Tire money please call me at 934-7046.

**Newsletter Editor** – Tenho Tuomi  
**Copy & Collate** – Les & Ellen Dickson  
**Labels & Temps** – Mark de Jong  
**Web Posting** – Gord Sarty

Saskatoon Skies is published monthly by the Saskatoon Centre of the RASC. Distribution is approximately 100 copies per issue. Saskatoon Skies welcomes unsolicited articles, sketches, photographs, cartoons, and other astronomy or space science material. **Articles can be sent by mail in any format to the Centre's mailbox.** Submitted materials can be returned upon request. Submissions may also be sent by e-mail to the editor at [ttuomi@yourlink.ca](mailto:ttuomi@yourlink.ca) – any format, but preferred as plain unformatted ASCII text files without line breaks. Images sent by e-mail should be attached files.

A separate by-mail subscription to Saskatoon Skies is available for \$15.00 per year. Saskatoon Skies is also posted on our Saskatoon Centre homepage as a .pdf file and can be downloaded free-of-charge. Members may choose to receive the newsletter by regular mail or via the Internet. Articles may be reprinted from Saskatoon Skies without expressed permission (unless otherwise indicated), provided that proper source credit is given. DEADLINE for submissions for each month's issue is the 20th of the preceding month. Saskatoon Skies accepts Commercial advertising. Please call the editor 306-858-2453 for rates. Members can advertise non-commercial items free of charge.

**LIGHT POLLUTION ABATEMENT**  
WEBSITE AT:  
[www.ras.sk.ca/lpc/lpc.htm](http://www.ras.sk.ca/lpc/lpc.htm)

## RASC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<b>June 20</b>	<b>RASC Executive Meeting</b> - 6:30 pm, 175 Physics, U of S	Jeff Swick	373-3902
<b>June 20</b>	<b>RASC General Meeting</b> - 7:30 pm, 175 Physics, U of S	Jeff Swick	373-3902
<b>June 25</b>	<b>Tour of Tenho's and Garry's Observatories</b>	Tenho Tuomi	858-2453
<b>July 1-4</b>	<b>RASC General Assembly</b> – Winnipeg	<a href="http://winnipeg.rasc.ca/ga-2011-home">http://winnipeg.rasc.ca/ga-2011-home</a>	
<b>July 8</b>	<b>Observers Group</b> – Dusk, Sleaford Observatory	Larry Scott	934-5801
<b>July 30</b>	<b>Grasslands National Park DSP - West Block Star Party</b>	Rick Huziak	665-3392
<b>July 30</b>	<b>Calgary RASC Star-B-Q</b> – Caroline, AB	<a href="http://calgary.rasc.ca/starbq.htm">http://calgary.rasc.ca/starbq.htm</a>	
<b>Aug 25</b>	<b>Saskatchewan Summer Star Party</b>	Rick Huziak	665-3392
<b>Aug 25</b>	<b>Spruce Woods Star Party</b> – Spruce Woods Park, MB	<a href="http://winnipeg.rasc.ca/home/35-announcements/158-spruce-woods-star-party-2011">http://winnipeg.rasc.ca/home/35-announcements/158-spruce-woods-star-party-2011</a>	
<b>Sep 19</b>	<b>RASC Executive Meeting</b> - 6:30 pm, 175 Physics, U of S	Jeff Swick	373-3902
<b>Sep 19</b>	<b>RASC General Meeting</b> - 7:30 pm, 175 Physics, U of S	Jeff Swick	373-3902
<b>Sep 24</b>	<b>Alberta Star Party</b> - Starland Recreation Area, AB	<a href="http://calgary.rasc.ca/asp.htm">http://calgary.rasc.ca/asp.htm</a>	
<b>Sep 27</b>	<b>Northern Prairie Starfest</b> – Black Nugget Lake, AB	<a href="http://edmontonrasc.com/public/nps.html">http://edmontonrasc.com/public/nps.html</a>	

## RASC SASKATOON CENTRE

**MONDAY, June 20, 7:30 PM**  
*Room 175, Physics Bldg., U of S*



**“Under South African Skies”**  
**by Ron Waldron**

**“AAVSO’s 100<sup>th</sup> Spring Meeting”**  
**by Rick Huziak**

**“Observing Dark Nebulae”**  
**Chris Beckett**

*Note: There will be an Executive Meeting at 6:30 pm.*

## SKY BUYS & MIRROR CELLS

**The Saskatoon Centre’s Swap and Sale Page**

**C8 FOR SALE:** One of the original model orange tube Celestron C8's. A well cared for 1970's vintage SCT telescope with excellent optics. Comes with a solid cast aluminum fork mount, motor drive, field tripod and wedge, two dew shields, 25 mm Plossl eyepiece, trunk for storage and transport, and other accessories. Since I bought it I have added a 2" mirror diagonal, a Starzona Feathertouch Microfocuser (1:1 and 10:1 speed focusing), a Telerad finder and a 9 x 50 finder. It is now looking for a good home since I bought a 12.5" truss-tube dob. Asking \$750. Interested parties should call me, Les Dickson, at 249-1091 or e-mail at [dicksonles@yahoo.ca](mailto:dicksonles@yahoo.ca).

# Minutes of the Executive Meeting, May 16, 2011

by *Les Dickson*

- 1 Meeting began at 6:35 pm
- 2 Approval of the Minutes of March Executive Meeting – Moved by Norma Jensen, seconded by Jim Gorkoff. Carried.
- 3 Reports
  - a) Treasurer – Norma Jensen
    - A review of the Year End Financial Statement was required by Saskatchewan Government Corporate Registry. Review was done and we are OK.
  - b) Events – Jeff Swick
    - Jeff gave a summary of Astronomy Day, which included a Friday set-up at the Lakewood Civic Centre, Saturday display at the Farmers' Market and talk by Ron Waldron at the Beaver Creek Conservation Centre. Traffic was good at the Market; lots of materials given out. The weather did not cooperate Saturday evening, but the talk was well received. We gained three temporary members.
    - Rick Huziak reported that organizers of the Canadian Undergraduate Physics Conference to be held in October in Saskatoon were interested in having the Sleaford Site as a tour destination. The University would host the event and have the liquor licence to allow beer to be served. Volunteers from RASC would help.
    - Rick Huziak also reported that Sleaford school needs to be checked out due to some shifting of

the structure and possible damage. There was some discussion of what options we would have if the school house was no longer usable.

- c) Rick: National Rep Report
  - Details are in the newsletter. The next event is the General Assembly in Winnipeg; Rick is going.
- 4 Other Business
  - a) Tenho Tuomi asked for clarification on Newsletter advertising rates and policies. After much discussion, a motion: Move that we should charge \$25/quarter page for an ad of a commercial nature, not to charge for advertising of an informative nature or an informative nature with a tangential commercial aspect if from a member. However, registered star party vendors shall still receive two quarter page ads for free throughout the year. Jim moved, Jeff seconded. Carried.
  - b) Rick Huziak: Further upgrades and repairs to the Meade 16 inch will be done once the work on the warm-up shelter is done.
  - c) Les Dickson: Les made a presentation on data projectors. He recommended the Epson Powerlite 1770W. Consensus was that Les buy a suitable projector, cost not to exceed \$1250 (with taxes).
- 5 Meeting adjourned 7:33 pm

# Minutes of the General Meeting, May 16, 2011

by *Les Dickson*

- 1 Meeting began at 7:46 pm
- 2 Approval of the Minutes of March General Meeting – moved by Rick Huziak, seconded by Ellen Dickson; carried.
- 3 Reports
  - a) Events
    - Astronomy Day: recap of events. See Exec Meeting minutes for details.
    - A Brownie group would like an astronomy out at a camp at Pike Lake June 5. Not much interest. Patricia Gakis may be contacted to see if she might be interested.
    - Tenho Tuomi and Garry Stone hosted a public star night at Lucky Lake.

- The Relay for Life, June 10, would like RASC participation as in past.
- Rick Huziak has updated the Events page on our web site.
- b) National Council Report – Rick Huziak
  - See newsletter for details.
  - Noted that Jasper National Park has now been designated a DSP. The intention is that all National Parks be so designated.
- c) Newsletter
  - Tenho would like to step down as Editor if someone was interested in taking over
- d) Observing Group

- Norma Jensen says the grass very much needs to be cut, is very dry at the moment; Larry Scott should contact Yannis or Stan and have it cut.
- e) SSSP
- Kathleen Houston discussed the sketching and astrophoto contest at SSS. Is Jack Milliken to host a sketching workshop? The rules for the contest were presented and discussed.
- f) Sleaford
- The School house appears to have shifted on its foundation and there is some distortion of the floor. An inspection should be done.
- Rick and Darrell need to make and put up wall boards in the Warm Up Shelter. The work will be

done through the summer. The shelter is still functional.

#### 4 Other Business

- a) There will be a star party at Grasslands Park May 28. Chris Beckett to give presentation. Rick is working out details re getting compensation for Regina and Saskatoon Centres for participation.
  - b) Chris Beckett will be speaking here next meeting on Observing Dark Nebula.
- #### 5 Presentation
- Kathleen Houston gave a talk on her Spring 2011 Art and Astronomy Southern Alberta Tour

## President's Message

*By Jeff Swick*

So here we are in June and the last general meeting of the year. I'd like to remind our newer members that just because the general meetings end for the summer our activities keep rolling.

We have the picnic and visit to Garry Stone's and Tenho Tuomi's observatories. Of course activities at Sleaford are on going and we have the Saskatchewan Summer Star Party. The best way to stay connected to activities is to sign up to our center's Yahoo Group.

For our last meeting of the season, we have a bit of a treat as we have a visit from Chris Beckett of the Regina center. Chris is also the National Observing Co-ordinator for the RASC. He will be speaking on observing dark nebulae and Rick Huziak will be reporting on the AAVSO's 100<sup>th</sup> spring meeting that was held in Boston this past May.

On the subject of speakers and presentations, I thought Kathleen Houston did a wonderful presentation on



combining her art with astronomy. Being a photographer myself I was especially interested in use of light in composition,

Astronomy weekend this year was a fight against the weather and in spite of this we still had a good crowd to hear Ron Waldron speak out at Beaver Creek and Barb Wright's crew of volunteers at the Farmers Market attracted quite a few curious people to our booth.

Before I close I'd like to pass on to Stan Shadick a very BIG thank you on behalf of our center. As those of you who attended May's meeting know, Stan's office on campus is being remodeled and as such he had to clean out his very large collection of Sky and Telescope and astronomy text books. Stan was kind enough to donate all these items to our center and by watching the feeding frenzy I would have to say that Stan's gift was very well received.

Oh yes....one more thing. Les Dickson had made the purchase of our center's digital projector but says we can't see it until after the Stanley Cup playoffs....guess that means Cup party at the Dickson's

See you at Sleaford!!!

*Ron Waldron giving a talk at Beaver Creek,  
International Astronomy Day, May 7*

*Photo by Jeff Swick*

# *Grasslands National Park (East Block) Star Party*

by Mike Clancy



Well, that was quite the weekend! Anna and I drove down to Grasslands National Park (East Block) on Saturday, 28 May 11 for the first-ever Star Party in that neck of the woods. The park is now the second-largest Dark Sky Preserve in the nation (Banff – Jasper DSP is larger) and home to some of the darkest skies remaining in the world. We got chased down there by the wind and rain, wondering if there would be any stars to see at all. We found two other hardy astronomers at McGowan Campground, Mark and Mary de Jong, and Barry and Linda Englot from the Regina Center. Barry had brought his 5<sup>th</sup>-wheel RV while the de Jong's were tenting, hardy souls that they are! We'd towed our new (to us) tent trailer along on its inaugural run and had little trouble setting it up once we'd passed an hour in pleasant conversation with the others in Barry's RV (excellent coffee by the way!). Four of us headed off on the paleontologically-oriented GPS-guided hike with the Park Interpreters Collette and Francois, a 2 ½ hour-long tour of part of

the Badlands area of the park which we quite enjoyed. After this happy adventure we set off for the Poverty Ridge Ranger's Station where a fund-raiser supper in support of the local Wood Mountain Rodeo Ranch Museum was being held. The wind was by now relentless and had a distinctly unpleasant bite to it. Even out of the wind the buildings open to us were so cold that mitts and toques were popular evening wear! The supper was, unfortunately, not up to the standard we'd expected: cold baked beans served with ham buns with store-bought cookies for dessert. Had the weather been hot this would have perhaps been appreciated but things were a far cry from that!

Chris from the Regina Center began the evening with a presentation of naked-eye viewing with a short discussion to follow. We also had a poetry reading and a short presentation from the park staff on Dark Sky Preserves. There were 20 or so people taking part, a small but enthusiastic group; had the weather been better I'm certain the attendance (Rock Glen Graduation notwithstanding) would have been better. We set up our telescopes in a small clearing just south of the Ranger Station only to have a local farmer choose that moment to begin spraying his field with something noxious; as several of our group suffer from asthma it was decided to move the star party to a ridge about a kilometre south of McGowan's Campground.

By now the wind was dying down and the skies were clearing. The first object viewed was Saturn in conjunction with Porrima, always a delight; after this we moved our telescopes as the skies permitted, seeing things like the Ring Nebula, M13, Albireo, the Goat Star and the like. Of particular note is that Barry had purchased a new scope and first light with it was a magnificent view of Saturn – well done Barry! By approximately 2230 hrs we noted a slight aurora building which grew to the point that by 2330 hrs it covered most of the night sky with prominences well past Polaris, perhaps as high as 70°! While the aurora weaved and swayed there was little stellar observing; by 2330 hrs I'd returned to my 90mm Maksutov-Cassegrain travel scope only to realize that a heavy dew had fallen which made viewing appear as though through a glass of milk – I was done for the night although the hardier observers stayed up until about 0200 hrs. The temperature dropped through the night

as well, with Chris stating it bottomed out at about -2°C just before dawn. We broke camp after fortified coffee and hot oatmeal, returning to Saskatoon near 1800 hrs.

What had we learned? As with most star parties we met some wonderful people and saw some neat astronomical sights but this party was different. The National Park has seen some serious development to accommodate campers at the McGowan Campground which makes the whole idea much easier to manage. While still a work in progress, they should have finished their RV sites (non-electrified) later this summer, and the dining shelter/camp kitchen with its footbridge across Rock Creek should be finished as well. There are 10 tenting sites already finished beside Rock Creek with wooden fences between as wind breaks; the old McGowan ranch house is nearly finished in its genesis as the new Interpretive Center. They already have one vault toilet done with a larger set-up nearly complete. All this work should have been done by now but the winter

was much harder than normal and the spring weather wasn't helpful either. Having said all that, they are creating a highly useful campground with the East Block set to be discovered on foot and those awesome night skies! I was very pleasantly surprised at their progress and the vision they have for making this special place available to low-impact camping (there will be no electrified campsites, for instance); this is a place we'll be back to!



## Observers Group

by Larry Scott

Our meeting for May 27th was clouded out but we had a semi-successful night on Jun 4. (See Ron's note for an update.) Moonless evenings in June start around the 26th and run till July 8th. Next Observers Group is scheduled for July 8th and is really just an excuse to go mow the lawn. Following that we get into some genuinely dark skies again in July starting July 26th and ending around August 6th. If I'm not at the Grasslands DSP on July 30th, I'll be at Sleaford. August Observers Group is scheduled for the 5th. Stay tuned to our yahoo! site for updates.

From our yahoo! site and used without permission:

*"Four of us were at Sleaford Last night. Lawn is freshly cut everywhere thanks to Larry, two mowers, and all of us taking turns (we really need to consider a riding mower for the site!)*

*Sky cleared very well - there was no wind and believe it or not, not a single mosquito! (My theory is it was too cold for them to fly around)*

*Larry unfortunately had to leave before sundown as he got an emergency call from home about a water leak. We all felt sorry for him - really!*

*Les had first light with Larry's 12.5" telescope which he had just purchased.*

*Norma and I just gave our eyes some faint photon release by re-acquainting ourselves with many of our favourites - M27, M13, M15, Albireo, the Sagittarius and Scorpio regions, etc.*

*Had minimal aurora, and observed a developing noctilucent cloud on the way home. All in all a great night!*

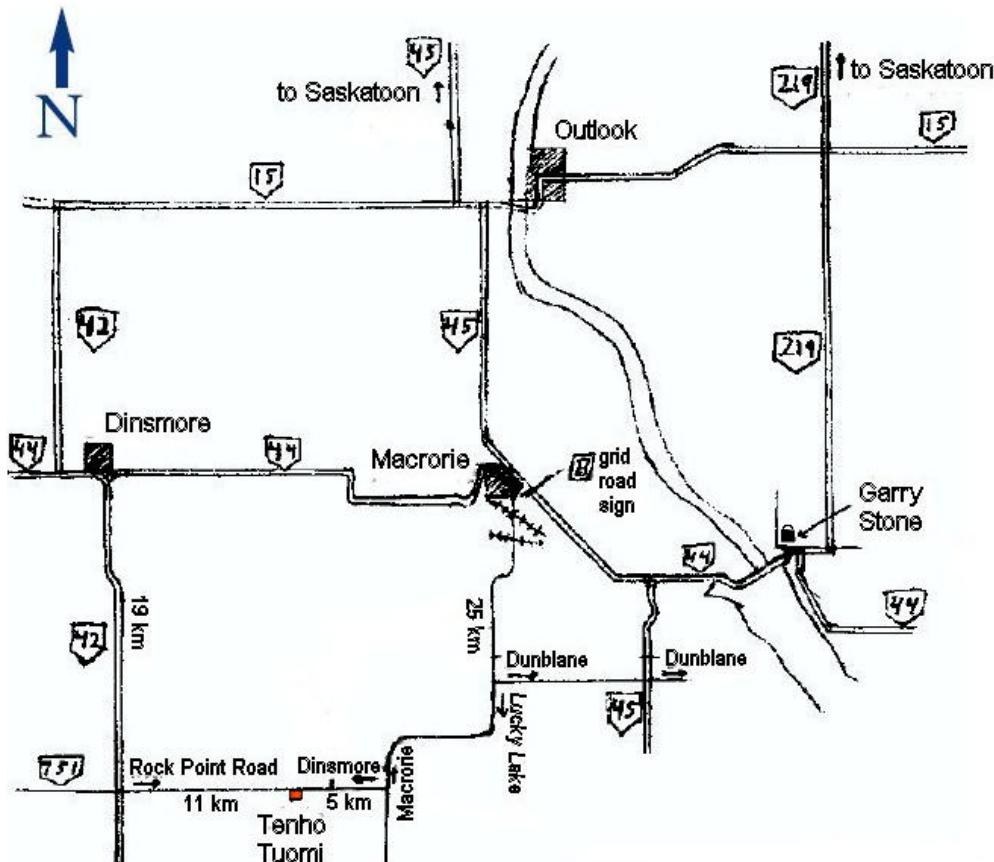
*So members, don't be afraid to make use of the site - yes, it does not get dark till late and sunrise comes early but the viewing during that short period of time can be great.*

*Ron"*

Sounds great, wish I'd have been there.

# Tour of Tenho's & Garry's Astronomy Havens

## Solstice Tour, June 25, (Afternoon schedule somewhat flexible)



Leave Saskatoon	1:00
Tour Gardiner Dam Visitor's Centre	2:00
Leave Gardiner Dam for Tenho Tuomi's	3:15
Tour of Tenho's Observatory	4:00
BBQ at Tenho & Velma's	5:00
Leave Tenho's for Garry Stone's	7:30
Tour Garry's Observatory	8:30
Dessert at Garry & Myrna Stone's	8:30
Stay and observe at Garry's or return to Saskatoon (1 hour drive)	

You are invited for a Solstice Tour of Tenho Tuomi's and Garry Stone's observatories on Saturday, June 25. This will be an all-afternoon event. Members and their spouses, families and guests are welcome to attend.

If you'd like to tour the Gardiner Dam Visitor's Centre, leave Saskatoon by or before 1:00 pm, and meet in the parking lot at the Dam by 2:00 pm. (If you need to car-pool, call someone on your own). You can tour the station (there is no admission, but there is a gift shop and restaurant) then leave as a group for Tenho's afterward. If you do not want to tour the station, go straight to Tenho's and arrive by 4:00 pm. It is about 1 hour 45 minutes from Saskatoon.

At Tenho's, you will tour his climatological station that he looks after for Environment Canada, the magnetometer station that he looks after for the University of Tokyo, Gordon Sarty's Fireball Camera, and the Little Barn Observatory, of course. Velma and Myrna are offering to provide a barbecue at about 5:00 pm for the group. All donations for food will go to the Bill Hydamako Sleaford Observatory Building Fund.

Then from Tenho's place, drive to Garry Stone's, a half hour drive. For those who are interested you can detour by way of the highest point of land, elevation 2600 feet, from where you can see the Rosetown terminals and Mount Blackstrap. That road is rough and requires high clearance vehicles.

Garry lives next to Gardiner Dam, so you are just about back to where you started. The tour will culminate with Garry's observatory, and dessert. Garry and Tenho have spots for tents or RVs if you'd like to stay overnight and observe, if the sky ever gets dark (since it is the Solstice). Bring your scope if you like. It is a little over an hour drive back to Saskatoon when you decide to return.

*If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Tenho <[ttuomi@yourlink.ca](mailto:ttuomi@yourlink.ca)> 858-2453, or Garry <[stonesw7@sasktel.net](mailto:stonesw7@sasktel.net)> 857-4707 by June 20<sup>th</sup> so we can get a head-count.*



## The Planets This Summer, 2011

by Murray D. Paulson, RASC Edmonton Centre

On June 12<sup>th</sup>, **Mercury** passes 42 minutes of arc above the sun in Superior conjunction. If you could see Mercury in such close proximity to the sun, you would see a magnitude -2.2, 5.09" disk. Mercury is on the far side of the sun, and this means that it will climb out into the evening side of the sky to its July 19<sup>th</sup> Greatest Eastern Elongation. Mercury will sit 26.8 degrees from the sun at this time and would be well suited for early evening viewing if it wasn't for the evening twilight. A daytime view will show you its 7.9", 44% illuminated "first quarter" phase. Mercury shines at magnitude 0.4 at this time. Over the next month, Mercury will swing back to its August 16 Inferior Conjunction.

The beginning of June sees **Venus** at an 18.5 degree elongation from the sun. At magnitude -3.8 it should be easy to see, but the morning twilight and the shallow inclination of the morning ecliptic makes it impossible. If you go for it in the daytime you will see its 10.4" disc. As the summer progresses, Venus will move steadily towards its August 16 Superior conjunction with the sun. The slow progression will give the avid daytime observer an opportunity to find out how close they can follow the planet on its way to the sun. Be very careful when observing close to the sun as blindness is not a good observing attribute and use a driven mount so the sun doesn't move into view. You should be able to get to 6 degrees from the sun which occurs on July 25<sup>th</sup>. Venus will show a 9.7" disc at this time. After the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, Venus will move into the evening sky and we then have only 9 months before the Last Venus transit of this century.

**Mars** rises 1 hour and 20 minutes before the sun at the beginning of June. At 4.12" diameter and magnitude 1.4, it is lost to the twilight. Over the next few months Mars will move up further in the morning sky and by the time of the summer star parties it will be visible to the all night diehards who stay up till dawn twilight. At the beginning of August, Mars rises 3.5 hours before the sun and shines at magnitude 1.4 with a 4.4" disc. It will be a nice comparison with Uranus which shows a 3.6" disc at this time. By the end of August, Mars will expand slightly to 4.6" and now rises at 1:46 am. Not much chance to view details other than polar caps, but a good target none the less.

The beginning of June sees **Jupiter** returning to our morning skies. It rises just before 4 am and shines at magnitude -2.1. In the eyepiece you will see its 35" disc, small compared to its magnificence at opposition. By the time of the star parties, Jupiter will shine at magnitude -2.4 and will show a 41" disc, Aug 1 or 44.8" at the end of August. It will rise at midnight at the beginning of August

and at 10:20 pm at the end of August. This will make Jupiter the highlight of the summer star parties.

The planet **Saturn** has been beautiful in the spring skies, and is now an early evening object. Its passage so near Porrima has been a highlight in the evening sky and I have seen photographs by Tenho Tuomi of Saskatoon centre. At the beginning of June Saturn shows a 18" disc and shines at magnitude 0.7. By the beginning of August Saturn will show a 16" disc and shines at magnitude 0.9. It sets at 11 pm so disappears early on in the evening. By the end of August, it will just tease us before it sets and we will have to wait up for Jupiter.

**Uranus** hides away in the morning sky and will be of prominence in the summer star parties. At the beginning of August, Uranus rises at 11 pm and shines at magnitude 5.7 and shows a lovely blue green 3.6" disc in the eyepiece. It sits 8 degrees east of the circlet of Pisces. By the end of August, it doesn't change its circumstance much but rises just after 9 pm.

**Neptune** much like Uranus, hides in the morning twilight and only gains prominence at the summer star parties. It arrives at opposition on August 22 and at this time shows a 2.4" blue disc. It shines at magnitude 7.8 and has one of the most easily found of the challenging moons, Triton. Triton shines at magnitude 13.4 and sits from 11 to 17" from Neptune. Use lots of magnification and get a chart of its position from your favorite software before the hunt. If you check back in 3 hours time, you will see it move with respect to the background stars.

**Pluto** will be at opposition on June 27<sup>th</sup> and shines at magnitude 14. It is way down in the south sky in Sagittarius and requires a good finder chart to locate. There are more than enough background stars since it sits in the milky way 6 degrees north of M28. It will be well placed at the summer star parties for us northerners when we are close to the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. The atmospheric extinction will make it more difficult so a 10 to 12" scope is probably the minimum for finding it.

Clear skies and enjoy the summer.

*Saturn and its moons*

*Photo June 6  
by Tenho Tuomi*

# Supernova in M51, June 3, 2011

AAVSO Special Notice #241

A new supernova in M51 was discovered by A. Riou and confirmed by several sources. It is located at 13:30:05.08 +47:10:11.2 J2000 and has a magnitude of about 13.5.

Nice images of the supernova can be found at:  
<http://6888comete.free.fr/fr/imageSN.htm>

This is a unique event, because it occurs in a galaxy that is imaged almost constantly. It is transiting at local twilight and should be observable for northern hemisphere observers for several months.

We recommend taking nightly monitoring images in B and V for CCD observers, along with visual estimates, until the supernova is no longer visible.

Here is an excuse to take the 10 millionth image of M51!

Information on submitting observations to the AAVSO may be found at:  
<http://www.aavso.org/webob>

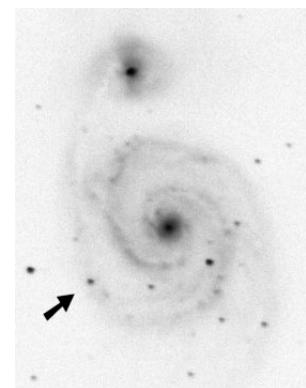
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Supernova SN 2011 dh  
In galaxy M51

Photo June 5, 2011  
by Tenho Tuomi

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