

Saskatoon Skies

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

Vol. 37
No. 6
June
2006

TODDLER MEMBERSHIPS?

Astronomy Day is a great opportunity to share our passion for the sky with new people and a new generation. It's never too early to start encouraging a sense of wonder and exploration!

Photo by Ken Maher



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Astronomy Day 2006

MEMBERSHIP? IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO JOIN!

Regular: \$65.00 /year Youth: \$34.25 /year Lifetime: \$1100

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, Mike Clancy, or renew through the National Office and let Mike 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 (bimonthly)
- SkyNews Magazine (bimonthly)

- use of the Centre library
- 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 fax 306-659-2170.*

SASKATOON CENTRE'S MAIN OFFICERS:

President – Ron Waldron, 382-9428

Secretary – Al Hartridge, 373-0034

Vice-President – Garry Stone, 857-4707

Treasurer – Norma Jensen, 244-7360



BOTTLE DRIVE & CANADIAN TIRE \$

by Darrell Chatfield

Thanks to \$5.70 from Barb we have collected \$177.50 in Canadian Tire Money! If you cannot make it to a meeting but would like to contribute, your Canadian Tire money please call me at 374-9278.

**LIGHT POLLUTION
ABATEMENT**

WEBSITE AT:

www.ras.sk.ca/lpc/lpc.htm

Newsletter Editors – Tenho Tuomi, Ken Maher **Copy & Collate** – Rick Huziak **Labels & Temps** – Mike Clancy **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 articles. 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 – preferred as plain unformatted ASCII text files without line breaks. Images sent by e-mail should be attached .JPGs (.GIFs also accepted). Send e-mail submissions to the editor at <tuomi@sasktel.net>. Please send articles in "generic" formats with simple formatting – one tab at the beginning of paragraphs, one space after commas and periods. 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 stated), but source credit is requested. DEADLINE for submissions is the 26th of each month. Saskatoon Skies accepts commercial advertising. Please call the editor for rates. Members can advertise non-commercial items free of charge.

RASC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 19	RASC General Meeting -- 7:30 p.m., 175 Physics, U of S	Ron Waldron	382-9428
June 23	Observers Group - 11:00 p.m., Sleaford Observatory	Larry Scott	934-5801
June 30- July 3	Alberta Star B-Q, Eccles Ranch Obs. Caroline, AB, http://calgary.rasc.ca/starbq2006.htm	Roland Dechesne	(403) 934-5664
Aug. 24- 27	Saskatchewan Summer Star Party - Cypress Hills Inter-provincial Park http://www.usask.ca/psychology/sarty/rasc/starparty.html	Barb Wright	249-1990
Sep 1-4	Spruce Woods Star Party, Spruce Woods National Park, MB http://www.mts.net/~rcberard/html/spruce_woods_star_party.html		spruce.woods.star.party@gmail.com
Sep 26- Oct 1	Northern Prairie Starfest, Black Nugget Lake, AB	Doug Hube	jdhube@telus.net



BOOKS FOR SALE

by Bruce Brandell, Sales Coordinator

All items will be available at our next meeting or call 249-1119, or email bruce.brandell@yahoo.com

<i>Title</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i># Avail</i>	<i>Price</i>
Calendars			
RASC 2006	RASC	1	\$5.00
Books			
The Backyard Astronomer's Guide	Dickinson & Dyer	2	\$45.00
Night Sky Atlas	R. Scagell	3	\$27.00
The Moon Observer's Guide	P. Grego	1	\$13.00
Firefly Astronomy Dictionary	Firefly	1	\$13.00
Skyways – Astronomy Handbook for Teachers	M.L. Whitehorne	2	\$20.00
The Beginner's Observer's Guide	L. Enright	1	\$19.00
Observer's Handbook 2006	RASC	4	16.00
Variable Star Charts [CD]	AAVSO	1	5.00
Astrophotography	G.N. Patterson	lots	\$3.00
Miscellaneous			
RASC Centennial Mug		2	\$5.00
RASC Stickers, blue or white		lots	\$1.00
SSSP 2001 Pin (Summer Triangle)		17	\$2.00
SSSP 2002 Pin (Comet)		29	\$2.00

SKY BUYS & MIRROR CELLS

The Saskatoon Centre's Swap and Sale Page!

For Loan to Members: Slide set for talks on general astronomy and light pollution. You can borrow this set any time you want to give a talk to your favourite group. Contact Rick Huziak at 665-3392.

For Sale: Celestron 8 Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope
 - black 8" 2000mm, f10
 - Ploessl 25mm - 2X Barlow
 - 1 1/4 visual back
 - heavy duty tripod with motor
 - Sun filter - Thousand Oaks
 - Telrad focusing aid
 - 2 hole viewing device fits over barrel end
 - red flashlight

Hardly used
 - Mint shape Asking \$2,000.00

Questions? Contact Gerry Kohuch at:
 Res: 306.497.2443
 Mobile: 306.497.7488
Kohuch@sasktel.net

**Note: There will be NO
executive meeting this month.**

MONDAY, JUNE 19, 7:30 PM – ROOM 175, U OF S

Presenting

"The 95th AAVSO Spring Meeting & a Tour to Yerkes Observatory" -- Rick Huziak

"George Moores' Workshop" -- Tenho Tuomi

**Two Videos "Comet Hunter Bill Bradfield"
"Astronomy Day Coverage on Shaw TV"**
-- Presented by Ron Waldron

Note: There will be NO executive meeting!



MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

May 15, 2006

by Al Hartridge

1. Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting. Moved by Ellen Dickson, seconded by Mike Clancy and carried.
3. Vote on U of S Telescope Proposal: -- Be it resolved that monies raised by the Saskatoon Centre continue to be used toward the construction of our 16" telescope at the Sleaford Site and that we support the University's 20" telescope project in other ways. -- The results were 25 YES and 3 NO for the proposal.
4. 26 inch mirror: Bill Hydomako talked about the possibility of obtaining a 26 inch mirror which could be carried by the mount which had been made for the 16 inch mirror. This will be further investigated.
5. Presentations:
 - Dark Sky Project - Mike Clancy
 - Constructing an 8 inch Dobsonian from Scratch - Kevin Lubzun
 - Cosmic Rays messengers from Space - Dr. Rainer Dick
6. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING

May 15, 2006

by Al Hartridge

1. Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting approved. Moved by Jim Young, seconded by Darrell Chatfield and carried.
3. Astronomy Day Post-mortem: Jeff Swick reported a poor turn out of people, the mall being very quiet. Also a poor turnout at Beaver Creek. Two temporary members signed up. PA was also fairly quiet, the mall had to shut down at 4:00 p.m. due to a power failure. There were only 6 people at the star night. 8 temporary members signed up.
4. Centre Bylaws: Barb Wright made a motion that our centre temporarily adopt the National bylaws to allow us to comply with the requirements for the raffle and also asked to strike a committee to draw up our own bylaws. Seconded by Jim Young and carried.
5. SSSP: brochures have been printed up and distributed. The website is up and running. The next meeting will be on June 15th at Les and Ellen's new house. Someone is needed to take charge of food and drinks and coffee at night at the Meadows.
6. Fundraising: Bottles and Canadian Tire money collected on an ongoing basis.
The quilt for the raffle has been appraised at \$2500.00. The recent steak night brought in \$450.00.
7. Observers Group: next get together will be the upcoming Saturday evening at Sleaford..
8. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.



**REMEMBER: The Saskatchewan Summer Star Party
runs from August 24 -27. REGISTER TODAY!**

Activities Coordinator Report

by Jeff Swick

As the next formal event coming up for our center after the general meeting is the star party I'll leave those updates to the SSSP committee. However, a quick rundown of last month's Astronomy Day activities is in order.

We kicked off the weekend with a public star night or "sidewalk astronomy" at the Lakewood Civic Centre. The sky looked pretty darn good until we got our scopes all set up and then the clouds moved in.

We did have a couple of folks come out because they saw our posters out at Beaver Creek so it was nice to see them make a special effort to look us up.

The next day we were greeted by a spectacular spring day for our display at the Mall at Lawson Heights....so spectacular it would seem that the last place people wanted to visit was the Mall. It was an enjoyable time visiting with folks for Gastronomy at the local Smithy's before heading out to Beaver Creek.

At Beaver Creek they told us that people had been calling all day about the event. Unfortunately the calls didn't translate into visits but the people who did come were very interested and in fact we have a couple of new members signed up so welcome to the new folks. In fact Yang Shuai who took an astronomy class from Stan Shadick signed up and it was nice to visit with him at the general meeting. I didn't get a chance to see Ron Waldron's slide show presentation but as any one who has seen one of Ron's presentations can attest he is an engaging speaker.

One of my personal high lights of the evening was having two young girls about 7 or 8 years of age look through a telescope for the very first time. I will always treasure their exclamations of wonder at seeing the moon, Jupiter and the Beehive star cluster. English was not their first language but like music, joy and wonder translates across the language barrier. I think one of my favorite activities is sharing the wonders of the night sky with children. Also during the evening Shaw sent a staffer out to shoot a segment for their

news program that turned out very nice. I tried to stand behind the camera to make Ron laugh on camera but he held up like a pro. One thing I will add is that I've had several opportunities now to listen to Al Hartridge talk astronomy to interested spectators and I must say that his passion for astronomy comes across with all age groups. He has a sense of just how much a spectator can absorb and adjusts for each participant.

Thanks to everyone in the club who came out both here and in Prince Albert. It takes all of us to grow the club and everyone's participation no matter how big or how small is certainly appreciated. We all benefit.

Looking back over the past year I have to say activity wise, in spite of the poor weather for getting out to Sleaford, it was still a fun year. Although I wasn't able to spend much time behind the eyepiece I did more astronomy this year than ever. I've focused on lunar geography which is fun but my lunar passion is in geology which has led me on adventures both online as well as to Salt Lake City to see moon rocks (shh I was supposed to be working) and moon rocks at NASA in Houston. Solar science also moved to the forefront for me this winter as well. What a fascinating star we have, even at this time heading into the low end of the solar cycle.

Utilizing online resources it has probably been my most rewarding pursuit, not just for the sun itself but also on space weather and its effects on the various layers of our planets atmosphere. I've got pretty good at predicting events for my co-workers and in fact even won a few wagers.

In the interim between now and the star party in August keep up with club activities by signing up to our centre's Yahoo Group at

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rascstoon/>

Membership is free but open only to club members to keep the spammers away. When signing up please remember to provide your name instead of an online alias as it assists in the sign up procedure and I will not submit you if I have no way of knowing who you are.

Happy Summer Holidays all and thanks for a fun year.

Adventures in the Dark

by Ken Maher



Kathleen, Jim, and Sharon, Helping out with questions. Photo by Ken Maher

When you get right down to basics, astronomy is a lot like art ... it's all about the proper balance of light and dark. In a sense it is really kind of ironic, we artists of the night sky happily sit in the dark to peer at the light. We gather upon the canvas of our eyepieces all the subtle hues of blue-whites, emerald-greens, fiery oranges, and misty grays. We compose our views frame by frame, seeking out just the right combination of elements to make a truly cosmic statement on our place in life, the universe, and everything.

Any good artist can tell you that when light and dark are placed in stark contrast in a painting or photograph the more stunning that picture is likely to be. So too with astronomy. Too much light where dark should be and the picture is ruined. It is only in the darkest of nights that we can really begin to deeply appreciate the twinkling glories of the universe above.

Astronomy Day in Prince Albert was, for me, a steady stream of reminders of this great irony of light and dark at play in the lives of astronomers.

First of all many, many thanks must go out to Jim and Kathleen who came up and shared the adventure with me. These two worked tirelessly representing our club to the people of Prince Albert. Also, a big thank you to Sharon who provided lunch relief for the three of us at the mall. Without their hard work PA's Astronomy Day wouldn't have been the success it was!

IRONY NUMBER ONE – TOO MUCH LIGHT.

Saturday morning dawned much too bright and warm and sunshiny. After a long dull spring people were happy not to be stuck in the mall. No matter, we got set up in the heart of Gateway mall ready to share our love for the night sky. We even got a lovely place right under the giant sky light in the center of the mall. Great visibility, central location, and I was able to set up my little solar scope. (Which as it turned out, was the biggest draw!) Kathleen even set up a small craft table for the kids.

Even though public traffic was down, enthusiasm was not. We had many people stop by for a chat, to ask

some questions, and help themselves to the free materials. Indeed, several people came back more than a few times throughout the day. We made lots of good contacts in the community and even signed up a few temporary members.

IRONY NUMBER TWO – TOO MUCH DARK.

Everything was going well until about 4:00 pm. That's when the mall's power went out! Instant and total darkness! Hundreds of people throughout the mall lost in the inky blackness of a building with no windows ... everyone that is except for three astronomers and their scopes sitting out under the pleasant sun's rays coming in the only skylight! Within thirty minutes it was decided that the mall would be closed early as there still was no power. So we packed up our gear and went to my backyard to sit on the patio and have pizza and pleasant conversation in the afternoon sun. I even got a little sunburn!

Jim and Kathleen had to head out after supper, so I made my way to Prime Minister's Park to see what else the day might have in store. When I got there the sky was more than $\frac{3}{4}$ overcast and the mosquitoes were waiting! I set up my gear on the top of a small hill to get the most from the cool breeze, and to be more visible to any who might come. Sharon came by again, but looking at the sky I let her go home. I wasn't expecting much from the evening.

Just as I was about ready to pack it in, the clouds started disappearing and the people started showing up. All told there were only six people that came out, but since I was there alone this worked out wonderfully. I had about a half-an-hour of quality one-on-one time with each pair or individual that came. When one part of the sky clouded up a bit, others cleared up. There was always something to focus our attention on.

The Moon, Saturn, and Jupiter were favourites. Bright stars, constellations, and some of the mythology behind them filled in the evening very nicely. In the end It was after midnight by the time I got home. It is kind of ironic, but the stark contrast of



Kathleen and children having fun! Photo by Ken Maher

first too much light and then too much dark, in the end, turned out to be just right. All together it painted the picture of a very impressive and memorable Astronomy Day!

Saskatchewan Summer Star Party

by Bill Hydomako, Registrar, SSSP 2006

The Saskatoon and Regina Centres of the RASC invite you to the Saskatchewan Summer Star Party 2006 (SSSP 2006) to be held at the Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, a Dark Sky Preserve, over the weekend of August 24 to 27, 2006. Guest speaker this year is Scott Young, manager of Manitoba Museum, Planetarium and Science Gallery, also incoming president of National RASC. As well, we are planned a special presentation of First Nations Astronomy on Thursday evening following the BBQ at the amphitheater. Alan Dyer is conducting a Digital SLR Astrophotography Workshop on Friday afternoon. This has limited numbers, so register early.

Download a brochure, which has a registration form that you can fill out and mail back with payment to the registrar at the address listed below. This brochure also gives information about SSSP 2006 and Cypress Hills Park and Resort. Please note that there is an early registration deadline of August 1, 2006 and the Organizing Committee reserves the right to charge an additional \$10.00 per registration received after August 1st.

The banquet has been a popular and well-attended event. Again, the option to pre-order the SSSP 2006 pins. Along with T-shirts, Golf shirts, short sleeve shirts there are



Brent Burlingham at SSSP 2005

Photo by Tenho Tuomi

bunnyhugs / hoodies (New) to remember SSSP 2006. This year BBQ tickets can be pre-purchased or bought "at the door" for \$5.00. This will get you hot dogs, drinks and salads.

Also note that if you plan to attend there is plenty of room for camping in the Meadows. Additionally, there is a limited number of resort accommodations including hotel rooms, cabins and condos. We recommend booking your resort lodging as early as possible. Resort contact information is listed in the brochure. If you are going to book accommodations at the resort please be sure to mention you are attending SSSP 2006, as we have arranged for a block of rooms, cabins and condos.

For more information, you can contact us at:

Bill & Marianne Hydomako

135 Manning Cres.

Saskatoon, Sask. S7L 6J3

Or: Phone **(306)384-4781**

Or: email: **wm.hydomako@sasktel.net**

Or you can go to the web site for information and updates:

<http://www.usask.ca/psychology/sarty/rasc/starparty.html>

Hope to see you at SSSP 2006
Clear Skies

Northern Prairie Starfest / Space Exploration Symposium

by Doug Hube <jdhube@telus.net>

The best end-of-season star party is back for 2006 and with new-and-improved benefits! The Northern Prairie Starfest (NPS) will take place at Black Nugget Lake campground (BNLC), southeast of Edmonton, at the end of September, and will overlap with the annual Space Exploration Symposium (SES) at the University of Alberta. The NPS offers daytime and nighttime observing at one of the darkest sites in Alberta plus a variety of speakers and other activities.

Organized events for NPS occur on September 28, 29 and 30, but registration and camping will be available as early as September 26 and as late as October 1. The SES takes

place on the University of Alberta campus September 28 and 29 and is open to all at no cost. One of the keynote speakers at SES will be Dr. John Mustard, Brown University, who is one of the lead investigators with the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter mission. We are waiting for confirmation from other invited speakers. At least one of the SES speakers will make a presentation at NPS. Confirmed speakers for NPS are Dwight Hansen ("The Genstar 10-inch Travel Scope") and Bruce McCurdy ("The Harvest Moon Anomaly").

For further information:

<http://www.edmontonrasc.com/nps.html>

The Planets This Month, June 2006

by Murray D. Paulson, Edmonton Centre

At the beginning June, **Mercury** sat 16 degrees from the sun, and shone at magnitude -0.8. Over the next 2 weeks Mercury swings out to its June 20th eastern (evening) elongation. It will shine at Magnitude 0.5 at the time and show a 8" half disk. It will sit almost 25 degrees from the sun and sets at an amazing 13 minutes before midnight! Pretty good for a sun hugging planet. I mentioned last month, the inclination of the ecliptic compounded by the summer twilight makes this a very poor evening apparition for us northerners. Your best bet is to look for it in the daytime with a goto scope. South of the equator, it is entirely another thing. A week after the elongation, a thin crescent moon passes 4.4 degrees above Mercury on June 27th. Last month an intrepid group of observers stood to the challenge of finding Mercury and a 22 hour and 50 minute moon after the Volunteer party. Against all odds of the weather gods, they succeeded. Eagle eyed Larry Wood was the first to spot Mercury in the very bright twilight, and also the first to spot the thin crescent moon descending from the cloud. The late June event will be a bit harder to reproduce, but worth the try! On July 18th, exactly 2months to the day from the May 18th conjunction, Mercury sits in inferior conjunction with the sun. On Aug 6, Mercury zooms out to its greatest western elongation where it will be at a diameter of 8" and shine at magnitude 0.1 in the morning sky. Venus sits 3 degrees above Mercury and should make it easy to find. On the morning of August 15, Mercury passes through the Beehive cluster, and on the 18th, Venus follows suit. The two planets will be sliding down the ecliptic together as they head back to the sun.

The summer twilight makes it hard to get motivated to get up early enough to check out **Venus**, but if you did, you would see the brilliant white fire of Venus sitting in the Dawn twilight. At the beginning of June, Venus rises at 10 to 4 in the morning, and the sun follows an hour and 20 minutes later. Venus shines at magnitude -4.0 and has a 13.6" gibbous disk. Venus is on its gradual trip back to its date with the sun next fall, and the elongation will decrease from 36 degrees at the beginning of June to 22 degrees at the beginning of August. On Jul 22 a

slender Moon sits 7 degrees above Venus in the dawn sky, and a lunar month later, on August 21, we get a repeat of the conjunction. On the morning of August 26, Venus will sit 1/2 degree west of Saturn, then the next morning, 1/2 degree east of Saturn. Half way round the world, you could watch the pair pass just over 4 arc minutes apart at 22:50 UT on the 26th in a darkened sky, but most of us will have to settle with watching the pair in a daytime sky at the summer star parties.

Mars is almost gone, and forgotten except by a few of us. At the beginning of June it is a small mote of magnitude 1.7 in the constellation of Cancer and would show you a 4.3" disk in the eyepiece. On June 28, a thin crescent moon sits South West of Mars and you may catch the pair with binoculars before they set just after midnight. On July 22, Mars passes only 42' of arc above Regulus and on Jul 27 a thin crescent Moon passes 35' away from Mars in daylight. Just before Mars sets, the moon is over 4 degrees SW of Mars. This will be a tough task, with the sun only 7 degrees below the horizon.

Date	Time (UT)	Event	Satellite
22-Jun	4:42	I	Sha start
22-Jun	5:51	I	Tra end
22-Jun	6:51	I	Sha end
23-Jun	5:13	III	Sha start
23-Jun	7:03	III	Sha end
29-Jun	6:37	I	Sha start
29-Jun	7:41	I	Tra end
29-Jun	8:46	I	Sha end
30-Jun	4:42	III	Tra start
30-Jun	5:55	I	Ecl end
30-Jun	6:37	III	Tra end
11-Jul	3:17	III	Ecl start
11-Jul	5:07	III	Ecl end
13-Jul	3:29	II	Tra start
13-Jul	5:58	II	Sha start
13-Jul	6:04	II	Tra end
13-Jul	8:31	II	Sha end
15-Jul	4:55	I	Sha start
15-Jul	5:51	I	Tra end
15-Jul	7:03	I	Sha end
22-Jul	5:34	I	Tra start
22-Jul	6:02	II	Ecl end
22-Jul	6:49	I	Sha start
22-Jul	7:43	I	Tra end
22-Jul	8:58	I	Sha end
5-Aug	5:06	III	Sha start
5-Aug	6:07	II	Occ start
5-Aug	6:56	III	Sha end

At the beginning of June, **Jupiter** finally gets well placed for evening viewing. Jupiter's southerly location in Libra sees it only crest 22.7 degrees above the horizon as it crosses the meridian at 11 p.m. In the eyepiece, Jupiter shows a 43.4" oblate disk and shines at magnitude -2.4. There has been a new little red spot seen on the margin of the Southern polar hood. It shows up well in photographs, but I have yet to see it. Last month I mentioned that there were a few Ganymede shadow transits and I caught the beginning of one before the sky went away with thin cloud. On July 6th, a gibbous moon passes 6 degrees from Jupiter. I have included a table of the best of the Jupiter satellite events for the next two months.

Please note that all times are UT, and the event on June 23 at 5:13 actually happens at 11:13 p.m. local time on June 22. The event is over at 1:03 am on June 23, just under 2 hours later. You can find a complete table of events in the Observers Handbook. This table was created with Guide, and Excel.

June starts off with **Saturn** in the Beehive, shining at magnitude 0.3 and showing a 16.9" disk in the eyepiece. You may notice that the tilt of the ring plane has decreased somewhat and the inclination is now just under 19 degrees. By early July, this will drop to under 18 degrees, but it would be a challenging observation in the twilight glare. On August 7th, Saturn sits in superior conjunction with the sun and it will be late in the year before we see the ringed visage again.

The outer planets are a good challenge in the summer star parties. Neptune comes into opposition on August 10th and Pluto's opposition occurs on June 16th. **Uranus** doesn't come around until early September, but it will be best at the summer star parties as well. In late August, Uranus will shine at Magnitude 5.7 in Aquarius, and will show you a green blue 3.7" disk in the eyepiece. Check out the Observers Handbook for a finder chart, or take your laptop with your favorite software. Give Uranus the naked eye challenge. It is not an easy pick due to it being so close to the sky limit, and it is low in the sky where

the atmospheric extinction will diminish its brightness even more. I have seen it over the last few years, so give it a shot. Take a good chart showing all the 6.5 plus magnitude stars in its neighborhood. **Neptune** is next on the way out, sitting in Capricorn and shining at magnitude 7.8. It has a 2.3" blue greenish disk that tells you that you got it. The chart for it is on page 197 of the Handbook, just across from Uranus's chart.

Pluto is a dim mote, no longer off at the distant edge of the solar system. New planets now bear that distinction. This doesn't make the hunt any easier! Pluto shines at magnitude 13.9 and takes an 8 to 12" scope to see it depending on sky quality. If you are up to the challenge, (self abuse?) see how small a scope you can find it in. My record is 3.75" or 94 mm. It is not too difficult in a 5 to 6" under ideal conditions. I don't care for the chart in the handbook, so I recommend the charts that come in Sky and Telescope, Astronomy Magazine or make up one with Guide or your favorite software. Happy hunting! Till the fall, clear skies.

Proposed 26 inch Telescope Project!!!

by Bill Hydomako

At the last general meeting of the RASC Saskatoon Centre I brought up a proposal for a 26 inch telescope project. The Saskatoon Centre has an ongoing project to build a 16 inch telescope. I got wind of a 26.25 inch mirror that Barry Arnold up in Edmonton area was grinding and finishing and might be available. My proposal was to switch tracks off of the 16 inch telescope project and look at purchasing this mirror and build a 26 inch telescope instead !!!!!

The wedge, right ascension shafting and bearings we have constructed to this point would be more than enough to carry the 26 inch telescope. As well, the secondary and focuser we have would work fine as well. The building we would construct would be more or less the same for this 26 inch telescope as we would have built for the 16 inch telescope. Only the forks for the mount would have to be changed to handle the large tube diameter involved. The over all cost of building and mirror would be more but it would have been an interesting project. Did I say would have been!

In recent conversations with Barry Arnold I found out that at this time he plans to finish the mirror and build up the 26 inch telescope himself. Hence it would not be available for us at this time. Barry did not rule out the possibility of selling it later down the line which would be in about one to two years but there was no commitment from him that he would do that. So this leaves us back onto the 16 inch telescope project.

Since the building we are looking at for the 16 inch telescope would house the 26 if it came available. I think we should design the building with at a 26 inch in mind in the future should Barry decide to sell his mirror after all.

This whole 26 inch mirror idea did spawn some interesting discussions about what to do about another building out at Sleaford and where to put it. This would also involve the University and their future plans as I can see the RASC and the University working together to build a structure that could have parts that are common to both groups. I look forward to hearing from the membership of the Saskatoon Centre on this topic.



Photo by Tenho Tuomi

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The Messier & Finest NGC lists can be found in the Observer's Handbook. The Explore the Universe list is available on the National web site. The Herschel 400 list is available at the web site listed below. The Binocular List will be available at each general meeting or can be mailed out on request to distant members.

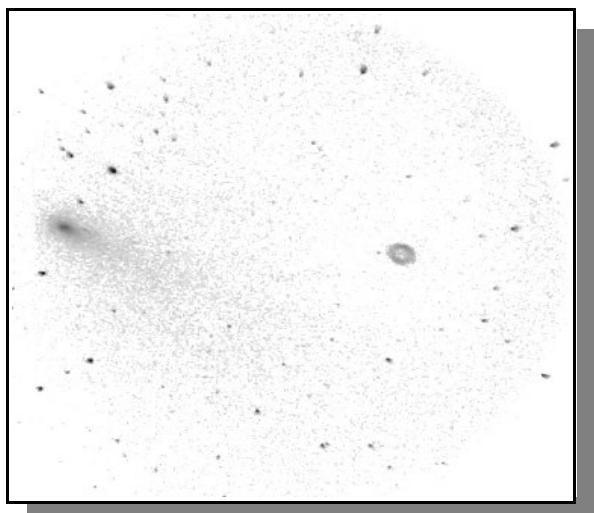


On-line Messier and Finest NGC lists, charts and logbooks - check out:

<http://www.rasc.ca/observe.htm>

On-line Herschel 400 List - check out the official site at:

<http://www.astroleague.org/al/obsclubs/herschel/hers400.html>



Comet 73P/Schwassmann-Wachmann Passes the Ring Nebula

Photo by Tenho Tuomi

Early in the evening of May 7 Comet 73P/Schwassmann-Wachmann passed very close to M57, the Ring Nebula. It was dark enough for those in eastern North America to see the closest approach, and there have been some very fine pictures on the Internet of the event and even videos of the comet's tail brushing over the Ring Nebula. By the time it was dark enough here in the west to see it, they were starting to separate, but at 10:32 p.m. I still could see them within an eyepiece field at 100 power and took this picture.