

Saskatoon Skies

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

Vol. 45, No. 9

September 2014



Despite cloudy skies and solid rainfall for all 3 days, SSSP was still a success in the minds and hearts of those who attended. To find out how and why, read the editor's article on page 4 in this issue. Group photo by George Charpentier.



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To view *Saskatoon Skies* in colour, see
our Website:
<http://homepage.usask.ca/~ges125/rasc/newsletters.html>

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MEMBERSHIP? JOIN TODAY!

Regular: \$82.00 /year

Youth: \$43.00 /year

Family: \$77/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 National Office at <national@RASC.ca>!

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
- Journal of the RASC (electronic format)
- SkyNews Magazine (bimonthly)
- use of the Centre library
- borrow the Centre's Data Projector to give astronomy outreach presentations – contact Les Dickson at astrochem@sasktel.net
- 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.

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 – James Gorkoff, 644-1343

Secretary – Tenho Tuomi, 306-858-2453

Vice-President – Jim Goodridge, 370-8530

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 – Ron Waldron

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 rmwaldron@shaw.ca as a .doc, no indents, no tabs, one line between paragraphs. Images: jpg please, no larger than 1 – 1.5 MB, sent by e-mail as attached files. **Deadline for submission of all articles for an upcoming issue is the first Friday of the month!**

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 1st Friday of the month. Saskatoon Skies accepts commercial advertising. Please call the editor 306-665-3392 for rates. Members can advertise non-commercial items free of charge.

**LIGHT POLLUTION
ABATEMENT**
WEBSITE AT:
www.ras.sk.ca/lpc/lpc.htm

RASC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sept 15	RASC Executive and General Meeting	Jim Gorkoff
Sept 19-21	Alberta Star Party – Drumheller, Alberta	Alberta Starparty
Sept 23-28	Prairie Northern Star Party – Tofield, Alberta	Edmonton Centre
Sept 27	Observer's Group at Sleaford	Larry Scott
Oct 8	Total Eclipse of the Moon (early morning event)	Ron Waldron
Oct 18	Sleaford Open House	Stan Shadick
Oct 23	Partial Eclipse of the Sun ~ 72% obscured	Ron Waldron
Oct 25	Observer's Group at Sleaford	Larry Scott
Nov 15	Observer's Group at Sleaford	Larry Scott
Nov 17	RASC Executive and General Meeting	Jim Gorkoff
Dec 15	RASC Christmas Potluck Social – No Executive Meeting	

For a complete list of club events, please check out: <http://www.usask.ca/rasc/activities.html>



General Meeting

for all members and guests
Room 175 Physics Bldg
University of Saskatchewan

Monday, Sept. 15th at 8:00 PM
Program

Jim Gorkoff will have a short presentation (15 minutes) on new bylaws. The balance of the program will be highlights of this year's SSSP by members of RASC Saskatoon and the SSSP committee. A recap of the events of one of the wettest star parties but also one of the most informative. Come see how 300 + astronomers managed to have a great time even though more than 100 mm of rain fell during the Star Party.

Note: there will be an Executive meeting at 7:00 PM

Minutes of the June Meeting - *Tenho Tuomi*

Chairman Jim Gorkoff called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

Moved by Norma Jensen and Les Dickson that the minutes of the April 20 Executive meeting be approved as circulated. Carried.

Committee reports:

Vice-President's Report by Jim Goodridge.

Upcoming meetings:

September – SSSP Reports.

October – Elections

November – Local Astrophotographer's Panel

December – Potluck Supper, Photo Display

January – WebEx with Kate Howells, Volunteer Network Manager, National Coordinator for Canada, The Planetary Society

February – Jim Goodridge, Aperture Fever, Causes & Cures

September 6, International Observe the Moon Night – do we want to take part?

Observing Co-ordinator Report by Norma Jensen. No observing nights in summer at Sleaford, only grass to mow.

Sleaford Site Report. Norma Jensen reported that new shed door is closing properly now but still needs attention before next winter. Les Dickson suggested putting plaques that are in storage on the new available wall spaces. He volunteered to look after it.

Events Co-ordinator Report. Solar observing at the Farmer's Market went well.

SSSP Report by Les Dickson.

All regular campsites taken, a few rooms left yet.

Les showed the new T-short picture.

Meadows Co-ordinator needed, Rob Jensen volunteered to do it.

National Report by Tenho Tuomi. He distributed copies of the White Paper on RASC Governance which will be introduced at the General Assembly. This suggested that the National Advisory Council meet with the Board of Directors at least twice year, with an increase in membership fees of \$5 to cover the additional expense. Most agreed that it was important for the Board of Directors to work more closely with the National Advisory Council.

A second White Paper on Youth Astronomy Group Membership, a new member type, was briefly discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM. After a coffee break the General Meeting was called to order at 8:20 PM, where Muriel Miller gave a presentation on her first year of RASC membership. She followed that with a presentation and pictures of her visit to Australia and its astronomy sights.

SSSP 2014 – Ron Waldron

All photos by the author

It was with great excitement that I left Saskatoon on Tuesday, August 19th headed for Cypress Hills and this year's Star Party. Having missed last year due to travel in Europe, perfectly dark skies were somewhat a fading memory and certainly long overdue. The forecast looked a bit foreboding but I was pumped and after all, forecasts are a bit like political surveys – the only forecast that counts is the one on the day of the event! Besides this year I decided to tent – so I was sure weather would be on my side. Boy was I wrong!

I arrived to warm semi-clear skies, secured a site, set up my tent and canopy and looked forward to setting up my 12.5" dobsonian telescope. This I did around 20:00 that night and although skies never really cleared, I did get in a few objects amid the glare of full cut-off street lamps near my site. Oh well, maybe tomorrow would be better.

The rain hit around supper time on Wednesday and then it simply never quit except for the odd two-three hour respite. Any hopes that the weather would clear up before I left on Sunday were quickly dashed as weather predictions kept worsening every time I checked. On the good side my tent was warm and dry all weekend and my canopy was a lifesaver.

Now there are four things that make a successful Star Party and this is the order:

1. Clear Skies
2. The People
3. The Program
4. The Vendors



The author – on Tuesday before the rain hit



On Friday, in the midst of controlled chaos

It's easy to see that we clearly had three of the four items still in check. As MC for the event this year, I made the conscious decision to accentuate the positive and to not dwell on things over which we had no control, i.e. the weather. The people were great – complaints about the weather dissipated around Friday as everyone could see that clouds and rain were there to stay. They made do by attending the indoor barbecue on Thursday and all the sessions offered on Thursday and Friday evening and all day Saturday.

Guest speakers Alan Dyer dazzled us with photos of the prairie skies on Thursday night, Joshua Roth spoke about night myopia, and Murray Paulson gave the Lucian Kemble Lecture on his eclipse expeditions.

Amid all this were a few surprises, one notably the short talk given Thursday night by Silvia Graca and Gary Smerchanski on Sketching. Pretty sure they may have converted a few people to at least try and I would include myself among the possible converts.



Friday arrivals are greeted to this scene



The meadows through early morning fog

Our SSSP continues to be successful also because of the volunteer efforts of our members. Yes there are key people from the committee who work tirelessly all weekend to make it a success but even non-committee members lend a hand. It is because of these efforts that our Star Party continues to be one of the shining lights among Star Parties across Canada (even when it rains)

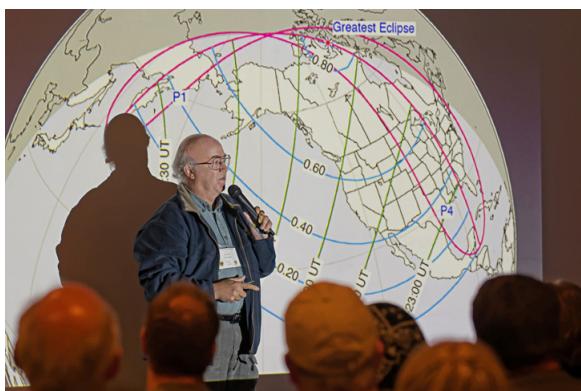
Also accentuating the positive – people gathered in the evenings sharing each others accommodation for some great camaraderie and to share a drink or two. The rain also brought some other unexpected benefits including no need to dark proof the vehicles of those staying or visiting the meadows and more time for some shopping therapy with the vendors – [All-Star Telescopes](#) and the [Science Shop](#).

When Sunday morning dawned and it was time for me to pack up my tent and canopy, nature was no kinder – a constant drizzle forced me to pack up my gear and put it in my vehicle wet – to be dried out later at home. This was a challenge but the rain had already challenged me all weekend and except for night viewing had not won. Although SSSP 2014 will likely go down as one of the雨iest (similar to that of 2009), many lessons were learned. I learned that it is still worth the trip because of the people, the program, and the vendors. Congratulations to the Saskatoon Centre and especially the members of the SSSP Planning group for ensuring its success.

PS – Speaking of vendors, I overdid the shopping therapy part and am now the proud owner of a fully computerized Celestron AVX Goto mount to use with my 80mm refractor – something I thought would never happen.

SSSP 2014 in Photos

All photos by George Charpentier



Sky Buys and Mirror Cells

FOR SALE

CELESTRON CELESTAR 8" DELUXE TELESCOPE C/W 2" METAL TRIPOD, WEDGE, FINDER, EYEPIECE - \$2400.00

ADDED UPGRADES:

FEATHER TOUCH FOCUSER - 250.00
WILLIAM OPTICS 2" DIAGONAL - 200.00
FLOCKED DEW SHIELD - 100.00
TELRAD - 55.00
BOBS KNOBS - 40.00
DRYEYE DEW HEATER - 150.00
MAIN SCOPE CASE - 150.00
TRIPOD CASE - 80.00

TOTAL VALUE - **\$3425.00** WILL SELL FOR **\$1500.00**

This scope is in excellent shape! It has seen many objects, such as the Finest NGC's, the Herschel I and some of the II's. This particular scope was 'recommended' by a former Celestron employee some years ago now. He happened to be visiting our SSSP at that time, so after meeting him, he politely came and looked through my telescope. He gave it an excellent optical review! Set this scope on an object, and it will track perfectly for hours. Please call **Darrell at 374-9278** for more information. I will consider serious offers.

FOR SALE

1-EN5-20/0 Eyepiece 20.0 mm Nagler Type 5 \$539.95
1-EN4-12/0 " 12.0 mm " Type 4 \$429.95
PMt – 2200 Powermate 2.0x \$359.95
Green Lazer Pointer \$99.95
2ND13 2" Density Filter \$29.95

11069 Nextstar 8 SE Celestron \$ 1349.95
18774 Power Tank 7 AH-12V \$74.95
04200 FlexSheild \$39.95
07722 Solar Filter \$139.95
93527 Diagonal 2" XLT-SCT \$169.95
LC Laser Collimator w/sideview \$ 49.95
15188 Scope Cloak \$ 79.95
#7675

07227 EZ Finder \$ 69.95
FURB Red Dot Finder \$ 9.9
#7056
92110 Observing chair (Not used) \$ 129.95
#13756
94005 Celestron StarSense \$ 349.95

Asking \$ 2300.00 obo for the package. Offered as a package only, not as individual pieces.

Contact Info:
Percy at 250-594-5858
or email ve7cul@shaw.ca

National Advisory Council Report - *Tenho Tuomi*

The **National Advisory Council** held two meetings at the General Assembly at Victoria. The first one was held Friday evening where we listened to reports by the Board of Directors.

- A motion was passed to have the Board coordinate the NAC meetings for the next year.

- A motion was passed that the Board explore methods to improve collaboration and communication.
- A motion was passed that the NAC approves of one in-person meeting and two teleconferences per year, to avoid additional fee increases.

The following topics were discussed:

- Youth Astronomy Group, a new proposed membership category.
- Joint Astronomy Canada Web site and publications with CASCA/RASC

The meeting ended with a Financial Update and 2014 Board Elections update.

The **Annual General Meeting** was held Sunday morning with 71 in attendance representing 19 out of the 29 RASC Centres. Outgoing President Glenn Hawley passed the gavel to the incoming President James Edgar. Reports were given by various Board officials and Committee chairs. Since the elections had already been done online by all members, and setting the membership fees is now the job of the Board of Directors, it seemed that the only business left for the Annual General Meeting was the adoption of the financial report, and the selection of the auditor for the coming year.

The second **National Advisory Council** meeting was held following the Annual General Meeting. It was a joint Board of Directors/National Advisory Council meeting, chaired by the incoming RASC President James Edgar.

Committees were appointed for the coming year. A discussion followed regarding communication and reporting expectations for the Committees just constituted.

The next NAC meeting will be via teleconference on November 8.

At the GA I had opportunities to visit more big telescopes than I had ever seen before, starting with the 72inch at the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory where there was a barbecue celebrating the Centennial of the Victoria Centre. On Friday thanks to Bill Weir and Chris Beckett, I saw Jack Newton's observatory and his 25inch Newtonian telescope which he donated to the nearby Pearson College. On Saturday night the sky cleared and we looked through the University of Victoria's 32inch telescope.

Observing Group Notes – Larry Scott

June 28th and July 26th Observer's Group meetings were clouded out but we did get one member trained for key privileges and cut a bunch of grass.

And now for my SSSP 2014 observing report. Arrived on Wednesday at 21:00 during a thunderstorm and set up my tent. Thursday it rained. Friday and Saturday it rained and was windy. Sunday it rained and was cold. Special thanks to Gord, Kevin, Dan, Sue, another Kevin and Ron for sheltering me from the rain and wind at various times. Considering the conditions, there was a ridiculous number of people that showed up and stayed for the duration. I credit the superlative job the organizing committee did in ensuring there was adequate programming indoors that made up for the lack of observing outdoors. My hat is off to you all once again. I know it wasn't my fault but I apologized to everyone I could for the poor viewing conditions and assured them it will be better next year. Barring snow, I'm feeling pretty good about my prediction.

On Monday, after the star party, the skies cleared and the sun shone. It only got to 17C but we were deliriously happy to dry out our belongings and sit in a patch of sunlight. Not wearing my rain suit or rubber boots after 5 days was also a major highlight for me. Monday night Norma and I set up our scopes in site 22 of the Dark-Sky campground and enjoyed the sky with 4 other people who dropped in to look through our scopes. Although we had to contend with a bit of dew and humidity it was great to see some stars. Tuesday warmed up to 25C and was

the best night with lower humidity and steady skies, but we only had one visitor. Wednesday we got to a high of 28C and though the humidity continued to drop the skies weren't as steady as Tuesday. We had 6 more people visit to look through our scopes that night. During the three nights we saw a couple of nice aurora displays including a zenithal band reminiscent of the one several years ago stretching from one horizon to the other; Comet C2014 E2(Jacques) was also nearly straight overhead; some nice meteors; and a bunch of other stuff in space. Thursday we packed up and scampered home just before another powerful storm front passed through with winds strong enough to literally blow a train off the tracks. Can't wait till next year to do it all again.

Next Observer's Group at Sleaford is scheduled for September 27th with moonless evenings from the 15th to the 29th.

Observing Clubs and Certificates

Join the Club! Observe all 110 Messier, 110 Finest NGC, 400 Herschel I or II, 140 Lunar, 154 Sky Gems or 35 Binocular objects, or Explore the Universe and earn great OBSERVING CERTIFICATES!

MESSIER CLUB

Certified at 110 Objects:

R. Huziak, G. Sarty, S. Alexander,
S. Ferguson, D. Jeffrey, D. Chatfield, B.
Christie, K. Noesgaard,
M. Stephens, B. Hydomako, T. Tuomi, L.
Scott, G. Charpentier, B. Johnson, M.
Clancy, L. Dickson, B. Burlingham, K.
Houston, Norma Jensen

Ron Waldron	105
Wade Selvig	75
Garry Stone	57
Bernice Friesen	45
Wayne Schlapkohl	43
Barb Wright	40
Ellen Dickson	34
Jeff Swick	24
Graham Hartridge	9

Chatfield BINOCULAR CERTIFICATE

Certified at 35 to 40 Objects:

M. Stephens, T. Tuomi, M. Clancy,
R. Huziak, K. Maher

Jim Goodridge	Up!	12
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FINEST NGC CLUB

Certified at 110 Objects:

R. Huziak, D. Jeffrey, G. Sarty,
D. Chatfield, T. Tuomi

Larry Scott	Done!	110
Scott Alexander		97
Norma Jensen		72
Sandy Ferguson		23
Kathleen Houston		23
George Charpentier		13
Mike Clancy		7

EXPLORE the UNIVERSE

Certified at 55 to 110 Objects:

M. Clancy, T. Tuomi, K. Maher,
B. Gratias

Wayne Schlapkohl	Done	55
Sharon Dice		31
Jim Goodridge	Up!	35

Isabel Williamson Lunar

Observing Certificate

Certified at 140 Objects:

T. Tuomi

Norma Jensen	133
Jeff Swick	29

HERSCHEL 400 CLUB

Certified at 400 Objects:

D. Jeffrey, R. Huziak, D. Chatfield, T.
Tuomi

Gordon Sarty	251
Scott Alexander	117
Sandy Ferguson	18
Larry Scott	20

HERSCHEL 400-II CLUB

Darrell Chatfield	Done!	400
Rick Huziak		246
Tenho Tuomi		253

LEVY DEEP-SKY GEMS

Certified at 154 Objects:

Tenho Tuomi	150
Darrell Chatfield	70



The Messier, Finest NGC and David Levy's Deep-Sky Gems lists can be found in the *Observer's Handbook*.

The Explore the Universe list is available on the National website.

On-line Messier and Finest NGC lists, charts and logbooks: <http://www.rasc.ca/observing>

On-line Herschel 400 List: <http://www.astrologeague.org/al/obsclubs/herschel/hers400.html>

Binocular List is at: http://homepage.usask.ca/%7Eges125/rasc/Chatfield_Binocular_List.pdf

"Isabel Williamson Lunar Observing Program Guide:

<http://www.rasc.ca/observing/williamson-lunar-observing-certificate>

Program details can be found at: <http://www.rasc.ca/williamson/index.shtml>