

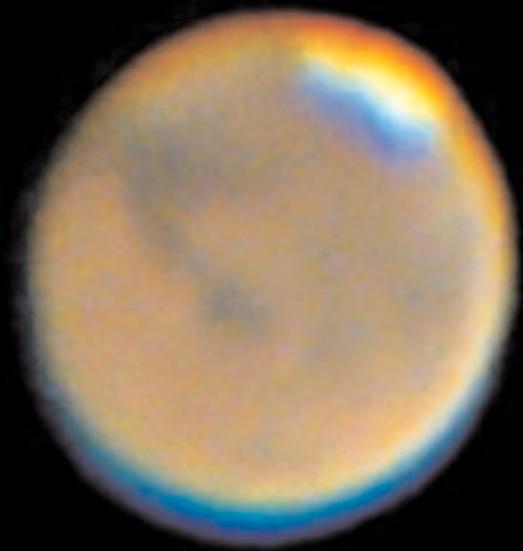
Saskatoon Skies

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

Vol. 34, No. 7/8

July/August 2003

MARS...



...caught by holding an Olympus C-2100UZ camera to the eyepiece. The exposure time is about 1/8 second and was done using a 31 mm Nagler eyepiece with the 4x Powermate barlow on his 20" scope. The effective magnification is 320x. Sinus Meridiani and the bean-shaped pole cap are plainly visible.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VANCE PETRIEW, REGINA CENTRE

In this issue...

Membership, Bottle Drive & U of S Observatory Hours	2
Calendar of Events, General Meeting Notice	3
Sky Buys and Mirror Cells	3
Now We Are 27!	3
Minutes of the May and June General Meetings	4
Last Call for SSSP'03	4
Mars for Visual Observers	5
The Great Adventure – How I Spent the Summer Solstice	6
Boneheaded Moments in Observing	7
A Summer of Good Observing	8
DF Cyg – An Amazing RV Taurid Star is Rising	8
Asteroid 14698 Scottyoung	9
Interesting Websites	9
The Messier, H-400 & H-400-II, FNGC, Binoc & EtU Club	10
Spotting an ISS Solar Transit	10



Saskatoon Centre

The Royal Astronomical
Society of Canada

P. O. Box 317, RPO University
Saskatoon, SK, S7N 4J8

URL: <http://prana.usask.ca/~rasc/>
E-mail: dicksonl@sasktel.net
Telephone: (306) 249-1091

Membership?

It's never too late to join!

Regular: \$52.00/year

Youth: \$27.50/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, Bob Christie, or renew through the National Office and let Bob 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 2003**
- **The Journal of the RASC** (bimonthly)
- **SkyNews Magazine** (bimonthly)
- use of the Centre library
- discounts to **Sky & Telescope Magazine**
- discounts of Sky Publishing merchandise
- discounts to Firefly Books
- free, no-cost, no-obligation, 3-month temporary membership if you don't want to join right now!

About this Newsletter...

Newsletter Editor – *Richard Huziak*

Production & Layout – *Linda Janzen*

Copy – *Brian Friesen & WBM*

Collate – *Brian Friesen, Bob Christie, Les & Ellen Dickson, Sandy Ferguson, Walter Essar, Yannis Pahatourogloou*

PDF & Web Posting – *Gord Sarty*

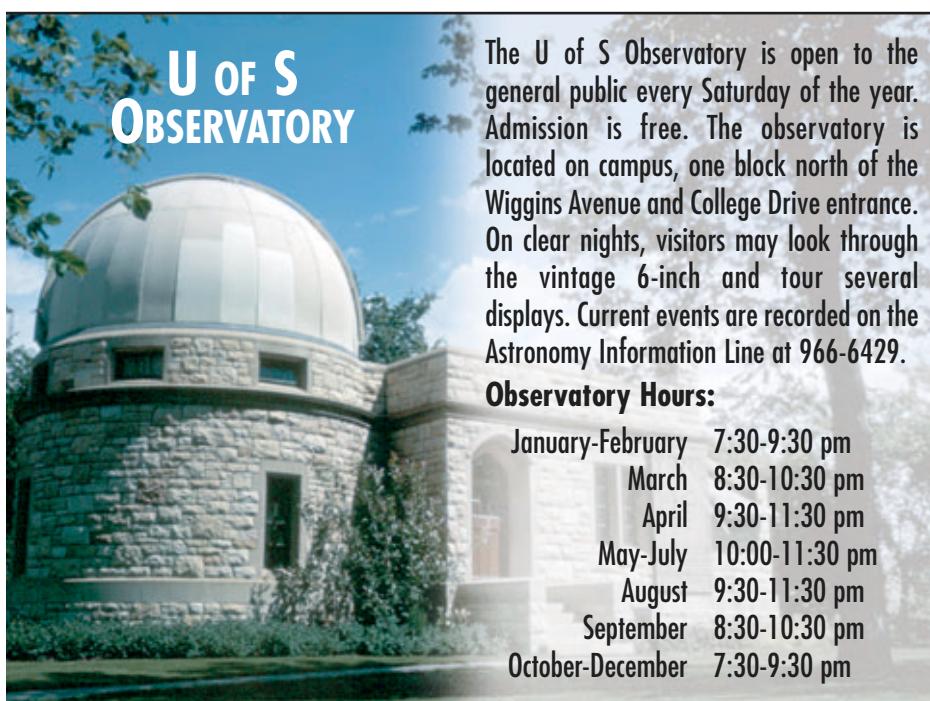
Printing of this Newsletter is courtesy of



WBM OFFICE SYSTEMS
601 2nd Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK S7K 2C7

Copying is provided on a Risograph copier for a nominal fee.

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 .EPSs, .TIFs or .JPGs (.GIFs also accepted). Send e-mail submissions to the editor at <huzaik@SEDSystems.ca>. 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.



**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



**Bottle
Drive
&
Canadian Tire \$**

by Darrell Chatfield

Please remember our on-going bottle and now Canadian Tire money drive to fundraise for the Centre. Bring them to General meetings. I will collect them after the meeting concludes. If you cannot make it to the meeting but would like to contribute, please call me at 374-9278.

DATE (2003)	EVENT	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
Aug. 12	Noctilucent Cloud Season ends	Richard Huziak	665-3392
Aug. 12-13	Perseid Meteor Peak (full moon)	Richard Huziak	665-3392
Aug. 22-24	Sask. Summer Star Party 2003 – Cypress Hills Provincial Park	Les Dickson	249-1091
Sept. 15	Executive Meeting – Room 8313, City Hospital, 6:30 p.m.	Les Dickson	249-1091
Sept. 15	General Meeting – “What I Did This Summer” – SSSP & More – Room 8313, City Hospital, 7:30 p.m.	Les Dickson	249-1091
Sept. 25-28	Alberta Star Party	Richard Huziak	665-3392
Oct. 20	Executive Meeting – Room 8313, City Hospital, 6:30 p.m.	Les Dickson	249-1091
Oct. 20	General Meeting – Annual Elections – Room 8313, City Hospital, 7:30 p.m.	Les Dickson	249-1091
Nov. 8	Total Eclipse of the Moon – 5:00 p.m. to 10:22 p.m.	Richard Huziak	665-3392

GENERAL MEETING
Monday, Sept. 15, 2003, 7:30 pm –
Room 8313, City Hospital



Presenting:

**The Alberta Star-BQ
in Pictures**
Rick Huziak

It rained again, but we had a good time anyway.
Ate a pig, too!

Sask. Summer Star Party 2003
by the group

We will show you how it went and why you should have been there!

SKY BUYS & MIRROR CELLS

The Saskatoon Centre's Swap and Sale Page!

For Sale: *Sky Catalog 2000 - Vol.2*, by Sinnott – \$30.00. *Astronomy*, 2002, by Robert Burnham – Color sky charts, planet information, etc., – \$15.00. *Guide to Stars and Planets*, by Patrick Moore, 256pp, softbound, 1995. Color photos and star charts – \$12.50. **35mm Bausch and Lomb Plossl eyepiece**, fully coated. Excellent shape; in original box with dust caps – \$80.00. Call Darrell at 374-9278.

For Sale: **Meade 4400 4.5" Newtonian** upgraded with **Celestron 6x30 finder**, **Meade MA25 and MA9 1.25" eyepieces**, **RA motor drive** – \$150 or best offer. Call Brent at 224-9872 or e-mail brent.burlingham@usask.ca

For Sale: **RASC Royal Centenary coffee mugs**. Pick yours up at the next General Meeting – \$9 each

For Sale: *Millennium Star Atlas*, 3-volume set – \$200; **REALSKY CD's** – \$200. Call Dale Jeffrey at (306) 223-4447 or dalejeffrey@sk.sympatico.ca

Now We Are 27!



The RASC is now bigger and stronger with this year's addition of the 27th Centre, namely Belleville, Ontario. Smaller, independent clubs are slowly coming into the fold to reap the benefits of a well-organized National organization. For more information, see <http://www.rascbelleville.ca/>

REMEMBER...

YOU CAN SIGN UP TO GET THIS NEWSLETTER ON THE INTERNET instead of waiting for snail-mail. Current electronic subscribers save us over \$320/year in mailing costs.

Minutes of the GENERAL MEETING

Room 8313, City Hospital, May 12, 2003

Recorded by Al Hartridge, Secretary

1. Additions to the agenda and approval of the revised agenda. Moved by Mike Clancy and seconded by Bob Christie and carried.
2. Approval of the minutes of the General Meeting for April. Moved by Rick Huziak and seconded by Darrell Chatfield and carried.
3. Astronomy Day: Lots of volunteers for the display and at the public star night but rather poor turn out of the public.
4. Membership: 73 members at present.
5. Fund-raising: Club has been turned down by the Saskatoon Foundation for the second time.
6. Sleaford: Deck maintenance, doorframe repairs, rails have to be finished. There has also been an incidence of minor vandalism.
7. Library: The university archivist has taken most of Ed Kennedy's papers. Some recent water damage to a few of the library books.
8. SSSP: Planning meeting May 25th Sunday at 2:00 p.m. at Sandy Ferguson's. There is a new logo for this year's T-shirt. \$1,757.00 has been paid to the resort to hold the accommodations for the SSSP.
9. Lunar Eclipse: A group will meet at the north end of the Bessborough grounds to view the upcoming lunar eclipse.
10. Chatelaine magazine: Page 68 contains a blurb regarding the SSSP.
11. Inventory needed badly to account for the items owned by the club.
12. Tour of Tenho's and Gary's observatories planned in late June. Probably on Saturday the 21st. A small donation by those attending will be accepted to help defer the costs.
13. Meeting adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

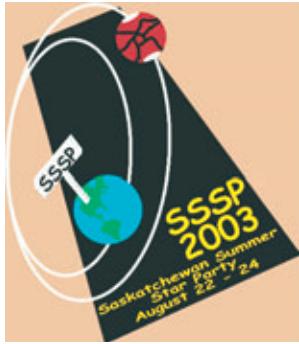
Minutes of the GENERAL MEETING

Room 8313, City Hospital, June 16, 2003

Recorded by Al Hartridge, Secretary

1. Presentations:
 - To Bob Christie, a Glen Scrimshaw picture for his years of work on the club executive.
 - Mike Clancy – The Urban Observing List
 - Rick Huziak – Noctilucent Clouds
 - Les Dickson – a collection of slides from previous SSSPs demonstrating various activities that occur at the star party.
2. Tour of Tenho Tuomi's and Gary Stone's observatories. At least eight people are interested.
3. Star Party Pins: New pins designed by Bob Christie depict the constellation of Sagittarius and the planet Mars.
4. Executive vacancies: National Rep, Membership Coordinator, Library and Treasurer. Mike Clancy has volunteered to accept the role as membership coordinator.
5. Treasurer's Report: Balance \$14,188.17. A bill for \$94.02 has been received from Heritage House Publishers for calendars for 2001. This has already been paid.
6. Membership: 72 paid up members at present.
7. SSSP: Planning meeting June 29th at Barb and Jim's.
8. Alberta Star-BQ: July 6th at Caroline, Alberta.
9. Red Shift software program: Bob Christie has an old copy that he is willing to give away.
10. Laser Pointer: Yannis suggests that club purchase a laser pointer. Les moved that we purchase one that Bob Christie has available, seconded by Ellen Dickson and carried.
11. Meeting adjourned 9:30 p.m.

Last Call for SSSP'03



In just a few days, the Saskatoon and Regina Centres of the RASC will be co-hosting the Saskatchewan Summer Star Party at Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, 30 km south of Maple Creek, SK. You can find information on the Star Party (August 22 - 24) and a registration form at <http://prana.usask.ca/~rasc/sssp03.htm>. If you come early (21st), you can attend the supper Early-bird Wienie Roast. Our usual attendance is 200 to 250 and our star party is geared toward family participation, so bring the spouses (spice?) and kids!

You can still come last minute and register at the door, but we cannot then guarantee supply of shirts and banquet tickets, since both will have only a limited number of extras, first come, first serve. Since all the hotel and cabin accommodation is taken, you will have to camp in the Meadows, but there are outhouses, picnic tables, fire-pits, wooded or open camping sites and a drinking water tap.

Speakers for the event include keynote lecturer Dr. Doug Hube, and Saturday afternoon presenters Murray Paulson, David Prud'Homme and Kevin Black. Hopefully, the dark skies of the Cypress Hills will present themselves for normally phenomenal viewing. We have lots of fun, and we'd have more if YOU were there!

MARS FOR VISUAL OBSERVERS

by Richard Huziak, <Huziak@SEDSystems.ca>

T

his close approach of Mars should not be missed! In the last month, Mars has increased in size and gained some altitude in the sky, and as a result, awesome detail can be seen on this planet, no matter what kind of telescope you have. In only a few weeks, Mars reaches opposition (Aug. 28) and is a remarkable 25.1 arc-seconds in diameter.

Just out of the morning twilight, I first sketched good detail on June 29th (Fig. 1) which shows the most recognizable features, the polar ice cap and the triangular Syrtis Major. An hour and a half later, at 4:02 a.m. (Fig. 2) the planet had rotated enough to bring the finger-like Meridiani Sinus into view, with Mare Serpentis above it. (See your 2003 Handbook, page 189 for a good Mars map). Mars was still small and the deep terminator made the planet football-shaped.

On August 9th at 1:10 a.m., I managed to catch Syrtis Major just as it was at the east edge of the planet (Fig. 3). Dominating the center of the planet is Mare Tyrrhenum and the dark bar to the left is Mare Cimmerium. At 3:46 a.m. on the same morning (Fig. 4), Syrtis Major was again central, and the now-smaller bean-shaped ice cap was visible. Between the two, the large, white impact basin, Hellas, is very prominent. The terminator is much smaller and the planet rounder.

As seen earlier, the next feature around the planet is Meridiani Sinus, and I caught better detail on this face on August 1st at 4:10 a.m. (Fig. 5). Here, Mare Serpentis, Meridiani Sinus, Aurorea Sinus, Mare Eythraeum, Niliacus Lacus and Solis Lacus can all be made out. In addition the irregular pole cap, which is now shrunken, can be seen to be traversed by at least two wide ice-free channels.

I have yet to see the face that features the 4 prominent volcanoes, including Nix Olympica and the great chasm, Valles Marineris. These can sometimes be seen if they sport ice or fog clouds. Hopefully, these will be visible at Cypress where this planet will be 2 degrees higher in the sky. Although this doesn't sound like much, it will get the planet just a little more out of the thicker atmosphere near the horizon. All sketches were made through my 10" f4.5 reflector at 230x or at times using powers up to 690x when the sky allowed it. Seeing the details takes good seeing, patience, practice and a well-collimated scope.



Figure 1

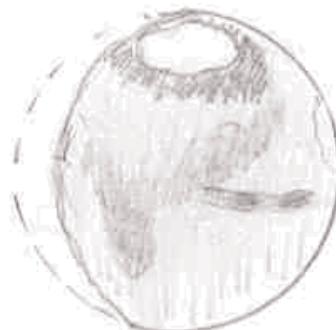


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

THE GREAT ADVENTURE – How I SPENT THE SUMMER SOLSTICE

by Mike Clancy, <mclancy@sasktel.net>

The Saskatoon Centre organized a wonderful trip to visit with members Tenho Tuomi and Gary Stone, ostensibly to tour the Gardiner Dam Visitor's Center and the two members' private observatories. As these things sometimes do, it turned into something much greater and a whole lot of fun for the 15 of us lucky enough to attend. It's approximately an hours' drive to the Gardiner Dam Center where we gathered for a short tour and documentary film of the construction of this interesting provincial landmark. I strongly recommend you take the time to visit this place as it is well worth your time. As we departed, it was discovered that one of the astronomers had the misfortune to lock their keys in the half-ton, and none of us had appropriate wire, which gives rise to the question: How many astronomers does it take to break into a truck? (The answer is: 2; the rest are observers!) We appeared stymied until one adventurer asked the cook at the local restaurant for a wire (how else would that worthy retrieve the ladle from the soup cauldron?), which was provided giving Al Hartridge and Rick Huziak the chance to demonstrate how they paid for their university education.

We then convoyed to Tenho Tuomi's farm where we had an excellent tour of his home-built observatory (for more photos and a description, see his article in the June edition of the center's newsletter) as

well as the weather station he operates, and a collection of equipment used in research into magnetic fields, some by the University of Tokyo. The view from his farmyard, stretching south as it does, would bring most of Sagittarius and Scorpius into full view which makes the placement of his "Little Barn" observatory perfect.

Supper was provided on tables literally groaning with food; home-made hamburgers, baked trout, salads, beans, buns, condiments, the works! I take little credit for supper as all I did was BBQ the burgers; Mrs. Stone and Mrs. Tuomi did all the real work and delicious it was! I particularly liked the rhubarb punch and the home-made Dijon mustard but it was all good.

After this was cleaned up we all piled into two half-ton trucks for a ride up to the local height of land, but you'll have to ask Al Hartridge who brought his GPS device for the actual altitude. Then began the adventure! The ride to and from the feature was interesting as I took the right front seat and so was hopping in and out of Tenho's truck to manipulate the many gates. We kept rattling over hills and through scrub bushes until a final hill barred our way. From the back seat came those immortal words "Hit the gas, Tenho, we'll get to the top!" Well, Tenho did just that and his old Ford fairly flew



The Great Adventure continued

over the crest. As the other truck was in hot pursuit, it would have made an interesting picture to say the least! Poor Graham, much like James Bond, was shaken but not stirred in the back of that truck. Still, the amazing view from that hilltop was worth all the trouble; with binoculars one could see as far as Blackstrap to the NE and the Kyle hills to the SW. As these features are roughly 180 km apart, you can get a glimpse of the majesty of it all. Rick Huziak, not to be outdone, climbed a seemingly rickety old tower once used as a wireless relay station to improve his view. The trip back was just as interesting as we bounced and bucketed back to Tenho's farm for the next stage in the journey.

We convoyed back to the pumping station which Gary Stone manages for a brief tour, followed by a visit to his observatory and workshop. After ogling the plethora of tools, and marveling at his expertise in construction of his domed observatory, we returned to the Stone residence where the ladies had prepared coffee and dainties for us all. I will not go into lavish detail over the many delicious treats they had laid out, but I will say that if ever a similar trip is organized in the future, starve yourself for a day so as to take full advantage of what awaits you! We had agreed to pay the miserly sum of \$4 per person to help defray the cost of the meal, but our hosts graciously donated the funds raised to the Saskatoon Center. In closing, the trip was a lot of fun. Some wonderful people went to a lot of trouble to make us feel right at home and show us some of the wonders of their part of the world. To the Tuomi's and Stone's: thank you so much! Your gracious hospitality and the warmth of your welcome remains the highlight of the trip to us all. To those of the RASC membership that missed out: too bad for you! Those of us that went had an absolute blast.

Post-script: Although we did no observing (it was, after all, the solstice and therefore no night sky for many hours) it was a day of fellowship and fun. This is, after all, one of the big reasons we get together – to celebrate our hobby/obsession/past time. Tenho, however, did get some observing in after his return home, and wrote about his experience thus:

"Thanks to all who came. It indeed was a great adventure. Thanks especially to the ladies and Mike Clancy who helped with the food. Sky conditions were not good but we did



observe Venus and Jupiter.

To top it off, when I came home I found that most of the sky was clear at our place. I hauled out all my telescopes and spent the next couple hours observing Messiers in Ophiuchus and Scorpius. My best 30mm object was M9 at magnitude 7.6. There was very little difference between the 80mm refractor and the 114mm reflector. At 2:00 AM I decided that since I had observed M6 which I needed for the Binocular List, I would try for NGC 4756 as well. I found it with the 80 mm, plus NGC 6633 beside it which qualifies for the FNGC award, but could not see it with my 30 mm. Then I realized that the reason for that was that the moon had risen and washed most objects out. It was time to end by swinging the 200mm on

Mars and giving it a good look. It was tempting to stay up another couple of hours and watch the Venus/Mercury conjunction.

Ironical that some of my best observing seems to be under the worst conditions, like at the Messier marathon under very bright aurora, or at the summer solstice."

— Tenho

Boneheaded Moments in Observing

Tenho's Key Discovery!

I was going along well combing through the Virgo cluster with my 114 mm scope when I decided to check the sky map for some details. That's when I discovered that somehow I had bumped the doorknob on my way out on the last trip and locked myself out. No problem. I keep a key in another building for emergencies like this, but when I got it, it would not work. I must not have updated the key the last time I replaced the doorknob. It was 12:30 a.m. and I hated to wake up my wife Velma but what else could I do. I rang the door bell, and rang it again many more times, but no response. She sleeps soundly. I thought about pounding on the bedroom window but didn't want to scare her. So after a trip to the garage to get tools to break in through a window, I was back to observing for a couple hours more. Velma slept through it all.

A Summer of Good Observing

by Tenho Tuomi <tuomi@sk.sympatico.ca>

Astronomically, skies have been rather hazy even if cloudless this summer. However I have observation notes for 18 days in July this year, compared to 5 days last year. Some examples:

July 4 – Garry Stone and I went to Douglas Park to show the skies. We had along Garry's 120 mm refractor and 200 mm Celestron, and my 80 mm refractor and 114 mm Newtonian. About 10 to 12 people showed up. Skies started partly cloudy but the 5-day old moon came out often enough to keep people interested, and as the evening progressed the skies cleared to show double stars (Epsilon Lyra, Alcor/Mizar, Albireo), several Messier objects including the nebulosities in Sagittarius, and Mars. The highlight was two bright Iridium flares within minutes of each other close to midnight.

July 17 – While at Adamson Lake I photographed the conjunction of Moon and Mars. See the attached digital picture taken through my 30 mm telescope at 20 power. North is up.

July 25 – Garry and I joined forces to observe the Jupiter/Mercury conjunction. See the attached digital picture taken about half an hour after sunset through my 114 mm Newtonian at 36 power. South is up. The two planets



were about 0.4 degrees apart with Jupiter to the south and a magnitude brighter than Mercury.

August 4 – Garry and I were invited to Danielson Park this time with our telescopes to show the stars. Being the long weekend the Park was full and about 40-50 people showed up keeping us busy at times. Again there was some clouds, and general haze preventing observations closer to the horizon. We observed the 4-day old moon, our favorite double stars, several Messiers (M57, M27, M13, M3, M31), Mars, one ISS pass and one Iridium flare. A surprising number of other satellite passes were observed, plus a few meteors. There seemed to be a lot of interest.

August 7 – We were invited to Saskatchewan Landing Park where we went with our camper and stayed overnight, a good practice run for the Cypress Hills Star Party. The sky started clear but the 9-day old moon, which quite impressive itself, prevented seeing deep sky objects. We had the biggest crowd yet, about 50 people. We again started by showing the moon and double stars, and Garry did find the Ring Nebula to show. At 10:30 just when Mars rose high enough for good viewing, the sky clouded up and it eventually started raining.

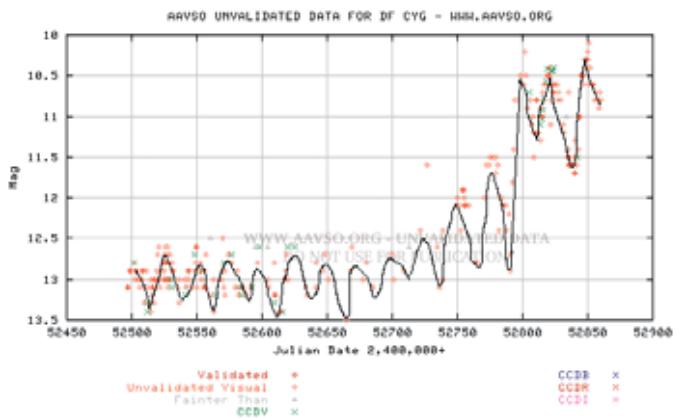
A couple other Park visits that we had scheduled were cancelled due to clouds.

DF Cyg – An Amazing RV Taurid Star is Rising

by Richard Huziak <Huziak@SEDSystems.ca>

DF Cyg is a very interesting star with a light curve that changes fairly quickly. This RV Taurid-type variable star has a period of about 50 days (a half-bump period of about 25 days) so observing it every night is not out of the question. It is currently rising from a low state oscillation of about 12.0 to 14.0 magnitude to the high state range of 10.0 to 11.5ish. It seems to be most of the way up the climb and will finish this in a few weeks, settling out for the next year or two as a 'bright' object. This object can have very deep and defined minima during the RV oscillation, which are often missed since they are so sharp, so if you see the star 'unexpectedly' dim, follow it more closely. The RV oscillations are well defined by visual observations, but more data-point density is always nice during the under-observed parts of the light curve, and especially during these transition periods. Get the chart from www.aavso.org under the

Charts file. The light curve for the last year is featured below, taken from the AAVSO Light Curve Generator.



Asteroid 14698 Scottyoung

by Ron Berard <rcberard@MTS.net> – from the RASClst, 5 July, 2003

Being on the executive council of your local RASC Club generally keeps me fairly close to most activities Astronomical in our community. Therefore, it's a rare treat to receive the local newsletter and be pleasantly surprised by, well, ...NEWS! This month's Winnicentrics [the Winnipeg Centre's newsletter] provided just such a rare treat when I read the headline that our own Scott Young was to have an asteroid named after him. I can think of few as deserving as he.

For those on the RASCals' list that aren't already aware, Peter Jedicke, our national VP, recently announced that the International Astronomical Union would be naming asteroid 2000AT230 in Scott's honour!

While not knowing Scott nearly as well as some of our other members, I have always held Scott in high esteem. Being President of The Winnipeg chapter of the RASC during my first and second year of membership, Scott made an immediate and lasting impression on me as being a pivotal contributor to, and hence a pillar of, our local community of amateur astronomers and night sky lovers of all ages.

At the RASC meetings, he always worked hard keeping the meetings flowing at a reasonable cadence, and the content kept at a high standard. His own contributions were always

delivered in a professional and confident manner, even when he had a limited grasp of the topic! (Sorry Scott ;-)

As the Planetarium director, he has worked tirelessly to keep the public's enthusiasm for science, and specifically astronomy, at the highest possible pique. Or so he always tells us!

Now Scott has extended himself to hold office at the National level as 2nd VP. Soon, Scott himself may be bellowing such momentous pronouncements on other deserving contributors! (Hint, Hint!)

Though I may be a few weeks late, I want to publicly congratulate Scott on this honour. Way to go Scott! Admittedly, I am more of a Deep Sky lover, so I ashamedly confess to never having laid eyes on an asteroid in my own eyepiece, but I will most certainly make the effort to track down and site 20th magnitude Asteroid 14698 Scottyoung! Though, I will have to have my own eyepiece at the focus of someone else's scope, only owning 8" of aperture. (I can't understand why writing that last sentence made me feel strangely uncomfortable).

Way to go Scotty!

[Those attending this year's SSSP can meet and congratulate Scott Young in person! — Ed.]

Interesting Websites

by Mike Clancy <mclancy@sasktel.net>

In between moments spent looking up, I've been looking for various sources of information to assist my developing interest in amateur astronomy. Although many links to other websites are available on the Saskatoon Center's page, I've stumbled across a couple that can be fun and informative.

The University of Wisconsin puts satellite images of western and eastern North America on their web page, updating these images approximately every half hour. Although these images are pretty much useless at night (the satellites are geostationary), one can use them by referring back over the course of the day to watch cloud and system patterns develop. If you want a visual guide to the forecasts on weather and clear sky clock information, this might be of use. Check them out at:

http://www.ssec.wisc.edu/data/west/latest_westvis.gif

http://www.ssec.wisc.edu/data/g8/latest_g8vis.gif

I've been working towards my Messier certification with relative success but I'm having some difficulty differentiating among "faint fuzzies." I'm also trying to draw what I see, but don't find my "neo-cubist abstractionist" artistic abilities to be

very useful. A gentleman in Finland has taken the liberty of placing his excellent drawings of Messier and Finest NGC objects on the net at <http://www.skyrover.net/ds/>. You'll also find excellent links to other hand-drawn images elsewhere on the net by following his "links" page.

Another highly useful page has been <http://www.cloudynights.com/index.htm> as it covers material from beginners to moderate level. The information deals predominantly with equipment reviews although it also has some interesting seasonal "What to see" documents. The authors of the various articles and reviews are an eclectic bunch from all over the place and provide useful information on a wide range of topics. Again, there are other links to pages around the world in their classified ads section.

As always, though, there's no substitute for just getting outside and looking up! All these pages and a host of others are there just to help you make the best use of whatever equipment you've got, and no amount of internet information can match the satisfaction of tracking down that elusive object for yourself. Best of luck!

The Messier, H-400 & H-400-II, FNGC, Binoc & EtU Club

Join the Club! Observe all 110 Messier, 110 Finest NGC, 400 Herschel I or 400 Herschel II, Explore the Universe, or 35 Binocular objects 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*

Tenho Tuomi	Applied	110
Mike Oosterlaken		93
George Charpentier		90
Wade Selvig		75
Lorne Jensen		74
Mike Clancy		72
Brent Burlingham		41
Brent Gratias		39
Stan Noble		28
Tyrone Klassen		26
Brian Friesen		15
Les Dickson		14
Kathleen Houston		13
Ellen Dickson		6

FINEST NGC CLUB

Certified at 110 Objects:

*R. Huziak, D. Jeffrey, G. Sarty,
D. Chatfield*

Scott Alexander	97
Ken Noesgaard	24
Sandy Ferguson	23
Mike Oosterlaken	20
Bill Hydomako	17
Mike Clancy	3

Chatfield BINOCULAR CERTIFICATE

Certified at 35 Objects:

M. Stephens

Tenho Tuomi	Applied	36
Mike Oosterlaken		32
Mike Clancy		27

EXPLORE the UNIVERSE

Certified for Certificate:

M. Clancy

Tenho Tuomi	Applied	Dun
-------------	---------	-----

HERSCHEL 400 CLUB

Certified at 400 Objects:

D. Jeffrey, R. Huziak, D. Chatfield

Gord Sarty	251
Scott Alexander	102
Mike Oosterlaken	68
Ken Noesgaard	44
Sandy Ferguson	18

HERSCHEL 400-II CLUB

Certified at 400 Objects:

Richard Huziak	196
Darrell Chatfield	117

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 Binocular list & Herschel 400 lists will be available at each general meeting for 50 cents (covers photocopying) or can be mailed out on request to distant members. Each month I'll be posting updates.

Notes from the Editor

I've had lots of updates. Observers are climbing all the lists. With more darkness and warm weather, get out and get those numbers up there!

On-line Messier and Finest NGC Lists – For those who'd like electronic Messier or FNGC lists, check out the Edmonton

Centre's version at: <http://www.edmontonrasc.com/catalog.html>

If you promise to look at M31 (Andromeda Galaxy) sometime in the next few months with eyeballs or binocs, I'll enter you onto the Messier Club as '1' object, and you can go from there!

Spotting an ISS Solar Transit

by Richard Huziak <Huziak@SEDSystems.ca>

Well – thanks to Kevin Fetter's RASCLIST satellite prediction service, I managed to catch the awesome passage of the ISS over the sun on the 8th of April. I'm used to following the ISS at about 200x with my 10" at night and seeing modules and panels, but a full disk (1/2-degree) solar projection was the method of choice for this transit, since it's very difficult to 'track' the ISS in the daytime with a solar filter! So – low power – only about 50x was used. The ISS crossed the disk right on time – down to the second – imagine that, and took just over 2.5 seconds to make its run. What you suffer from here is the reflex problem that occultation observers run into – the event happens unexpectedly, even if you know it will happen on time, so you are never really ready and miss the

first second or so of the event. Despite this, what I could distinguish was what looked like two stubby baseball bats attached 'butt-to-butt' traveling more or less 'flat' to the direction of motion. The north-most bat had a small projection facing forward to the direction of travel. Other than that, nothing more could be distinguished in that short time. Size-wise, it was likely 10 or 15 arc-seconds long, and maybe 3 or 4 arc-seconds wide, but this is just a guess – hard to measure this based on a 30-minute wide sun! If you'd like personal predictions of ISS transits of the sun and moon, contact Kevin by checking his reports found on the RASCals Discussion List at RASCALS@ap.stmarys.ca It might be fun to try to videotape a passage in the future.