

Saskatoon **SKIES**

Newsletter of the Saskatoon Centre of the
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
May 1997, Vol. 28, No. 5



photo by Erich Keser

Sandy Ferguson displaying Bob Christie's
beautiful Saskatchewan Summer Star Party Brochure
at our busy Astronomy Day Display at Wildwood Mall.

Presidential Ramblings by

Richard Huziak, President

Note the *early* meeting date of the General Meeting to avoid the Victoria Day long weekend! Due to the 2 main speakers, the president promises to keep the business portion of the meeting short!

Saskatoon Centre Forms Two Committees

With the two major events this year, we have formed two new committees. The first is the **Building Committee**, chaired by Gord Sarty. This committee's mandate is manage the plan for the new Sleaford Observatory. It will have to finalize the Partnership Agreement, plan the observing site, construction and buildings, and carry out these plans with actual. It will also have to determine how funds are to be raised and how the annual operating budget will be guaranteed.

The second committee is the "**Saskatchewan Summer Star Party Committee**", chaired by Erich Keser. This committee is mandated to organize and run the star party. It will have to further publicize the event, define the star party tasks, recruit volunteers, manage the star party, and come out of it with a positive bank balance and maintain a cooperative liaison with the Regina Centre

Input to these committees is always welcomed. Contact the chairpersons or the president with your comments. Volunteers for the Star Party are urgently needed, so don't be shy about taking on a necessary job either in Saskatoon or for the Star Party itself!

Still Missing Your 1997 Observer's Handbook?

All outstanding handbooks should now have been sorted out and mailed out by U of T Press, and you should have received them by now. If you have not received yours yet, please give Rick Huziak a call (665-3392) and we'll whine yet again to the Press!

(more Presidential Ramblings Page 4)

Notice of the May 1997 General Meeting of the RASC

You are invited to attend the May General Meeting of the Saskatoon Centre of R.A.S.C. to hear the following speakers: (Everyone is welcome. There is no admission!)

Dr. Garry Davis - Planetary Spectroscopy by a Satellite Experiment. Professor Davis is a member of the Physics Department and Institute of Space&Atmospheric Studies at University of Saskatchewan. His expertise in the makeup of planetary atmospheres has made him a regular user of the infrared telescope on Mauna Kea (and of the beaches far below!)

Les Dickson-The New Generation of Space Telescopes What comes after Hubble?

Gordon Sarty - Jupiter - Using the 1997 Observer's Handbook

When: Monday, May 1212 1997, 8:00 p.m. in the boardroom

Where: The National Hydrology Research Institute Building, Innovation Place

Please remember to park *only* in the NHRI parking lot as all other locations in Innovation Place require 24-hour parking permits, and you will be ticketed. On entry and exit of building, please register with the commissioner. He will have a membership list to quicken this process. Non-members will just sign the guest book. There is ground-level access, and coffee will be served! Bus service is close by, but anyone who needs a ride, call me at 665-3392 well before and to arrange pickup. Remember to bring your Handbooks!

Executive members will meet at 7 p.m. in the NHRI boardroom.

Saskatoon Centre

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

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Errata: The April issue!

Saskatoon Skies is produced by volunteer labour on a monthly basis with summer double-issues. We welcome letters and submissions (articles, images, cartoons, drawings and diagrams are all welcome!) Contact Sandy Ferguson (931-3184) or Erich Keser (374-4262) for further details. Text may be e-mailed in *plain unformatted ASCII text with line returns at paragraph breaks only*, and images in UUEncoded form to keser@duke.usask.ca. Signed articles do not always represent the opinion of the Centre. Circulation is about 110.

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MORE Presidential ramblings...

Rick and Sandy and Dale and Whendi

No. This isn't a new movie based on a 1970's standard! It's a meeting of local and 'distant' Saskatoon RASC members! On April 15th, Sandy Ferguson and I took a trip to Laird, SK, at the invitation of 'distant' members Dale and Whendi Jeffrey. Since Laird is 45 minute drive, Dale and Whendi rarely can make it to our general meetings. We were invited out to a wonderful supper, and then helped Dale and Whendi set up a slide show to be used in conjunction with Whendi's kindergarten class, who were preparing and rehearsing a 'rap' song about the solar system. We also arranged a tour of the U of S Observatory for Whendi's class on April 29, and discussed plans to give a school seminar on May 6th, followed by a public starnight for the Laird community later that evening. Thanks for the hospitality, Dale and Whendi!

Other 'distant' members may want to request similar programs for their communities. We know there are a lot of you out there who live far from Saskatoon and can't participate directly with the Centre on a regular basis. If you are interested in setting up a local community event, Saskatoon members would likely be able to come and give you help for a starnight or other similar event! Call me for details.

David Levy wed

Sandy Ferguson informs me that David Levy , Canadian amateur astronomer and comet hunter extraordinaire, was married to Wendee Wallach on March 23, 1997 in Tucson, Arizona. This day was chosen to coincide with the eclipse of the moon to keep in the astronomical tradition! The wedding was attended by close friends and Ottawa Centre members, Rolf and Linda Meier. Congratulations David and Wendee!

Too Many Wendy Variants!

I've noticed that there are too many variants of the name "Wendy" in this newsletter!

Victoria School Environmental Club Puts on Light Pollution Play

I was happy to see (and somewhat flattered) that the Victoria School Environmental Club wrote and performed a play based on light pollution problems after I presented a light pollution seminar to them! The students, mostly in grades 2 to 4 based the play on excessive lighting killing migratory birds and ruining the opportunities for learning about the sky for city-based kids! They included the fact that our Centre has to move it's observatory to escape the problem and even slammed City Council for not being receptive to imposing light pollution bylaws and controlling stray light! Way to go! The play was performed for the school's general assembly and at the evening "spring fling" that parents attended on April 23.

Noctilucent Cloud Season About to Begin

Well, it's here again. NLC season lasts from about May 15 to August 15 in Saskatoon. Those interested in becoming NLC observers (and reporting to past speaker, Mark Zalcik) can give me or Gord Sarty a call for more information and observing instructions. Observing and recording NLCs takes only a clear north horizon and a set of eyes. It's fun and easy!

Rick Huziak, President

LOOKING UP

take1. **A Fine and Private Observing Session** April 11th and 12th, 1997

Knowing I needed some 60 more Messiers toward my certificate, I decided to go out to Rystrom's Observatory to try and pick up a few more in and around the constellation Leo. I met up with Bill Hydomako and of course, Sadie, the club mascot. I think the reason Bill didn't talk to me at the start was because as he was taking pictures, I arrived with my car lights blazing. You cannot shut off the lights on these newer cars, let alone a dome light that won't quit for a minute after closing the doors.

However, I set up my Meade 10" SCT and got started with the easier galaxies in Leo. I say easier, because there are a few good reference stars and star patterns in this area. M65 and M66 are a pretty pair of galaxies within the same field of view. Just above these is NGC 3628, a beautiful edge-on galaxy with a visible dust lane. Next came M95, M96 and M105. These were easy. NGC 3389 is in the same field as M105, and is almost identical appearance. From there, I went to M98, M99 and M100. These were a bit more challenging, as they come in around magnitude 9.5-10.1. Lastly, there was M87, an easy galaxy with a bright nucleus and M88, a large elongated galaxy.

continued overleaf

**by Darrell Chatfield
Observer's Group Coordinator**

take 2. Observers Group Meeting May 2-3, 1997 Sleaford Schoolsite

This observing session was to be one of the best nights I've experienced in quite a while in terms of far as visibility and darkness was concerned. Our group may have been small, but we were very eager! Erich was there, along with Les and Ellen Dickson. The evening did not look too promising at 8:00 p.m. In fact, I had even called it off because of a few clouds here in the city. However, I have the advantage of a contact person who farms in the Colonsay area, and his wife phoned back at 9:00 p.m. and said the clouds had moved away. So after a quick few phone calls, we were on the road by 9:30 p.m.

It was a pleasant drive, until we came across a lot of smoke near St. Denis. We could also see a reddish-orange glow on the horizon. This turned out to be dozens of round hay bales deliberately set on fire. It was quite a sight, set against the inky black sky. We arrived at our dark site, with Erich setting up his CG-11, myself with my Meade 10" and Les and Ellen each with their own binoculars.

After the dust settled from us driving on the grid road, the sky proved to be excellent. This site has the advantage of unobstructed

continued overleaf

Observing: take 1

(continued from P. 12)

Well, this was great. I has "bagged" ten Messier objects and two NGC objects in a single night one night. I decided to try and match that record the next night, April 12.

This second night of galaxy hunting proved to be great, also, perhaps because Bill was present again. **M61** and **M49** were easy finds, with **M49** showing up its spiral arms. **M85** was also easy, because its is close to a magnitude 5 star, but **M91** was quite dim, coming in at magnitude. 10.2. Next were **M89** and **M90**. Both were easy. However **M86** was a challenge, because of the lack of guide stars. **M84** was easier, being round and bright, and in the same field as **M86**.

I spent about half an hour trying to figure out which was which as far as **M58** and **M60** were concerned. I finally got my bearings straight, and was very pleased to have recorded eleven more Messier objects, as well as a few NGC's for good measure.

Keeping in mind that the moon was showing about a quarter phase and that, toward the end of each evening, dew showed up on my corrector plate. So persistence does pay off! I encourage you to get out there and track down the Messiers, or whatever you like to look at.

Come out and Observe!

Next Observers' Group:

Friday June 6, 9:30 PM

(clouddate Sat. June 7th)

at the Sleaford Schoolsite
for directions, possible car
pooling and weather guesstimate

Call Darrell at 374-9278

Observing: take 2

(continued from P. 12)

sky views in any direction, except for the schoolhouse (which is ideally placed to hide the 50 km. distant Saskatoon light dome and tree barrier around the property. I found that these were not really a problem because they only blocked the very lowest part of the sky.

As we started, we noticed that Hale Bopp was bidding us an early farewell, as it traversed its ever-smaller arc across the sky. Les Dickson was busy taking some pictures to finish off his film while Ellen was even busier tracking satellites and meteors. She, is, in my opinion, the Queen of meteor finders, coming across at least 10 that night. I was tracking down more Messiers, and Erich finally decided to start on his Messier Certificate. The beauty of observing with others is in being able to share equipment and views with those around you. The Dicksons left around midnight, while Erich and I stayed on until 2:00 A.M. looking at the Sombrero Galaxy (**M104**) and **M5** repeatedly. Some of the usual Messier proved to be more spectacular out there under truly dark skies.

Near the end of our session. A hip new observing technique was developed by Erich, in that he donned his sunglasses to look at Mars (too cool, man!). This was a great way to see the markings of this planet in greater detail.

Hence, we all had a great time. I wish more of you could have been there. I will try to call some of you earlier in the week to remind you of our next observing session in on Friday June 6th or Saturday June 7th. Keep looking up!!

Saskatchewan Summer Star Party: YOUR HELP NEEDED!

Our first full-scale "starfest" looks like a winner. Most of the twenty non-camping units the resort saved for us have been reserved, registration income has already climbed past \$500, and inquiries keep flooding in--one just came in from New Mexico. There is every indication that the Saskatchewan Summer Star Party will be our opportunity to make a big hit on the Canadian and North American astronomy scene.

BUT only if we can conduct this big event as professionally as possible. Most registrants will be forgiving; they know it's our first time. Nevertheless, these people, have entrusted us with their hard-earned cash from many miles away: they deserve our very best "shot"! We owe them as good an observing experience as conditions permit, good talks and presentations, courteous, efficient organization and decent meals.

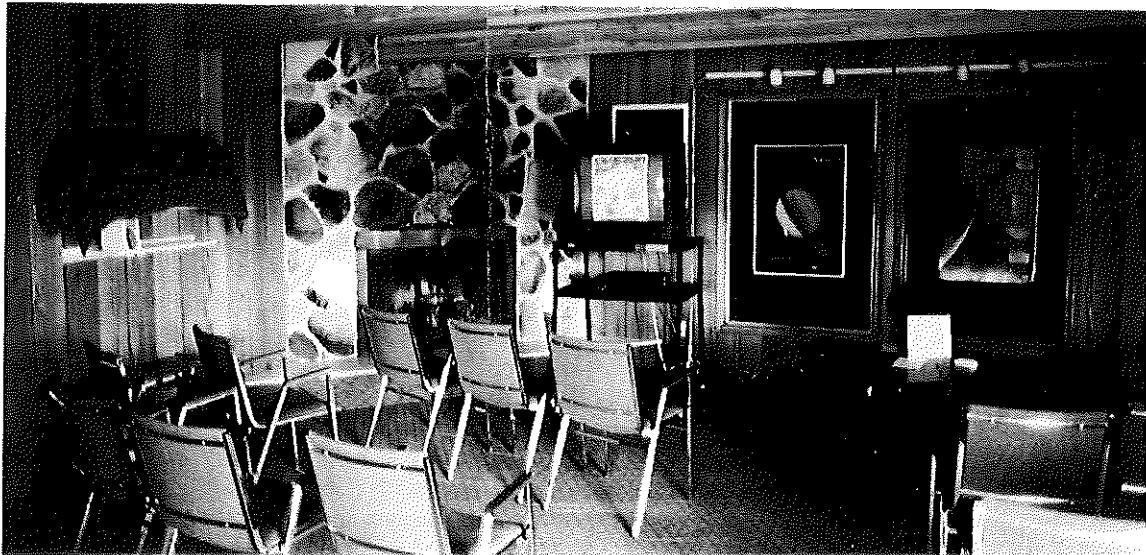
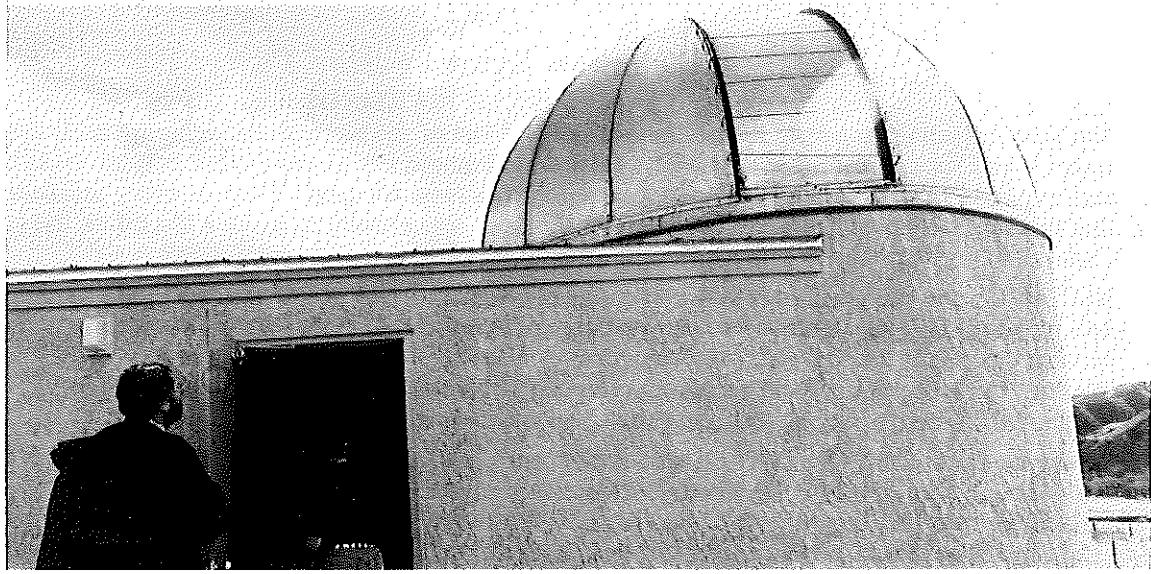
It *can* be done: Ontario's Starfest, which has run for a dozen years and last year topped 600 attendees, is conducted by the North York Astronomy Club, which is no larger than our Centre. Similarly, the 30 member Lethbridge Astronomy Society has hosted very successful (150+ attendee) events similar to SSSP in Waterton Park. (And each of these 'clubs' runs *a pair* of observatories as well!) Thus, this event should be well within our capacities as a sixty member organization, especially with the help of another Centre.

However, in order for the Saskatchewan Summer Star Party to be a successful --and an *enjoyable*--event for all concerned, every member and supporter will have to lend a hand wherever she or he can. Only in this way can ALL of us a chance to observe and relax as well as work, and to meet and make friends with those who have come to our "party" from as far away as Montreal (and perhaps garner an invitation to New Mexico for January 1998!)

Things are shaping up. A dozen members are already helping and there have been two very productive committee meetings (everyone is welcome!) at the Mysyks. **Kim Mysyk** has done a great job of setting up a "volunteer matrix" and coordinating a phoning of our membership by **Kirt Headley** and **Pat Lafournaise**. **Debbie Mysyk** has continued **Sandy Ferguson's** efforts by providing much-needed leadership and a detailed budget for the meals. **Bob Christie's** slick brochure has gained widespread praise, and **Al Hartridge** is organizing the photo contest. **Darrell Chatfield** and **Brian Friesen** will be running security and traffic, and even our faraway **John and Jill Leppert** of North Dakota have heroically offered to pitch in (after a ten or twelve hour drive!). **Rick Huziak** is handling registrations, while this humble scribe is, as usual, running around like that proverbial chicken to coordinate the whole effort, maintain a liaison with the Park and Regina Centre, answer Email inquiries and "plant" articles and notices everywhere possible.

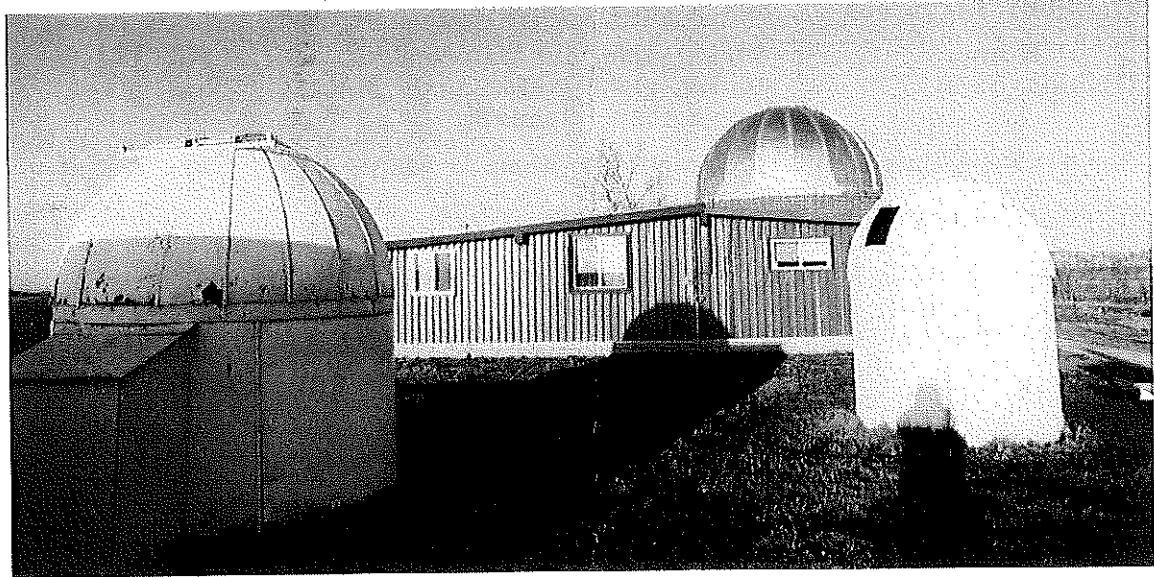
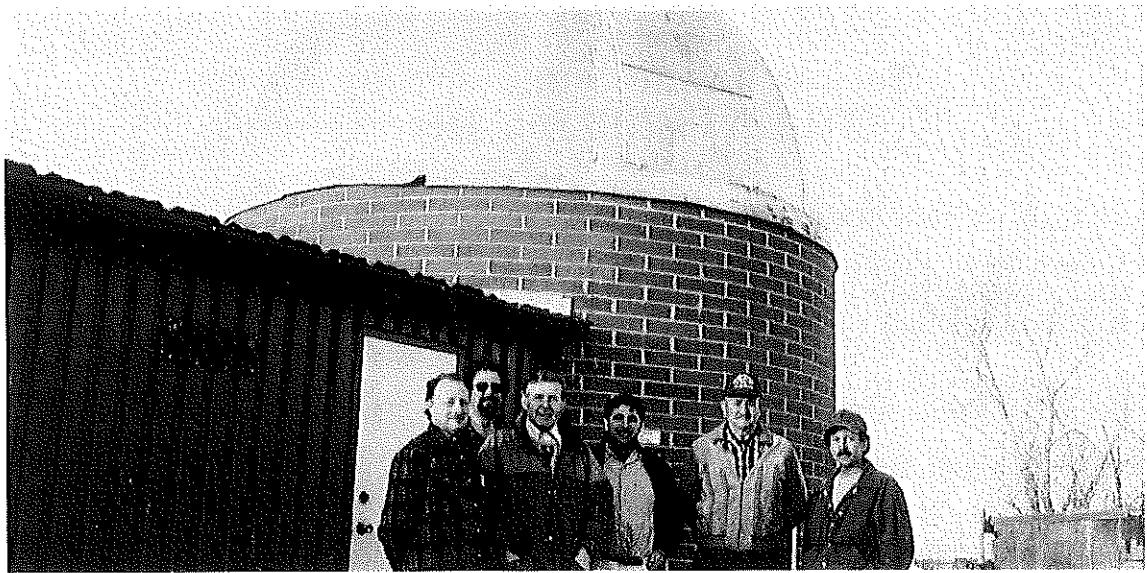
Much remains to be done. While our Regina colleagues, who are already organizing the Public Observing and T-shirts, have offered to help, we still need many more volunteers to help with **security, cooking and serving, registration and much more***.

PLEASE HELP: SEE THE JOB CHART & DESCRIPTIONS ON P. 10



photos by Erich Keser

The thirty member Lethbridge Astronomy Society operates a 16 inch Optical Systems Ritchey-Chretien Telescope in a well-designed observatory and holds meetings and public classes in a lovely 2-storey house made available by the city in return for their public education activities. They are also paid to conduct Astronomy lab courses at the C-14- equipped University Observatory.



photos by Erich Keser

The smaller Medicine Hat Astronomy Club also operates a 16 inch telescope. In this case a 16" Starliner with both a Cassegrain and a Newtonian focus in an unusual brisk and Stainless steel domed observatory. They also have regular monthly public starnights in their comfortable clubhouse. Note the member "mini-domes" clustered around the site like a miniature Mauna Kea!

Saskatchewan Summer Star Party: VOLUNTEER Job Descriptions:

(developed by Kim Mysyk)

Job (& Coordinator):	Duties:	Time Frame:
1. Security & Traffic (Darrell Chatfield & Brian Friesen)	Guide incoming traffic, preserve darkness, Patrol Meadows and Sat. particularly telescope set-up area.	Fri. PM AM&PM* Sun. AM
2. Transportation (Kim & Debbie Mysyk)	Transport food, utensils, misc. items and displays from Saskatoon	Thur&Fri Sunday (return)
3. Set-Up and Removal TBA	Unload, Set up hall tables, chairs & displays, set up&take down kitchen	Friday PM Sat. night
4. MEALS (Hall) Breakfast (? Sandy Ferguson)	Flip & serve Pancakes, set tables make coffee, pour Juice, cleanup.	Sat. AM
Dinner* (Debbie Mysyk)	Make salad, cut watermelons, set tables, make coffee, pour Juice, serve food, cleanup.	Sat. PM Sat. Evg.
5. GOFER (2 needed)	Pick up misc. items in Maple Crk	Fri. & Sat.
6. Registration	Register People at Site	Fri. PM& Sat.

If you can help in any of these areas, or in any other way,
Please call Kim Mysyk at 374-2485 or Erich Keser at 374-4262.

***** Latebreaking Saskatchewan Star Party News

We've hired as Professional: After much discussion and more trepidation the SSSP committee has decided to invite Jim Saville, proprietor of the highly touted Spring Valley Guest Ranch, to perform his **Pitchfork Barbecue** for our dinner banquet. This regional specialty (none of those sissy little finger forks for us westerners!) was suggested by **Conservation Officer Rick Goett** as we toured the facilities. It will cost us more than BBQing our own steaks would, but thanks to Mr. Saville's reasonable pricing this delicacy (which costs \$15, as a full meal, at the Park Resort) will still fit within our budget, and HEY us kitchen "staff" will want a chance to observe and socialize too!

Single Day Admission: As a special courtesy to very busy people from our own Centre, as well as those from such nearby communities as Medicine Hat, we have decided to charge a flat fee of \$10 for Single Day admission.

Erich Keser

JUNIOR ASTRONOMERS' REPORT

The first year of our Junior Astronomers' program is drawing to a close and it has been very successful. We began on October 11th with six young astronomers, Graeme Hartridge, Heather Mysyk, Ariel Solose-Keser, Martine Drew, Tomas Borsa and Brenna Wright and over the winter gained Bridget Martin, Erin Degenstein, Olaf Lokken, Jessica Chatfield and Stacey Olson. Most of our meetings were held at the space club facility at Alvin Buckwold School, but on two occasions everyone came to my place. The space club is a fantastic place to be, but was a bit too large and interesting for eleven curious and energetic kids to stay put for an hour! There were times when it was difficult to keep track of them!

Our meetings were a mixed bag. We combined slide presentations, discussion, crafts and, of course, observing, when it was feasible. Unfortunately, only three meeting nights were clear enough to observe. We did, get to look at the moon, Orion and its main features and Comet Hale-Bopp. Early on we made planispheres, and each meeting night highlighted specific objects that were then visible. As the night sky this winter and spring was so interesting, we focused on Saturn, Mars, the lunar eclipse in March and, of course, the comet, as well as the constellations and objects within them. Everyone was encouraged to keep log books, which were special sheets, each covering a two-week period, with areas to record sky observations and 14 circles to record the phase of the moon each night. When at the school we observed from the playground, which had a good horizon, but many lights; when at my place we went into the alley behind my building, which doesn't have much of a horizon, but is surprisingly dark. For these objects high in the south, it was quite suitable.

We tried to keep the meetings easy-going, but a good learning experience. The children are in school all week and don't need more school-like conditions on a Friday night. Everything we suggested in the way of 'homework' was strictly optional. For example, they didn't have to keep the log books, if they chose not to. Star charts, moon maps and the like were provided along with other hand-outs, so they were able to use them with the help of their parents, if necessary, when they were at home. They all seemed to enjoy themselves, so the classes appear to have been successful!

I would really like to start a kids' program again this fall. I hope that the same gang will return and we will find additional interested junior astronomers to join us. This winter I ran two other kids' astronomy sessions--a 6 week program for the Nutana Community Association and a 4 -week one for the J.S. Wood Library. There were 12 children in the first group and 30 in the latter. Not one child dropped out of either group! So, there is a lot of interest in astronomy in the 9-12 age bracket. I would like to keep focusing around that age group--say 8-11 or 12. If some members would like to see a program for younger children, and we get enough interest, we could consider this. I would appreciate member input on this. An additional program like this would, however, require a bit of help from other members. Calgary Centre runs a full program for about 80 young members, divided into a Beginners, Intermediate and Senior categories, so it can be done.

After almost 20 years (yes, 20 years!) of bringing astronomy to young people, I've learned that it is almost impossible to mix up the age groups. The younger ones may not have the attention span to take in what the older ones are learning and the older ones get bored if you make it too elementary for the younger ones. For about 5 years I ran the Junior Astronomers at the National Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa. The first year we had one complete group of children ages 7-14, but we had a lot of difficulty keeping them all happy. The second year we divided them up into 7-10's and 11-14s and it was clear sailing from then on.

We had some great help with the Juniors this year--Carol Cadrain, one of the Space Club instructors, kept us supplied with star maps from her computer; Kim Mysyk filled in for me one night and he and Erich also did telescope duty on the few clear nights we had, and Darrell Chatfield fixed the remote for my aging slide projector, so now I can talk and push buttons at the same time!

Sandy Ferguson

ASTRONOMY DAY 1997

Another Astronomy Day has come and gone and the general opinion is that it has been the most successful one in a number of years. We suspect this was due to Comet Hale-Bopp's popularity.

April 12th was a gorgeous, warm day--a sharp contrast to some of our previous days, some of them later in the spring, when we experienced all manner of foul weather. Murphy's Law being what it is, this was the first year we didn't plan our usual public starnight, as we felt it was just too early in the season to expect nice weather! Ah, well...

We set up our display tables and telescopes at Wildwood Mall (we were initially to have been in the Mall at Circle and 8th, but got bumped down the Mall at the last minute). It turned out to be a good area, as we were situated just inside one of the entrance ways, not far from Wal-Mart. In addition to the usual books, periodicals, hand-outs and other table items, we had some of Don MacKinnon's and Bob Christie's excellent photos of the comet. These drew a lot of interest from passers-by, some of whom were eager to buy photographs (a future fund-raiser?). Although we had notified all media sources of our display at the Mall, we were surprised to have both the CBC and CFQC turn up with their cameras to record our activities. Bob Christie was interviewed by CFQC, and thus appeared on both their 6:00 PM and late night news, while Jim Young and Scott Alexander dealt with the CBC and appeared on the CBC late news. My granddaughters were thrilled to see themselves on TV; the CFQC report showed Brianna (5) and Jayme (1 1/2) busy at the telescopes!

We had a record number of visitors join our temporary membership program this year. This free program invites interested persons to attend our meetings and receive our newsletter for a 3 month trial period, and to visit our observatory on at least one occasion. It is a popular way of enticing new members, who may not want to commit themselves to full membership right off the bat. The event also gave us the opportunity to advise school teachers and other educators of our Society and most expressed their interest in inviting us to make presentations at their facilities. This, too, helps to spread the word that our Centre exists here in Saskatoon.

As mentioned previously, this was the most successful Astronomy Day in many years. Thanks to Al Hartridge, Bob Christie, Brian Friesen, Jim Young, Scott Alexander, Brenna Wright, Rick Huziak, Amy Huziak, Erich Keser, Ariel Solose-Keser, Dan Kulak, Kim Mysyk, Heather Mysyk, Darrell Chatfield, Les and Ellen Dickson and Brianna and Jayme Kantor, all of whom assisted at the tables during the day, and to everyone else who provided time and telescopes. Thanks, too, to Don MacKinnon for the loan of his photos. See you all next year, when Astronomy Day will be May 2nd.

Sandy Ferguson

UPCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, MAY 10TH - ASTRONOMY DAY PUBLIC STARNIGHT: Our first starnight of the summer season takes place at Beaver Creek Conservation Area. The starnight is open to everyone, begins at dusk and admission is free. This starnight is being announced in the media and around town and we hope to get a lot of interest. Everyone in the group who can provide their telescope and time will be needed. Please call Sandy Ferguson at 931-3184 if you can be part of the fun!

Such public Starnights are an important recruiting opportunity for our Centre. Volunteers and telescopes are needed to make both events successful. Please participate!

FRIDAY, MAY 9th - JUNIOR ASTRONOMERS' GROUP: There has been interest in extending the Juniors' meetings into May and perhaps June. Therefore, a meeting will be held at Sandy Ferguson's place (11-238 Main Street) at 8:30 p.m.. All children between the ages of 7-12 are welcome. Please call me at 931-3184 for more information and to let me know if your children are interested in joining the regular group.

BINOCULAR GROUP MEETING: Kirt Headley (683-0251) and Brian Friesen (384-2963) are making tentative arrangements to hold another binocular night. This is an excellent way to learn the sky or to refresh your knowledge of it. Proposed dates are Friday, June 6th or Saturday, June 7th. To find out more, or to join the group, please contact Kirt or Brian at the above numbers.

OBSERVING SESSION: Friday June 6th. 9:30 PM, Sleaford Schoolsite (New Observatory Site: Try some really dark skies for a change! We may car pool or meet as a convoy, so please call Darrell at 374-9278 to confirm arrangements, find out the best route for yourself, and get a final check on the weather. Cloud/ date is Sat. May 3rd.

ALSO:

BEST WISHES to Barbara Wright and Jim Young, who will be married on the May long weekend here in the city. The same to David Levy and Wendee (David is on our mailing list), who were married in Arizona in March. **PEACE, LIVE LONG AND PROSPER!**

Sandy Ferguson

Welcome New Members and membership changes:

Renewals:

Robin Friesen, #104 - 107 Reindeer Rd, Saskatoon, S7K 4W8, phone 242-0705

Jim Patterson, Cambridge Bay, PO Box 58, NWT, X0E 0C0, ph. (403) 983-2860

Correction to Membership List - Address Change

John Leppert - change address to - 1101 Westwood St. #209, Bismarck, ND 58504-6292, phone (701) 222-3283, e-mail denebobs@btigate.com

Minutes of the General Meeting

1. Meeting called to order at 8:00 PM.
 2. **1997 RASC Calendars** one left at \$10.00 (SOLD to Kirt Headley)
 3. **Astronomy day & 4. Gastronomy report** - see minutes of executive meeting.
 5. **Laird Starnight** - Rick will give a talk followed by viewing. He will need some volunteers to bring out a few telescopes and show things to the public.
 6. **New Observatory update** - please see the minutes of the executive meeting.
 7. Speakers for the next general meeting: Les Dickson "The New Generation of Space Telescopes" and Dr. Garry Davis of ISAS "Using the JCMT".
 8. Former member Doug Miller has lots of things for sale. The price on many items is negotiable.
 9. **Programs:**
Rick Huziak reported on his visit to the **Edmonton Centre** to do a slide presentation on the Sask. **Summer Star Party**. The mileage was covered by his educational presentations to a school in Senlac, Saskatchewan sponsored by the **Innovators Program**.
 - Erich Keser reported on similar SSSP presentations to the **Calgary Centre, Lethbridge Astronomy Society** and the **Medicine Hat Astronomy Club**, and gave a detailed slide presentation showing their observatories and (wonderfully spacious!) clubhouse. Report on swing by Cypress Hills Park, and **SSSP**.
 - Hale Bopp Extravaganza:** Slide shows by Brian Friesen, Bill Hydomako and photos by Don MacKinnon, Darrell Chatfield and Gord Sarty of Comet Hale-Bopp. Many of these images were of excellent quality.
- 10. Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM=====**

OBSERVATORY BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETS

The first meeting of the observatory building committee was held at my place at 8 p.m. on April 28. Present were **Al Hartridge, Stan Cisna, Bob Christie, Merlyn Melby, Rick Huziak, Bill Hydomako** and myself. The building layout scheme on the Sleaford site was discussed. The current vision is similar to the sketch made by Rick Huziak in the March issue of Saskatoon Skies except that the Rystrom warmup shelter will probably be added and provision will be made for a clubhouse-type building at least 16 by 24 feet in size. The exact layout will be determined at the second meeting where we will have scale models of the buildings and property to play with. It was agreed that the first construction activity to take place should be the drilling of holes for the building piles and telescope piers to be followed by form construction for any additional concrete structures, followed by pouring the concrete. By the time all that happens, it will probably be winter again. In parallel with the site activity it would also be possible to, for example, assemble the metal dome for the 16 inch telescope observatory in Al's backyard.

The next committee meeting will take place at **Bob Christie's: 143 Perreault Cr., 8PM on Tues May 20.**

TELESCOPE LOANER PROGRAM As of April 29, 1997, the Centre's loaner telescopes are:

3.1 inch Tasco Refractor: Returned to G. Sarty, Mar. 31/97.

4 inch Astroscan Reflector: Borrowed by Sandy Ferguson (931-3184) since Jan 20/97.

6 inch Rich Field Reflector: Borrowed by Ron Schnor (343-1256) since Sept. 22/96.

If you wish to borrow a telescope, please phone the person who has the telescope to arrange for pick-up and/or phone me at 655-2332 to let me know what's going on or to make other arrangements.

Gord Sarty

MINUTES OF April 21st 1997 EXECUTIVE MEETING

1. Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM.
2. **The Saskatchewan Star Party:** A Committee met at the Mysyk's house and discussed many concerns. A division of labor will be necessary. It was decided that we will do our own cooking. It was also decided to rent the hall for the Friday as well. Presentations on SSSP by Rick H. in Edmonton, and Erich K. Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat were well received.
3. **Astronomy Day:** There was a fairly good response from the public and we were swamped by the press (TV) because of the interest in the comet. We had a good group of volunteers to staff the display and there was keen interest in a clucking noise that appeared to be coming from the vicinity of Scott's telescope. Brian was sure he could count at least five spots on the sun until we advised him that they were only dead flies on the sky light.
4. **Gastronomy Night.** This was held in conjunction with astronomy day. About twenty people came out for a meal at the Saskatoon German Club. Many of us enjoyed the food and conversation and teasing but as always there were a disgruntled few who felt they had to wait too long for their food and had other complaints.
5. **Laird Starnight:** Rick will give a seminar followed by a starnight on May 6th or 7th.
6. **MAY 10 Astronomy Day Public Starnight:** will be at Beaver Creek Nature Center.
7. **New Observatory update:** A preliminary partnership agreement was made available. A site committee was chosen, Gord Sarty will chair this group and the first meeting will be at Gord's house on Monday April 28th at 8:00 PM.
8. Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Executive and General Meeting Minutes
were submitted by Dr. Alan Hartridge.

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**Get the RASC Handbook and Journal, plus Sky News and
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Make cheques payable to RASC Saskatoon and send them to RASC Saskatoon Centre,
PO Box 317, RPO University, Saskatoon, SK, S7N 4J8, or pay at the General Meeting

Put this on your Calendar!
Another great Star Party by one of our members:

NORTHERN PRAIRIE STAR FEST, August 1-3rd, 1997.

Sponsored by Deneb Observatory and the Northern Sky Astronomical Society, will be held under the very dark pristine skies near the North Dakota-Manitoba border during the August 1-3 weekend. NPSF97 will be the third annual star party held on a wheat farm next to an amateur observatory, 7 mi (11.3 kms) west & one mi (1.6 km) south of Sarles, ND.

Ample space is provided for telescopes, tents, camper trailers, and motor homes. Registrants are provided electricity (telescope drives, CCD equipment, camping), water, food/ beverage refrigeration, and bathroom/shower facilities at no additional charge. Motel space is available at Rolla, 27 miles SW of the NPSF97 site, and a hard-surfaced airport is located there as well.

Additionally, guided day trips are planned to Spruce Woods Provincial Park (Mb), and to the International Peace Gardens (North Dakota-Manitoba border). The annual Saturday BBQ, paper presentations, photo contest, and swap meet will round out the daytime activities.

Last year participants came from Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Saskatchewan. Many have again made plans to attend, and three additional groups are expected to arrive from Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Registration fees are \$15 (\$20 CDN) per person, and \$20 (\$27 CDN) for families. The optional barbecue is \$10 (\$13 CDN) for adults and \$4 (\$5 CDN) for children. A 10% discount is offered for all advance fee payments made by July 15.

Further queries and a registration packet request can be e-mail 73424.3533@compuserve.com or mailed to **John Leppert**, 1101 Westwood Street #209, Bismarck, ND 58405-6292.



*The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
La Société royale d'astronomie du Canada*

1997 RASC General Assembly
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Details about registration fees and accommodation arrangements available from Kim Hay, 1997 RASC GA Registration, 1462 Leland Road, RR2, Perth Road, ON, K0H 2L0 Web site: <http://www1.kingston.net/~rasc/ga.htm>