

AURORA



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The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Windsor Centre

Dec 2006

Message from the (new) Prez . . . by Pierre Boulos

First, I would like to wish everyone the brightest... oh, alright the darkest and clearest for 2007! I hope all had a restful and enjoyable holiday season. December always brings many occasions to celebrate: from the RASC December social, to workplace parties, to Hanukkah, to Christmas, Kwanza, and various other holidays. For astronomers, both amateur and professional, we relish in the Solstice, if not Isaac Newton's birthday that follows a few days later.

This January, our RASC Windsor Centre welcomes a whole new team for Council and the Executive. I look forward to working with everyone in order to carry on the Windsor Centre's history of being a solid, friendly, and exciting node in the RASC network.

Five planets should be visible to us over the next few months. We have a Lunar eclipse to amaze us in late winter and then again in early summer. With our own Hallam Observatory Open Houses, Messier Marathons, Astronomy Day activities, and observing get-togethers, there will be ample opportunities for all of us to get out and observe with fellow Centre members. I urge us all to take advantage of our gem, Hallam Observatory, but most of all to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge that our Centre's members have. One new feature for the coming year will be a team of "directors" of observing. We can look forward to an exciting monthly report from any one of Steve Pellarin, Steve Mastellotto, Randy Groundwater, Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu, and Dan Taylor. Thanks in advance go to our "Directorate of Observing."

I must admit that I begin a new year as president with a little bit of trepidation. Over the years I've seen and witnessed the stellar leadership of our Centre. In recent memory, our Centre has successfully competed for a Trillium Foundation grant, moved and installed our Hallam Observatory, purchased a new telescope, kept our membership numbers around one hundred, and kept our finances in a sound framework. Steve Mastellotto's tenure as president is one tough act to follow! So now you see the source of my trepidation. What's a city boy like me supposed to do? Thankfully our membership has spoken in the recent survey. Our council will be visiting the survey data to see how we can build on the solid foundation we already have. I hope for and welcome any suggestions from members, so please do not hesitate to communicate these to anyone on council. My trepidation melts away when I reflect on all the devoted energy that we have in our centre.

Here's to a prosperous 2007 for RASC, RASC Windsor Centre and to each of us and our loved ones! Let's make it good.

Clear skies ... Pierre

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Calendar of Events

Our next meeting...

Tuesday, January 16, 2007 8:00 p.m.
at
K of C Maidstone Recreation Centre
10720 County Road 34 (Old Hiway 3)

Main Speaker...

Paul Preney

Topic...

Astronomy computer programs

Coming Events

Astronomical Events:

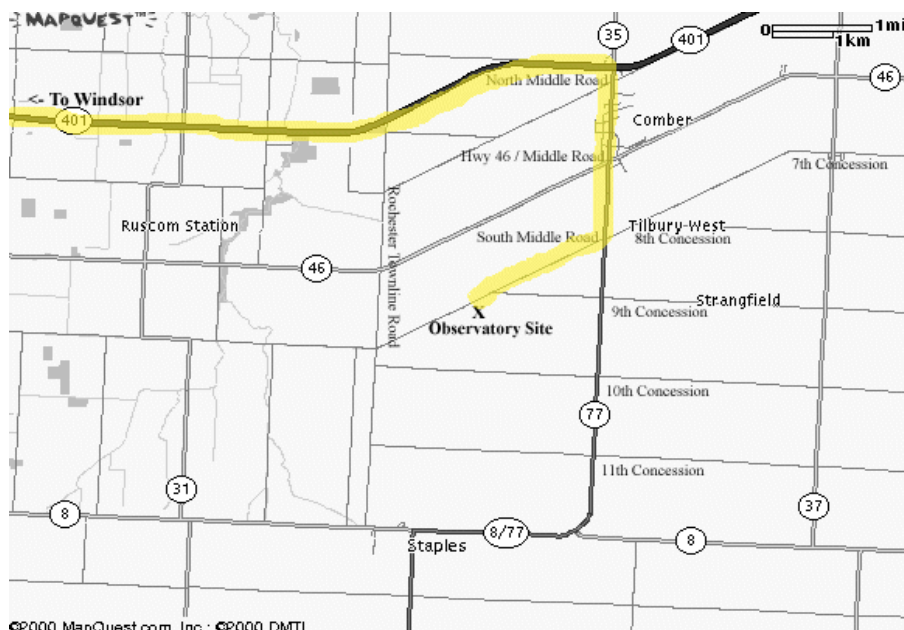
January 3 Quadrantid meteor shower
January 3 Full Moon
March 3 Moonrise Total Lunar Eclipse
 (east of Saskatchewan) - See the
 Observer's Handbook page 121

Observatory Open House (Saturdays):

SATURDAY	Start	Moon age
January 27	7:00 p.m.	9 days
February 24	7:00 p.m.	7 days

See last page for a year's list

Feb 13th Council Meeting at Pierre Boulos'



Hallam Observatory Site

Directions: The map above shows the Comber area and it includes the major highways (401, 77, 8 and 46) that are in the area of the observatory.

The most direct route from Windsor is "highlighted" on the map which is to take 401 East to Highway 77 South to South Middle Road. While on South Middle Road you go about 1 kilometer and just after the barely discernable point where Concession 9 joins it you will find the observatory site on the South side of the road.

If you hit the Rochester Townline Road (i.e. you come to a stop sign and have to turn left or right) you have gone too far.

Submissions

Aurora is published monthly except for August. The October, December, February, April and June issues are full newsletters (usually 6 pages) with a number of member submitted articles. The November, January, March, May and July issues are short flyers (2 pages) with one short article. September is a dual issue with the full 6 page newsletter mailed just **before** the meeting and a flyer available **at** the meeting. Submitted articles can be of any length from a paragraph to multiple pages. I can scan pictures and/or diagrams (both prints and film) to support your article and the originals will be returned to you. Submission deadline is the 1st of the month.

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Ass't: Dan Anzovino

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Email: danzovino@sympatico.ca

Membership

The Windsor Centre of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada meets on the 3rd Tuesday of every month (except July and August) at the K of C Maidstone Recreation Centre. In addition to regular meetings the centre hosts a number of observing nights, a picnic and a December social. Members receive a copy of the Observer's Handbook, the RASC Journal (optional at extra cost), a subscription to SkyNews magazine and access to the Centre's library and telescopes.

Annual Membership Fees are Regular - \$55.00, Youth - \$34.25 and Life - \$2100.00. **** NOTE New Rates ****

Contact Ken Garber at (519) 966-3478 or visit our website at: <http://www.mnsi.net/~rasc> for more information.

Your Windsor Centre Council for 2007

Honorary President	Dr. William Bayliss
President	Dr. Pierre Boulos
1st Vice-President	Paul Pratt
2nd Vice-President	Tina Chichkan
Secretary	Dave Panton
Treasurer	Ken Garber
National Council Representative	Tim Bennett
Alternate	Steve Mastellotto
Councilors	Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu, Paul Preney, Steve Pellarin Robin Smallwood, Rev. Harry Brydon, C. Joady Ulrich Ken ROUNG, Dan Anzovino, Donna Ronconi, Art Rae Mike Mastronardi, Tom Sobocan
Aurora Editor	Ken Garber
Librarian	Rick Marion
Directors of Observing	Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu Steve Pellarin Steve Mastellotto Randy Groundwater Dan Taylor
Director of Public Education	Randy Groundwater

Treasurer's Report for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2006

Approved at Centre meeting on November 21st, 2006

REVENUE

(Rounded off)

General Subject	Detailed Subject	Amount	Comments
Membership	membership dues for forwarding	\$ 969.00	payments TO RASC
	Membership Fees (Regular)	\$2754.00	payments FROM RASC
	Life Membership Grants	\$ 88.00	Received each January for their life members
Donations/Fundraising	Donations	\$ 174.00	
Educational Activities		\$ 302.00	
Interest		\$ 3.00	
Publication Sales	Observer's Handbooks		
	Observer's Calendars	\$ 456.00	
	Beginner's Observing Guides	\$ 18.00	
Product Sales	Other items	\$ 16.00	
Obs. site/rent/loan	observatory fee	\$ 645.00	Observatory Access Fee
Miscellaneous		\$ 65.00	(Items that don't fit above)
	50/50-refreshment proceeds	\$ 221.00	Meetings
TOTAL REVENUE		\$5711.00	

EXPENDITURES

Item	Details	Amount	Comments
Publications	Newsletter	\$ 210.00	
	Handbook	\$ 96.00	
	BOG	\$ 85.00	
	Calendar	\$ 469.00	
	Other Publications	\$ 101.00	Magazines
Events	Meetings	\$1098.00	
	Annual Dinner	\$ 127.00	
	Astronomy Day	\$ 50.00	
	Other Events	\$ 109.00	annual picnic
Product Expenses	Other items	\$ 300.00	planispheres
Insurance		\$1409.00	
Awards and Donations			
Observatory and Site Expenses		\$1906.00	
Miscellaneous	Internet Service – MNSi	\$ 128.00	Any items not covered by the above.
	Monies forwarded to RASC	\$1715.00	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$7803.00	

SURPLUS OR DEFICIT		-\$2092.00	Profit or Loss for fiscal year.
ASSETS	Liquid assets	\$5399.00 \$ 50.00	Banks account balance petty cash
	Capital assets	\$75,000	Scopes, observatory
LIABILITIES		Nil	

“County shrouded in fog” radio reports began the great day. Windsor airport weather “Visibility three miles, scattered clouds at 1500 feet, solid layer of clouds at 2500 feet, winds a mere 4 mph from West”. The fog was expected to clear but the rest of the weather was to be pretty much the same. At least it was mild and there was no rain. Hopes for a sighting were very dim.

Given a brief thin spot in the overcast there might be a tiny chance of witnessing a few moments of the event. We have the equipment in the Henry Lee telescope, and if set tracking along the cloud base there might be a hint of Mercury. The affair could waste most of one’s afternoon. It was a poor gamble at best.

There was another project at Hallam that day. Al DesRosiers was ready to install the new custom made full cut off security light fixture high on the steel pole. The day would not be a total loss. The telescope was set up to observe the Sun and track it somewhere above the grey sky while the light fixture installation progressed. It went pretty well other than the usual problem in finding the most needed tool was back at home. Innovation solved this one. The transit was to start at 2:12 p.m. and last well past Sun down.

Approaching 3:30 the clouds began to brighten in the Sun’s area.

At the eyepiece with the Sun filter securely on the telescope nothing could be seen. Suddenly the Sun broke through and focus was found. Sunshine flooded the dome! Mercury was there, a perfect little round black dot on the face of the Sun.

Slewing around to see the entire surface of the Sun there was one Sunspot with a centre nearly as large as Mercury. It had a patch of surrounding grey, giving it the appearance of a fried egg in black and white.. Two other Sun spots were easily visible. There may have been more. The clouds made it pretty obvious we were not to have much time and at 4:00 p.m. a solid layer of black clouds wiped out the rest of the day.

There were only four of us on site at the time. One more arrived and ran to the observatory to catch the last couple of minutes observing time. Another came flying down the road only to miss by about seven minutes.

Having the security light project to keep us busy and helped the afternoon pass quickly. It daylight tested perfectly. Now we need some observing nights to see if it is reliable and to see if the cut off fixture does it’s job. Seeing a little of the transit of Mercury was a very nice bonus.

Celestial Alerts by Email

Want a heads-up on astronomical events?

Try out <http://www.calsky.com>

At this site you can subscribe to receive notices of aurora alerts, good ISS passes, Shuttle and Iridium flares, satellites and ISS transiting the sun or planets, your detailed daily celestial calendar, or simply get warned of the full moon by email.

You will need to get a login account to use the mail feature. The program attempts to find your location but you need to login and tweak it if it’s wrong. On my first login, it thought I was in Windsor Nova Scotia.

Centre Internet Communications

A Newsgroup/discussion board has been set up for Centre members on Yahoogroups. Created by Pierre Boulos, the list is called **RASCWINDSOR**.

To find out more about the *rascwindsor* group and to subscribe, please visit
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rascwindsor>

A Little Fund Raising

Got any Canadian Tire money lying around that you'd like to get rid of?



Why not donate them to the Centre?

To date we've collected almost \$70. Some of this will go towards preparing the site against wasps and other creepies. We're always buying bits and pieces - be it hardware or a can of bug spray.

Bring them along to any meeting and throw them into the box on the treasurer's table, and they will be put to good use.

Time to Renew??

Don't forget that you can renew your membership at the treasurer's desk, by snailmail to the National, or online at the RASC 'store' at

<http://www.store.rasc.ca/>

And don't forget that the printed Journal is now optional extra. Look for the option on your form.

Got Yours yet ??

Still available...

**The 2007 RASC
Calendar . . .
Only \$12.00**

Already have one?

**Then how about a
gift for someone?**



AND also available
(in very limited quantities)...

**The 2007 Observers'
Handbook**

**and the 2006 Observers'
Handbook**



2007 Observatory Open Houses

As compiled by Randy Groundwater

Here is the schedule for the coming year. All are Saturday evenings. The dates will be repeated in the flyer or full newsletter as the dates approach.

Note that the August Open House will not interfere with Starfest / Stellafane, as both are being held the weekend before.

The October Open House is scheduled one week earlier than optimum, in case we're all at Pt. Pelee the following weekend helping out with their planned nature night walk. Here we go:

SATURDAY	Start	Moon age
January 27	7:00 p.m.	9 days
February 24	7:00 p.m.	7 days
March 24	7:30 p.m.	6 days
April 21	8:30 p.m.	4 days
May 19	9:30 p.m.	3 days
June 23	9:45 p.m.	9 days
July 21	9:30 p.m.	7 days
August 18	8:30 p.m.	6 days
September 15	8:00 p.m.	4 days
October 13	7:00 p.m.	2 days
November 17	7:00 p.m.	8 days
December 15	7:00 p.m.	6 days