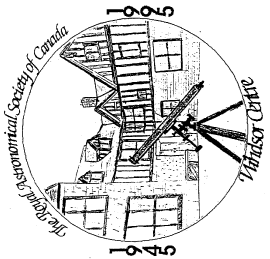




AURORA



September 2010

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Windsor Centre

Volume 36, No. 1



M16 The Eagle Nebula (top) and M20 The Trifid Nebula (bottom) were captured this Summer at Hallam Observatory by Steve Mastellotto. Steve used the AT111 refractor along with his new SBIG ST10XME CCD camera and Hydrogen Alpha filter for these 40 (4 x 10 minute) and 30 (3 x 10 minute) minute exposures respectively.

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Calendar of Events

Our next meeting...

Tuesday October 19, 2010

7:30 p.m.

at

Maidstone K of C Hall

10720 County Road 34 (Old Highway #3)

Main Speaker...

TBD

Topic...

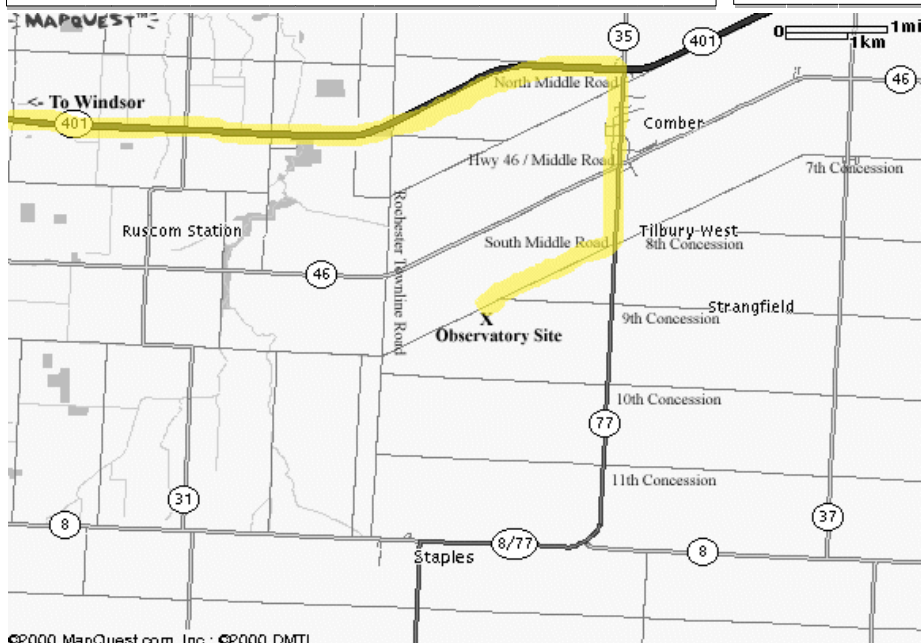
“TBD”

Activities...

Garage Sale: Saturday October 2, 2010 from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at Al DesRosiers' house (149 Lesperance Road, Tecumseh, Ontario). Al is now accepting your donations to the Garage Sale and will also need help setting up the night before and during the day of the Garage Sale. You can contact Al to arrange drop-off of your items, volunteer to help out, or Al has offered to pick-up larger stuff with his trailer. Please contact Al at 519-735-9550 or email him at alandesrosiers@gmail.com

Open House Night at Hallam: Saturday October 9th starting at 7:30 p.m..

Council Meeting: Tuesday October 12, 2010 starting at 7:30 p.m. at Steve Pellarin's house.



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 Highway 401 East to Highway 77 South to South Middle Road. Turn right onto South Middle Road and go about 1 kilometer and just after the point where Concession 9 joins it (it is hard to see this intersection) you will find the observatory site on the South side (left) of the road.

If you hit the Rochester Townline Road (you come to a stop sign) you have gone too far.

Submissions

Aurora is published monthly except for July, August and December. The September, October, January, March and May issues are full newsletters (usually 6 pages) with a number of member submitted articles. The November, February, April and June issues are short flyers (2 pages).

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.

Editor: Steve Mastellotto Email: mmastellotto@cogeco.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, a subscription to SkyNews magazine and access to the Centre's library and telescopes. And optionally the RASC Journal in print form—online version free.

Annual Membership Fees: Please see the RASC website at www.rasc.ca for current rates.

Contact Greg Mockler at (519) 326-7255 or visit our website at: <http://www.rascwindsor.com> for more information.

June 2010 Meeting Minutes by Dave Panton

Minutes from the meeting of June 15th, 2010 at the Maidstone Recreation Centre.

The meeting was chaired by President Paul Pratt. Paul welcomed members and guests. A regular item was dealt with to start by asking for a motion to accept the May minutes. Tina Chichkan provided the motion, Peter Bondy seconded. The motion carried.

Paul introduced our main speaker, Dave McCarter from RASC London Centre to talk about his trip to a privately operated amateur astronomy lodge located in the Atacama high desert in Chile.

Observing from the Atacama Desert

Dave very enthusiastically described skies so clear few of us could ever imagine. He also pointed out the Southern Sky may lack a pole star but it has more gorgeous sights than found in skies seen from our Northern latitudes. He showed many casual night photographs he took just to show the remarkable sky conditions. The new lodge operated by Canadian Allan Murray is quite primitive in a desert area and lacks amenities. It is of prime interest to those wishing to see the remarkable observing conditions in this very dry desert area. It is equipped with several telescopes on pads (used also nightly by people arriving on bus tours from nearby tiny San Pedro).

There are many surrounding natural sights to occupy daylight hours and include hot springs with geysers, salt lakes with rough deposits of salt and the sight of earth movement in the mountains shown by large fault slip cliffs. For epicures San Pedro has many great cafes with reasonably priced foods. There are volcanoes in the area, some still active and very high altitude lakes such as huge Laguna Miscanti at 13,400 feet.

Dave greatly enjoyed the whole ten day experience and shared some tips for others suggesting visiting on Moonless nights in February and March when there is still lots of darkness and generally wide open skies. For sky watchers the lodge is a definite "must visit" destination. An important hint probably good for all travelers, take lots of money!!

Paul thanked Dave for sharing his unusual vacation trip with us.

Then he announced **coffee break and 50/50 draw** to be held on resuming the meeting.

Reports

President, Paul Pratt: Paul announced Peter Bondy won the draw and donated his winnings to the treasury. The usual monthly open house at Hallam is to be held this coming Saturday evening. He also mentioned the June council meeting had been held at Steve Mastellotto's home and there were no announcements regarding the routine meeting.

Secretary, Dave Panton: Dave indicated there were no out-

standing items in his area.

Treasurer, Greg Mockler: Greg reported our current bank balance is \$5,500.65 with no heavy bills outstanding.

Librarian, Rick Marion: Rick was not at the meeting.

Newsletter Editor, Steve Mastellotto: The First issue as we resume regular meetings in September is the full size version so Steve asked for articles and photos taken over the Summer to help fill it out.

Public Education, Randy Groundwater: Randy was unable to attend the meeting.

Public Relations, Peter Bondy: Peter reported the June picnic at Hallam had been a success, rain the main concern. He also observed the deck is in need of refinishing with Thompson Water Seal. Al DesRosiers has begun sanding the benches and railings. Peter suggested holding a vote by e-mail by council member to authorize purchasing the sealer and applicators.

National Council Representative, Mike Mastronardi: Mike will not be able to attend the annual General Assembly. Instead proxies were signed by members at meeting's conclusion for voting by Peter Jedicke on our behalf.

Observing session at Point Pelee, Mike Mastronardi indicated that an observing event has been proposed by park staff for either August 12th or October 16th. There is one major concern in becoming involved when there is a curfew of 11:00 p.m. in the park. Canadian Geographic magazine has publicly queried the wisdom of establishing a dark sky site and prohibiting its use after dark.

Observatory Director, Dave Panton: Rick Marion dropped off the 8 inch Dobsonian we swapped with him for the 12 inch mirror-less Dob donated by a member some years ago. We now have two 8 inch Dobsonian telescopes for use outside. The six inch Dob has attracted a buyer from within the membership and will be sold following a couple of minor modifications. For the convenience of those who wish to shoot guided astrophotos a set of instructions has been written to help occasional users.

Membership, Tina Chichkan: No report.

Light Pollution Abatement, Dan Taylor: As usual Dan's monthly report is on the website.

Short Presentation by Tom Sobocan. Tom shot a variety of photographs at the picnic which he edited and projected. He also showed a number of photographs taken at Families First where Ken Rount was resting prior to his funeral. They highlighted Ken's many talents as an artist in several media.

Director of Observing, Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu: Given this was our last meeting until September Susan first listed the Sum-

(Continued on page 5)

Hallam Happenings by Dave Panton

Comet Hartley has just become visible in the C14 at Hallam and should lead to many interesting observing session this Fall ending a very active Hallam Summer, active in many ways. The great growing conditions kept Al DesRosiers busy cutting a very heavy crop of grass around the observatory and at the observing area along the cedars. Farm owner Moe Trepanier cared for the larger area so the whole operation looked great all Summer.

Our usual monthly open house events were held and well attended. Among the visitors there were many children. In some cases the new telescope mounting allows all to observe but at others the eight inch Dobsonians can be set up outside to see targets like Saturn low in the Western sky where the eyepiece in the dome is too high for young children.

We had visitors from Scotland and China, most enjoying their first look at the night sky through a telescope. Three members brought out groups related to them or to their interests to enjoy some amateur astronomy.

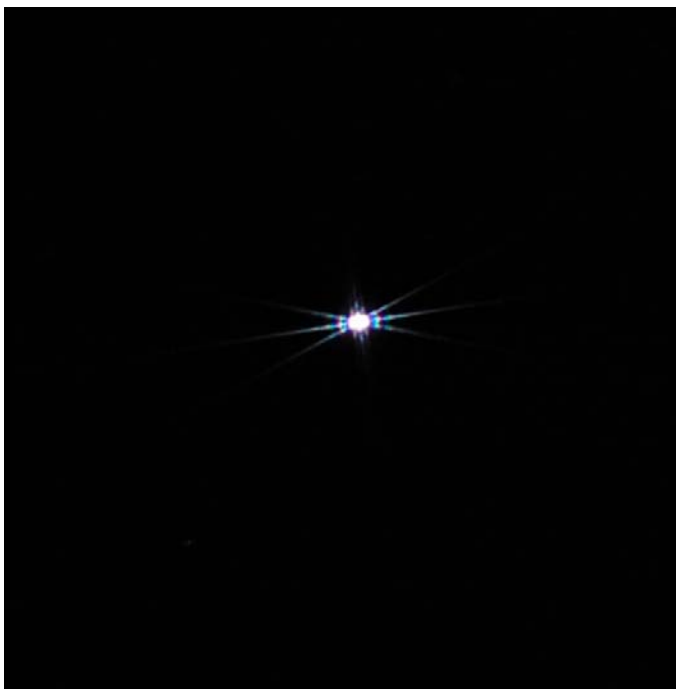
Regulars like Larry Burgess, Ray Drouillard, Randy Groundwater and Pete Romano set up scopes outside through the Summer. Lucky members on the night Steve Pellarin brought out and set up his new 28 inch Dobsonian enjoyed stunning views of familiar sights filled with far more detail than ever seen before.

The August Perseid meteor shower was witnessed from the deck by keen members staying out until the wee hours. There were not as many Perseids as hoped for but none were disappointed, especially those who witnessed one big and bright enough to throw a flash of light on the ground. Two members (Al DesRosiers and I) were fortunate to be at Hallam on a super clear night and observed ripples in some of Jupiter's cloud bands and observe a shadow transit by it's moon Io. Steve Mastellotto's 111mm refractor is ideal for this via it's fine resolution.

Among maintenance items was a major task completed by Al DesRosiers. The deck was showing signs of needing new weather seal protection. After sanding the railings and benches Al coated the entire deck with Thompson Water Seal donated by a member. Al also dealt with our annual hornet problem using sprays purchased via donated Canadian Tire "money". Tina Chichkan took charge of a poor little cat abandoned at Hallam. Instead of becoming a mascot the little guy had to be euthanized when it's health rapidly fell beyond treatment.

Since making the telescope relocation changes, and adding an auto-guider provided by Steve Mastellotto this Spring the telescope has performed admirably. Virtually all targets will appear near center in the 26 mm eyepiece in the C14 when commanded to go to them from the computer in the warm room. As it is the "master" telescope the AT111 frequently has to be realigned to it when looking at different areas in the sky. The reason for this state of affairs is unclear.

Astrophotographers have been taking some very impressive images, most notably Steve Mastellotto with his new highly capable Santa Barbara Instrument Group SBIG ST10 XME ccd camera fitted with a ten position color filter wheel. Others with less capable equipment have been helped in obtaining the ever vital focus by using either "Hartmann" or recently finished "Bahtinov" focus masks made to fit both telescopes.



Dave Panton captured this view of Deneb through the AT111 with Bahtinov mask in place illustrating a properly focused (i.e. centre diffraction line bisects the X of the other diffraction lines) star.

Using the dome involves rotation and the hazard of "crashing" the shutter if it is hung down the back too far when fully open. A new much more visible warning label has been made and installed to help determine safe areas of rotation. Motor driven shutter operation mysteriously slowed to a crawl on initial opening where the mechanical load on the motors is greatest. Al and I removed the motors, found both to operate as normal and traced the problem to need for lubricant on the big Ash Dome worm gear at the top of the shutter opening. All is well again.

A preliminary study of how the dome might be rotated electrically from a control on top of the observing ladder has been done. This would be a major convenience for observers using the telescopes, saving the many trips up and down off the ladder to manu-

ally rotate the dome. A vertical axis 12 volt D.C. motor driving a reduction gear turning it's output shaft about 15 rpm would do the job. Adapting a cable winch drive is a possibility. Ideas are welcome!

A reminder to key holders is in order. For a number of practical reasons it is very important to make an entry in the log book each and every time the observatory is used.

June 2010 Meeting Minutes (continued from page 3)

mer star parties within reasonable driving distances. Then she reviewed the planets positions over the Summer and gave special mention to the Perseid meteor shower peak August 12/13. Comet McNaught is not expected to be a very exciting target. Susan used the program "Earth Centered Universe" (ECU Pro 5.0) to help illustrate her presentation. This evening it chose to be recalcitrant. Susan deserves a medal for completing her presentation in this rather trying circumstance.

East of us near she described the 1.2 meter Elginfield observatory operated by the University of Western Ontario. Neglected and suffering growing light pollution university authorities planned to mothball the facility. Instead a group in London has taken on the task of saving the observatory to use it for a Public Outreach Program. It would become "London's Telescope". In another development East of us, London Centre is planning to build a roll off roof observatory in the Fingal dark sky site. It is located on the former Fingal airfield, built to train WW2 bomber crews and abandoned at war's end.

Paul thanked Susan and **adjourned the meeting** shortly after 10 p.m.

Summer Activities

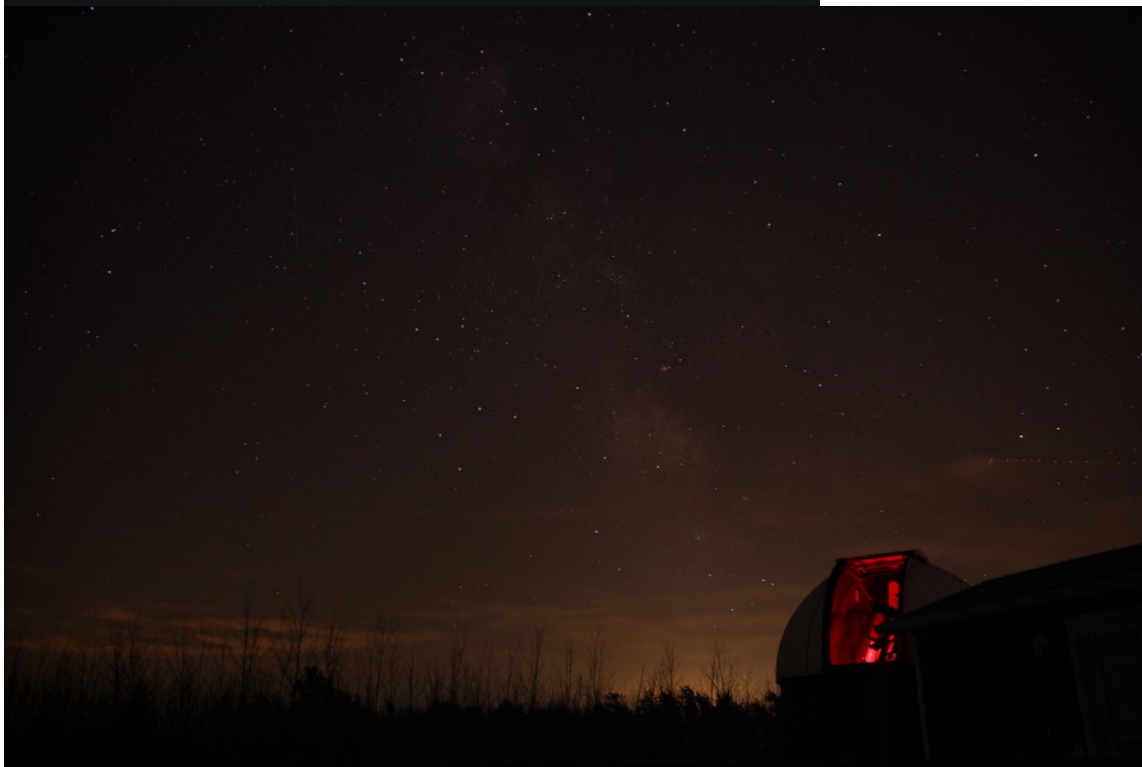


Manitoulin Star Party photos by Dave Gabriele. Top right: Ryan Gabriele, Middle left: Al DesRosiers waiting for nightfall, Middle right: Ryan Gabriele, Dave Gabriele, Tina Chichkan, Al DesRosiers and Randy Groundwater. Bottom left: RASC - Windsor Centre Summer picnic group photo by Steve Mastellotto - we once again escaped any rain however clouds prevented any observing.

Summer Astrophotos



Dave Panton captured Comet 103P/Hartley 2 (above - fuzzy streak at centre) on September 7 using his Nikon DSLR and the AT111 telescope at Hallam Observatory. Dave combined 9 five minute exposures for this image.



Brian Thomas captured a number of scenic photos on the night of August 12th from Hallam Observatory. At top left Moon, Venus and if you look close Mars and Saturn. Middle left is a nice shot of Jupiter rising with a Perseid meteor streaking past. Bottom left is a classic Summer Milky Way shot with Hallam Observatory along with the Henry Lee telescope and a bit of sky glow from Staples.