

the strange discovery of two distinct age classes of stars found within many of the globular star clusters found around the Milky Way.

Director of Observing Report, Brian Thomas: Brian began by asking the audience if anyone had made any observations since the last meeting. Observations included comet **Lovejoy**, the close conjunction of **Mars** and **Venus** low in the western sky at sunset, an observation of the great globular cluster **Omega Centauri** while down in the Everglades (Paul Pratt), a few naked eye sky tours of the constellations with neighbours and some observations of **Jupiter** through various instruments. Steve Mastellotto mentioned that both **Mercury** and **Saturn** should be visible in the morning sky at this time, but that he had only been able to spot Saturn during his brief early morning scans of the sky. Brian pointed out that Dan Taylor had alerted club members of a **new nova** that had been discovered in the constellation Sagittarius. At the time of the meeting, it shone at 6th magnitude in brightness and should have been easily visible in binoculars. Steve Pellarin concurred, saying that he had seen it with 8x50 binoculars the previous weekend while visiting friends in Chicago.

Brian discussed the locations of the planets currently visible. Jupiter's apparent close approach in the sky to the **Beehive star cluster** was also noted. Brian discussed the spring constellation **Hydra**, the water snake. He highlighted some interesting facts about the constellation and a few others close by as well. Brian then went on to review a few interesting spring deep sky objects including the **Coma-Virgo supercluster** of galaxies and a few interesting double stars in **Canes Venatici** and **Ursa Major**. He mentioned that the earth had been buffeted by solar wind storms over the past day or so and that **aurorae** had been visible in central Ontario (to the north of us). He showed a couple of pictures of the sunspots that were identified as the cause. Among the celestial events that he highlighted for the coming month were the short early-morning **lunar eclipse** on April 4th and the **Lyrid meteor shower** peaking right around the time of our next meeting. Brian also took a look at the constellation **Leo the Lion** and some of the bright and interesting galaxies found within it. To illustrate his points, he showed some of his own excellent photos of these faint fuzzies.

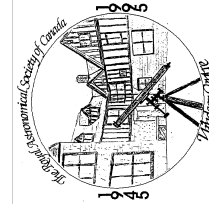
To finish off his report, Brian gave the members an update on the arrival of the **Dawn spacecraft at the dwarf planet Ceres**. A brief discussion of what people had heard and read about the mysterious bright white spot discovered on the asteroid ensued. Brian then left the members with a trivia question about Tycho Brahe - who cut off Tycho's nose in a duel and why did the duel happen? (No one knew the answer).

Matt McCall spoke briefly to the membership about the upcoming **Omega Centauri star party** taking place down at Point Pelee on Saturday night, March 21st and explained where and when to meet. Matt explained that attempted observations of the actual Omega Centauri globular cluster (a real challenge object that can only be viewed from extreme southwestern Ontario) could only take place at around 2:30 a.m., when it just barely clears the horizon. Given the warmer lake conditions, the likelihood of successfully seeing the cluster is fairly low - but you never know until you try!

Mike thanked Brian for his Director of Observing report and reminded the audience that the **next regular membership meeting** would take place on Tuesday, **April 21st at 7:30 p.m.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Recorded by Steve Pellarin, RASC Windsor Centre Secretary.



AURORA



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The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Windsor Centre

April 2015

Flyer

Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

7:30 p.m.

at

[Ojibway Park Nature Centre](#)

5200 Matchette Road

Speaker: **To Be Announced**

Topic: **New Horizons Mission to Pluto**

Upcoming Events

Open House Night at Hallam: The next open house night at Hallam is on **Saturday April 25th at 8:45 p.m.** Come out and see the Moon and Jupiter.

Mercury: Will be visible in the evening sky for the first two weeks of May. It will pass the Pleiades on April 30th and will be at greatest elongation East on **May 6/7**. This will be the best chance to see Mercury in 2015.

Science Rendezvous: On Saturday **May 9** from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. we will be participating in the annual **Science Rendezvous** activities by hosting a table at the University of Windsor CAW Student Centre in the Ambassador Auditorium. Weather permitting there will also be telescopes set up outside for safe Solar observing.

Monthly Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2015

The monthly meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Windsor Centre was held at the Ojibway Park Nature Centre.

Windsor Centre **1st Vice-President, Mike Mastronardi**, chaired the meeting. Mike called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

Mike invited those in the audience to review the minutes of the February meeting which were printed in the monthly newsletter that was provided at the door. Greg Mockler brought forward the motion to accept the minutes of the February 17, 2015 membership meeting, which was seconded by Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Announcements

Mike informed the audience that because of Randy's unexpected absence, the schedule of activities for the evening would be altered as Randy had also planned to present the night's main talk on the upcoming New Horizons mission to Pluto. Mike asked **new members and visitors** to introduce themselves so that they could be properly welcomed - which 6 people did. Mike reminded members and visitors to sign our meeting attendance book.

Mike announced the club would be selling **raffle tickets** (see Greg Mockler at the back of the room) for two large beautiful framed **photographs of Jupiter** that were donated by club member Mike Pataky. Raffle tickets will be sold at the March, April, May and June monthly meetings as well as at our annual June club picnic out at Hallam Observatory. Tickets cost \$1 each and the draw will take place at the June monthly meeting. The person with the winning ticket must be present at the time of the draw with their ticket in hand in order to claim the prize. In case of an unclaimed winning ticket, a new ticket will be immediately drawn until there is a winner. Steve Mastellotto added that the first prize winner drawn will get to pick which of the two images they want, while the second winner will receive the remaining framed image.

Mike mentioned that the **fundraising committee** met to discuss a plan to put together another application for a Trillium grant. Juliana Grigorescu inquired as to exactly what the committee was hoping to do with the grant money. Steve Mastellotto, member of the committee, explained that the idea behind this new grant application was to purchase of a **new mount and possibly optical tube assembly** to replace the current aging equipment inside Hallam Observatory. Steve indicated that the specific items were still up for debate within the committee, but that the telescope mount and its electronics were certainly the key piece of equipment that needed to be looked at for replacement. Mike said that membership could expect to hear a report from the committee in the near future regarding their progress.

Mike noted that the structure of our National Society has undergone major changes with regards to the role of the **National Council Representatives** from each Centre. Reps have been repositioned as more of an advisory board to the RASC executive. Mike explained that as a result of a vote at the last general assembly the Society's publication known as the Beginner's Observers Guide would no longer be published. It will be replaced by a new publication known as the **'Explore the Universe Guide'** which is in its final stages of editing. Mike had seen a draught version and expected that this would

soon be available for purchase from National Office.

Mike noted the **dark-sky night** that had taken place the previous Saturday night (before the meeting) at **Point Pelee National Park**. He mentioned that while it was fairly well attended with a good turnout of club members and their telescopes, the skies were disappointingly cloudy all night.

Mike announced that next Sunday (March 22), the club had organized a **mini Messier Marathon** for members at Point Pelee National Park. He pointed out that the details of the event could be found in the March issue of the Aurora newsletter.

Mike invited attendees to visit the Hallam Observatory on the upcoming **open house night** of March 28th.

Mike introduced Al DesRosiers who discussed a photographic scrapbook that he was assembling as a **historical record of the construction and early development of the Hallam Observatory site**. Al explained that he was looking for additional photos and recollections from other members who had been involved back in the early 2000s to better fill out the history of the observatory's early years. He was also looking for help in identifying people pictured in some of the photos already present in the scrapbook. Al's goal was to complete the book relatively soon and place it in the archives kept out at the observatory.

Mike introduced **Tom Sobocan** who presented the audience with a brief **slide show** of pictures that he and his brother Dave had taken that chronicled events and activities within the Windsor Centre over the past year. Images included award recipients, our club picnic, Earth Day dinner, Science Rendezvous, and the Astro-Cats Convention.

Art Rae presented a few short videos taken from the **ISS looking down at Earth as the station passed over Essex county and the Great Lakes**. The video cameras that took the shots are part of a newly installed system on the ISS that provides live continuous streaming video.

Break and Fifty-Fifty Draw: Winner was Greg Mockler, who donated the winnings (\$5) back to the club.

Hallam Open House takes place on **Saturday, March 28th** at 8:15 p.m. at Hallam observatory.

John Huschilt has brought to the club's attention that **Science City** is having its monthly **'talk with a scientist'** presentation on Wednesday, March 18th at 7:00 p.m.. This month's speaker, Dr. William Crosby will be speaking on 'genetically-modified food technology'. Admission is free.

Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu announced that this year's **Astro-Cats Convention** is taking place June 27-28 rather than in early May as it did last year. Also this year's convention will be held at the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto. Susan is likely going to be organizing a trip to the convention.

Steven Pellarin presented two short videos from the **Hubble Space Telescope Hubblecast** website. The first described a new type of galaxy which appeared to be a normal large spiral which was being stripped of all its gaseous material. The second described