

General Meeting Minutes (continued)

If a group of dedicated amateurs world wide were to acquire and operated a network of the older large (and mostly obsolete) domestic television antenna dishes the signal receiving part of the project would be complete. If the data could be recorded, transmitted, coordinated and finally processed it could provide high resolution radio images.

Paul and Adrian are taking the first steps in the effort. The first dish is in operation near Delhi Ontario and two more at other locations will begin the network. They hope the project will go much further and eventually provide 24 hour a day operation world wide. Computers, also available world wide, most with lots of spare data processing capacity would be an essential part of the plan. With the internet as a basis for communication they believe the project can become reality.

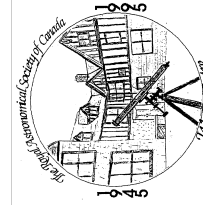
A network of dishes linked as described could reveal new views of happenings on our Sun, planets, unusual stars and galactic hydrogen in our galaxy. A key advantage of a worldwide network would be to allow continuous observation of a single object in the radio sky for extended periods of time. New discoveries would surely follow.

Help of any kind is welcome. Their e-mail addresses are:

Adrian Guillon guillon@uwindsor.ca
Paul Preney paul@paulpreney.com

Randy Groundwater thanked Paul and Adrian for their excellent presentation.

Meeting Adjourned



AURORA



The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Windsor Centre Volume 27, Number 10
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Flyer

Next Meeting

Tuesday June 18, 2002
8:00 p.m.

at
St. Stephen's Church
Howard Road, 1.4 kms. South
of Highway #3

Speaker: TBD

Topic: "TBD"

Upcoming Events

Venus and Jupiter: Are 1.6 degrees apart on the night of June 3.

Council Meeting: Tuesday June 4 at 7:30 p.m. at Randy Groundwater's house.

Venus and the Crescent Moon: Are 1.5 degrees apart on the night of June 13.

Windsor Center Picnic: Mark you calendars for Saturday June 15. Details will follow in the next few weeks.

Summer Solstice: Summer officially begins on June 21 at 9:24 a.m. E.D.T.

UNIVERSAL SCIENCE

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Contact Robin Smallwood
Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. - Noon, Closed Sunday
Telephone: (519) 967-1655 Fax: (519) 967-1657
Email: unisci@sympatico.ca

General Meeting Minutes

April 16, 2002

President, Randy Groundwater: Randy opened the meeting and requested and received a motion to accept the minutes from the March meeting. Moved by Stephen Le Boeuf, seconded by John Murray the motion carried.

Reports

Correspondence Secretary, Joady Ulrich: Joady was unable to attend the meeting.

Treasurer, Frank Shepley and Assistant, Ken Garber: Frank reported Harold Sweetman had returned to the area and rejoined the Centre. Ken Goebel has also joined. A donation of \$60 in memory of recently deceased member Jean Langan was sent by her brother.

National Council Representative, Tim Bennett: Tim will be attending the National Meeting in Montreal in May and asked for signed proxies from members. Six members present had not received blank proxies so Tim arranged to have copies made for signature during the evening.

He then asked for a "straw vote" so he would have an idea as to how members would vote in the matter of fee decoupling. Virtually all raised hands in favour.

Question from the floor: Do "unattached (from local center)" members pay lower annual membership fees. Tim explained they do not.

Librarian, Tom Sharron: Tom had a display of surplus books on offer for a silent auction. He handed out cards and explained how bidding could be done during break.

Newsletter Editor, Steve Mastellotto: Steve reminded us next month's newsletter will be the full issue size and he needs local reports and articles.

Public Education, Randy Groundwater: Randy spoke about his course given at the Centre for Learning in Retirement. Poor skies unfortunately wiped out 4 evenings of observation.

Susan held a backyard observing session using a 3 and 11 inch telescope to help teach a dozen cub scouts a little about our night sky.

Pierre Boulos did a presentation to some Beaver Scouts, teaching them basics of the magnetic compass and the passing of our seasons.

Martha Pinch is in charge of an "Out of this World" party for 75 to 100 teenagers at the Leamington Marina the evening of May 11th. She asked for member assistance in aid of the astronomical theme by bringing telescopes and binoculars. Martha's poetic creation for stargazing titled "Out behind the Barn" was published in the most recent full newsletter.

Fund Raising for the Comber Dome project: Peter Bondy was unable to attend the meeting.

Public Relations, Robin Smallwood: Robin went over the details of the upcoming Earth Day event to be held at Ojibway Park on April 21 2002. He asked for volunteers to assist by bringing telescopes fitted with solar filters. Others can assist by helping set up and staff the club display.

Director of Observing, Robin Smallwood: Switching hats, Robin gave handouts obtained via the Abrams Planetarium Website. He also commented on the value of their \$14 Calendar and it's listing of an astronomical event each and every night of the entire year.

Robin showed where and when comet Ikeya Zhang can be observed in the morning, near one end of the constellation Cassiopeia. Space.com, Robin suggested, was an excellent web site to find the latest information about the comet. For those observing the next couple of nights there is a chance of a display of Northern Lights in our area.

Finally he presented a birthday cake to John Welsh. It was sent to the meeting just for the occasion by John's wife. At break time it was shared and enjoyed by all.

During break, several members ventured out into the chill evening air. From the third planet they tried to see five of the inner six planets lined up in their outward order. Mercury was too low to see through the industrial murk and low cloud to our West.

Speakers for the Evening

Short Talk: Frank Shepley postponed his talk on star magnitudes to a future meeting to provide more time for the speakers to follow.

Main Talk: Paul Preney and Adrian Guillon. Paul and Adrian, both with very impressive academic credentials gave a joint presentation on Radio Astronomy. Starting with the basics and a brief history they quickly led into the matter of aperture and how "bigger is better". Given the long wavelengths of most radio frequencies of interest it is not possible to built single a single radio telescope dish antenna large enough to achieve much more than rather approximate resolution of the objects to be observed. We are effectively only seeing as much of the radio sky as the observers with circa 1700 optical telescopes could see of the night sky in their time.

They showed how two or more such telescopes (primarily dish antennas) placed far apart and linked via a communications network can dramatically improve resolution. In theory paired telescopes can act like a single unit with aperture equal to the distance between. If two are good more are better. A large network world wide network would be ideal.

The aiming, linking and data processing problems to make sense of observations from such a network are very formidable but not impossible. A lot of theoretical work has been done already and the results are available on the internet.

(Continued on page 4)