



RASC Windsor Centre's Monthly Newsletter ~ February, 2025

Full Snow Moon

Sandy French, Secretary of Windsor Centre

February 12th saw the rising of the Full Snow Moon. Since the winter weather has been heavier than the past few years, I've found it difficult to log any time with my telescope. However, the rare clear evening allowed Luna to shine in all her glory.

It reminded me that clear skies are ahead, with many wonders to behold. I've been watching the sky and trying to catch glimpses of the wanderers as they line up for the end of February. By being more active in astronomy, I'm starting to appreciate identifying more constellations. Maybe by the Full Flower Moon, I'll be able to spend more time outside!

Hallam Happenings

Brian Simpson, Director of Hallam Observatory.

I'm excited to share that on Friday evening (February 7), a couple of rowing friends of mine got engaged out at Hallam Observatory.



Mat is a new member of RASC-Windsor that I hope remains active, whether attending meetings or helping out in some capacity. His fiancée, Jackie, is very active in the LaSalle Rowing Club. She is on the LRC Board where she runs various workshops. Both have been to various dark-sky nights at Point Pelee.

It was a nerve-racking night as I was obviously in on the secret and had to play tour guide, a minor setup

person and photographer. All my photos had to be extremely high ISO (25,400) and wide open aperture on my 50mm f/1.8 lens. The one attached photo with the starry night was ahem...helped by AI. It did cloud up just as he was about to propose, so the sky was otherwise bland, like in the second pic. This was his fourth or fifth attempt out at Hallam as the other nights ended up being cloudy.



Thought I would share the news! If you see Mat (and Jackie) around, congratulate them!

Upcoming events from RASC National

Tom Sobocan www.rasc.ca

February 22: Green Laser Pointer Instructor Training via ZOOM, 3:00pm. Open to RASC members who received Green Laser Pointer User & Spotter training in 2024.

April 16-17: RASC National General Assembly weekend. Online seminars & webinars.

May 3: International Astronomy Day, featuring a RASC live stream from David Dunlap Observatory.

May 20: Visit to RASC Windsor Centre by Jenna Hinds, Executive Director of RASC National.

June 22: RASC Annual Meeting.

You should have a fear of some things. That doesn't mean it incapacitates you from your ability to figure out a way to deal with it.

Chris Hadfield

Celestial Events ~ February - March, 2025

From www.SeaSky.org

February 27 - New Moon. The Moon will be located on the same side of the Earth as the Sun and will not be visible in the night sky. This phase occurs at 19:46 EST. This is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is no moonlight to interfere.

March 8 - Mercury at Greatest Eastern Elongation. The planet Mercury reaches greatest eastern elongation of 18.2 degrees from the Sun. This is the best time to view Mercury since it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the evening sky. Look for the planet low in the western sky just after sunset.

March 14 - Full Moon. The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth as the Sun and its face will be fully illuminated. This phase occurs at 02:56 EDT. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Worm Moon because this was the time of year when the ground would begin to soften and the earthworms would reappear. This moon has also been known as the Crow Moon, the Crust Moon, the Sap Moon, and the Lenten Moon.

March 14 - Total Lunar Eclipse. A total lunar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes completely through the Earth's dark shadow, or umbra. During this type of eclipse, the Moon will gradually get darker and then take on a rusty or blood red color. The eclipse will be visible throughout all of North America, Mexico, Central America, and South America.

March 20 - March Equinox. The March equinox occurs at 04:58 EDT. The Sun will shine directly on the equator and there will be nearly equal amounts of day and night throughout the world. This is also the first day of spring (vernal equinox) in the Northern Hemisphere and the first day of fall (autumnal equinox) in the Southern Hemisphere.

Long Range Weather Forecast for Southern Ontario

From: www.almanac.com

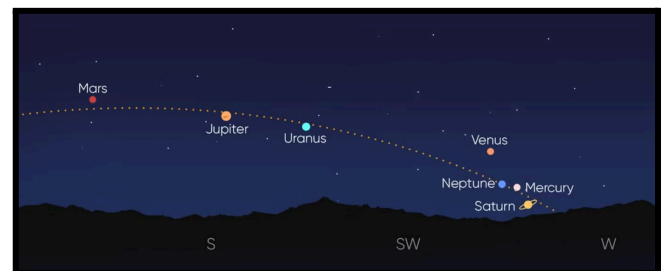
February ~ Rain & Snow. 2°C below average.

March ~ More Rain & Snow. 1°C below average.

All Planets To Align In A Rare Parade

Planetary parades of four or five planets happen relatively regularly, though alignments of six or seven are remarkably rare. Six planets are already aligned in the night sky, but we'll have to wait until sunset on Friday, February 28th for Mercury to appear just above the horizon to complete the astronomical event.

Not all planets will be visible to the naked eye, with Neptune and Uranus requiring binoculars or a telescope to view.



Where the planets will appear shortly after sunset on the evening of Friday, February 28th. ~ Starwalk.

The next planetary alignment of five or more planets will be in late October 2028, and then again in February 2034. Another seven-planet alignment will not happen again until 2040.

Guest Speaker from January 21 Meeting

Dr. Chitra Rangan presented "Women in Astronomy – a chronological evolution of Women Astronomers of the 20th Century." More information is included in the meeting minutes on Page 4.



Dr. Chitra Rangan and Nathalie Roy.
Photo by Tom Sobocan

Winter Astronomy in Ontario

As the chill of winter continues, the long nights present a unique opportunity for stargazers and astronomy enthusiasts. The clear, cold skies of winter illuminate celestial wonders, making it one of the best seasons for astronomical observation.

Benefits of Winter Stargazing:

- **Clear Skies:** Winter weather often brings clearer skies, reducing atmospheric distortion and allowing for sharper views of celestial objects.
- **Long Nights:** The extended hours of darkness provide ample time for observation, allowing enthusiasts to explore the night sky without the constraints of shorter days.
- **Low Humidity:** Cold winter air tends to have lower humidity levels, which minimizes haze and improves visibility.

Key Celestial Events:

- **Planetary Alignments:** Keep an eye out for planets like Jupiter and Saturn, which are often visible in the evening sky. Their brightness makes them easy to spot, even in light-polluted areas. Watch for the other planets to join later in February.
- **Winter Constellations:** Prominent winter constellations such as Orion, Taurus and Canis Major are easily identifiable during this season. Orion's Belt is particularly striking, guiding observers to other celestial wonders.

Best Locations for Stargazing:

- **Dark Sky Preserves:** Ontario is home to several Dark Sky Preserves that offer exceptional stargazing opportunities. Locations like the Torrance Barrens and Kejimikujik National Park provide minimal light pollution, allowing for breathtaking views of the Milky Way and other celestial phenomena.
- **Parks:** Parks such as Algonquin Provincial Park and Point Pelee National Park also offer excellent stargazing conditions, with clear views of the night sky away from urban lights.

Tips for Winter Stargazing:

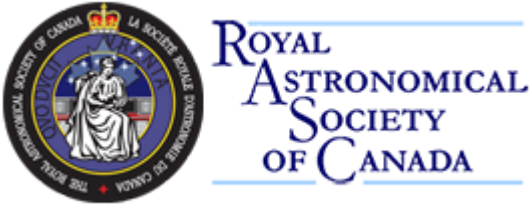
- **Dress Warmly:** Layering is key to staying warm during long nights of observation. Don't forget gloves and a hat to protect your extremities from the cold.
- **Use a Star Map:** Familiarize yourself with star maps and apps that can help you identify constellations, planets, and other celestial objects.
- **Bring the Right Equipment:** While binoculars can enhance your viewing experience, a telescope can provide detailed views of planets and deep-sky objects. A red flashlight can help preserve your night vision.
- **Plan Ahead:** Check the weather forecast and lunar phases to choose the best nights for stargazing. New moon nights are optimal for observing fainter celestial objects.



Winter astronomy in Ontario offers a captivating experience for anyone interested in the cosmos. With clear skies, long nights, and a variety of celestial events, the winter months present an opportunity to explore the universe like never before. Whether you are a seasoned astronomer or a curious beginner, the stars are waiting to be discovered. So bundle up, grab your telescope or binoculars, and enjoy the wonders that the Ontario winter sky has to offer!

The history of astronomy is a history of receding horizons.

Edwin Powell Hubble



Minutes of the General Meeting
Tuesday, January 21, 2025.
Ojibway Nature Centre, Windsor Ontario

General Meeting ~ Call to Order

This meeting was called to order by President Steve Pellarin at 19:30. The chair asked all attending to sign the registration book and noted that the 50/50 draw will take place after the break.

Announcements, Attendance & Introduction of Guests

- A total of 34 signed the registry. Two guests identified themselves.
- Wayne LeMoine, our new librarian, is putting together a spreadsheet of catalogued books to permit members to borrow them.

Minutes of the Previous Meetings

November 19, 2024. Special Meeting Minutes were circulated by email, and printed in the Aurora.

November 19, 2024. Annual General Meeting Minutes were circulated by email, and printed in the Aurora.

- **Motion to accept both Minutes as presented.**
Moved by Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu and seconded by Starr Livingstone. Carried.

Presentation ~ Women in Astronomy

Dr. Chitra Rangan, former RASC Windsor Centre honorary president; Associate Dean of Science and Physics professor at the University of Windsor. Dr. Rangan started her research on this topic by reading books about these women, including "Hidden Figures" by Margot Lee Shetterly and "Her Space, Her Time" by Shohini Ghose. The many women who contributed to our current knowledge of astronomy spanned the time period from the 1890s to present day. In the early days, some of them were able to gain access to the observatories because their husbands were astronomers but eventually women were accepted in their own right as professional astronomers. It was an important time in astronomy because spectroscopy and glass plate astrophotography were added to the astronomical tool-kit towards the end of the 19th century. Women called "Computers" did most of the spectral analysis but were paid half of men's wages. They weren't initially considered astronomers, although that is what they actually were!

Break

The chair called a coffee break following the presentation. Wayne LeMoine won the 50/50 Draw.

Director of Observing Presentation

Dr. Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu presented some sunspot photos taken by Mike Mastronardi. She then proceeded to show the upcoming lunar meetings with the planets Venus, Jupiter and Mars in February. Watch for the Moon and the Pleiades on February 6. The Full Snow Moon is February 12. February 17 will feature the Moon & Spica.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was called at 21:50. Jeremy Hansen set up his telescope in the parking lot to permit members to observe Jupiter, Mars and Sirius. Two of Jupiter's Galilean moons were on one side of the planet and the other two were on the other side of the planet. It was a nice way to close off an astronomy evening!

Clear Skies!

Minutes compiled by Laura Burgess and Tom Sobocan.