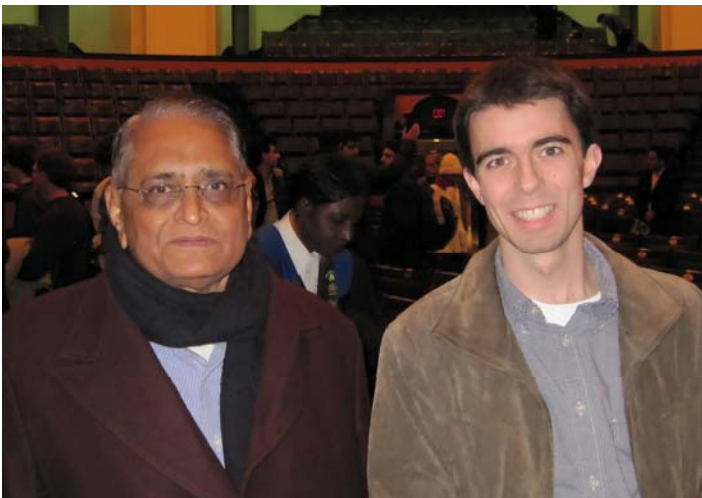


age them to keep their plan in mind to maintain the park as a “Dark Sky Site”.

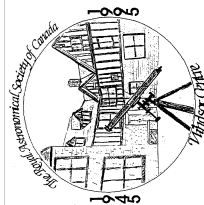
**Comber truck stop lighting:** Paul reported the truck stop lighting over the Esso truck fueling area has at long last been changed to the full cutoff type. He thanked Dave Panton for his perseverance with Lakeshore building authorities to conclude the matter. Light pollution has been noticeably reduced at our observatory.

**Treasurer:** Greg Mockler, our new treasurer reported we currently have a bank balance of \$6,929.95.

Meeting adjourned 10:04 p.m.  
Recording Secretary, David J. Panton



Matt McCall with Narendra Bhandri (above) of the Indian Space Research Organization and Peter Schultz (right) coinvestigator of LCROSS during the ASX Symposium at University of Toronto's Convocation Hall.



# AURORA



February 2010 The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Windsor Centre Volume 35, No. 5

## Flyer

### Next Meeting

Tuesday, March 16, 2010  
7:30 p.m.

at  
Maidstone K of C Hall  
10720 County Road 34

Speaker: TBD

Topic: “TBD”

### Upcoming Events

**Vesta:** Is at opposition on Thursday February 18th. Look for it all this week passing the star Algieba (Gamma Leonis) - a nice double star in the sickle of Leo.

**Open House Night at Hallam:** The next open house night at Hallam Observatory is on Saturday February 20th at 7:00 p.m..

**Council Meeting:** 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday February 22nd at Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu's house.

**Messier Marathon:** With the new Moon on March 15th the weekend of March 13 & 14 will be the best time to attempt a Messier Marathon.

**Daylight Savings Time:** Begins on Sunday March 14th.

## Monthly Meeting Minutes

### January 19, 2010

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada Windsor Centre, Maidstone Recreation Centre.

The meeting was chaired by new president Paul Pratt.

Paul, chairing his first meeting as new president welcomed members and guests. Minutes from the November meeting were read and adopted via motion by Pierre Boulos seconded by Barry Mathews and carried.

Paul announced the evening's program plan consists of three items, a movie, shots from the Christmas party by Tom Sobocan and Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu's observer report for the coming month.

Special thanks were given to Ken Garber for very capably handling the treasure's position for the past 9 years. Ken richly deserved the round of applause he received.

#### **Main Feature - “*The Phoenix Mars Lander*”**

This interesting DVD documented the process of building and preparing the lander for its journey to Mars and the tasks to be accomplished upon a successful landing. Hard to imagine, the effort started in 1964 after the first Mars flyby of a spacecraft from Earth. While we think of traveling from one place to another by merely starting out at our convenience a Mars journey is governed by orbital mechanics. It turns out to reach Mars from Earth there is only a two week period every two years where it is possible to launch a spacecraft from Earth to reach Mars with the minimum possible fuel burn and maximum payload.

The team had hundreds of problems to successfully resolve all the way from seemingly simple things like how can one reach out, scrape up a bit of Martian soil and deposit it into a sample analysis unit? Coming from Earth the spacecraft cannot contain the slightest contamination of any kind that might taint the sample testing results. The biggest problem of all was how to land the spacecraft in one piece, upright, undamaged and able to carry out its tasks and report the results back to Earth. The team working through all these difficulties found they actually began to imagine they themselves were on their way to Mars. Their names went on a CD velcroed to the spacecraft.

The DVD took the mission to the launch pad, where a rocket successfully launched the craft on its way to a subsequently very successful mission. The DVD was very well done and brought a round of applause from a appreciative audience.

**Items for Sale:** Paul distributed a list of a large collection of astronomical equipment being sold from the estate of Jim Lucyk by Brian Thomas in Chatham. He had an amazing collection of items, the estate listing asking prices range from \$50 to as high as \$7,000.

**ASX Symposium in Toronto:** Matt McCall, planning to attend asked if there were any persons interested in joining him (see photos on back).

**Break Period and 50/50 Draw:** Coffee, tea and hot chocolate along with Tim Horton's goodies were enjoyed by all as they socialized during break period.

**December Social Photos:** Tom Sobocan showed some of the many shots he took at our annual social.

**Geminid Meteor Shower:** Steve Mastellotto was hoping to catch some Geminids from Hallam when he set up his Canon 5D Mark II camera fitted with a wide angle lens (24mm - 80 degrees) on a tripod and set it to shoot 20 second exposures for as long as its battery held up. Incredibly after four hours it had taken 700 photographs. Steve then edited them to run a movie for all to see. The result was a star field with prominent constellations moving with time, mainly featuring high flying aircraft zipping Eastbound across the sky almost like meteors as well as a few deep sky objects. Steve searched for meteor trails and found just two Geminids and only one was visible for the briefest moment during the movie!

**New Mars Photos:** Steve Pellarin brought in recent photos from a spacecraft orbiting Mars over the poles. A newly discovered phenomenon of dark sand being pushed to the surface from sloping sand dunes produces very convincing illusions of trees along ridge lines.

**Director of Observing:** Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu distributed observer's maps of the sky and commented in spite of reports of increasing sunspot activity none are visible on our side of the Sun at this time. The Moon and Mars are approaching their closest positions to Earth later this month and on January 29th both will be in optimum positions to see maximum detail. At this time of year there are lots of open clusters in view. She listed several under NGC designations and one IC 1805 as a great sight. Susan also mentioned the advantage of using an “Oxygen three” (OIII) filter to view specific objects in greatest detail. One she mentioned, NGC 1502 is a planetary nebula resembling a Summer favorite, M27 the ring nebula in Lyra.

Paul thanked Susan for her report.

The **next council meeting** will be held Tuesday February 9th hosted by Susan in her home.

Paul will call **Parks Canada** people at Point Pelee National Park and encour-