

Book Review

COLD DARK MATTER by Alex Brett
Paperback, A novel.
The Dunburn Group, Toronto

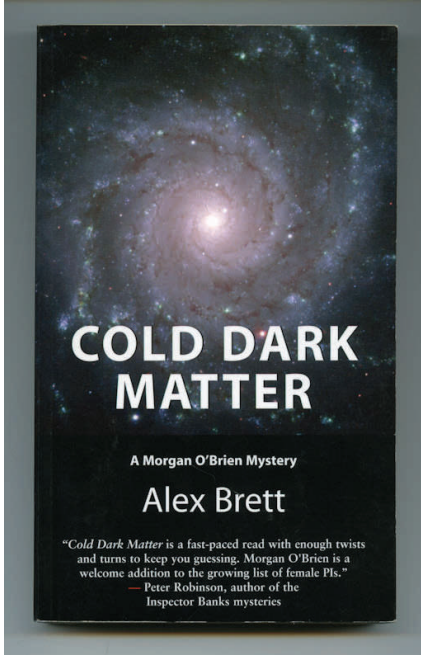
Review by Art Rae

On a cold winter night with overcast skies you might want to do something inside related to astronomy. A good novel to read is a possible alternative to all the technical stuff your amateur astronomy takes you to. "Cold Dark Matter" is a Canadian book that gets you inside the spy community around Ottawa and the observing one up on Mauna Kea in Hawaii in and around the Franco-Canadian mega telescope.

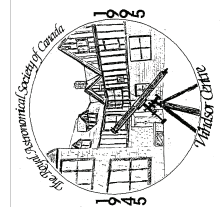
The story jumps into high gear when one of the imaging scientists at the observatory working on black hole lensing has been found to have committed suicide in the telescope building. His diaries are missing. The person sent from Ottawa to find out what happened is a hired government investigator who is charged with the possibility that there is something else behind the death, that there is a subterfuge of foreign intrigue maybe tied to work done previously in military satellite surveillance. The government office hiring investigator, Morgan O'Brien, tells her there are secret diaries that have disappeared from the dead astronomer that must be found and returned to Ottawa. "We funded the research... and we want it back."

With sleepless flights back and forth between Ottawa and the Big Island Morgan gets into difficulty with all sorts of characters inside and outside the astro community as the mystery gets deeper and more elaborate politically and technically. With run-ins with the local Hawaiian police, no-answer politicians and civil service heads back in Ottawa to excursions up the mountain to find evidence in the big telescope dome itself this searcher hits many brick walls, gets attacked, followed and shot at all to find the real story. The tale is literally a cliff hanger as she gets run off the telescope mountain by overzealous staff and shot at on the way down only to find strange coincidences lurking back in Ottawa.

It's a fun read for a change of pace for someone interested in astronomy. I also like the credit page at the front of the book. It finishes with the line, "Support your local astronomers".



AURORA



February 2011 The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Windsor Centre Volume 36, No. 5

Flyer

Next Meeting

Tuesday, March 15, 2011
7:30 p.m.

at

Maidstone K of C Hall
10720 County Road 34

Speaker: Maria Cioppa

Topic: *"The Shape of the Earth"*

Upcoming Events

Open House Night at Hallam: The next open house night at Hallam is on Saturday March 12th at 7:00 p.m..

Member's Night: Saturday March 26th starting at 8:00 p.m. at Hallam Observatory. Have you ever wondered how to get there, what equipment is there, what the site is like to observe from or how dark the skies are? Regular visitors are available to "buddy up" with to answer these questions and guide you once you are onsite so come on out to Hallam.

Science Rendezvous 2011: Saturday May 7 from 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. at the University of Windsor. Also there will be observing at Hallam Observatory that night starting at 8:30 p.m.

Monthly Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2011

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

President Paul Pratt chaired the meeting. Paul called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed members and guests to our first meeting of the New Year, 2011.

President Paul called for a motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting of November 16, 2010. Motion by Steve Mastellotto, seconded by Tim Bennett. Motion carried.

Member Al DesRosiers demonstrated and described a parallel bar **binocular mount** he has designed and constructed.

Director of Observing: Juliana Grigorescu, Juliana presented the Sky Report for the month including the meteor shower and lunar eclipse events. Juliana also described the planets visible this next month and handed out sky maps for the period courtesy of the Ottawa Valley Observatory.

The **50-50 Draw** was won Tom Sobocan who kindly donated the funds back to the Centre.

After the Break, President Paul welcomed the new Executive.

Matt McCall gave a review of the book, "**Challenging Targets for Amateur Astronomers**".

Reports

Hallam Observatory Director: Dave Panton, Dave gave an update on the wind turbine farm going up near the Hallam Observatory and his concerns of site lighting glaring onto our observatory site. Dave is enquiring if an obstruction light on one of the nearest towers can be left off. He also reported the pointing accuracy of the observatory main telescope is being checked. The path into the observatory was snow shoveled today by Al DesRosiers.

Treasurer: Greg Mockler, Greg reported over \$7,300 is in the bank account and Windsor Centre now has 97 paid members.

Light Pollution Abatement Director: Dan Taylor, Dan filed his report as posted on the RASC Windsor Centre website.

Aurora Editor: Steve Mastellotto, Steve noted that this month's issue is printed in colour to show off Brian Thomas' colour astrophotos of targets he

has taken with the equipment at Hallam observatory. Steve also noted the photos are available for viewing in the on-line version of the Aurora. A detailed update of Hallam Happenings by Dave Panton is included in this month's edition.

National council Rep Mike Mastronardi, Mike updated the membership on the push to create a national service award that will include a monetary component.

Windsor Centre Council, next meeting will take place on February 8, 2011 at the residence of Pierre Boulos starting at 7:30 p.m..

Main Talk

Our main presentation for the evening was a video history of the manned moon mission of the Apollo program called, "In the Shadow of the Moon". It was done in the words of most of the astronauts that went to the Moon. At the end of the program Steve Pellarin handed out illustrations showing the Apollo flight landing sites and mission stats.

The Meeting was adjourned at 10:25pm.

Art Rae, Recording Secretary



Another fine astrophoto from Brian Thomas. This image is from Friday February 4, 2011. The shot was taken with his modified Canon 5D camera through an 80mm f/6 APO refractor piggybacked to the Lee Telescope at Hallam observatory. The image is a combination of 16-two minute exposures at ISO 400.