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the Moon and Venus was captured in a photo by member Dave Williamson. We are entering the spring galaxy season, in particular the ones in constellation Leo. These include NGC 2903 (see Newsletter photo), Hickson 44, only 44 million light years away, M105, M96, M95 and the NGC 3605 group of galaxies.

Matt showed an astrophoto of M44 retrieved by himself from a remote access telescope in Arizona (www.global-rent-a-scope.com).

From the handout sky chart was noted:

Mar. 19th the largest full moon of 2011 bringing high tides.

Mar. 20 Saturn near the Moon and Spica

Mar. 26 Last quarter Moon Earth Day and Members night at Hallam

Mar. 27 Venus 0.1° from Neptune

April viewing: NGC4656, Lyrid Meteor Shower

Apr. 6 Saturn due south at midnight

Apr. 16-17 Moon near Spica

Current Events: The Messenger spacecraft starts imaging of Mercury on March 29th. Astro image of the Sendai, Japan quake damage from the ISS. CASCA 2011 astrophysics conference at University of Western Ontario coming up on May 31 – June 2nd.

President Paul Pratt thanked Matt for his report.

The Meeting was adjourned at 10:15pm.

Reported by Arthur Rae, Windsor Centre Secretary.

For Sale

TASCO Luminova 4.5" reflector telescope

Includes equatorial mount and field tripod.

A good quality beginner's scope.

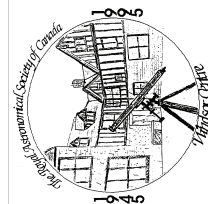
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AURORA



Volume 36, No. 7

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Windsor Centre

April 2011

Flyer

Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 17, 2011
7:30 p.m.

at

Maidstone K of C Hall
10720 County Road 34

Speaker: TBA

Topic: "TBD"

Upcoming Events

Earth Day/Astronomy Day: Sunday May 1st
from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at Mic Mac Park.

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.

Open House Night at Hallam: The next open house night at Hallam is on Saturday May 7th at 9:00 p.m..

Four Planet Conjunction: For the month of May early morning risers will be treated to a dance between Mercury, Venus, Mars and Jupiter. The Moon joins the group on both May 1 and the 30th. The closest approach will occur on May 11 and 12 when the group is confined to a six degree circle.

Monthly Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2011

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

Windsor Centre **President Paul Pratt** chaired the Meeting. Paul called the Meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

Motion to accept the **Minutes of the meeting of February 15, 2011**. Moved by Pierre Boulos, Seconded by Greg Mockler. MOTION CARRIED

The guest speaker, **Dr. Maria Cioppa** was introduced by Past President, Pierre Boulos. Dr. Cioppa is a professor of earth sciences at the University of Windsor.

Main Talk: Part 1 - Earth's Magnetic Field

Dr. Cioppa discussed the mechanics of the earth's magnetic field and why it is important to us including protection from radiation from outer space and the source of a magnetic field for the activation of navigation compasses. There are differences in the magnetic fields of Venus, Earth and Mars. There are two types of magnetic field components, dipolar and non-dipolar. The magnetic field can reverse and has done so over many millennia. It may take up to 5000 years to reverse polarity. The science of paleosecular dating can measure the residual magnetic polarity of some rocks to determine their creation era due to the polarity phase. Similarly, some bacteria display biomagnetism due to the materials they ingest. It is known that animals such as pigeons, whales and sea turtles sense direction due to the earth's magnetic field. Local research is being done at Pt. Pelee National Park. High magnetic susceptibility of certain rocks there relate to high rates of erosion.

Main Talk: Part 2 – Recent Earthquake in Japan

Dr. Cioppa gave a technical explanation of the events through the recent Richter scale magnitude 9.0 earthquake that has just devastated Japan. The quake is only the fourth largest ever recorded. Foreshocks reached 7 to 7.2 on the Richter scale while aftershocks reached 7.1 and 6.8 within an hour of the main one. There were over 400 aftershocks recorded at between magnitude 4 and 8 within 24 hours of the major shake. Japan is vulnerable to earthquakes due to its position at the joining of many tectonic plates. Also discussed was the secondary damage caused by a tsunami and details of why it was so destructive including the damage sustained to Japanese atomic reactor power generators and the areas around coastal towns. Dr. Cioppa then took questions from the members.

President Paul Pratt thanked Dr. Cioppa for her two topical presentations.

Break

Paul Pratt showed some recent photos taken of the International Space Station and Space Shuttle by a French amateur astronomer named Thierry Legault.

The 50:50 draw was won by Brian Thomas who kindly donated it back to the Centre.

Business Reports

Centre Secretary, Arthur Rae: No correspondence to report.

Newsletter Editor, Steve Mastellotto: Steve has been able to print in colour the great astrophotos coming in that members have recently taken at Hallam. The astrophotography group is now circulating their photos via an e-mail group. See latest issue of Newsletter to subscribe.

Education Director, Randolph Groundwater: With the warm weather season coming the next visiting group to Hallam is the Belle River Beavers. Upcoming event May 7th, Science Rendezvous at the University of Windsor. Needs volunteers to staff display, talk to visitors.

National Council Representative, Mike Mastronardi: Mike will be attending the upcoming National Council Meeting in Toronto next week. Discussion items at the National will include green laser pointer safety and a possible fee increase. He will report back at the next Windsor Centre meeting.

Light Pollution Abatement Director, Dan Taylor: The monthly report is posted on the Windsor Centre website.

Director of Observatory, Dave Panton: Notable construction noise at the wind turbine site has been heard. A new high power pole line across the road from the observatory is being studied as an obstruction to viewing. Dave has asked the construction manager to keep heavy equipment passing through the property away from the observatory due to its effect on the position of our telescope mount.

The flat light box unit has now been installed including the illumination control panel. Dave gave brief instructions on its use.

Dave is currently troubleshooting a loss of power to the telescope dewcap heater.

Director of Observing Report, Matt McCall: With the increasing activity of the Sun solar flares are showing, February 14 - 15 were particularly notable. February 18 Full Moon is considered a Wolf Moon. The March conjunction of

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