

Saskatoon Skies

Vol. 37
No. 5
May
2006

The Newsletter of the Saskatoon Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada



Marianne and Bill Hydromako enjoying themselves at the workshop.

Saskatoon at the George Moores' Astronomy Workshop



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In This Issue:

Membership Information, Bottle Drive, U of S Observatory Hours	2
Calendar of Events	3
Sky Buys & Mirror Cells; Minutes of General Meeting;	3
Books For Sale; Minutes of Executive Meeting;	4
General Meeting Information; Saskatoon LPA Victory!	4
Making of a New Telescope	5
Report from George Moore's Astronomy Workshop	6
Activities Coordinator Report	7
The Planets this Month	8
Lunar Observing and the Full Moon	9
The Messier, H-400 & H-400II, FNGC, Bino & EtU Club	10
Saskatchewan Summer Star Party	10
RASC Observers Group Notes	10

MEMBERSHIP? IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO JOIN!

Regular: \$65.00 /year Youth: \$34.25 /year Lifetime: \$1100

The Saskatoon Centre operates on a one-year revolving membership. You will be a member for the next 12 months no matter when in the year you join. If you do not want to join at this time, ask to get onto our FREE 3-month Temporary Membership list. You will receive regular mailings of our Saskatoon Skies newsletter and will be invited to participate in Centre activities. Members are encouraged to renew early to avoid disruption in publications. Renew through the membership coordinator, Mike Clancy, or renew through the National Office and let Mike know that you did!

Benefits of Membership in the Saskatoon Centre

- knowledgeable & friendly amateur astronomers
- use of the Sleaford Observatory
- use of the U of S Observatory (after training)
- Saskatoon Skies Newsletter
- Observer's Handbook
- The Journal of the RASC (bimonthly)
- SkyNews Magazine (bimonthly)
- use of the Centre library
- discounts to Sky & Telescope Magazine*
- free, no-cost, no-obligation, 3-month temporary membership if you don't want to join right now!

** New subscription or renewal of Sky & Telescope? Send new info or renewal notice, plus credit card # to Norma Jensen, 128 - 4th Street East, Saskatoon, SK S7H 1H8, or fax 306-659-2170.*

SASKATOON CENTRE'S MAIN OFFICERS:

President – Ron Waldron, 382-9428
Secretary – Al Hartridge, 373-0034
Vice-President – Garry Stone, 857-4707
Treasurer – Norma Jensen, 244-7360



BOTTLE DRIVE & CANADIAN TIRE \$

by Darrell Chatfield

So far we have collected \$172.00 in Canadian Tire Money! Please keep bringing your bottles and Canadian Tire Money to the General meetings. I will collect them after the meeting concludes. If you cannot make it to the meeting but would like to contribute, please call me at 374-9278.

U OF S OBSERVATORY

The U of S Observatory is open to the general public every Saturday of the year. Admission is free. The observatory is located on campus, one block north of the Wiggins Avenue and College Drive entrance. On clear nights, visitors may look through the vintage 6-inch and tour several displays. Current events are recorded on the Astronomy Information Line at 966-6429.

Observatory Hours:

January-February	7:30-9:30 pm
March	8:30-10:30 pm
April	9:30-11:30 pm
May-July	10:00-11:30 pm
August	9:30-11:30 pm
September	8:30-10:30 pm
October-December	7:30-9:30 pm

About this Newsletter...

Newsletter Editors – Tenho Tuomi, Ken Maher **Copy & Collate**– Rick Huziak **Labels & Temps** – Mike Clancy **Web Posting** – Gord Sarty

Saskatoon Skies is published monthly by the Saskatoon Centre of the RASC. Distribution is approximately 100 copies per issue. Saskatoon Skies welcomes unsolicited articles, sketches, photographs, cartoons, and other astronomy or space science articles. Articles can be sent by mail in any format to the Centre's mailbox. Submitted materials can be returned upon request. Submissions may also be sent by e-mail – preferred as plain unformatted ASCII text files without line breaks. Images sent by e-mail should be attached .JPGs (.GIFs also accepted). Send e-mail submissions to the editor at <tuomi@sasktel.net>. Please send articles in “generic” formats with simple formatting – one tab at the beginning of paragraphs, one space after commas and periods. A separate by-mail subscription to Saskatoon Skies is available for \$15.00 per year. Saskatoon Skies is also posted on our Saskatoon Centre homepage as a .pdf file and can be downloaded free-of-charge. Members may choose to receive the newsletter by regular mail or via the Internet. Articles may be reprinted from Saskatoon Skies without expressed permission (unless otherwise stated), but source credit is requested. DEADLINE for submissions is the 26th of each month. Saskatoon Skies accepts commercial advertising. Please call the editor for rates. Members can advertise non-commercial items free of charge.

**LIGHT POLLUTION
ABATEMENT
WEBSITE AT:
www.ras.sk.ca/lpc/lpc.htm**

RASC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 13	Fund Raising Dinner , Mulberry's (Sturdy Stone)	Norma Jensen	244-7360
May 15	RASC Executive Meeting -- 6:30 p.m., 175 Physics, U of S	Ron Waldron	382-9428
May 15	RASC General Meeting -- 7:30 p.m., 175 Physics, U of S	Ron Waldron	382-9428
May 18-22	2006 RASC General Assembly , Ottawa	--	--
May 26	Observers Group - 10:00 p.m., Sleaford Observatory (Date Changed)	Larry Scott	934-5801
June 19	RASC Executive Meeting -- 6:30 p.m., 175 Physics, U of S	Ron Waldron	382-9428
June 19	RASC General Meeting -- 7:30 p.m., 175 Physics, U of S	Ron Waldron	382-9428
June 23	Observers Group - 11:00 p.m., Sleaford Observatory	Larry Scott	934-5801
June 30- July 3	Alberta Star B-Q, Eccles Ranch Obs. Caroline, AB, http://calgary.rasc.ca/starbq2006.htm	Roland Dechesne	(403) 934-5664
Aug. 24-27	Saskatchewan Summer Star Party - Cypress Hills Inter-provincial Park http://www.usask.ca/psychology/sarty/rasc/starparty.html	Barb Wright	249-1990

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING April 17, 2006

by Al Hartridge

- Meeting called to Order at 7:30 p.m.
- Approval of minutes of previous meeting. Moved by Barb Wright, seconded by Les Dickson and carried.
- Events Committee: Astronomy Day display will be held at Lawson Heights Mall, a sidewalk astronomy star night will take place at Lakewood Civic Center on the evening before. After the Saturday display there will be a gastronomy supper followed by a star night at Beaver Creek. A star night and astronomy day display will also be held in Prince Albert.
- Fundraising: Darrell says no reply yet from the potash mine regarding a donation. He states there are other funds available to apply for.
- Membership: Mike Clancy states that there are 77 members at present but 6 have not yet paid their membership dues.
- Light Abatement: Mike Clancy has managed to get anti light pollution lighting established in his acreage development. Norma Jensen has talked to the people at the Saskatoon Inn praising them for their environmentally friendly lighting. They will be the first recipients of new anti-light pollution award.
- Newsletter: Tenho stated that the deadline for articles for the next newsletter will be April 24th.
- Observer's Group: Larry Scott is looking for someone to head up the next observers group session which will be held on April 29th.
- Presentations:
 - Winter Moon Study- Norma Jensen
 - What's in a Photograph - Jeff Swick
 - Black Holes and Warped Space Time- Video lecture by William Kaufmann.
- Meeting Adjourned at 9:40pm.

SKY BUYS & MIRROR CELLS

The Saskatoon Centre's Swap and Sale Page!

For Loan to Members: Slide set for talks on general astronomy and light pollution. You can borrow this set any time you want to give a talk to your favourite group. Contact Rick Huziak at 665-3392.

For Sale: Celestron 8 Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope

- black 8" 2000mm, f10
- Ploessel 25mm - 2X Barlow
- 1 1/4 visual back
- heavy duty tripod with motor
- Sun filter - Thousand Oaks
- Telrad focusing aid
- 2 hole viewing device fits over barrel end
- red flashlight

Hardly used
- Mint shape Asking \$2,000.00

Questions? Contact Gerry Kohuch at:
Res: 306.497.2443
Mobile: 306.497.7488
Kohuch@sasktel.net

MONDAY, MAY 15, 7:30 PM – ROOM 175, U OF S

Presenting

"Dark Sky Project"

-- Mike Clancy and
Rob Metanczuk

"Constructing an 8 inch Dobsonian from Scratch"

-- Kevin Lubzun

"Cosmic Rays"

-- Dr. Rainer Dick



Note: There will be an executive meeting at 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING April 17, 2006

by Al Hartridge

1. Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting. Moved by Jeff Swick, seconded by Norma Jensen and carried.
3. Treasure's Report: Norma Jensen stated that there is: \$6118.21 in the chequing account, \$1448.34 in the fundraising account, and a total of \$15448.50 in three term deposits.
4. Messier Marathon: there was a good turn out of people with fair skies.
5. Astronomy Day Planning, May 5-6: a sidewalk star night will take place on the Friday evening at Lakewood Civic Center before astronomy day. Setup at the Lawson Heights mall on Saturday should be before 9:30- 10:00 a.m. and take down should be after 6:00 p.m.
6. GA rep: a motion was made by Ellen Dickson, seconded by Barb Wright and carried that we ask Sandy Ferguson to be the centre's representative at the General Assembly in Ottawa.
7. New U of S telescope: a good discussion was held by the centre members regarding a donation to the 20 inch telescope project of the Physics dept. U of S. A motion was made by Chris Martin, seconded by Jim Young and carried that the discussion and vote be tabled until the next meeting.
8. Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 p.m.



BOOKS FOR SALE

by Bruce Brandell, Sales Coordinator

All items will be available at our next meeting or call 249-1119, or email bruce_brandell@yahoo.com

Title	Author	# Avail	Price
Calendars			
RASC 2006	RASC	2	\$5.00
Books			
The Backyard Astronomer's Guide	Dickinson & Dyer	2	\$45.00
Night Sky Atlas	R. Scagell	3	\$27.00
The Moon Observer's Guide	P. Grego	1	\$13.00
Firefly Astronomy Dictionary	Firefly	1	\$13.00
Skyways – Astronomy Handbook for Teachers	M.L. Whitehorne	3	\$20.00
The Beginner's Observer's Guide	L. Enright	1	\$19.00
Observer's Handbook 2006	RASC	4	16.00
Variable Star Charts [CD]	AAVSO	1	5.00
Astrophotography	G.N. Patterson	lots	\$3.00
Miscellaneous			
RASC Centennial Mug		2	\$5.00
RASC Stickers, blue or white		lots	\$1.00
SSSP 2001 Pin (Summer Triangle)		17	\$2.00
SSSP 2002 Pin (Comet)		29	\$2.00

Saskatoon LPA Victory!

by James Edgar, Regina

[Reprinted from the national RASC website]

Yippee!

Mission Ridge Country Estates, located in the RM of Aberdeen, requested advice on limiting light pollution since they were interested in creating a country atmosphere where estates were not lit up like living in the city.

As a result, they adopted, verbatim, recommendations we provided.

Although not enforceable to any great extent, the LPA stuff hopefully will get everyone thinking. Also, the developer is requesting that the RM *not* put in any streetlights, and if he loses this, he will accept only full-cut-off ones.

Thanks go to Mike Clancy, RASC Saskatoon member, for the heads-up on this one!

Making of a New Telescope

by Kevin Lobzun

Having just this evening agreed to do a "show and tell" about the 8" dobsonian that I just completed, I now lay awake with the realization that the 10 minutes I agreed to fill with this presentation may be inadequate to convey all that I wish to say on this subject. Allow me now at this time to give a preamble to my presentation scheduled for our general meeting in May.

As a little pre-history let me start by saying that my interest in astronomy actually evolved as an offshoot of an earlier interest I have in one of man's most spectacular and mysterious achievements- the pyramids of Egypt. Through various readings and investigations on the pyramids at Giza, some interesting theories came to surface, which linked not only the pyramids themselves but also their geographic layout within Egypt to certain celestial constellations. In fact, much of Egyptian mythology and folklore is based on star formations visible in the Egyptian Sky. Having no previous exposure to astronomy, I felt it necessary to educate myself on the subject in order to have a fuller understanding of the Egyptian mindset. And so, at Christmas of '97, I gave my wife-to-be a copy of "The Backyard Astronomer" by Terrence Dickenson (which I promptly confiscated for my own).

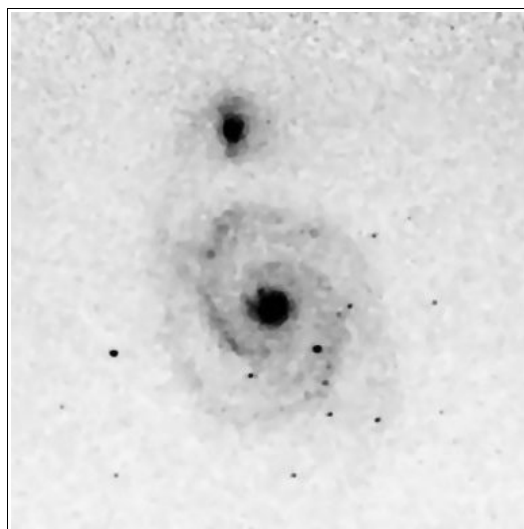
You can only be new to something once and on reflection I can't think of a better book to introduce one to the vast world of amateur astronomy. Not only were the stars, constellations and planets discussed but also telescopes, binoculars, eyepieces, equipment, astrophotography and a little blurb about crazy people who actually make their own telescopes. WOW! I took Mr. Dickenson's advice. Instead of rushing out and paying hundreds if not thousands of dollars on a telescope only to find that astronomy is not your bag; why not get a pair of decent binoculars and see if you're still interested? If not, well, you still have a descent pair of binoculars. In the summer of '98 I bought myself a pair of 9 X 63 Celestron Ultima binoculars. With the binos and a planisphere in hand, I set out to learn the constellations. I saw the moon as I had never seen it before. I discovered the Pleiades and fell in love. The Andromeda Galaxy is how far away?!? I can't believe I'm looking at the moons of Jupiter just like Galileo did hundreds of years ago. Yup, I was hooked.

After much consideration I decided that I was going to get a telescope. The only problem was that the telescope that I wanted was a 15" truss-tube dobsonian that could be had for a measly \$5000 US (that included all the Nagler eyepieces I was convinced I would need). And so after much more realistic consideration I remembered something about crazy people who make their own telescopes.

Not long after I ventured into the tangled web of the ATM (Amateur Telescope Maker), it became apparent a 15" F5 parabolic mirror was NOT the place to begin. These size mirrors are indeed possible for one to make, but one with much more experience under their belts. Once more I was forced to re-evaluate my position. A 6" or 8" mirror was very achievable for the first timer who was willing to take their time and expect a few setbacks along the way. I revealed my intentions to my future wife (about making the telescope, not about getting married) and she went out and bought me a 9mm Nagler for my birthday in '99. I don't think she realized she had put the cart before the horse, but I do believe she was fully aware that she had painted me into the proverbial corner known as "Put up or shut up!"

That November in '99 I ordered an 8" BVC (Black Vitreous Ceramic) blank and all the different grits I would need from a company in Quebec. My initial order was lost in the Christmas madness at the post office, but my second try arrived in January 2000. By now I was married and our first child was due in April. One of my jobs at that time was night security at a medical facility in the lower mainland of BC. This afforded me the perfect opportunity to work on the mirror uninterrupted (I also got paid while I did it). Everything progressed nicely until the end of March when my son arrived. Well, the mirror went into storage with the exception of a couple of half-hearted attempts to pick it up again until the summer of '05.

Upon telling some of my co-workers about the telescope project I worked on long ago, they insisted that I get it out of storage and finish it once and for all. My life at that time was relatively stable and quiet so I thought "why not". The conclusion to this gripping story will have to wait until our meeting in May. Hope to see you there.



by Tenho Tuomi M51 Whirlpool Galaxy: 39 15-second 200-power exposures taken with a Canon A75 digital camera, stacked with RegiStax and enhanced with Paint Shop Pro.

Report from George Moores' Astronomy Workshop

by Tenho Tuomi

As usual Saskatoon sent a good delegation to the George Moores' Astronomy Workshop at the St. John's School, near Warburg, 70 km SW of Edmonton. We had Norma Jensen, Barbara Wright and Ron Waldron (in this picture) plus my wife Velma and me, Bill and Marianne Hydomako, Margo Miller, and former Saskatoon member Tyrone Klassen. At this time I still don't have a report of how many were there in total, maybe close to 100.



The rocket launch scheduled for Saturday afternoon was cancelled due to strong winds.

Friday evening was just a time of getting acquainted with the rambling building and the fellow astronomers mostly from Edmonton. A few clear patches teased would-be observers in the evening but no opening lasted long enough

The Round Robin sessions were also on Saturday afternoon. I attended the session on Digital Photography given by Murray Paulson (in the picture below) and Mike Noble. I admired their efficiency for they had two projectors running so that one person was always speaking while the other person was getting ready with the next slides. In spite of that they ran overtime for



to get a telescope out. Mike Noble, in this picture, always drew a crowd around his laptop when he brought it out.

Saturday morning was spent looking over the swap table, and the tantalizing array of eyepieces offered by the Science Shop. In the afternoon we started with a presentation by Dr. Jaymie Matthews on "A Suitcase Full of Starlight", on Canada's humble MOST satellite. Dr. Matthews had been part of the team that sent it up and made it do remarkable work beyond its small size. When he finished I think we were all proud of what Canada had been able to do in space research.

A presentation slide with a dark background. The title "Searching for Terra Nova" is in green. Below it, there are three bullet points in green: "The MOST space telescope is the first instrument which can detect exo-Earths through transits", "It is the pioneer for future space missions:", and "COROT (France; launch Oct 2006)" and "Kepler (USA; launch 2008)". There are logos for Kepler and Corot. At the bottom, there is a website address "www.astro.ubc.ca/MOST" and the phrase "The search is on..." in a green box.

they were covering so many different subjects in photography that they did not have time for all. After that I tried to attend the session on Collimation but found that they were only half way through their first session. It seemed that the sessions on Time, Teachers, Sketching, and Rocketry were running better on schedule.

Saturday night turned out to be perfect for observing; clear, calm and reasonably warm, though many complained of cold fingers afterwards.

Apparently good observing is not usually expected at these Workshops. Most took their telescopes to a nearby meadow but I stayed close to the buildings, within range of my extension cords for running my telescope drive. I did not find it a problem for lights in the building were mostly turned off, and what lights were on were covered with red.

Sunday morning was a final get-together around breakfast and brunch. Food was outstanding. Being a boys' school, maybe they were used to feeding hungry growing mobs. The salad bar was open 24 hours a day.

I think the part I liked best about the Workshop was meeting people that I had heard much about, or read their articles in the Journal, or even e-mailed with. It was great being able to put faces to names, and ask questions about their astronomical interests, and to learn from them.



Activities Coordinator Report

by Jeff Swick

Well finally some nice skies and it's so nice when the upcoming activities include observing deep sky objects in decent weather. I'm looking forward as well to more work on my lunar program.

Speaking of observing, I'd like to share some of my observations on stars of a different note.

With Astronomy Days come and gone and due to the fact that I'm writing this a week before the actual event I can't yet comment on the actual event itself. Pre event I'm impressed with the number of members who have come forward and offered assistance. I've noticed some posters around town for the event so thanks to the unidentified stars for their assistance. I also want to thank Christine Kulyk for her package for Astronomy Days from Sky News. As many of you know Christine is a member of our center and also an associate editor for Sky News so thanks again. What a nice surprise to just turn around and see her there with the package. As a matter of fact of the magazines Sky News was first out of the gate and without even being asked.

I know Ken will have some thoughts elsewhere about the presentation up in Prince Albert. Thanks to all who traveled to offer assistance up north. I was speaking out at Sleaford with Jim Gorkoff (yeah...he bought another Nagler) who traveled to Prince Albert last year and he told me how busy the booth was so I'm sure it won't get any less busy this year.

I went for a haircut the other day and took an astronomy day poster and the hairdresser says to me "Oh you must know Scotty Alexander ... he's my cousin. I move down to Salonika and take my Sky and Telescope and the waitress says to me "Do you know Tyrone? I went to a star party with him once." I'm looking out the back of my garage at the sun and my neighbor says "You must know Al Hartridge ... I built his house, he has a telescope". If we could translate this into an increase of membership it would be fabulous.



Garry Stone's project for the winter was building a pair of 90mm fibreglass telescopes. Here is one of them, with a homebuilt tripod to go with it.

On a final note I'm wondering if there are any members that would be interested in collaborating on a Solar-observing project? It wouldn't be necessary to live in town. The only requirement I think would be online access to share communications and access to the RASC Yahoo group. Let me know at the general meeting if you are interested.

Circle May 13 on your calendar as the fundraising committee Darrell, Barb and Norma have put together the dinner at Mulberry's. There will be a silent action as well.

One final thought and I know I keep picking on Jim but I would like to wish him all the best as he will be getting married soon and I know how all the planning can make you crazy. From all of us Jim, Congratulations and Good Fortune.

The Planets This Month, May 2006

by Murray D. Paulson, Edmonton Centre

Ahh, the **solar eclipse** last month was great! Three minutes and 45 seconds of totality at our Mediterranean coast hotel in Turkey was a fine sight indeed. Now to plan for the next one. That piggy bank is a tad skinny now. Our group of 15 travelers enjoyed the time we spent in Turkey and the bonus of a near perfect solar eclipse. Check out your traveling calendar. The next big one is in 2009 and it crosses China. 5 minutes and 57 seconds at the Shanghai coast and 6 minutes and 39 seconds out in the Pacific. There is one that starts in the high Canadian Arctic in 2008 and it slides across the polar regions and down through Siberia, Mongolia and western China. Start saving your pennies now.

The beginning of May sees **Mercury** coming back from a morning apparition, headed to its May 18th superior conjunction with the sun. On that date, Mercury will pass less than one arc minute above the sun. No, Don't bother looking for it! In the latter part of the month, Mercury will make its way into the evening sky, headed to a June elongation. With the summer twilight advancing upon us, Mercury will remain a daytime pursuit this month and next. The incline of the ecliptic is also unfavorable for an evening apparition and further compounds the summer twilight. On June 1, Mercury will sit 16 degrees from the sun, and shines at magnitude -0.8. You will see the gibbous 5.8" disc in the eyepiece. On the evening of May 27 you can try for the very early new moon and Mercury only separated by 3.2 degrees in the evening sky. The moon will sit just 12 degrees from the sun, and Mercury will sit 2 degrees below and one degree south of the moon. Make note of where the sun sets, and 1/2 hour later, the moon will sit 5 degrees above that point. Good luck!

Venus still lights up the morning sky shining at magnitude -4.0. It has dimmed a bit over the last month, and is now officially headed around the backside of the

sun. At the beginning of the month, Venus presents a 16.6" gibbous disk at a 42 degree elongation from the sun. Venus rises an hour before the sun despite its great distance from the sun. This is due once again to the very shallow angle of the ecliptic in the morning sky. Save it for a daytime pursuit. By month's end, Venus will have shrunk to 14.1", fatter gibbous phase, and shines at magnitude -3.9. Venus is now just 37 degrees from the sun.



At the Astronomy workshop, I looked up and it took me a minute to recognize **Mars** sitting in the foot of Gemini. That constellation sure looked funny. Mars and Saturn have changed the constellation space into a rather distorted Pegasus square, a rather Picassoesque horse. Cool! I like these transient meta-constellations. I have enjoyed Saturn flirting with the Beehive as well. Mars has faded and shrunk to a magnitude 1.5 4.9" mote of light. Still

prominent, but not enough to catch your eye. By month's end, Mars will sit in Cancer as it closes in on Saturn and will now be at magnitude 1.6 with a 4.3" disk. Look for a 3-day old moon 2.5 degrees above Mars on May 30th. A nice photo op.

May is **Jupiter** month. Opposition was on May 4th at which time Jupiter shone at Magnitude -2.5 and it displayed a 44.7" disk in the eyepiece. At the Astronomy Workshop, we watched the Great Red Spot transit Jupiter's meridian and noted the festoons in the Equatorial region. The seeing was variable, but when it came in, it was great. You only need a 3" or larger scope to see the GRS and enjoy Jupiter's moons. Over the month you can watch the moons undergo eclipses, transits and occultations with Jupiter. A larger scope will let you discern the disks of those moons and helps identify them. I have included a table of interesting events over the next month, but for a full table, look in the Observer's Handbook.

Note that all times are in Universal time. This means that an event at 4:55 UT on May 11th actually occurs on May 10th at 10:55 p.m. Just subtract 6 hours and keep track of the date. The May 11 event with Ganymede is a high point, and will be repeated a month later, don't miss it. On May 11, a full moon will pass 5 degrees under Jupiter.

DATE	TIME	SAT.	EVENT
11-May-06	4:55	III	Tra start
11-May-06	5:20	III	Sha start
11-May-06	6:19	III	Tra end
11-May-06	7:11	III	Sha end
29-May-06	3:23	III	Ecl start
29-May-06	5:13	III	Ecl end
29-May-06	6:35	I	Occ start
29-May-06	9:19	I	Ecl end
30-May-06	3:55	I	Tra start
30-May-06	4:30	I	Sha start
30-May-06	6:03	I	Tra end
30-May-06	6:39	I	Sha end
4-Jun-06	3:35	II	Sha start

4-Jun-06	4:44	II	Tra end
4-Jun-06	6:08	II	Sha end
5-Jun-06	4:34	III	Occ start
5-Jun-06	6:14	III	Occ end
5-Jun-06	7:22	III	Ecl start
5-Jun-06	8:21	I	Occ start
5-Jun-06	9:12	III	Ecl end
5-Jun-06	11:13	I	Ecl end
6-Jun-06	5:41	I	Tra start
6-Jun-06	6:24	I	Sha start
6-Jun-06	7:49	I	Tra end
6-Jun-06	8:33	I	Sha end

Saturn is still a good target in the early evening sky. It shines at magnitude 0.3 and shows a 17.8" disk in the eyepiece. Over the month, it makes its last pass through the Beehive for another 29 years. Don't miss it! I better get a shot this time round. On May 31 just after dark, you will get a chance to see the 5-day old moon above Saturn and the Beehive. It should be a lovely binocular sight.

Clear skies till then.

Lunar Observing and the Full Moon

by Mike Clancy



Thursday, 13Apr06, was notable as the first time in far too long where the evening was clear, mild, with little wind, and the promise of a full moon - I could now begin the Lunar Observing certificate I'd been planning for a while.

I'd purchased a lunar filter and some new Plossl lenses, so I was ready to begin using the 90 mm Maksutov-Cassegrain for what I'd intended, planetary and lunar observing.

I began with an area of the moon I hadn't really explored yet (I'd done a bunch as part of the Beginning Observer's Certificate some years previous), down in the south-west quadrant, most particularly that portion covered by Rukl

map 62.

In short order I found and identified craters Schikard, Lehmann and Inghirami, although the brightness of the full moon washed away much of the detail I might have otherwise expected to see. The image shown here (courtesy Peter Plaice) was downloaded off the internet and shows Schikard as the central crater with Lehman off the top left aspect. Indeed, so bright was the moon that I didn't notice nearby Jupiter at all!

I began to slow down my observations of the moon as I listened to the night sounds around me. There were ducks chuckling amongst themselves in some nearby pond, and the croaking of frogs in their spring mating ritual as well. Off in the distance I could make out the mournful howl of a tribe of coyotes as they sang to the full moon. In short, I became enthralled! I then noticed the beginnings of an interesting Aurora Borealis display, one that eventually circled the bright star Etamin (approximately Mag. 2) in Draco. There were three ghostly lines shimmering in greenish waves while the sounds of spring sang about me; I felt truly blessed. It seemed almost sacrilegious to ignore such natural splendor, so I dragged out my chair and sat with a glass of home-made "Chateau Glug", saluting the heavens for the peace and tranquility of the moment, all thoughts of furthering my lunar observations forgotten.

As amateur astronomers we don't always take the time to enjoy the spectacle that surrounds us; I'm glad I did this warm spring night!

The Messier, H-400 & H-400-II, FNGC, Binoc & EtU Club

*Join the Club! Observe all 110 Messier, 110 Finest NGC, 400 Herschel I or 40 Herschel II
Explore the Universe, or 35 Binocular Objects and earn great OBSERVING CERTIFICATES!*

MESSIER CLUB

Certified at 110 Objects:

*R.Huziak, G.Sarty, S.Alexander,
S.Ferguson, D.Jeffrey, D.Chatfield,
B.Christie, K.Noesgaard, M.Stephens,
B.Hydomako, T.Tuomi, L.Scott,
G.Charpentier, B. Johnson, M. Clancy*

Les Dickson	Up! & Done!	110
Brent Burlingham		107
Ken Maher		105
Brent Gratias		96
Mike Oosterlaken		93
Lorne Jensen		89
Margo Miller		77
Wade Selvig		75
Kathleen Houston		72
Garry Stone		57
Norma Jensen		31
Ellen Dickson		29
Brian Friesen		15
Barb Wright		6

FINEST NGC CLUB

Certified at 110 Objects:

*R.Huziak, D.Jeffrey, G.Sarty,
D.Chatfield, T.Tuomi*

Larry Scott	Done!	110
Scott Alexander		97
Bill Hydomako		55
Sandy Ferguson		23
Mike Oosterlaken		20
Mike Clancy		7
George Charpentier		4

Chatfield BINOCULAR CERTIFICATE

Certified at 35 Objects:

*M.Stephens, T.Tuomi, M.Clancy,
R.Huziak, K. Maher*

Brent Gratias		36
Mike Oosterlaken		32
Anna Clancy		24

EXPLORE the UNIVERSE

Certified for Certificate:

M.Clancy, T.Tuomi

HERSCHEL 400 CLUB

Certified at 400 Objects:

D.Jeffrey, R.Huziak, D.Chatfield

Gord Sarty		251
Tenho Tuomi		220
Scott Alexander		117
Mike Oosterlaken		68
Sandy Ferguson		18

HERSCHEL 400-II CLUB

Certified at 400 Objects:

Darrell Chatfield	Up!	268
Richard Huziak		211

The Messier & Finest NGC lists can be found in the Observer's Handbook. The Explore the Universe list is available on the National web site. The Herschel 400 list is available at the web site listed below. The Binocular List will be available at each general meeting or can be mailed out on request to distant members.



On-line Messier and Finest NGC lists, charts and logbooks - check out:

<http://www.rasc.ca/observe.htm>

On-line Herschel 400 List - check out the official site at:

<http://www.astroleague.org/al/obsclubs/herschel/hers400.html>

Saskatchewan Summer Star Party

by Barb Wright



The SSSP brochure is printed and ready for distribution. It was folded thanks to the many helping hands at the George Moore workshop in Edmonton.

We are still looking for people for the planning committee, specifically someone to be in charge of the food and drink sales. This would mean running the BBQ Thursday night and overseeing pop sales and coffee sales at the Meadows. Our next committee meeting will be May 7th, in the evening, 7:00pm. Also, the star party web site is up and running, check it out at:

<http://www.usask.ca/psychology/sarty/rasc/starparty.html>

Greetings to all. No observing to report on, however there is a date change for the May Observer's Group. The originally scheduled date of May 19th falls on the Friday of the May long weekend and is being changed by executive decision to May 26th. Sorry for the confusion on my part. See you out there.

by Larry Scott,
"Interim" Coordinator

RASC Observers Group
Notes