

Saskatoon **SKIES**

Newsletter of the Saskatoon Centre of the
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
March 1997. Vol. 28, No. 3



photo by Erich Keser

**The Sleaford School: our new Observatory Site?
A wonderful opportunity for the Saskatoon Centre and
perhaps the biggest challenge in our history.**

Bekanntgebungen des Presidentes

Notice of the General Meeting

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN LOCATION

Everyone is welcome to attend the next general meeting of the Saskatoon Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. The meeting is open to members and non-members alike. Admission is free.

Mon., Mar 17, 8pm, National Hydrology Research Institute Bldg., Innovation Pl.

Thanks to Bob Christie's employer and Garry Brett's initiative to move the RASC's meeting place, the RASC has found a new home for its meetings. The NHRI is allowing us to use their seminar room for our Executive and General meetings. This can hold 60- 80 people and is equipped with an overhead and slide projector and a VCR. There is free parking and ground level access, so hauling in telescopes and displays is not a problem. Washrooms are right there as well and we can also have coffee and munchies at the meeting if we wish. We are looking forward to a long and pleasant relationship with the NHRI. Please remember to park ONLY in the NHRI parking lot as all other locations in Innovation Place require 24-hour parking permits, and you will be ticketed. On entry and exit to the building, please register with the commissionaire. He will have a membership list to quicken this process. Non-members just sign the guest book. Bus service is close by, but anyone who needs a ride, call me at 665-3392 well before and to arrange pickup. For a map to the NHRI, see the February newsletter.

Executive members will meet at 7 p.m. in the NHRI Seminar room.

- Programs:**
- Hale-Bopp Comet Photography Extravaganza
 - Decision Time on the Sleaford Observatory
 - Saskatchewan Summer Star Party - Progress Report

Still Missing Your 1997 Observer's Handbook

We're really not sure what's going on, but it seems that several members who renewed in November still have not received their new Observer's Handbooks. If you have not received your book, please call Rick Huziak (665-3392). It seems that in the changeover to U of T mailout, that some memberships are going a bit astray and others get two mailings of the Handbook! We are assured that this is a temporary problem that will be rectified shortly.

Welcome New Members

Dr. Alan McHughen, 659 Whiteswan Drive, Saskatoon, S7K 8A2, ph. 931-2910, e-mail mchughen@duke.usask.ca
Normand Poirier, RR#3 North Battleford, S9A 2X4, ph. 445-0458

Membership Changes: Corrections to membership list as issued in the Feb. newsletter:

- Bob Christie - new email - christie@eagle.wbm.ca
- Paul Ferguson - delete from membership - not renewed
- Dale Jeffery - new email - dale.jeffery@sk.sympatico.ca
- John Leppert - change address to - Deneb Observatory, RR#1, Box 25
- Dr. James Wood - new email - jwood@eagle.wbm.ca

March's Lunar Eclipse

Just a quick reminder that there will be a smashing lunar eclipse on Sunday, March 23rd. Although the eclipse is not total, about 95% of the moon enters the earth's umbra, so it's going to be pretty dark anyway! The eclipse is visible from all of the Americas. See your 1997 Observer's Handbook for details!

Richard Huziak, President

Saskatoon Centre

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
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Honorary President: Prof. J. E. Kennedy
President: Richard Huziak
Vice-President: Erich Keser
Secretary: Dr. A. Hartridge
Treasurer: M. Williams
National Rep. Dr. Gord Sarty
Editors: Sandy Ferguson
Erich Keser
Photo Ed.: Dr. A. Hartridge

Contents

President's Message - Rick Huziak.....	Page 2
Meeting with Regina Centre	Page 4
Saskatchewan Star Party - URGENT UPDATE.....	Page 5
SITE FOUND - Decision time for Colonsay site.....	Page 6
Announcements: Binocular Group, March Observing Session.....	Page 9
Jr. Astronomers, International Astronomy Day, Items Wanted and for Sale	
Budget for Colonsay Site (and update on Telescope Loaner Program).	Page 10
February General & Executive Meeting Minutes.....	Page 11
Enclosure: Cypress Sask. Summer Star Party Brochure (by Bob Christie)	

Cover: Photo of the Sleaford (Colonsay) School (and Observatory?) Site.

Errata: February's Back Cover Photo was by Don MacKinnon, not McKinnon.
The image of Clyde Tombaugh on page 11 was taken from *Sky and Telescope*.

Saskatoon Skies is produced by volunteer labour on a monthly basis with summer double-issues. We welcome letters and submissions (articles, images cartoons, drawings and diagrams are all welcome!) Contact Sandy Ferguson (931-3184) or Erich Keser (374-4262) for further details. Text may be e-mailed in *plain unformatted ASCII text with line returns at paragraph breaks only*, and images in UUEncoded form to keser@duke.usask.ca Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Saskatoon Centre. Circulation is approximately 100.

Keser and Huziak Presentations Kill at Regina

A little while ago, Erich and I decided to crash the Regina Centre's February 28th General Meeting. We wanted to find out what this Centre was all about, so we thought we'd help them out with a few dazzling presentations. We also needed to discuss inter-centre planning and duties for the upcoming joint Saskatchewan Star Party at Cypress Hills. So, that Friday afternoon, off we drove, dripping Mr. Subs, coffees, brochures, slide projector and tray after tray of slides in hand.

Regina's general meeting is held in the Science Center's IMAX board room: a nice facility! We arrived in the parking lot just as the Regina Centre members were arriving, and immediately met Steve Szuta and Darcy Kozoriz, who we had met previously at last year's Cypress Hills Star Party.

The meeting was much like ours, with a short business section and then presentations. Only 9 members were in attendance. (Regina is a fairly small Centre with about 30 members). After the short business meeting, where Steve was elected the new President and plans were made for upgrades to their Davin observing site, we were invited to speak...for the rest of the meeting!

We discussed our plans to date for the Cypress Star Party, determining that Saskatoon would handle the bulk of the organization, registration and food services and Regina would organize the Public Star Party, design and market the T-shirts and provide a speaker and meteorite search helper. Active Regina photographer Al Andrews will also participate in the Astrophotography Panel. We all agreed that the fee structure we've set was fair, and that, at this time, any proceeds from the SSSP would be put into a fund for next year's party, though the exact use of the funds would be determined later. We also agreed on the July 23rd weekend as the date for 1998 SSSP.

Erich then gave a slide presentation (right way up this time!) of the proposed Colonsay Observatory, and I gave a presentation on Fighting Light Pollution in Saskatchewan. Regina was duly impressed. We also received a tour of the Science Center's observatory, which houses a 6-inch Unitron refractor that the Centre staffs in exchange for use of the boardroom meeting place.

After the meeting wrapped up, we joined Steve and Darcy at Smitty's for pancakes, greasy fries, copious amounts of coffee and stimulating conversation. We then headed back to Saskatoon at 85 km/hour through fog as thick as pea stew! The trip was worth the effort. We met some wonderful people at the Regina Centre and we're looking forward to seeing them at future meetings and Cypress Hills.

by Rick Huziak

Ed Wed - Gin Kin

We are pleased to announce that the wedding bells recently rang for our Honorary President Professor J. Edward Kennedy and his blushing new bride Ella Virginia (Ginny) Blake. These two lovebirds tied the knot on Saturday, February 22, 1997 at St. Stephen's Anglican Church in Saskatoon. The ceremony and reception were attended by close friends and family. Ed and Ginny met a few years ago through their involvement in a student mentoring program (no! - Ginny is the mom, not the student!) and they've been going strong ever since. The Saskatoon Centre is honored to be able to extend our best wishes to this happy new couple. The best to you in the future!

by Rick Huziak

NOTE: The co-editors disclaim all responsibility for titles on this page!

Saskatchewan Summer Star Party

IMPORTANT UPDATE

1. Help needed:

Much is underway. Bob Christie has done a great brochure. Regina will organize the Public Observing and T-shirts. I've flooded the Net with announcements and articles including Sky News, Sky&Tel, Astronomy, and all the RASC rags. But there is much more to be done. We need **speakers and exhibitors** for the **Photography Panel, registration help, traffic and security directors** for the site, **cooks and assistants** for the barbecue and much more. Please call Erich or Rick.

2. Non-camping Accommodation NOW AVAILABLE

We've managed to get the Park Administrator to lean on the Four Seasons Resort accommodations director (he cooked dinner for her) to find the following assortment of units for our Star Party. These are conveniently located across the road from the presentations, and within a few km of where we will be observing. They are reasonably priced...and usually all gone by October of the previous year.

These are being specially held for us for the next week or so. Please reserve ASAP. All reservations are through the Four Seasons Resort front desk (306) 662-4277, and ask for Jeanine (or her designate). State that you are with the RASC, and that it is for the SASKATCHEWAN SUMMER STAR PARTY. The reservation system will charge your credit card for the first night, only, and all but a \$10 administration fee will be refunded if you cancel or change your booking at least two weeks before your scheduled date of arrival.

*****The Park and Resort are doing us a big favour. Please reserve ASAP!**

HOTEL ROOMS, (Hotel has a dining room and pool)

*** 6 or 7 left

Two double beds and TV per room. Hotel has restaurant and pool. \$64

CABINS,

Include kitchenette and shower, dishes, cutlery, pots, pans and all linen and towels and one double bed per room.

one bedroom \$55 ***4 or 5 left

two bedroom \$66

***2 left

CONDOMINIUMS:

These have a large downstairs living area with kitchenette, full bath and fireplace with wood.

Two upstairs bedrooms with double bed in each

\$85

***2 or 3 left

There are also large 3 bedroom deluxe condos for \$135 up. None are being held, but several should be available. Rates are confirmed, and based on double occupancy, with a \$5 additional charge per extra person over fourteen.

Should you call too late, there are several **Bed and Breakfasts** near the Park, including the **Spring Valley B&B** and **Sorensen's B&B** (306) 662-3377. There are also several motels in 30km distant Maple Creek.

Camping situation:

We will need a core of campers by the 'scopes in the East end of the Meadows area, which will be blocked off for our use. This includes a few shaded campsites in the trees and plenty of room for mobile homes. There are outhouses and water taps, but no showers, wheelchair washrooms or trailer hookups. All of these can be found at the Service Centres in the nearby Terrace and Rainbow campgrounds. The Meadows, is actually closer to these than at the other non-trailer campgrounds. **Trailer owners wanting sites with electrical hookups are advised to check with the park ASAP.**

Erich Keiser

Decision Time for Colonsay

by Richard Huziak, President

It seems, that after 3 years of searching out more than 35 potential sites, and putting in excess of 3000 kilometers in our vehicles, that we finally may have located the site for the Centre's new observatory. Late last year, Erich chanced across the seemingly abandoned Sleaford schoolyard, just 11 kilometers north of Colonsay. This site, though 55 kilometers from Saskatoon beat out the former contender, Smuts, due to its excellent winter access, lack of stray light and superbly dark skies. Al Hartridge, who has been at the schoolyard under a dark sky, commented that he could not recognize the constellations because so many stars were visible! The site is also acceptable to the U of S Physics department.

On February 21st, Stan Shadick, Yannis Pahatouraglou, Erich Keser and I met with Colonsay Community Coop (owners) and the Colonsay Wildlife Federation (occasional users). The Colonsay High School was kind enough to let us use their staff room as a meeting place. Colonsay was quite enthusiastic about our proposal, surmising that a new observatory would provide an excellent use of the property and welcomed the prospect of new people in the community. They resolved that selling the property to us would be strongly considered and should not be a problem. In the next few weeks, they will be meeting with their members to firm up the details of the tentative sale.

The Sleaford School site is 3 acres in size, 2 acres of which are surrounded by a Maple windbreak, giving us ample room to spread out our envisioned observatories. The original schoolhouse is in usable condition and would be useful for larger meetings, as our new library and as the warm-up shelter. The building is already serviced by a power run and a new breaker box. The site is adjacent to a plowed school bus route, guaranteeing winter access. It is also so remote that increasing light pollution from Saskatoon and nearby buildings should not be an issue for decades to come. The site is wonderful in that we can have public starnights, barbecues, tours and all kinds of activities there!

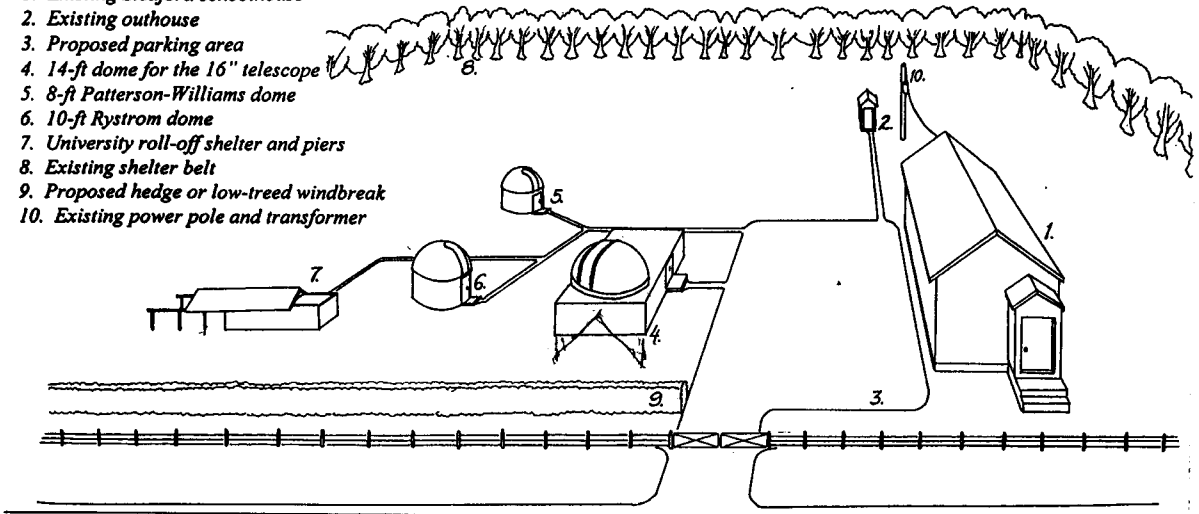
Some minuses for this site are the 54 kilometers distance - a good 35- to 40-minute drive. However, it still would be one of the closest observatories to a city for all of the RASC centres. It is also very remote, making security a concern and winter safety an issue, though we have plans for both of these problems.



photo by Erich Keser

The Sleaford (Colonsay) Observatory

1. Existing Sleaford schoolhouse
2. Existing outhouse
3. Proposed parking area
4. 14-ft dome for the 16" telescope
5. 8-ft Patterson-Williams dome
6. 10-ft Rystrom dome
7. University roll-off shelter and piers
8. Existing shelter belt
9. Proposed hedge or low-treed windbreak
10. Existing power pole and transformer



drawing by Rick Huziak)

Envisioned layout of the site as drawn for the Colonsay meeting.

At the March general meeting, the membership will be asked several questions in regard to the new observatory. One is for agreement to proceed. We will have 3 choices - take the site, find a new site, or become a centre without an observatory (since the Rystrom Observatory is reaching the end of its useful life). The U of S has also stated that they WILL proceed if we do not. The second question is if members will use the site. The third is about ownership. Should the RASC or the U of S own the site?

There are benefits to both methods of ownership. No matter how we decide, the U of S and the RASC will form a legal partnership agreement in this venture, with one party being the owner and the other being the lessee. If the RASC is the owner, we have a piece of land for eternity, but we must be able to support and maintain the land on a yearly basis. If our membership drops, we may become in danger of not being able to pay our bills! The U of S would lease from us on some cost schedule, yet to be determined, which may include a cash payment or services such as snow clearance or phone installation in trade. We would be unrestricted as to the design of the buildings, though we may have to finance the infrastructure costs, which may be quite high. There are also great advantages to the U of S owning the site. The U of S already owns several properties, and maintains them as part of the deal. They are also property tax exempt. They may cut the grass, plow the snow, install telephones, trench power, pay heating and maintenance bills, provide building and maintenance services, etc. - they do what it takes to maintain the property.

On the down side, the U of S is subject to funding cuts and may have some restrictions on buildings. We have begun to discuss and clarify this with the university, and plan another meeting before our next meeting to clarify some details. For the record, the U of S has never sold off a property due to funding cuts, and we'd make sure our Partnership agreement cover the right of title transfer to the RASC in the event of a sale. I personally do not think that U of S ownership is a problem. Our Centre has to be realistic and we have to assure that we can raise enough money to build and maintain the site year after year. Do we have that commitment from our members? This is a decision we have to make.

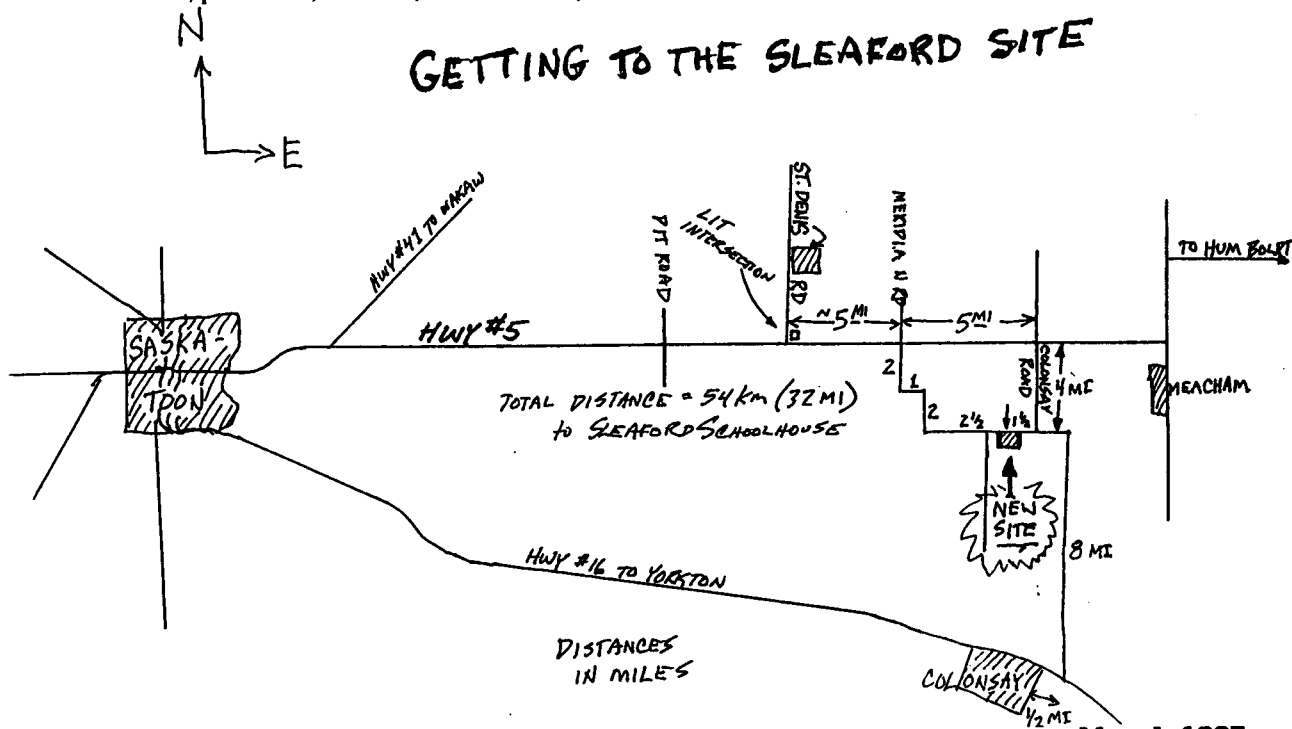
(continuation and map P.8, Budget P8)

continued from P.7

New Observatory Site

A preliminary budget for an observatory site has been included (see page 10) and outlines costs for envisioned future plans. Kim Mysyk has worked hard to put this together. Before anyone gets huffy about the costs, I never said that we would have to raise this total amount in order to build the new observatory! But there are some costs we cannot ignore. If we buy the site, we will have to have the purchase price **IN THE BANK**. We will also have to have a guaranteed yearly cashflow of about \$500 per year to maintain the site and pay the bills. Currently we work on a break-even budget, so I don't know how we will guarantee the operating costs. All of the other costs are negotiable, but are real. These are the costs for materials or services that we **MAY** choose. If we can get some of them free through scrounged donations and materials, we will, thus reducing our costs. The costs do not include labour, which I assume, our members will put in. But at the end of the day, no matter what we scrounge and save, the Centre will, add a costly observatory of \$20,000 or more to our list of assets! Please review the list and remember that it is a **LONG-TERM** target plan. We don't have to have most of this cash tomorrow! It gives us targets for those who are fundraising for the Centre. Things can easily come and go from the budget, but at least we have one!

Members are strongly encouraged to visit the site **BEFORE** the next meeting, and to be at the next meeting to voice their opinions. Whether Colonsay has already agreed or not, we will decide on how to proceed once and for all. Members not attending may not get a vote! (If you can't attend and would like to comment, phone me!) The map below shows you how to get there.



Announcements:

The **Junior Astronomers** will meet on **Friday, March 14th at 7:30 p.m.** at **Alvin Buckwold School**. The group is still growing. For information, call **Sandy Ferguson at 931-3184**.

Observing Session: Friday April 4th, 8 p.m. at Rystrom Observatory
Take a last good look at our winter constellations from the comfort of our observatory & warm-up shelter. Cloud/ date is **Sat. April 5th.** (Call **Darrell at 374-9278** for further information).

Binocular Group: May be meeting at the same time and place
Call **Brian Friesen at 384-2963** or **Kirt Headley at 683-0251** for further details.

ASTRONOMY DAY 1997:

International Astronomy Day is being celebrated on **Saturday April 12th**. This year we will set up our displays at The Mall at Circle and 8th throughout the day. We will not hold the usual Astronomy Day public starnight that day, but will invite people to participate in our first starnight of the season at Beaver Creek on the evening of Saturday, May 10th.

As usual, we will be looking for the regular volunteers (and telescopes) to make both events successful. Please give me a call at 931-3184 if you can help.

GASTRONOMY Evening: Saturday April 12 6:30 PM Astronomy Day displays will provide a good excuse for us and our families to get together for another Gastronomy bash. The German Club Concordia is a possible venue. Call **Al Hartridge at 373-0034** to confirm.

HALE-BOPP STARNIGHT: We will be holding a Public Starnight on Thursday, April 10th, to allow everyone a chance to view Comet Hale-Bopp.

Thanks to **Darrell Chatfield** for donating magazine holders to our library. Much appreciated.
Sandy Ferguson

UNIVERSITY OBSERVATORY HOURS: The University of Saskatchewan Observatory will be open to the public on Saturday evenings in March from 8:30 PM to 10:30 PM. Mars, the Orion Nebula, the Pleiades and Comet Hale-Bopp may be viewed through the telescope. The observatory will also be open on Sunday, March 23 from 9 PM to 11 PM for public viewing of the partial lunar eclipse. For more details, call the Astronomy Information Line at 966-6429.

Buy and Sell:

Telescope Wanted: New member, Normand Poirier would like to purchase a decent telescope. He is suggesting a 6" f/8 or similar scope in used and good condition. If anyone has such a scope available please
Call **Norm at 445-0458** in N. Battleford.

Kodak Carousel Projector Bulb: Sylvania ELH 300W 120V Brand New in box. Surplus from bulk order for Centre educational presentations. \$25. (Lowest in-town-price is \$30+ taxes)
Call **Erich at 374-4262**

(Continued from P 8)

NEW OBSERVATORY & SITE BUDGET

Smuts costs have been kept in for comparison. These costs have been researched in most cases. The costs are for planning and reference purposes. This does not represent a final or firm budget - only as list of possibilities and representative costs for services so we all understand what things really cost! Rick

PURCHASE OF NEW SITE

	Smuts	Colonsay
Land Purchase	\$500 to 3,000	\$200-\$1000 (Nil if we are the leasing partner)
Legal, titles, registration	\$200	\$200 (or nil if we are the leasing partner)
Surveyors Certificate	\$250	\$250 or less - likely on file
Utility Connections:		
Sasktel	\$477 phone line	\$250 Cellular - plus per call cost
SaskPower	\$100 install	\$100 upgrade
SaskEnergy - natural gas	\$0- \$200 (100 m. line)	\$59,000 (quite prohibitive!!)

OBSERVATORY FOR 16" TELESCOPE

Building Materials (wood, door, paint, nails)	\$1,880
Concrete Footings & Pier	\$ 400.00
Dome Modification	\$ 400.00
Power Run	\$ 500.00

PIERS for 2 OTHER DOMES

Concrete Footings and Piers (x2)	\$400
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MOVING RYSTROM OBSERVATORY (Truck Rental)

(Including warmup and 2 domes)	\$600
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SCHOOLHOUSE RENOVATIONS (some maintenance of schoolhouse was part of our offer)

Two Exterior Doors	\$1,200	Minimum: Paint, caulking, etc. \$350
Heating System (Propane?)	\$ 500	Sump pump \$150
General Upgrades (1st year)	\$1,000	

ROLL-OFF SHELTER FOR OTHER PIERS/VISITOR SCOPES

Building & Concrete (use Rystrom? or U of S)	\$ 800
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COMPLETION OF 16" TELESCOPE

Finder, Motors, Drive System	\$4,000
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ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COSTS

Electricity (\$0.09/kW-hr)	\$240	Optional Gas (\$0.13/cu m) or Propane	\$250
Telephone (Business \$400) Personal	\$200	Property Tax (if bought, if levied)	\$150
Insurance (same as Rystrom's)	\$300	Snow Removal	\$300
Building Maintenance	\$300	(RM. or University may do for less)	

SECURITY FENCE & GATES (\$15 PER FOOT)

(Probably unnecessary - alternate is to build STRONG buildings)	\$6,000
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(Budget prepared by Kim Mysyk)

Loaner Telescope Program:

As of March 3, the Centre's telescopes are in the hands of these people:

- 3.1 inch Tasco Refractor: Larry Grenkow, 955-0810, since Feb. 22/97.
- 4 inch Astroscan Reflector: Sandy Ferguson, 931-3184, since Jan.20/97 (Sandy will have this for March).
- 6 inch Rich Field Telescope: Ron Schnor, 343-1256, since Sept. 22/96.

If you wish to rent a telescope, please phone Gord Sarty at 665-6448 or 655-2332.

MINUTES for February 17, 1997.

EXECUTIVE MEETING

1. Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM.
2. **New Observatory Site:** Most of the time was used to discuss the Colonsay site. There are a number of concerns to clear up: ownership, power, gas, heritage status. Stan Shadick was present from U of S Physics department to present some of the ideas of the university. Representatives from the town, the ownership group, the Colonsay Wildlife Federation, Saskatoon Centre and the University will meet at the Colonsay School on Sunday.
3. **Saskatchewan Summer Star Party Cypress Hills.** Erich Keser brought us up to date on arrangements.
4. **New Meeting Site:** the meeting was held at the National Hydrology Building. All agreed that this is a superb facility meeting all our requirements and then some. We hope to hold all our meetings here in the future.
5. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

GENERAL MEETING

1. Meeting called to order at 8:00 PM.
2. **New Observatory Site:** A long discussion was held regarding the Colonsay site. Don MacKinnon (lawyer), a Centre member, was on hand to offer a legal opinion on members' concerns. There appears to be general agreement that we pursue the lease or purchase of the land. The University of Sask. is also in favor of the site. There will be a meeting in Colonsay on Sunday as per Executive Minutes.
3. **New Meeting Site:** Everyone agreed that it had everything we could ask for, including excellent parking.
4. **SK Summer Star Party (July 4th-6th):** Erich Keser distributed a provisional schedule.
5. **Astronomy Day April 12 at Circle Park Mall:** Volunteers & telescopes will be needed for our display.
6. **Regina General Meeting Feb. 28:** A group will car pool down to coordinate Star Party plans with them.
7. **National Council Meeting** Gord Sarty and Rick Huziak will apply for Messier Certificates.
8. **Tuktoyaktuk T-shirts** are available - the watered down design was unanimously disparaged.
9. **Programs:**
 - Gord Sarty - Using the Observer's Handbook.
 - Mark Zalcik (Edmonton) - The Noctilucent Cloud CAN - AM program.
 - Erich Keser - Slides of Colonsay site: Sleaford Schoolhouse and yard.
10. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Executive and General Meeting Minutes were submitted by Dr. Alan Hartridge.

Become a Member

Get the RASC Handbook and Journal, plus Sky News and Saskatoon Skies mailed to you regularly. Use the Rystrom Observatory and participate in the many interesting activities of the Saskatoon Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. Join Now!

Regular	\$ 40.00	Youth (21 and under)	\$ 22.50
Lifetime	\$900.00	Newsletter only	\$ 12.50

Make cheques payable to RASC Saskatoon and send to RASC Saskatoon Centre, PO Box 317, RPO University, Saskatoon, SK, S7N 4J8, or pay at the General meeting. The membership year runs from Oct. 1st. thru Sept. 30th.

**Don't miss a last chance to see
the sky's Winter Wonders**

Observing and Binocular Night, April 4th or 5th.

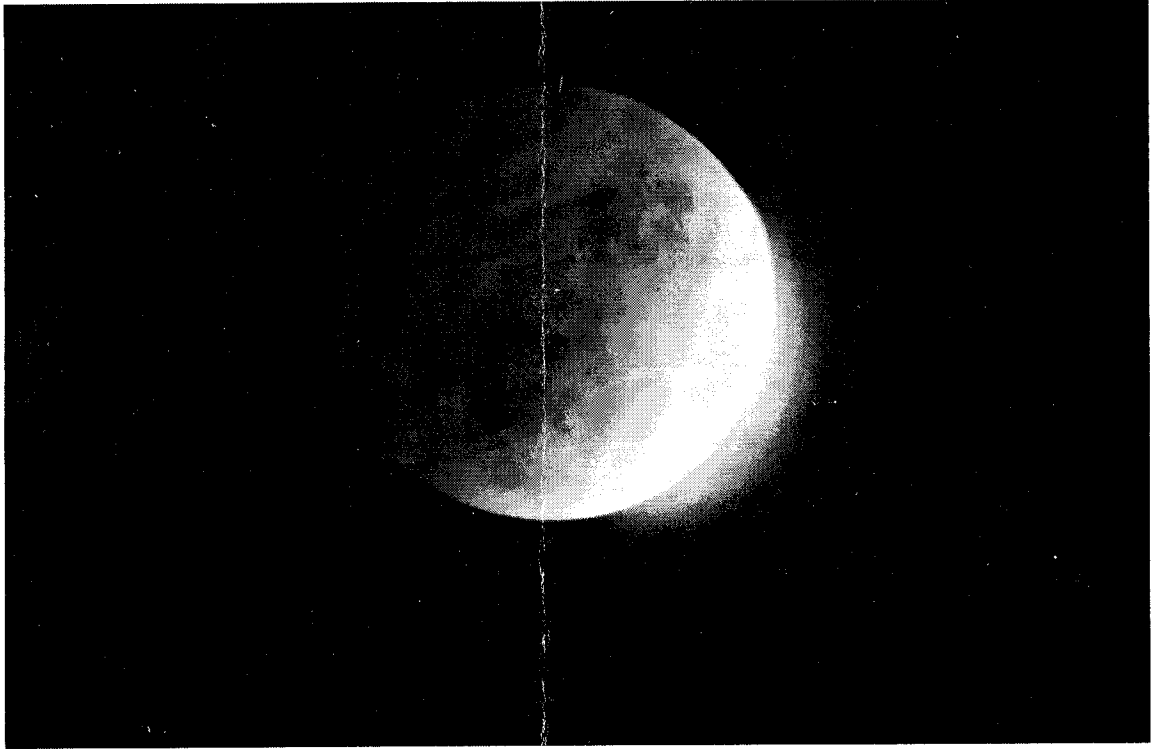


Photo by Bob Christie:

**"This photo was taken at prime focus with my
Celestron C-5 telescope on ASA 400 film
The exposure time was two seconds. "**

**Don't miss your chance to enjoy a similar spectacle:
Come out and see the 95% Lunar Eclipse on March 23rd!**

AstracFilm: FPP 400