

Saskatoon **SKIES**

Newsletter of the Saskatoon Centre of the
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
Aug-Sept. 1997. Vol. 28, No. 8/9



photo by Erich Keser

The very busy Saskatchewan Summer Star Party '97 Registration table. Regina Centre's Darcy Kozoryz smiles sweetly as his T-shirts sell out, while President Rick Huziak registers disbelief on hearing that the 198th SSSP registrant somehow got by his "foolproof" registration system.

Presidential Pronouncements

Renew your membership NOW to get your Handbook in time:

The new membership year begins on October 1, and if you want to avoid last year's fiasco with handbooks being delivered in March and April, please consider renewing your dues earlier rather than later. Last year, members who renewed in later October and November received handbooks in January or later. We've been advised this year to get our membership list in by October 15, then handbooks are almost guaranteed to arrive before the new year. Although changing to the University of Toronto Press was supposed to allow handbooks to be delivered trouble free, and monthly, all the bugs have still not been worked out. Please be patient.

Annual Dues: Regular \$40.00 Life \$900.00
 Youth (21 & under) \$22.50

Send dues to the Centre's mailbox. Make cheques payable to "RASC Saskatoon" or Renew your membership at the Monday September 15th General meeting.

Next General Meeting is on Monday, Sept. 15th at the National Hydrology Research Institute, Innovation Place at 8 PM. (Executive members will meet at 7 PM).

Business will include the Partnership Agreement and building plans for the New Observatory Site at Sleaford, early preparations for SSSP 98 and the opening of nominations for the Oct. Annual Meeting (Please take on an area or make a nomination: call Rick, 665-3392).

Presentations will include:

- Visiting the Edmonton Space&Science Centre to Help Build Sleaford by Rick Huziak slides of that big roll-off observatory and of a meeting of Rick and Yannis with Edmonton President Bruce McCurdy to discuss the possibility of a similar structure at Sleaford.
- Multi-media presentation on SSSP'97 by some of the guilty parties including an excellent video of Murray Paulson's presentation on Choosing and Using Binoculars.
- Report on 1997 R.A.S.C. General Assembly by Professor Ed Kennedy.

The President Bids Farewell

Well, this is almost it! One more issue of the newsletter and that will be my final hurrah as President of the Saskatoon Centre. The last 4 years as Prez, and 4 years prior to that as VP have been very busy. I hope I have helped the Centre keep on track and to grow a little bit by leading a superb executive and membership. You guys and girls have been just great and I will surely miss sitting at the front or such a great group. Our Centre has a lot to be proud of. We are one of the more active Centres in the RASC, and have accomplished a fair amount in the name of amateur astronomy fun. Now off the bench, and on the other side of the room, I will really enjoy sitting at the back and heckling the new President and will be delighted when I get to call him or her several times a week about everything that I want done, but would rather not do myself! Oh..the life of the Prez! But seriously, I have enjoyed my stay in this position and as of October, it's someone else's turn. I will now have time to be a doer instead of an administrator. I have a whole list of projects to work on! I hope that every member will support the new president as well as you have supported me. Thank you.

Richard Huziak

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Errata: if you didn't notice that one, then we're not telling!

Saskatoon Skies is produced monthly, with summer double-issues. We welcome letters articles, images, cartoons, drawings and diagrams. Contact Sandy Ferguson (931-3184) or Erich Keser (374-4262) for 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 always represent the opinion of the Centre.

Print run is 125 to 135 of which about 120 copies are circulated.

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MORE Presidential ramblings... (by Rick Huziak)

Variable Stars Anyone?

If anyone in the Centre would like to observe variable stars, I would be more than willing to put on a seminar under the stars to teach you how. Estimating the brightness of your choice of hundreds of variables can be very rewarding, since the data, if reported, is used by many groups studying stellar evolution. It also gives you something to do when the moon is out and too bright for deep sky observing. You can also do it from your light polluted back yard! There are observing programs for naked eye, binoculars and telescopes from 2-inches to 200-inches. If I can get several members in the Centre observing, I can get the Centre registered as an 'observer' with the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO), and I will take on the task of compiling and submitting the observations every month. Please give me a call (665-3392) if you are interested in the seminar and observing.

Asteroid 433 Eros - An Observing Challenge

Possibly the most famous earth-crossing asteroid, 433 Eros, will come within 42 million mile of earth in April 1998. The closest approach is visible only from the southern United States and lower. However, this fall, Eros should make a good appearance in the northern sky on it's way down south, coming to within 1.1 AU of us in October. Although it is relatively dim, it can be located in 8-inch and larger 'scopes as it zooms through Auriga and Cancer in Sept. and Oct. Even though Eros will pass though congested starfields in Auriga's Milky Way, it should not be hard to identify due to it's fast west to east motion at more than 4 minutes per day, or about 10 seconds per hour. Finding the field and making an accurate sketch will allow you to go back in an hour or two and identify which "star" moved. Don't be surprised if it changes brightness slightly as well, as this potato-shaped asteroids spins on it's axis once every 5 hours and 16 minutes. Below are its positions and magnitudes for the asteroid at 0 hours Universal Time on those dates. A daily ephemeris is available at <http://cfa-www.harvard.edu/cfa/ps/Ephemerides/> and can be downloaded. Those who want the challenge of observing other earth-crossing asteroids may also want to download positions for 1036 Ganymede, 1980 Tezcatlipoca, and 2100 Ra-Shalom, which all come close enough to become brighter than 14th magnitude

433 Eros Ephemeris (Sept. - Oct. 1997)

Date	RA	Decl.	Mag. (v)
1997 09 09	06 09.86	+35 32.5	13.4
1997 09 14	06 30.20	+35 29.3	13.3
1997 09 19	06 50.78	+35 13.9	13.3
1997 09 24	07 11.50	+34 45.7	13.2
1997 09 29	07 32.25	+34 04.3	13.1
1997 10 04	07 52.89	+33 09.6	13.0
1997 10 09	08 13.34	+32 01.4	13.0
1997 10 14	08 33.49	+30.40.0	12.9
1997 10 19	08 53.28	+29 05.7	12.8
1997 10 24	09 12.65	+27 19.0	12.
1997 10 29	09 31.55	+25 20.5	12.7

Perseid Meteor Shower at Beaver Creek

Darrell Chatfield

I got out to Beaver Creek about 9:30 p.m. on this fine Tues. evening and began setting up my 10" telescope. **Bob Christie** was out with his C5, **Sandy Ferguson** with her homemade 10" 'scope, **Les and Ellen Dickson** with their famous binoculars, lawn chairs and drinks! Rick was giving a talk on the Perseid meteors inside the Beaver Creek interpretive centre.

Tonight was to be a night of firsts for me: the first night that I had ever decided to Polar-align. (Bob had taught me how at SSSP). After doing just that, I plugged in the battery pack that I had borrowed from Erich, trained the 'scope on Jupiter, and marveled at how it didn't drift out of sight within the usual minute.

I turned around to see what was happening and was surprised (shocked!) to see this army of people coming up the small hill, ready and eager to descend upon us and our instruments. H-E-L-P! There were Grandmas and Grandpas, Moms toting kids of all sizes, Teens, Dads with their sons, and single guys who couldn't get dates that night! My second 'first' was just being at Beaver Creek to help out.

There were at least 145 people there waiting to see the sights of the Universe. Bob had his telescope trained on the moon for most of the night. He was able to show people 'The Terminator'. I will give you four guesses as to what that is, and they are:

1. Arnold Schwarzenegger's nickname based on his muscular prowess.
2. Rick Huziak's nickname based on his driving skills.

Continued Overleaf

Observing Session at Sleaford August 23, 1997

Darrell Chatfield

Even though this was not a club observing session, it was, nevertheless, a time for testing out our new site. Erich and I made plans to go out around 9:30 p.m. By then the skies were clear, the telescopes were packed and we were on our way. It took us 45 minutes to get to the site, and a bit less time to set up our equipment. Of course, we had to visit before we even got out the tripod legs.

We both marveled at the darkness of the skies. The Milky Way was very bright, right down to Sagittarius. After we polar-aligned, we started to views. Good old **M31** was very bright, along with **M32** and **M110**. Jupiter and its moons were a treat as usual. I had seen some new planetary nebula in Aquila at SSSP at Cypress Hills, **NGC 6781** and **NGC 6804**. Their magnitudes are 11.4 and 12.0, respectively, so they are not that bright. However, at a dark site like Sleaford, one can pick these out fairly easily with the right equipment. After helping Erich find these in his C11, we shared the views in both scopes.

As our session progressed, a strange light (called a 'beacon' by Erich) appeared in the East. Yes, you guessed it - this 'beacon' was the Moon. Neither of us had checked out the rising times of this yellow orb, so this led to problems as time went on. We persevered and continued observing. This was challenging, until the clouds came in. So here we were at this great dark site with the Moon and the clouds!!! Well, such is the life of an amateur astronomer (and professional ones at that, come to think of it).

Continued Overleaf

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Beaver Creek Perseid Night

3. The line marking off the light and dark areas of the moon, or

4. The gopher hole to the right of Bob's 'scope, almost covered by my 'scope case

(Please bring your answers to the next general meeting! First prize will be a chance to follow Rick Huziak to his first Observing Session at Sleaford: via the gravel road route. ed)

I was showing people the good view of Jupiter and its four major moons. Les and Ellen were impressing others with binocular views of various sky objects and Sandy was showing about the same things with her telescope. (We also looked at Albireo, M31 and M13.)

This was a very goodnight. It was fairly dark and the enthusiasm of the crowds was fantastic. It was too bad that we had to leave by midnight, because I'm sure most would have stayed longer. However, we packed up, with some of us heading on to Rystrom's for further meteor observing.

Bob brought a friend from work with his family and I came along with Sandy and Rick. We all met Bill Hydromako out there. Sandy, Rick and Bill stayed past 1:30 a.m. to count meteors, at which time Bob and I left.

All in all, it turned out to be a fantastic night. Lots of fun, lots of friendship and maybe a few future members for our club. (P.S. I will be Polar aligning from now on!). Thank you, and I hope to see you all at our next meeting, or even better, under the stars!

We may soon get have a key Beaver Creek Conservation Area--so come out to help and to OBSERVE!

(Continued from previous page)

Sleaford Lunacies

Even though this was a short session, it was still valuable. Check the Moon's rising times you go out, unless you want to observe the Moon, as we ended up doing anyway. As far as the clouds go, who can predict nature? Make the best of the situation rather than complain about things we cannot change. We packed up around midnight and headed back for the city. P.S.. Rick Huziak was at Rystrom's the same night, observing his usual fare of variable stars and 15-16th magnitude galaxies! (16th magnitude galaxies with the moon in the sky?? Right on, Rick! Ed/sf)

Come out and Observe!

Next Observers' Group:

Friday Sept. 26th, 9:00 PM

(cloud-date Sat. Sept.. 27th)

Sleaford Schoolsite

for directions, car-pooling, weather guess..
call Darrell 374-9278

*****Newsflash*****

Sleaford Site tested for Astrophotography

The usual culprits were surprised on the night of Sept. 1/2 by the midnight black Golf, of the notorious, Al "Doc" Hartridge, who braved the roads to the Sleaford with 1.5 metric tons of equipment to test our new site for Astrophotography. Al was so impressed with the star-studded skies that he took a 75 min. shot of the Helix Nebula and a 40 min. one of M81&M82 as Darrell and I tiptoed about in the dark. e.k.

We Did IT!

Saskatchewan Summer Star Party established as Major Astro Event

Thanks to the heroic help of dozens, many of them non-members or members of other Centres, the first full-scale SSSP was a great success. The 197 registrants of all ages and levels of astronomical skill (plus Jenica Dyck, who snuck in late) had a great time. Through Providence or good fortune, there was good viewing on all three nights, and those who'd come early raved about the seeing on Thursday night as being "11 out of 10"!

As we'd planned, the SSSP also established itself as a wonderful family event. Dozens of children of all ages enjoyed the Park's many facilities, and some previously "non astronomer" family members were so encouraged by the wonderful venue and general good cheer that they took their own first steps into our wonderful hobby.

Thanks to generous coverage in *Sky News* and RASC Centre newsletters, plus listings in *Sky&Telescope* and *Astronomy*, people from Ottawa to Vancouver Island and from Thompson MB to Flagstaff AZ people drove and flew in to take part. The Park staff also helped greatly by doing much more than their job. They mowed the entire viewing area to reduce dew and helped us to block it off as a dark area, provided security during the Sat. night talks, and did us many other favours

On Friday night, the Regina Centre's **Star Night at Lookout Point** drew appreciative campers. Meanwhile, the rest of us had such a night of seeing at the spacious Meadows that those who rose to prepare Saturday morning's **Blueberry Pancake breakfast**

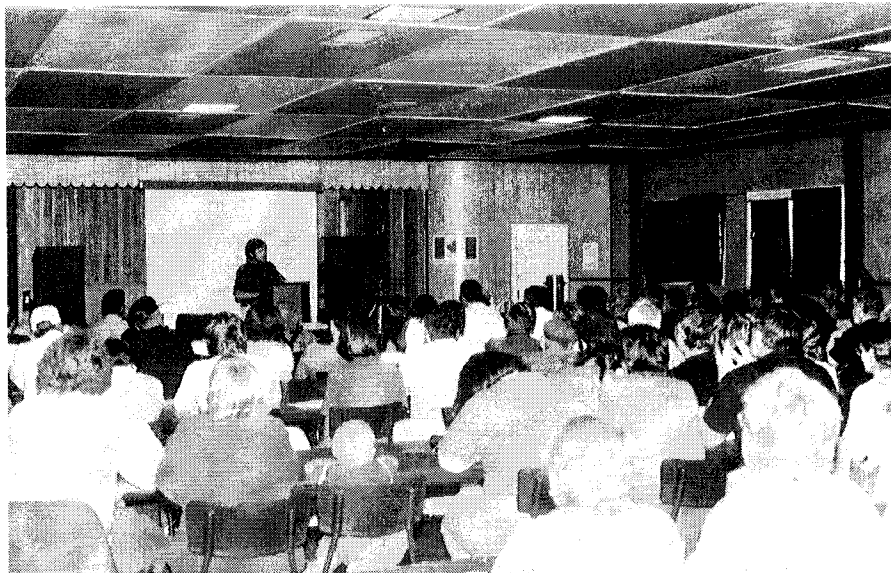
deserve medals, most especially Kitchen and food Organizer **Deborah Mysyk**. That afternoon's **Meteorite Hunt** led by **Kim Mysyk** was fun, but as more cow patties than bolides were found, cold beer became a holy grail. People returned with a healthy appetite for local chef **Jim Saville's** delicious **Pitchfork Fondu**. Next came the well-attended talks.

Father Lucian Kemble's inspiring keynote address related his decades of observing and stressed the need to wean young people from synthetic images by teaching them to look for themselves. **Edmonton's Murray Paulson** followed with a binocular astronomy presentation full of impressive advice and images. Next came the great slides of **Al Andrew's** astro-photo talk, the awarding of **Al Hartridge's** nice engraved plaques to astrophoto contest winners, and an ingenious camcorder video of lunar events by **Winnipeg's Kevin Black**.

Scattered clouds did not deter **Paulson's** mid-night **Binocular Starwalk**. However, as we moved through the heavens, it became clear that this Star Party had attracted many newcomers, so Murray smoothly re-gearred his talk to more prominent objects and signposts.

Paulson has already proposed **two Starwalks**, at two levels for SSSP '98, for which plans are well underway. Noted astronomy speaker **Alan Dyer** and Geologist **Don Hladiuk** and several others have already agreed to take part in the program. In fact, our first registration is already in hand.

Don't miss this fantastic event! I've attended dozens of Star parties, but never seen a better one. Non-campers, please be sure to call the **Four Seasons Resort (306-662-4411)** about their range of reasonably-priced cabins, rooms and condos. (These become available in Oct., but will go quickly, and deposits are refundable)
Erich Keser, SSSP Chair.



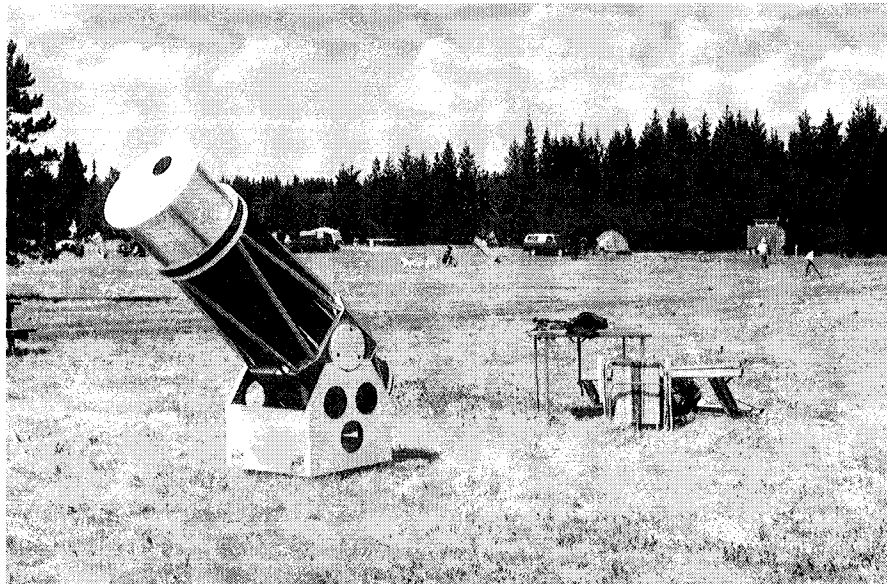
The big Park Recreation Hall was filled almost to capacity by young and old, women and men, people from all walks of life, at all levels of experience.



Deborah Mysyk, who worked miracles costing and buying food and organizing meals keeps smiling as Ellen Dickson and Pat Lafournaise, and over dozen others work away to feed almost two hundred hungry people. photos by E. Keser



Calgary's Susan Yeo and Pam Drysdale clown for camera at the Information & Security stand which helped us our viewing area dark and safe. photo: E. Keser



Al Walker's well-crafted 17.5" dobsonian illustrates the size of the magnificent viewing area the Park mowed and reserved for us. photo: Darrell Chatfield

Summer Observing:

The 1997 Perseid Meteor Shower: Detecting the Pre-maximum Burst

The Perseid meteor shower is the most famous meteor shower of the year. This, and its appearance during the warm vacation months, makes it the most widely observed shower of the year. The shower performs fairly reliably, producing observable meteors from the beginning of August to about the 15th of August. The peak occurs on the 12th or 13th, often producing as many as 100 meteors per hour. The peak is also occasionally accompanied by a short fireball phase as was seen in '94.

Six years ago meteor observers in Europe recorded a burst of activity about 12 hours before the "traditional" peak occurred over the Americas. It was clear that the earth had begun to collide with a meteoroid stream that had not been there before. For the next five years, this peak was repeatedly seen, but occurred over Europe or Japan, due to celestial timing. This year the peak was predicted by the International Meteor Organization (IMO) to appear over North America between midnight and 4 AM. on the night of August 11/12. But did this peak happen?

I began observing the Perseids on August 9/10 as part of the meteor observing program I do for the IMO. (I also watch several other showers during the year and submit reports - in particular, I watch the Quadrantids, Lyrids, Geminids, north and south delta Aquarids, kappa Cygnids, alpha Capricornids, Orionids, Aurigids and several others). Still three days from the peak, the slow rates were, barely enough to keep me interested, but still at about 11 meteors per hour. A day later, on the night of August 10/11, a 3-hour session netted 58

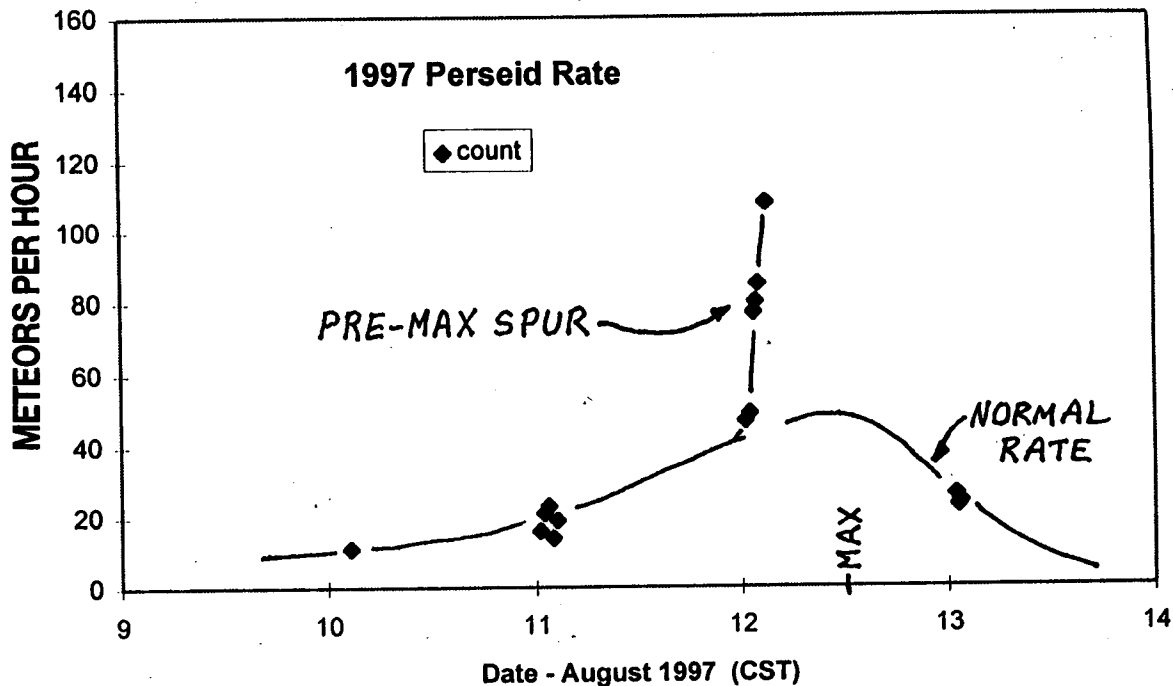
Perseids, with an average rate of 19/ hour.

As soon as counting began on August 11/12 it became obvious that the meteor rate was somewhat "enhanced". In the first 15-minutes, 19 meteors were counted - the same as yesterday's rate for an entire hour! This rate kept fairly steady over the next hour, now yielding 57 meteors/hour. Yesterday's rate had quadrupled --but was it "storming"? Was the pre-maximum peak manifesting itself? It was still quite difficult to tell. I continued to watch and count.

The rates seemed to be increasing slowly, and by 3:30 AM, I had netted 246 meteors; the last 36 coming in 15 minutes! Although the rate was obviously higher than normal, the form of the shower was different than I had seen it before. During the final hours of the traditional Perseid peak, meteors usually get brighter and more fireballs appear. However, there was not a recognizable increase in bright fireballs, but just a general increase in the numbers of all meteors.

The answer came when I plotted the results on the accompanying graph. It became very clear that not only had the pre-maximum spur been detected, but that the actual ramp-up from the normal rate to the full "storm" rate had been seen! We did not see the entire 4-hour spur because the sun decided to come up on us. It seems that the full force of the spur was seen a little further to the west in Alberta and BC, judging by Jeremy Tatum's (UBC) report on Email where he stated that "this was the best Perseid shower he had seen in many years". The accompanying graph clearly shows the rate increasing from 50 per hour at 12:00 am to 80 per hour by 1:30 am, and to 117 per hour by 3:00 AM.

Refer to Graph, next Page



1997 Perseid Meteor Shower Frequency over Time

Bill Hydomako did counts on August 11/12 and 12/13. Their results and mine have now been submitted the International Meteor Organization (IMO) for inclusion in their database, and subsequent use in analysis with a few hundred other formal meteor counts done by others all over the world.

What makes their data useful is that they did what are called "single observer counts", they counted for at least one hour and most importantly, they calibrated their observations by recording the faintest star they could see in a test area of the sky. Only in this way can observations from around the world in all

kinds of sky conditions be properly calibrated to a common baseline, then converted to a standard unit of measurement called the ZHR (Zenith Hourly Rate). Counting meteors to provide scientifically useful results is very easy to do, and can obviously be done by amateurs who have limited equipment. I always hope that amateurs will do useful counts in this manner instead of the more common, but non-useable "group counts" that are usually made during club meteor observing sessions. Full details of how to do meteor counts appear in July's issue of *Sky & Telescope*.

by Richard Huziak

Sleaford Observatory Site Progress Report

On July 22, the new Sleaford site was given a rough survey by Yannis Pahatouoglou, Rick Huziak, Bob Christie, Erich Keser, Al Hartridge, Merlyn Melby and myself. The measurements were reduced to elevations and x-y coordinates and are currently being used by Yannis to determine to best location on the site for buildings.

The site purchase by the University is apparently finished with only some minor legal paperwork to be completed. The partnership agreement between our Centre and the University is also in its final stages should be ready for ratification soon.

We are planning a noon hour meeting soon to determine the next step, which should be to move the Rystrom buildings to the new site. It is currently envisioned that this will happen sometime in October. The move will

Dr. A. V. Douglas, 1894 - 1988

Abstract of presentation by Prof. Emeritus J. E. Kennedy to June 1997 RASC General Assembly in Kingston

Accomplishments in Astronomy:

Dr. Douglas was appointed Dean of Women at Queen's University in 1939 and later became Professor of Astronomy. She served as the first woman President of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, spearheaded the effort to form the Kingston Centre of the RASC, was responsible for construction of a dome and installation of a telescope on Ellis Hall and wrote the biography of her teacher and mentor at Cambridge University, Sir Arthur Eddington.

In retirement she spoke and wrote extensively on a variety of astronomical topics, as well as serving on a number of national and international committees and commissions. Her contributions to the science were recognized by honorary degrees and awards.

probably need to be preceded by some foundation construction. It is currently planned that a contractor will place the foundation work, including telescope piers, but some volunteer labor will probably be required to move the buildings (two domes and a warm-up shelter). Let us know if you want to help (my number: 655-2332). We could also be working on assembling the aluminum dome for the 16 inch 'scope. Again let us know if you want to help.

Gord Sarty

Help Needed!

If we are going to actually get any use out of this great new Dark Site THIS YEAR, then we will have to move at least the Warm-up Shelter out there, and make it functional. Please help us do this! call Gord (655-2332) or Rick (665-3392).

To her coeds at Queen's University she was affectionately known as "Dr. Di" and to her close friends as "Allie". She was dearly loved and highly respected by astronomers of all vintages.

Professor J. E. Kennedy is Professor Emeritus of Physics at University of Saskatchewan. Ed Kennedy is a former President of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Honourary President of the Saskatoon Centre, a member of the International Astronomical Union and a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society of London.

For more than four decades, Ed has carried out research on the history of astronomy, often emphasizing the close association between astronomy and early surveying. As a member of Commission 41 of the IAU, dedicated to the history of astronomy, he not only benefited greatly from the outstanding leadership provided by the late Dr. A. V. Douglas but also the encouragement she afforded him in continuing with his studies in this area of the science.

Upcoming Events

Sandy Ferguson

Fri., Sept. 5th OR Sat., Sept. 6th - BEAVER CREEK PUBLIC STARNIGHT:

Our last Public Starnight of the summer will be at the Beaver Creek Conservation Area and will begin at 8:30 (8:00 for those of us setting up scopes). All are welcome and admission is free. This event is being announced in the media and around town and we hope for a lot of visitors. Everyone who can provide their telescope and time will be needed. Please call Brian Friesen at 3845-2963!

Our August Perseid public Starnights at this venue drew well over 300 people of all ages. Public Star Nights are an important recruiting opportunity and a great chance to introduce young and old to our wonderful pursuit. If 8-yr. old Heather Mysyk can show people the skies (through Sandy's 10 inch telescope!), then you can too. Please participate!

FRIDAY, September 26th - JUNIOR ASTRONOMERS' GROUP:

An organizing meeting will be held at Sandy Ferguson's place (238 Main Street, Apt. 11) on Friday, Sept. 26th at 7:30 PM to divide interested junior and youth members into appropriate age groups. Anyone from 8 to 16, who wishes to participate in our youth programs is welcome to come along. Parents are welcome too, of course, and we may also be looking for additional presenters. Punch and cookies will be served and a bit of observing may also take place! If you have any questions or require further information call Sandy at 931-3184.

OBSERVING SESSION: Friday Oct. 3rd. 9:00 P.M. (leaving town at 8 P.M.)

Sleaford Schoolsite (New Observatory Site): Try some really dark skies for a change! We may car pool or meet as a convoy, so please be sure to call Darrell Chatfield at 374-9278 to confirm arrangements, find out the best route for yourself (there are several shortcuts), and get a final check on the weather (he has friends in the area) Cloud/ date is Saturday October 4th.

NEW OBSERVATORY WORK WEEKEND(s): To Be Arranged

Your help will be greatly appreciated as we organize and execute the construction of new facilities at our new Sleaford Observatory Site. We should move our equipment from the Rystrom Farm over the next months, and must get the Warm-up Shelter re-sited and operating if we hope to use this great new location into the Fall and Winter. Please call Gord (655-2332) or Rick (665-3392)

LIBRARY UPDATE:

Ellen Dickson and I have been shuffling through our Centre's library collection in order to create a proper listing of all materials that are stored there. We are currently working on books, RASC Journals/newsletters and periodicals, so that we can provide the membership with a selection of publications that can be borrowed. In time, we will also be cataloguing all remaining library items, including slides, published symposia papers, catalogues and other materials.

We have noticed that a number of individual volumes belonging to various sets of books are missing, perhaps borrowed over the years. We are asking that any members that have Centre books (or other materials) in their possession please contact Ellen at 249-1091 or Sandy at 931-3184 to let us know the title, so that we may include it in the complete listing.

Thank you for your help!

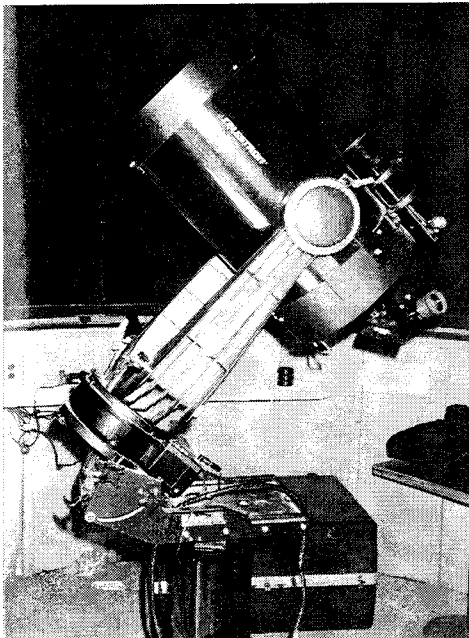
Wilkinson Memorial Observatory

The Wilkinson Memorial Observatory near Eastend is a new observatory with a long history behind it. The original observatory was built by Jack Wilkinson, a local blacksmith machinist, and amateur telescope maker in 1949. It housed an 8" reflector telescope that he built. After his death in 1953 a society was formed to preserve the observatory and telescope for public use. Wallace Stegner, the Pulitzer prize-winning author and former Eastend resident, refers to this in his book **Wolf Willow**:

But his observatory did not die with him, because Corky Jones, and a few others unwilling to see a light go out, formed--how touching and how finally splendid-- The Eastend Astronomical Society, and sold memberships for funds to buy the telescope and dome from Wilkinson's estate.

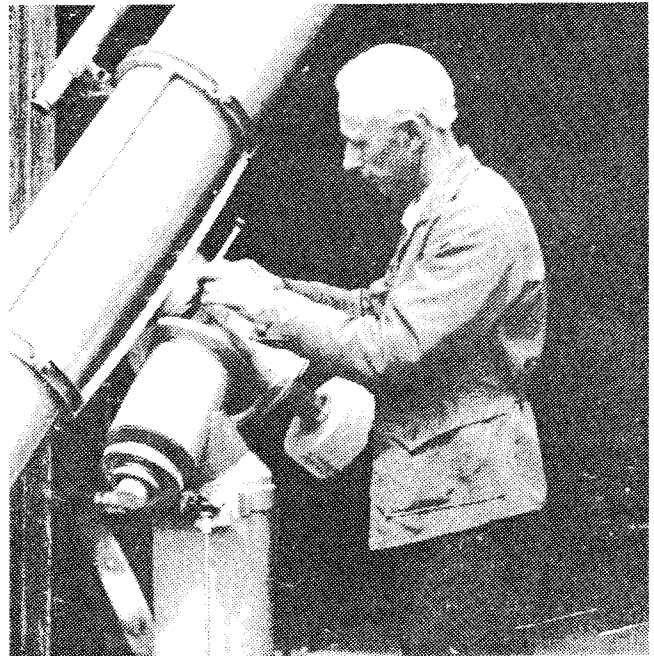
The building was moved onto the roof of the Eastend High School, where it remained for many years. It was then that it was given its present name.

In 1992 the building was moved out of town to escape the light pollution and turbulent seeing produced by the surrounding buildings. It was relocated 5 km southwest of town along highway 13 onto land donated by Elaine Andreas (land section NW 13-6-22 W3M), in memory of her brother Bruce Gregory. The structure now houses a Celestron Ultima II" (279 mm) f/10 Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope with periodic error correction and a Lumicon Sky Vector II computer control. The formal rededication took place on July 24, 1994.



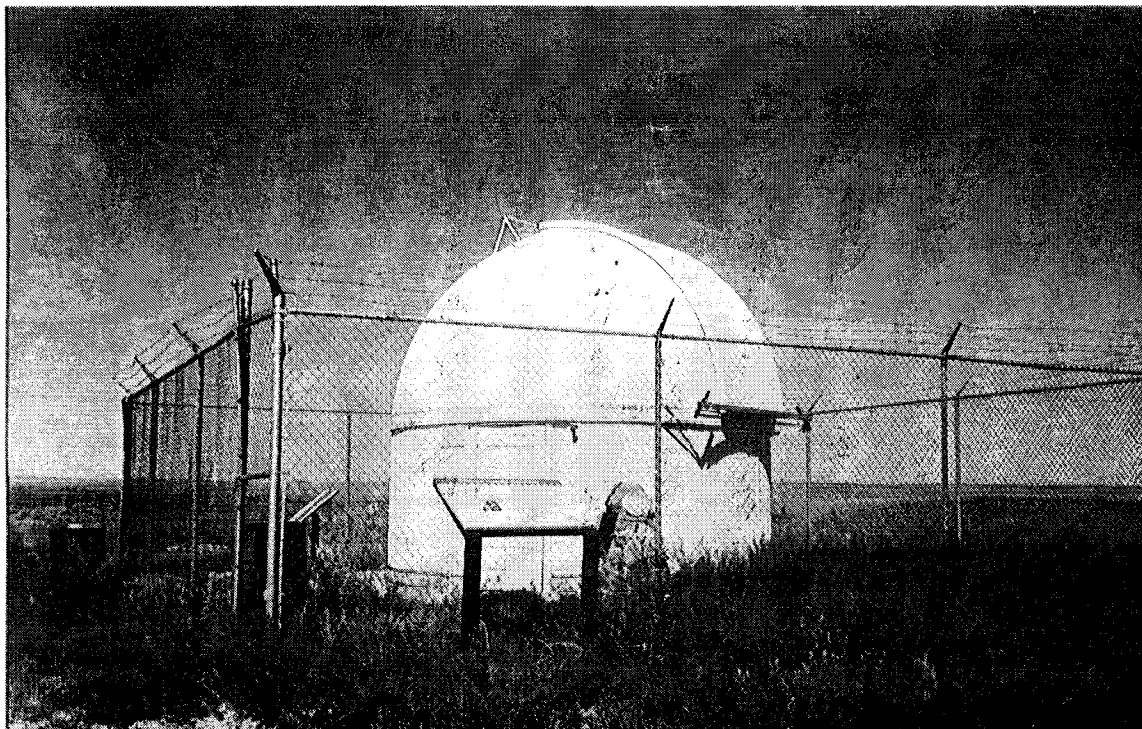
The new Wilkinson Dome C11

-Photo-Wade Selvig -



Jack Wilkinson working on his telescope

from Eastend Historical Society **Range Riders and Sodbusters**
(North Battleford,SK: Turner-Warwick Inc., 1985, p. 303)



The Wilkinson Memorial Observatory at Eastend, Saskatchewan - photo by Wade Selvig

The observatory is a unique facility. Its isolation from large urban areas and relatively high altitude (about 1000 meters above sea level) give it exceptionally dark skies. It is a rare cloudless night where one cannot see the Milky Way. On spring evenings you can even find the ghostly zodiacal light (light reflected off a dust cloud in orbit around the Sun, along the plane of the ecliptic) extending half way up the sky from the western horizon. The building itself is roomy enough to hold groups up to 15 people at a time. The observatory's lights and power are provided by a 12 volt DC system that is charged up by two 11 watt solar panels located on a pedestal on the south side of the building.

Since its rededication the observatory has been the site of many events. It is a popular attraction for field trips from nearby schools. Through this telescope the public has seen lunar eclipses, the impact of comet Shoemaker-Levy with Jupiter and, most recently, the remarkable inner-coma structure of comet Hale-Bopp, with its. Every August Dr. Peter Bergbusch of the University of Regina graciously comes to Eastend to conduct public starnights. During one of these starnights Dr. Bergbush brought along the university's CCD cameras to give the Wilkinson Observatory its electronic "first light"

To book a group tour of the observatory you can contact the **Eastend Community Tourism Authority** at (306) 295-4144, or **Eastend Fossil Research Station** at (306) 295-4009.

Wade Selvig, Shaunavon, Saskatchewan.



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