

Nova Notes



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

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Venus, Jupiter, Moon, Mercury and Pollux by David Hoskin

FEATURING:

MAY / JUNE 2026

VOL 57 NO 3

NOVA EAST: GATHER UNDER THE STARS	5
THANK YOU, MEMBERS FOR SCO CLEANUP	6
A BLAST FROM THE PAST	8
MEMBERS' UNIVERSE	9
SAVE THE DATES: SCO OBSERVING DATES	9
MAY & JUNE CENTRE MEETING NOTES	15

PLUS ALL YOUR FAVOURITE REGULAR FEATURES!



In this issue:

From the Editor	2
Centre Information	3
A Message From the President	4
Nova East: Gather under the stars by Judy Black	5
Thank you, members for SCO cleanup	6
A Blast from the Past: In Praise of the Long-Suffering Astronomer's Spouse	8
Food For the Soul: The Poetry of Paul Heath	9
Save the date - Observing at SCO	
Members' Universe	10
Puzzle Corner	14
March and April Meetings	15

Cover Images:

Main Image:

Venus, Jupiter, waxing crescent Moon and Mercury, 16 June 206
Canon T3i DSLR on a tripod: 0.6 sec sub at ISO-1600, f/8, FL 70mm; post processing with Photoshop
by **David Hoskin**

Thumbnail:

St. Croix Observatory
drawing by **Mary Lou Whitehorne**

Note: All photos and original works in this edition are the copyrighted property of the photographers, writers and artists. Permission to use any of their photos for other purposes must be obtained from the photographer.

From the Editor

Ahhh! Summer. A time to hopefully rest and recharge. While the nights are shorter, I hope you can still get out and continue to observe, image and just appreciate all the night sky has to offer.

Those of you in darker skies are fortunate to have the Milky Way keeping you company at night.

Personally, I'm looking forward to enjoying the Moon and planets as I like to do, and hopefully share them with our neighbors.

I often write about how this hobby has the added bonus of the people and the "wow factor" that come along with sharing the eyepiece.

It is always important for me to remember those who gave me such moments when I first started the hobby, and to "pay it forward" by sharing the eyepiece with others who have not had such experiences.

So whether you are visiting SCO, attending Dark-Sky Weekend or Nova East or just "doing your own thing," I wish you the peace and wonderment the Universe has to offer.



A recent rainbow that appeared after a sudden storm here in New Jersey. So many reasons to "Look Up!"
Photo by Lisa Ann Fanning

Clear skies - I can't wait to see your images and hear all about your adventures.

With continued gratitude,



Lisa

Upcoming Meeting Dates

September 12 - TBA

October 3 - TBA

November 7- Finding Exoplanets (Blair MacDonald)

December 5 & AGM - John Badowski
(the Fermi Paradox)

We are now hosting hybrid live/Zoom Members' Meetings. Halifax Centre meetings are usually held on the first Saturday of the month, except for July and August.

Come join us in-person in Room AT101 at Saint Mary's University or by pre-registering for the meeting on Zoom.

For information about the meeting and how to register for the Zoom session, please visit <https://halifax.rasc.ca/index.php/activities/rasc-events>

For past meeting replays, visit our YouTube Channel
<https://www.youtube.com/c/raschalifax>



St. Croix Observatory

Part of your membership in the RASC Halifax Centre includes access to our observatory, located in the community of St. Croix, NS. The site has expanded over the last few years and includes a roll-off roof observatory with electrical outlets, a warm-room, and toilet facilities. We welcome you to bring your own equipment or to use the Centre's 400-mm Dobsonian telescope, 100-mm binoculars, and the recently acquired SCT and gear for astro-imaging.

Enjoy dark pristine skies far away from city lights and the company of like-minded observers searching out those faint "fuzzies" in the night. Most clear Moon-free nights, you will find our keen observers out there! Announcements of members visiting SCO are made on the Centre's Discussion List. If you are not a key holder and would like to become one or need more information, please contact the SCO Manager, Tony McGrath, at scomanager@halifax.rasc.ca.

SCO is Open!

Go to our website (<https://halifax.rasc.ca>) for the latest SCO usage guidelines and conditions.



St. Croix Observatory
drawing by Mary Lou Whitehorne

NOTE: As of Fall 2023, the building has lights again! (Thanks to Tony McGrath and Peter Hurley, the lights have been connected to 110v AC power.)

RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors, 2026

Elected	
President	Tony McGrath
Vice-President	Peter Hurley
Secretary	Judy Black
Treasurer	Gregg Dill
Director	Gerry Brosky
Director	Matthew Dyer
Director	David Hoskin
Director	Frank Logan
Director	David McMullin
Director	Vincent Vallee
Appointed	
Honorary President	Patrick Kelly
Auditor	David Chapman
Communications Committee, Chair	VACANT
Dark-Sky Preserve Committee, Co-Chair	Peter Hurley
Dark-Sky Preserve Committee, Co-Chair	Tony Schellinck
Education & Public Outreach (EPO) Chair	David Hoskin
Governance Committee, Chair	Judy Black
National Council Representative	Judy Black
Nominating Committee, Chair	VACANT
Nova Notes, Editor	Lisa Ann Fanning
Nova Notes, Copy Editor	John McPhee
Observing / EPO Chair	David Hoskin
St. Croix Observatory, Manager	Tony McGrath
Webmaster	Jerry Black

SAVE THE DATES FOR 2026!

Dark-Sky Weekend
August 7-9, 2026

New Moon August 13, 2026

Nova East Star Party
August 12-16, 2026



A Message from the President

One Certificate at a Time

One of the great strengths of amateur astronomy is that there is always another layer to discover. We usually begin our journey in astronomy by simply looking up, but before long we find ourselves learning constellations, understanding celestial motion, recognizing deep sky objects, estimating variable stars, sketching lunar features, or exploring the stories behind what we observe.

I have discovered that one of the best ways to encourage that journey is through the RASC Observing Certificate programs.

At first glance, an observing certificate might look like a checklist of targets. In practice, it becomes something much more valuable. One of the eye openers for me as I renew pursuit of my first certificate is that my observing has become more deliberate. It provides structure, introduces new areas of astronomy, and gives a reason to observe things I might otherwise overlook.

The certificates are designed for all experience levels. Some are ideal for those just becoming familiar with the night sky, while others invite experienced observers to deepen their skills and explore specialized areas. Instead of asking “What should I look at tonight?” the certificate provides a destination.

One of the unexpected benefits is how much learning happens naturally. Pursuing a certificate has helped me become more proficient at star hopping, more aware of seasonal sky changes, better at keeping notes, more patient at the eyepiece and best of all introduced me to sketching, something that I am really enjoying.

As we move into the warmer observing months, consider choosing one RASC observing certificate and giving it a try. You do not need perfect skies, expensive equipment, or years of experience: just simple curiosity and an observing certificate to pursue.

All the best,
Tony McGrath
President RASC Halifax Centre

Email the Centre Executive:
president@halifax.rasc.ca

Nova Notes: The Newsletter of the RASC Halifax Centre of the RASC PO Box 31011, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 5T9

Nova Notes is published five times a year, in February, April, June/July, September/October and December.

The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the RASC Halifax Centre.

Articles on any aspect of astronomy and related activities will be considered for publication.



By Judy Black

Ever wonder what it would be like to travel 4 light years? Find out by joining members and non-members alike at the 38th Annual RASC Halifax Centre **Nova East Star Party** (<https://novaeast.rasc.ca>).

Date: Wednesday, August 12 – Sunday, August 16, 2026

Theme: **The Sky – from near to far**

Place: Smileys Provincial Park, Hants County, NS

Registration opened June 6, 2026

Come join the fun! We extended the 2026 Star Party an additional two nights to incorporate a session led by Paul Gray on **August 12/13** to observe and record the Perseid Meteor Shower that peaks in the wee hours of the 13th.

Keynote Speaker (August 15)

Dr. Catherine Lovekin, Mount Allison University

Looking at Stars: Beyond the surface.

When we look at stars, we are really only seeing the surface, a layer called the photosphere that has spots, flares, and many other interesting features. The light we see actually originates from much deeper inside the star, so can we use it to learn something about the interiors? Dr. Lovekin will explain how we can use stellar variability to probe the interior structure of stars, allowing us to learn much more about their structure and evolution.

Presentations from members include safe solar observing and imaging, comparisons of Seestar and Dwarf smart telescope imaging, and a daytime challenge to find Venus. Lots of free time to meet and greet other astronomy enthusiasts.

We invite families to come enjoy our evening sky tour and lore, followed by the binocular table and a telescope field to view wonders of the night sky four ways. To travel 4 light years, our members will lead you on a *Walk through our Solar System to Alpha Centauri*.



Registration includes a camp site with space for your astronomy equipment, access to all presentations, astro-breakfast on Saturday and Sunday mornings, and the Astronomer Lounge held Friday and Saturday nights. Did I mention door prizes? Visit our website for more details.

Thanks to Frank Logan, we have another amazing t-shirt depicting our Star Party theme. There is a limited time to order these – must order by July 3! We also thank Michael Gatto for developing a Nova East logo (seen in Frank's design). It's also being stitched to the front of Nova East toques. No time limit for these – we will have them available for sale at the Star Party and throughout the year! To learn more about the design and our merchandise, go to the Nova East "merchandise" page.

“And what about prizes?” you ask. Glad you asked! Our Centre sends a big thank you to *Atlantic Photo Supply* for our Grand Prize (a Celestron StarSense Explorer 130 Dobsonian Tabletop Telescope), and to *Telescopes Canada* (two \$200 gift certificates, 2 hoodies and toques)! I hear you saying, “But I don’t need another scope? What would I do with this one?” [Jerry tells me he’d never say that.] Think about a family member or neighbour who has a budding interest in astronomy, or a school, library or astronomy club that could use it.



Atlantic Photo Supply
PROUDLY CANADIAN OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1942



TELESCOPES CANADA

If you have never attended a star party, you are encouraged to do so this summer. RASC Halifax Centre invites everyone to attend – members and non-members alike. If you haven’t attended in a few years, we would love to see you at the Park.

Don’t just wish you had been there. Come to our 38th Annual Nova East Star Party being held at Smileys Provincial Park to socialize, to meet new friends or to catch up with longtime friends, to observe, and maybe learn new skills and observing techniques! Looking forward to seeing you there!

You won’t want to miss the opportunity to learn more about and to look up at ***The Sky – from near to far!***

Thank you, members for SCO cleanup

Text and Photos by Judy Black

On Saturday, June 13, some of our members ventured out to SCO to conduct the annual spring cleanup - Tony McGrath, Frank Logan, Michael Gatto, Blair MacDonald, David McMullin, Peter Hurley, Daphne Themelis, Judy & Jerry Black, with Mary Lou Whitehorne joining us after lunch.

Special shout out to Frank who came armed with coffee and donuts. Some of us may have seen a double-double.

Many thanks to them all for the great work they accomplished and how amazing SCO now looks.

What was accomplished?

- The problem with the electrical system was identified (thanks to Blair and Tony), and has been fixed.
- The parking lot and walkways leading to the Storeroom were all whipper snipped (thanks to Jerry and Michael).
- Jerry and Peter levelled one of the slabs in an observing pad; it no longer wobbles.
- All the weeds in the observing pad area have been removed, including those under the chairs (thanks, Frank and Peter!); it will be a while before anything grows under them. That was not an easy task and it is greatly appreciated.

- After Jerry vacuumed the Warm Room, the walls and floor were washed down by Daphne while Judy attended to the cupboards. It should also be a little brighter now that dead insects were removed from the light covers (and the covers were washed, too!). The covers came off easily once we located the spring-loaded attachment for each cover.
- The Observatory floor and rolloff shelf were vacuumed (thanks David and Michael) and the mouse nest removed (thanks, Blair).
- The Storeroom was vacuumed top to bottom with a mouse nest or two removed (Jerry). The compost toilet was partially cleaned. The materials needing replenishing have been identified (thanks to Mary Lou). BTW, she also provided metal mesh that now covers the two ventilation holes on the sides of the toilet which will prevent little critters from having access to 'nesting materials'.
- The low shrubbery between the observing pads and the pond have been given their spring brush cut. Thank you, David (and Tony).
- The solar panels were investigated by Blair and Tony. Blair reattached the large panel more securely to the support rails.



A Blast from the Past

By Judy Black

One of my goals over the past several years has been to ensure as best I can that our records are up-to-date and include those files from years gone by. This includes scanning (and reading as I do so) older editions of *Nova Notes* and, before that, the *Gazer*.

We do recognize that not every relationship involves both partners having an interest in astronomy; Jerry and I are exceptions to the rule in our Centre and I am sure the same situation exists in our sister Centres across the country. Former member David Griffith wrote an article for the January-February 1990 edition of *Nova Notes* explaining the woes of the “astro-spouse”. I am sure what he wrote hits home with many members. Maybe your “astro-spouse” can relate in part or totally with what David says? Enjoy!

In Praise of the Long-Suffering Astronomer’s Spouse

The time has come for we creatures of the night to cease contemplating the heavens long enough to contemplate the many sacrifices made by our “astronomy widows/widowers”. For far too long have the trials and tribulations of these heroes and heroines been overlooked. Their time has come.

Consider, if you will, the following hypothetical scenarios that are played out, night after night by those “star-crossed” lovers: the astronomer and his/her spouse.

Who else but an astronomer’s spouse is faced with the dilemma of answering such questions as, “Why does your husband stand outside at night in sub-zero weather wearing a black cape?” You consider attempting to explain to this worthy soul the concepts of night vision and light pollution, but would probably do just as well to admit that your husband is a vampire.

Who else but an astronomer’s spouse has to contend with such ultimatums as, “Honey, I’m coming in to grab a bite to eat. Would you please shut off all the lights and sit in total darkness for a while?” And when you finally emerge into the kitchen, clad in five layers of clothing, a black cape and red goggles, what do you think is going through the minds of your guests your spouse invited over for tea?

Who else but the astronomer’s spouse lives in constant fear of the “night drive”? While you are uttering superlatives concerning that lovely aurora in the north, your loved one is feverishly attempting to call your attention to that string of vehicles approaching from the east.

Who, but our long-suffering spouses, are continually subjected to being ruthlessly shaken from a peaceful night’s repose, only to be escorted, clad only in nightgown or pyjamas, into the backyard to “experience an occultation”? Such incidents typically occur during the dreaded “observing window”, a period during which our heroes and heroines are deprived of the security and warmth of a shared bed. When communications are restored next morning, the sky gazer is scarcely worth talking to, wandering about as if in a trance, a victim of “astronomer’s hangover”.

Consider, too, the financial burden shouldered by the astro-spouse. The sky gazer becomes a virtual rogue when bitten by the crave for a new accessory. While husband or wife is desperately trying to balance the books, our astronomer lurks in the shadows, waiting for a chance to dip into the emergency fund to finance a new Nagler. And if there isn’t enough? Well, there’s always little Joey’s piggybank!

Such are the burdens of our tormented mates. What recourse do they have? Sadly, their choices are few. The more desperate ones could perhaps install bright yard lights and trade in the four wheel drive “scope mobile” for a tiny sports car. Some will, after years of resisting, succumb to the creatures of the night and become one of them, doomed to roam the fields by night, thirsting for the ideal observing site.

So, here’s to you, astro-spouses! We acknowledge your plight! We hear your cries for overcast skies and Full Moons. We feel your pain, and we offer you release from it...

Just come close...closer...look into my eye(piece)...deeper...deeper...feel the photons...

Members' Universe

Food for the Soul: The Poetry of Paul Heath *IN EGOS HANDS*

He claims the stars,
His own constellations he makes.
He fills the sky with sound,
A hundred million voices unheard.

Entitled, so many resources claimed
A service his fame to increase.
His waste discards without care,
Contaminated air, but futures despair.

You build Goliath, a new world to seed
An evacuation ship it will become,
To take survivors of your prides run,
From a world that sees no Sun.

Will our children see the wonders up above
Will they know a Star, our Sun, our Moon.
Or just your glowing, entwining streaks of words,
That your arrogance, the night did take away.

Save the Dates!

Save the Dates: Observing at SCO

Members may be found observing at the [St. Croix Observatory](#) on almost every clear, dark night. Once a month, we encourage members and their guests to congregate at SCO, at which time new members are particularly welcome.

Members are advised to sign up to the [email discussion list](#) to keep up to date on gatherings of fellow observers.

The proposed dates for the Friday observing nights at SCO in 2026 are July 17, Aug. 14, Sept. 11, Oct. 9, Nov. 6 and Dec. 11.

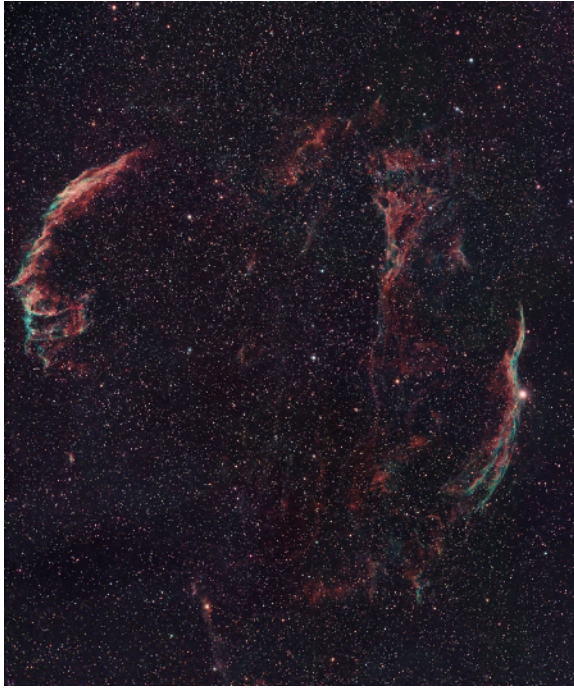
Check the email discussion list or our website (halifax.rasc.ca) for changes in schedule.
<https://halifax.rasc.ca/index.php/observing/observe-with-us>



St. Croix

du Whitehorne

Members' Universe: Jerry Black's Universe



S30Pro_DSO_Stacked_105_NGC
6960_mosaic_60.0s_20260523_MAS
126@60sec mosaic of Eastern and Western Veil
Nebula taken using the SeeStar S30 Pro, processed
in PixInsight using MultiscaleAdaptiveStretch by
Jerry Black



21 x 600 sec. taken with a Touptek ATR2600C camera
with an SkyWatcher Esprit 120 mm ED scope on a
Proxisky Umi20s Servo motor strain wave mount.
Processed in PixInsight by **Jerry Black**



S30_M 3
115@60sec of M3
a globular
cluster located 33.9
thousand light years
from Earth in the
northern constellation
of Canes Venatici. It
is one of the largest
and brightest globular
clusters discovered
with around 500,000
stars. Taken using the
SeeStar S3,
processed in
PixInsight using
MultiscaleAdaptiveStr
etch by **Jerry Black**



S30Pro_Stacked_30_mosaic_IC
4604_60.0s_IRCUT_20260524-MASv2
30@60sec mosaic of IC4604 The Rho Ophiuchi
cloud complex is a complex of interstellar
clouds. At an estimated distance of about 460
light years, it is one of the closest star-forming
regions to the Solar System. Taken using the
SeeStar S30 Pro, processed in PixInsight using
MultiscaleAdaptiveStretch by **Jerry Black**

Members' Universe: Jerry Black's Universe



S30Pro_M82_RGB_IR_CUT_522x60_Annotated 522@60sec of M81Bode's Galaxy and M82 the Cigar Galaxy. Taken using the SeeStar S30 Pro, processed in PixInsight using MultiscaleAdaptiveStretch by Jerry Black

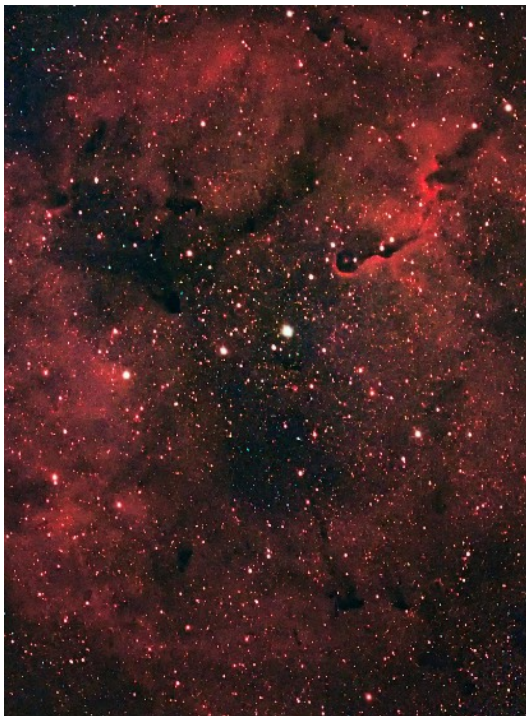
Members' Universe: David Hoskin's Universe



Coat hanger asterism by **David Hoskin**
Seestar S30 Pro: 15 min (90 x 10 sec subs in Alt/Az mode); postprocessing with Siril and Photoshop.



Hydrogen alpha Sun, 4 June 2026 by **David Hoskin**
Player One Apollo-Mini M camera, Lunt 40mm solar telescope, SkyWatcher EQ6R mount: 100 x 0.45 millisecc at gain 144; postprocessing with AstroSurface, Registax and Photoshop



IC 1396 by **David Hoskin**
Seestar S30 Pro: 912 x 10 sec subs in Alt/Az mod,; postprocessing with Siril and Photoshop



Messier 17 by **David Hoskin**
Seestar S30 Pro: 58 x 30sec subs in EQ mode; postprocessing with Siril and Photoshop

Members' Universe: David Hoskin's Universe



Messier 56 by **David Hoskin**
ZWO ASI533MC camera, Optolong L-Pro filter,
Celestron 150mm f/5 reflector, SkyWatcher EQ6R
mount: 22 x 6 min at gain 110; postprocessing with
Siril and Photoshop



NGC 6633 by **David Hoskin**
Seestar S30 Pro: 90 x 10 sec subs in Alt/Az mod.,
postprocessing with Siril and Photoshop



Waxing crescent Moon and Venus, 17 June 2026 by **David Hoskin**
Canon T3i DSLR on a tripod: 0.6 sec sub at ISO-800, f/8, FL 250mm; post processing
with Photoshop

PUZZLE CORNER – Secret Scramble

By Lisa Ann Fanning

Unscramble these astronomy terms. Letters in the highlighted boxes reveal a “bonus” word describing something you can see in the summer sky. Solution will appear in the next edition of *Nova Notes*.

A	E	I	M	R	S	S	T			
C	I	O	P	R	S	S	U			
A	E	H	I	L	N	O	P			
A	A	I	L	Q	U					
A	A	E	N	R	S	T				
A	A	G	I	I	R	S	S	T	T	U
C	E	E	H	L	R	S	U			
E	H	I	N	T	Z					

Bonus Word: _____

Answers to Last Edition's Puzzle

L	F	D	O	-	H	J	D	G	L	-	N	P	L	H
O	N	H	G	J	A	N	-	B	J	D	E	E	O	Y
V	K	H	A	L	L	E	Y	L	G	O	O	R	E	A
E	Q	H	R	H	E	E	N	H	C	N	W	I	G	K
J	C	-	E	J	-	M	A	D	O	A	I	H	J	U
O	S	G	Q	B	B	K	I	P	B	T	S	E	B	T
Y	F	-	D	M	O	V	O	F	J	I	E	L	L	A
K	S	U	P	J	P	C	I	R	P	C	E	I	E	K
T	S	K	H	M	P	N	H	M	B	F	B	O	C	E
T	A	M	A	F	N	D	L	A	K	I	B	N	H	J
M	I	J	S	W	I	F	T	-	T	U	T	T	L	E
I	C	E	-	P	A	N	S	T	A	R	S	-	H	E
G	J	D	J	G	H	N	D	I	F	H	A	M	O	C
S	H	O	E	M	A	K	E	R	-	L	E	V	Y	E
Q	A	-	J	T	A	I	L	I	-	C	R	-	C	D

May 9, 2026 RASC Halifax Centre Meeting:

(Xxx attendees)

To watch a replay of the meeting, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J56f0k3KsXM> on the RASC Halifax YouTube Channel.

Welcome - David Hoskin

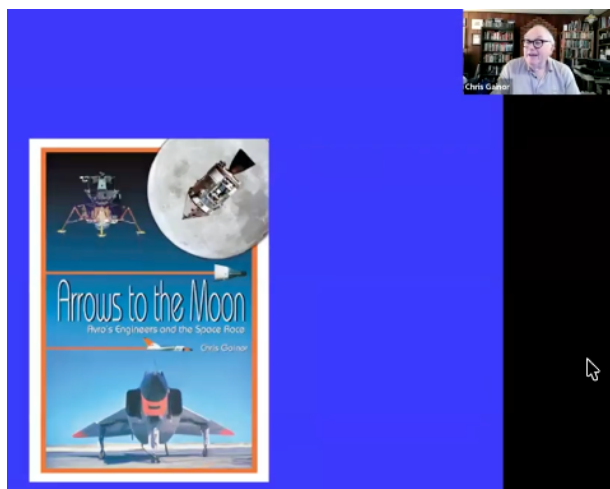
RASC Halifax Director, Observing / EPO Chair and program emcee David Hoskin welcomed everyone to the monthly meeting, shared the Indigenous Land Acknowledgement and read the Centre's inclusivity and diversity statement and reviewed the Agenda.

David Hoskin - Photo Montage

David presented photographs from Centre members Jerry Black, Michael Boschat, Jeff Donaldson, Lisa Ann Fanning, Paul Gray, David Hoskin, Peter Hurley, Frank Logan, Blair MacDonald, David McMullin and Kathy Walker.

Special Guest - Chris Gainor, *Arrows to the Moon*

Chris Gainor spoke about his book, *Arrows to the Moon: Avro's Engineers and the Space Race*. His book tells the story of the Canadian engineers who played key roles in putting Americans on the Moon during the Apollo manned lunar landing program and helped build the United States' space program.



News from the Board with Judy Black, Secretary of RASC Halifax Centre

- Judy shared an email from Tom Calderwood who leads the Photoelectric Photometry (PEP) Group of variable star observers. They are building a long-term project on Alpha Cygni variables and would like to add an observer from Nova Scotia. Anyone interested can be put in touch with Tom.
- David Lane SCOPE fund is at \$25,170. The matching campaign has concluded, but donations are still being accepted.
- Astrophoto Sale in support of the SCOPE Fund - The RASC Halifax Centre has Astro Images for sale through Atlantic Photo Supply with shipping or pickup at Atlantic Photo in Burnside. 8x12" or 16x24" prints may be ordered. Images may be viewed and ordered through [this link](#).
- Judy expressed "many, many" thanks to editors Lisa Ann Fanning and John McPhee and reminded everyone that the March / April edition of *Nova Notes* is posted to the website. The current issue is full of information. Tony gave a shout-out to editor Lisa Ann Fanning and copy editor John McPhee for their work on the bi-monthly publication. The deadline for submissions for the May / June edition is June 19.
- Dark-Sky Weekend is coming up August 7-9, 2026 at Kejimikujik NP & National Historic Site. Note, camping bookings open February 11th. If you would like to volunteer, contact Peter Hurley, Vice-President or Tony Schellinck.

- Nova East Star Party is August 12-16 at Smileys Provincial Park. Suggestions for sessions are welcome, please reach out to Judy Black, Secretary. The theme this year is “The Sky - from near to far.” The party’s tagline has been changed to “Gather Under the Stars.” Under the suggestion and creation of Michael Gatto, an event logo was also created.
 - Volunteers are needed for telescopes or the binocular table (contact secretary@halifax.rasc.ca)
- Reminder: RASC Awards deadline for submission for 2027 is December 31, 2026. Visit <https://rasc.ca/rasc-awards> for more information.
- Reminder to review the available Observing and Astroimaging certificate programs as well. Information for Observing Programs can be found at <https://rasc.ca/certificate-programs> Information on the Astroimaging Certificate, visit <https://rasc.ca/astro-imaging-certificate>.
- Welcome to RASC Executive Director Sandhya Mylathula. Refer to the May 1, 2026 RASC *Monthly Bulletin*
- The RASC Annual Meeting (AM) is June 21 the weekly and monthly bulletins will have information on registration.
- The next RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors meeting - June 2, 2026
- RASC National Council meeting - June 14, 2026
- The next member and public meetings:
 - June 6 - Star Finder - The David Lane Astronomy Outreach program at St Mary’s University and Tony Schellinck: Educational Observing Program - Look Up at the Stars.
 - September 12 - TBA
 - October 3 - TBA
 - November 7 - Finding Exoplanets (Blair MacDonald)
 - December 5 (AGM) John Badowski - The Fermi Paradox

David Hoskin (EPO/Observing Chair) - What's up in the May Sky

David reviewed highlights of the May sky. He highlighted the Sun, solar activity, the Moon, and targets needed to check off for Explore the Universe, and when they can be viewed. He also highlighted planetary positions, constellations, stars (including double and multiple), meteor showers and deep sky objects.

Each month, you can find David’s presentations on the homepage at <http://halifax.rasc.ca>.

June 11, 2026 RASC Halifax Centre Meeting:

(Xxx attendees)

To watch a replay of the meeting, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ve-KpjNGFE8&t=10238s> on the RASC Halifax YouTube Channel.

Welcome - David Hoskin

RASC Halifax Director, Observing / EPO Chair and program emcee David Hoskin welcomed everyone to the monthly meeting, shared the Indigenous Land Acknowledgement and read the Centre’s inclusivity and diversity statement and reviewed the agenda.

David Hoskin - Photo Montage

David presented photographs and sketches from Centre members Jerry Black, Michael Boschat, Stewart Cameron, Dave Chapman, Jeff Donaldson, Lisa Ann Fanning, Paul Gray, David Hoskin, Blair MacDonald, Tom MacIntyre and David McMullin.

Special Guests - Michelle Lane, Tiffany Fields, Mackenzie Hayduk and teachers inspired by the Star Finder materials - *Star Finder: The David Lane Astronomy Outreach Program at Saint Mary's University.*

Launched in 2025, the program provides teachers with the knowledge, resources and activities they can use to inspire their students (perhaps future members of RASC?) about the magic of the night skies.

After a brief introduction from Michelle Lane about the vision she and David had when they proposed the concept to Saint Mary's University, members of the Saint Mary's team who developed and now deliver the Star Finder program presented. Tiffany Fields and Mackenzie Hayduk presented exercises to get the viewer thinking as they draw you into a Star Finder activity and challenge you to reach for the stars.

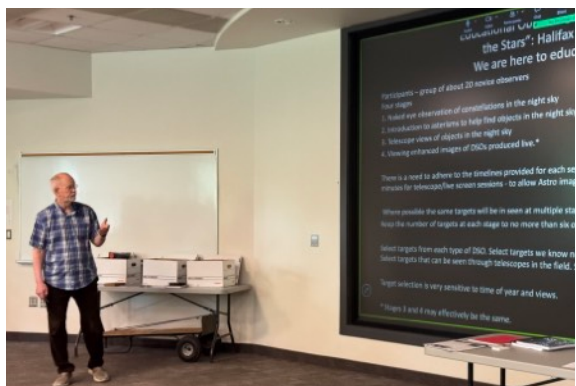


Michelle Lane presents Star Finder
Photo by Dave Chapman

Then teachers inspired by the Star Finder materials, Andrea Misner and Ben O'Toole, provided some concrete examples about the ways they're bringing the resources to life.

For more information about Star Finder, please visit <https://observatory.smu.ca/bgo-about/star-finder/starfinder-links>.

Tony Schellinck *Look Up at the Stars - a RASC Halifax Centre Educational Observing*



Tony Schellinck photo by Dave Chapman

Tony discussed the program that was developed at the 2025 Nova East star party, where members of the RASC Halifax Centre developed a new four-stage star party outreach program designed to introduce participants to the night sky through naked eye observations, binoculars, telescopes and enhanced images of deep-space objects produced live. Tony provided a description of the program, the targets for each stage, and the benefits for novices observing the night skies.

News from the Board presented by Tony McGrath, President of RASC Halifax Centre

- Tony shared a note from Joshua Kutryk, CSA astronaut who will be launched to the International Space Station in September. He did a presentation to the RASC and sent a thank you note.
- David Lane SCOPE fund is at \$25,170. The matching campaign has concluded, but donations are still being accepted.
- Astrophoto sale in support of the SCOPE fund. The RASC Halifax Centre has astro Images for sale through Atlantic Photo Supply with shipping or pickup at Atlantic Photo in Burnside. 8x12" or 16x24" prints may be ordered. Images may be viewed and ordered through this link.
- Tony expressed his gratitude for editors Lisa Ann Fanning and John McPhee and reminded everyone that the March / April edition of Nova Notes is posted to the website. The current issue is full of information. Tony gave a shout-out to editor Lisa Ann Fanning and copy editor John McPhee for their work on the bi-monthly publication. The deadline for submissions for the May / June edition is June 19.

- Some opportunities have come up for folks looking to get involved: The St. Croix Observatory clean-up weekend is scheduled for June 13, 2026. Volunteers are needed to clean the grounds and observatory building. If anyone is an electrician and willing to donate time, there is also a need.
- Reminder: RASC Awards deadline for submission for 2027 is December 31, 2026. Visit <https://rasc.ca/rasc-awards> for more information.
- Reminder to review the available Observing and Astroimaging certificate programs as well. Information for Observing Programs can be found at <https://rasc.ca/certificate-programs> Information on the Astroimaging Certificate, visit <https://rasc.ca/astro-imaging-certificate>.
- The next RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors meeting - September 8, 2026
- RASC National Council meeting - June 14, 2026
- The next member and public meetings:
 - September 12 - TBA
 - October 3 - TBA
 - November 7 - Finding Exoplanets (Blair MacDonald)
 - December 5 (AGM) John Badowski - The Fermi Paradox

More News from the Board with Judy Black, Secretary of RASC Halifax Centre

- Dark-Sky Weekend is coming up August 7-9, 2026 at Kejimikujik NP & National Historic Site. Note, camping bookings opened February 11. If you would like to volunteer, contact vice-president Peter Hurley.
- Nova East Star Party is August 12-16 at Smileys Provincial Park. Suggestions for sessions are welcome, please reach out to secretary Judy Black. The theme this year is “the sky - from near to far.” The party’s tagline has been changed to “Gather Under the Stars.” Under the suggestion and creation of Michael Gatto, an event logo was also created.
 - Dr. Catherine Lovekin from Mount Allison University will be the keynote speaker and discuss “Looking at Stars: Beyond the Surface.”
 - Fees - registration \$45, Camping/ night \$15.
 - This year’s T-shirt was designed by Frank Logan and incorporates this year’s theme. T-shirts must be ordered by July 3. The cost is \$25. A toque is also available for purchase for \$20
 - Door prizes have been donated and will be awarded at the event.
 - Judy showed the video created by Jerry Black gives a preview of what to expect. View the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzPrqXUOgdo>
 - Visit <https://novaeast.rasc.ca> to learn more about Nova East and register.
 - Volunteers are needed to help with sessions. Contact Chris Young.
- The RASC Annual Meeting (AM) is June 21 - registration information is available via the bulletin.

David Hoskin (EPO/Observing Chair) - What's up in the June Night Sky

David reviewed highlights of the June sky. He highlighted the approaching summer solstice on June 21 at 5:24 AM AST.

He highlighted the Sun, solar activity, the Moon, and targets needed to check off for Explore the Universe, and when they can be viewed. He also highlighted planetary positions, constellations, stars (including double and multiple), meteor showers and deep sky objects.

Each month, you can find David’s presentations on the homepage at <http://halifax.rasc.ca>.