

SKYNEWS



SOLAR ECLIPSE

By David Lee

IN THIS ISSUE

On the Cover
November Speaker
President's Report
Council – Reports and News

NOVEMBER A.G.M.

Sunday, November 16, 2014
6:00 PM (Talk & Meeting-7:30 PM)
Moon Under Water Pub
350 Bay Street, Victoria

On The Cover

Partial Solar Eclipse October 23, 2014 (David Lee)

Prepared to be disappointed, I packed my car this morning with my camera and a half made solar filter. I recall the transit of Venus from previous years that we had lost hope for appearing miraculously from behind clouds. Today after days of rain the skies cleared just hours before the beginning of the eclipse. I assembled the solar filter over the lunch hour and made it to my vantage point just moments after the eclipse started.

I was most impressed by the display of sunspots especially the one near the centre which narrowly missed being covered as the eclipse progressed.

I was able to share some of the shots from the hour and half that I was there with a few people that passed by. Just a few minutes before totality the clouds started to appear so I packed up, but with a smile on my face as one of my co-workers observed while passing by.

Camera: Nikon D7000

Sensor ISO: 200

Lens: Nikkor 300/4 AF with 1.4x TC teleconverter

Exposure: 1/1000 at f/8

Solar filter: Thousand Oaks RG Solar Film

November Speaker – A.G.M.

Our Annual General Meeting Banquet will be on Sunday, November 16th, beginning at 6:00 PM. At 7:30 PM, our speaker, Dr. James Di Francesco, will be describing the newest research that is coming out of ALMA, the Atacama Large Meter Array in Chile, as well as the latest advances in planetary formation. He will also bring us up to date with the James Webb Space Telescope.

President's Report

Of the organizations that I have belonged to in my life - professional associations, sports clubs, conservation groups, and neighborhood associations; this one, the RASC Victoria Centre, has been one of the best, if not THE best. I am honored that for two years I have been its president.

Let me explain why. In my experience, most groups feature an impenetrable inner circle; a leadership that cannot separate its own interests from the group's interests, and a mission that is largely ignored in practice. Not so with Victoria Centre. Its leadership positions are easily available to all, and rotate regularly. Its culture is one of inclusion, not exclusion. Best of all, its mission, public outreach, modest though it may seem when compared to the more important sounding missions of larger, but less successful groups, is front-and-center, and is practiced with enthusiasm by most of the members. This last year stands as a testament to this club's strength: an enviable national convention held at a

first-class university, an astronomy day event held in a downtown Victoria landmark, and the successful resurrection of public tours and night-sky viewing from the DAO after they appeared to be lost among government budget cuts which seem to have become so common today. Most remarkably, these “signature” events were held in addition to our array of outreach events.

I could go on, but I won't. Thanks to everyone in the club that makes its success possible. The energy and competence of our members is - well, amazing.

....*Nelson Walker*

Your Editor's Musings

The life and times of an observer is never dull in the Victoria Centre! This is a tale of two eclipses – a rare back-to-back offering of both a lunar and a solar eclipse in the same month. Given the unpredictability of our weather here in the Victoria area, it was rare indeed for yours truly - and her star-studded bag of goodies – to embark on some new adventures under the night and daytime skies....

In the early morning of October 8th, I woke to a 1:15 AM alarm and looked out of the window at the clearing skies. An hour later, I made my way down to Clover Point as the earth's shadow slowly engulfed the full Moon. At 2:30 AM, I sat on the front hood of my car, in conversation with a couple of ladies – who were set up in their lawn chairs as their dogs played nearby. We were the only ones in the area. I had binoculars in hand, trying to find what was left of the “blood-moon” through the pea-soup fog that was slowly engulfing us. After a ½ hour of waiting, I gave up and went home – looking for what was left of Luna, before the clouds took over for good....

The solar eclipse on the afternoon of October 23rd, however, didn't disappoint! We had one of the typical Island fall days – rain - off and on, in the morning, and more consistent sunshine in the afternoon. A few of us made our way up Mt. Tolmie and set up our equipment – filtered telescopes and simple wood-and-lens cameras. A few hundred visitors joined us, including camera crew from the local TV stations....



That afternoon was fun, and very productive. The age range of our many guests varied from very young to elderly. They shared in our excitement as the bite of the Moon's disk ate ever deeper into the sun. We were also gifted with the biggest sunspot in many years! I have seen several partial eclipses in my lifetime, but this was the first time I played “tour-guide” through a filtered telescope and the wooden box camera nearby.

I remembered one or two of the younger kids literally jumping for joy at the sight of the “crescent” sun as the moon approached maximum coverage. I too, wanted to jump high. This has been my best eclipse experience so far. But – here's hoping the grand “show” in the summer of 2017 will.....eclipse that. Clear Skies.

....*Diane*

Astronomy Cafe

John McDonald and Chris Purse host an informal get together every Monday evening. All are welcome. Some telescopes are often on hand, and we observe when conditions warrant. Come talk astronomy with friends and bring a reusable mug for your coffee or tea!

The Building: Astronomy Cafe is held in a classroom adapted for society services and events by the [Fairfield Gonzales Community Association](#). It is located on the grounds of Sir James Douglas School (Fairfield Road and Moss Street) in Fairfield, behind the Garry Oak Room and gym. It has full washroom facilities, handicap access, a good night viewing field nearby, and easy access to the parking lot, as well as a nearby bus service (Fairfield bus). *Please note – Astronomy Cafe does not meet during the summer months of June, July and August, and usually restarts the first Monday after Labour Day.* Members are on hand to offer presentations on selected Monday evenings. There will also be a Swap and Shop planned early in 2015. Come and join us!

The pleasure of sharing astronomy

I had the distinct pleasure of sharing my love of astronomy with a special group of people when I taught the University 201 course recently. This was the second time I have given the course (last time was in 2009) and I was pleased to be asked to do it again.

The U101/201 series is offered for students who have not had the opportunity to attend regular college or university programs. The Astronomy 201 sessions were held on 4 successive Tuesdays in October each lasting 2 ½ hours. It attracted an interesting mixture of women and men who were eager to learn and unafraid to ask lots of questions some of which were quite challenging.

The course covered some of the early history of astronomy including that of the amazing Greek scholars who deduced the circumference of the world, the distance to the moon and its diameter as well as a method to measure the distance to the sun. That was followed by some instruction on what is up there and how to find one's way around the sky using star finders and charts. Student questions guided me in selecting material. In particular based on their questions we discussed the distance scales for the solar system, the galaxy and the universe. We also dealt with modern cosmology including what is currently known about the early universe and its origin, black holes, dark matter and dark energy.

Despite the difficult concepts covered nearly all of the students stuck with it. The highlight of the course was the presentation of their group projects during the last session. I was very pleased with the originality and understanding that was demonstrated.

.....*John Mcdonald*

Council for 2013 / 2014

Past President: Lauri Roche pastpres@victoria.rasc.ca
President: Nelson Walker president@victoria.rasc.ca
First Vice President: (vacant) vp@victoria.rasc.ca
Second Vice President: Sherry Buttner vp2@victoria.rasc.ca
Treasurer: Bruce Lane treasurer@victoria.rasc.ca
Secretary / Recorder: Deb Crawford secretary@victoria.rasc.ca
Librarian: Michel Michaud librarian@victoria.rasc.ca
Website: Joe Carr web@victoria.rasc.ca
E-Mail Coordinator: Matt Watson admin@victoria.rasc.ca
Skynews Editor: Diane Bell editor@victoria.rasc.ca
Telescopes / School Programs: Sid Sidhu telescopes@victoria.rasc.ca
National Representative: Mark Bohlman nationalrep@victoria.rasc.ca
Light Pollution Abatement: Mark Bohlman lpa@victoria.rasc.ca
New Member Liaison: Sherry Buttner NewMembers@victoria.rasc.ca
Membership Coordinator: Sherry Buttner Membership@victoria.rasc.ca
Observing Chairperson: Bill Weir obschair@victoria.rasc.ca

Members at Large: Bill Almond, Jim Hesser, Alex Schmid, David Lee, Li-Ann Skibo, Paul Schumacher, Matt Watson

**ASTRONOMY
Cafe**



Astronomy Cafe: Held every Monday at Fairfield Community Centre - 1330 Fairfield Rd, Victoria, at 7:30pm to 10pm. Call John McDonald at (250) 480-0928 for directions and information. Newcomers are especially encouraged.



New Observers Group: Hosted by Sid Sidhu, 1642 Davies Road, Highlands. Please call (250) 391-0540 for information and directions.



Email Lists Observer / CU Volunteers / Members
Contact Matt Watson to subscribe. <mailto:admin@victoria.rasc.ca>

The next meeting is Wednesday, December 10, 2014, at 7:30 PM.