

# POLARIS



## Royal Astronomical Society of Canada London Centre Newsletter June 2010

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### 2010 Observatory Tour Patrick Whelan

It was a lot of driving but it was worth it. The weather cooperated to a point. Clear skies would have been preferred but at least the rain held off for most of the day. We drove from London to Kettle Point to Elginfield to Aylmer to Ingersoll to Hickson. What were we doing? We were on the 2010 London RASC observatory tour!

It was organized by John Kulczycki and included 6 home observatories in the London area, including his own. So put on your seatbelt and let's go for a ride.

Our first stop is Charlie Barbara's dome. He lives out near Kettle Point near Lake Huron. When we first enter the house we get to see a portion of his meteorite collection. There are meteorites everywhere and most (if not all) are nicely labeled so you know what you are looking at. He also has a fossil and skull collection but I digress. Charlie had a second floor put in over a room at the corner of his house. On the rooftop he has a Skyshed Pod dome. In the dome is a 14" Meade LX200 ACF telescope. The pillar it sits on is about 2 feet in diameter and goes straight down through the room below the dome and deep into the ground. Charlie gets great viewing from here, especially over the Lake because of the obvious lack of light pollution.

Next we drive to Gary Hink's. His farm is near Adelaide and Highway 7 North of London. Gary has a roll off roof shed in the back of his property. I had to warn my daughter not to touch the fence as we arrived since I noticed it was an electric fence. Gary has a couple telescopes out at his shed. One scope is a 15" f5 Starsplitter. It is the 'roll out' telescope. It is housed in a small lean-to shed attached to his main shed. The dobsonian style telescope rolls out of its storage area on a small wooden track. There is a tall concrete pier near the shed and Gary mounts his 25/40x100mm Oberwerk binoculars on it. Good planning Gary! In the roll off roof shed Gary has a Meade 8" 2080 SCT on a Meade GEM mount. A nice added touch is the heated storage area near the floor along one wall. The gentle heating helps keep the dew and moisture at bay.

Now we drive into London near the Masonville area. We visit John Kulczycki and his roll off roof shed. John lives in a very populated and light polluted area but

having the shed means he can be out observing at a minutes notice. In the shed John has a Celestron 9.25 SCT on a Celestron Advanced GEM mount all on a home made plywood pier. John has the roof on garage door rails. We also got to see his newest acquisition: a white water heater. I mean a 16" Meade Dobsonian telescope. It doesn't fit in the shed so it lives in the garage and it even looks big in there!

From London we travel to Aylmer to Arthur Oslach's roll off roof shed. Arthur lives in the middle of Aylmer but the shed affords him easy viewing at a minutes notice. Arthur has a Celestron NexStar 11" SCT in the shed. The roof is motorized with a remote control garage door opener. Arthur uses video with his telescope. He has a video sensor in the telescope and high res security monitors to view with. He can control the telescope from inside the house and view from there as well. Nice and warm in the winter!

From Aylmer we travel North to Ingersoll to visit Bill Gardner and his dome. (on the way to Bill's we got behind a truck pulling a trailer with canoes and a bunch of young adults...and as an added bonus get 'mooned' by one of them in the back of the pickup. How did they know we were on an 'astronomy' themed trip?) Bill has built a dome observatory in his backyard. Inside the dome he has a AP155 apo refractor on a AP900GTO mount. The dome and telescope are all completely motorized/computerized/automated. The dome's shutter opens by motor and computer control and the mount will point and focus and do imaging runs on its own. Bill can plan an evening's worth of imaging and send the schedule to the dome and it will work on its own the whole night long. At the end of the evening the dome shutter closes and it all goes to sleep until the next imaging run.

The final stop on our tour is Gerald Kennedy's domes near Hickson. Gerald converts old silo domes into observatory domes. The first dome is a two storey structure. The shutter of the dome works with a hand crank from what looks to be an old fashioned hand drill. Currently he has a Televue 102 telescope on a Losmandy G11 mount in the dome for solar observing. It isn't quite

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Moon Phases



May 20 2010



May 27 2010



June 4 2010



June 12 2010

*(Continued from page 1)*

finished as the dome has a big strap holding it down to the middle of the floor. The other dome is up, way up. My daughter counted 63 steps up to this dome. It is at the top of a full size silo! Away from ground effects like fog the view should be awesome from up there. In this dome Gerald has a Takahashi Epsilon 180 astrograph on a EM-500 Takahashi mount. Looking out the dome slit, it is a long way down! The pier for the telescope is 39' high and the silo is 42' high.

Clouds and the occasional rain kept everyone from observing. There was a barbeque at Gerald's that evening. If it was clear it would have been a Hickson star party. But it was a party nonetheless and good times were had by all.

Thank you to all six observatory owners for your gracious hospitality in allowing the RASC group to come admire your handiwork. And thanks to John for organizing it. We had a great day driving around Ontario and a great evening with friends too.

## London Centre Executive

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Find the Polaris newsletters on the internet at: [www.patusratus.ca/Polaris](http://www.patusratus.ca/Polaris)

## LONDON RASC MONTHLY MEETINGS

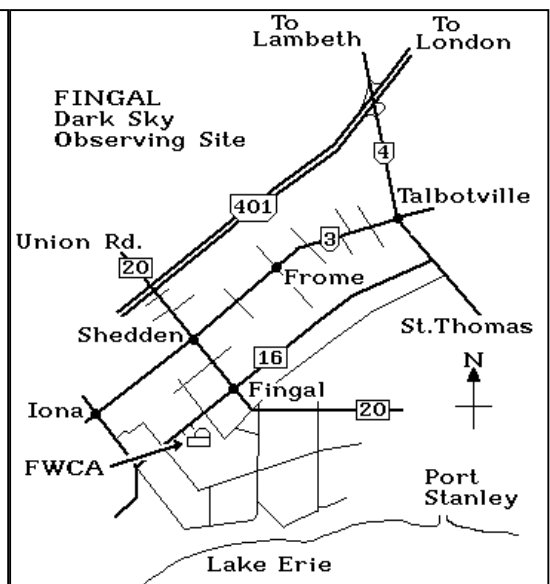
The London RASC group meets at Fanshawe College in London Ontario, September through July on the third Friday of the month at 19:00. We meet in room B1073.

Everyone interested in astronomy is invited to attend and enjoy our guest speaker, member activity and observing reports, announcements of new discoveries and upcoming events, telescopes and telescope accessories show and tell, and other fun activities. Have a look at our future and past activities on our website to see what we are doing.

Parking is free on Friday evenings, and there is plenty of room in the east parking lot off Oxford St. and parking spaces on the south side of B building. Enter the college by B building doors near Oxford Street, just west of the bus stop. College signs at key hallway locations will help you find us.

The London RASC webpage can be found at: [www.rasc.ca/London](http://www.rasc.ca/London)

Our dark sky observing site is at the **Fingal Wildlife Management Area**.



## Sky Events for late June and early July 2010

June 18 Ceres at opposition  
 June 20 Venus 0.4 N of Beehive (M44)  
 June 21 Solstice  
 June 24 Antares 1.8 S of Moon  
 June 25 Ceres 1.0 S of Moon  
 June 25 Pluto at opposition  
 June 26 Partial lunar eclipse  
 July 8 Moon 0.6 S of Pleiades (M45)  
 July 10 Venus 1.1 N of Regulus  
 July 10 Moon 0.01 S of M35  
 July 11 Total solar eclipse  
 July 13 Mercury 0.2 N of Beehive (M44)



**Mars is in the Western sky in Leo**  
**Venus is in the Western evening sky**  
**Jupiter is in the morning sky in Pisces**  
**Saturn is visible all night**  
**Uranus is in the Eastern morning sky in Pisces**  
**Neptune is in the Eastern morning sky near Aquarius-Capricornus**

### R.A.S.C. London Centre Library Books of the Month June 2010 *By Robert Duff*

In order to make our library collection available to members, I bring three books to our general monthly meetings. These "Books of the Month" are available for loan, to be returned at the following monthly meeting.

The books for June 2010 are as follows:

Burnham's Celestial Handbook: an Observer's Guide to the Universe Beyond the Solar System, by Robert Burnham. Revised and Enlarged Edition. c1978.

Volume Three, Pavo—Vulpecula.

365 Starry Nights: an Introduction to Astronomy for Every Night of the Year, text and illustrations by Chet Raymo. c1982.

Relativity: the Special and the General Theory, by Albert Einstein. Authorized translation by Robert W. Lawson. Introduced by Roger Penrose. London: The Folio Society, 2004.



For a complete listing of our library collection please see our RASC London Centre Library Web page at:  
[http://www.astro.uwo.ca/~rasc/newrasc\\_library.html](http://www.astro.uwo.ca/~rasc/newrasc_library.html)

If there is a particular book or video you wish to borrow, please feel free to contact me by telephone at (519) 439-7504 or by e-mail at [rduff@sympatico.ca](mailto:rduff@sympatico.ca)

### Book Donations to the London Centre

I wish to thank John Kulczycki for donating the following books at our Friday, April 16th and May 21st, London Centre meetings, subsequently given to graduate student Amanda Papadimos as a resources for the Exploring the Stars program at the Cronyn Observatory:

**The Beginner's Guide to Astronomy**, by Brian Jones; forward by Heather Couper.  
**The Glow in the Dark Night Sky Book**, by Clint Hatchett, illustrated by Stephen Marchesi.  
**The Monthly Sky Guide**, by Ian Ridpath and Wil Tirion. 6th Edition, 2003

### Star Night, Fingal, Homeschoolers, May 19th, 2010

Some 50 parents and children of the A Different Drum: Homeschoolers of Southwestern Ontario arrived at Fingal Wildlife Management Area, Wednesday, May 19th, for an evening of stargazing under exceptionally clear skies and mild weather.

Dave McCarter gave a twilight talk providing a brief history of the Fingal area and advice on observing through telescopes. The children were asked to stay away from a killdeer nest on the southeast side of the pad and a fawn hiding in the grass to the west.

There were 6 London Centre who set up 8 telescopes. These included Harold Tutt, with his 20.3cm Celestron Schmidt-Cassegrain and 80mm Stellarvue refractor; Mike Roffey, with his 30.5cm Sky-Watcher Truss-Tube Dobsonian and Sky-Watcher 127mm Maksutov; Matt Neima, with his 20.3cm Celestron Schmidt-Cassegrain; Charles Bonello, with his Meade LX90 25.4cm Schmidt-Cassegrain; Dave McCarter, with his 25.4cm Dobsonian; and Bob Duff with his 20.3cm Dobsonian. Cheri McCracken and Pete Raine were also there to enjoy the event and newcomer, Ryan Fraser tried out his new Celestron 8X56mm binoculars.

Children and adults viewed the Moon (one day prior to first quarter), Venus, Saturn, Mars and a number of deep-sky objects. One young boy quickly learned to take pictures through a telescope with his digital camera, obtaining images of the Moon, Venus and Saturn. After our guests

left, several members remained to observe until 3:00 p.m.

### Camp Timken Star Party, May 28th, 2010

RASC London Centre members Steve Imrie and Dave McCarter, with their 20.3cm and 25.4cm Dobsonians, respectively; Matt Neima with his 20.3cm Schmidt-Cassegrain; Mike Roffey with his 127mm Maksutov; and Harold Tutt with his 80mm refractor, set up their telescopes near the cookhouse at Camp Timken for the Star Party, Friday, May 28th. They provided excellent views of Saturn, Mars and deep-sky objects such as M82 to more than 200 Scouts and their leaders.

### Camp Sylvan Cub's Star Night, May 29th, 2010

Some 120 Cubs and leaders attending the Sydenham Area Cuboree at Camp Sylvan, Saturday, May 29th, enjoyed a memorable star night under clear skies. Harold Tutt, with his 80mm Stellarvue refractor, and Dave McCarter and Bob Duff, with their 25.4cm and 20.3cm Dobsonians, respectively, showed them Venus, Saturn, Mars, M13, M51, M57, Epsilon Lyrae and Mizar and Alcor. They watched an overflight of the X37B space plane at 22:24—22:27h, travelling west to east, reaching 42 degrees high in the southern sky. The star night ended for the Cubs around 23h and members observed for a little while before packing up at 23:20h, stopping at Tim Horton's in Parkhill for refreshments on the way home.

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## June 2010 Pocket Sky Atlas Challenges

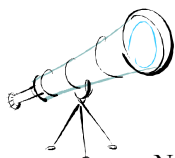
Welcome to a whole new year of Pocket Sky Atlas Challenges.

As you make plans for Camping or other travel plans for the summer, remember that the Pocket Sky Atlas never takes up much room in your back pack and in conjunction with binoculars, it offer's you instant astronomy: just add dark sky. I've indexed the object to the star chart page it's on so this should be easy hunting.

### Naked Eye:

The Summer Triangle offers a gateway to may interesting objects.

Vega, Page 63; Deneb, Page 62; and Altair, Page 64 make up the triangle. Deneb also anchors the Northern Cross.

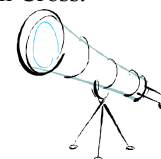


### Small Scopes and binoculars:

IC 4665, Page 65; Stock 1, Page 64.

### Larger Scopes:

NGC 5846, NGC 5850, Page 55 (possible photo op), B72 Snake Nebula (possible photo op), Page 58



### Bonus objects:

IC 4406, Page 59 ( this will be very low ) and NGC 6633, Page 65

Do not forget that the Pocket Sky Atlas has Close Up Charts at the back, Chart "C" might be helpful for some objects this month.

**Happy hunting!**  
**John Kulczycki**

**Thank you John for continuing another year of Pocket Sky Atlas Challenges! -the editor**

**Cronyn Observatory Saturday Evening Summer  
Open House, May 1st—August 28th, 2010**

**By Robert Duff**

**Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, May  
15th, 2010**

Graduate student Amanda Papadimos reported that the Open House at the Cronyn Observatory, Saturday, May 15th, went really well with 20 people showing up throughout the evening, despite the cloudy weather. About half of them saw the sign out in front of the Cronyn Observatory and decided to see what was going on. Besides Amanda there were Dr. Paul Wiegert and Patrick Cookson. Amanda gave her presentation twice to two waves of people and they were finished by 10:40 p.m. There were no RASC London Centre members present.

**Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, May  
22nd, 2010**

A clearing sky greeted visitors to the Cronyn Observatory on Saturday, May 22nd, 8:30 p.m., when Dr Shantanu Basu made his digital slide presentation on galaxies. Undergraduate student Patrick Cookson operated the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome. I set up the RASC London Centre's photo display and laid out some brochures on the table in the lecture room.

Greg Andres arrived with his son Abram and we had both Greg's 20.3cm Sky-Watcher Dobsonian and the London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian set up on the roof patio. Dr. Basu had 11 visitors listening to his presentation but other people arrived to look through telescopes. Two families with children brought telescopes including a 60mm alt-azimuth refractor and a 90mm Meade Go-To refractor, which I assisted in setting up. The Go-To refractor had Toronto as the nearest city for polar alignment and with some effort I managed to get it aimed at the Moon and then Saturn.

Dave McCarter found Saturn in the early twilight, using the London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian "Marques" telescope, and stayed on it for most of the evening. He also showed visitors M13 and Mizar and Alcor. He also helped the family that had brought the 60mm refractor, which delivered a nice image of the Moon.

Patrick Cookson showed visitors the Moon and Saturn through the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome. Between clouds people also viewed the Moon, Saturn and Mizar and Alcor through the telescopes on the roof patio.

There were about 26 visitors, including 2 students who were friends of Patrick's in the dome, roof patio and lecture room.

John Kulczycki set up his newly acquired 40.6cm Meade Starfinder Dobsonian on the walkway in front of the Cronyn Observatory, along with Harold Tutt who brought his 80mm Stellarvue refractor with its Vixen alt-azimuth mount. John had impressively sharp views of the Moon through the 40.6cm Dobsonian. About 20 visitors looked through John and Harold's telescopes.

We closed down the Cronyn around 11:10 p.m., after the last of the visitors had left. In all, there may have been around 45 visitors, including about 20 who looked through John and Harold's telescope but possibly may not have entered the Observatory.

**Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, May  
29th, 2010**

About 60 visitors enjoyed an evening under the stars at the Cronyn Observatory, Saturday, May 29th. Graduate student Alexander DeSouza made the digital slide presentation, "Our Solar System," while fellow grad student, Konstantin Fedotov, operated the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome.

RASC London Centre members Mike Roffey, with his 127mm Maksutov, and Adam Priestap-Suttis, with his Sky-Watcher 20.3cm Dobsonian, set up their telescopes on the Observatory's roof patio. John Kulczycki set up his 40.6cm Meade Dobsonian on the walkway in front of the Cronyn. Peter Jedicke was there and was greatly impressed by the outreach effectiveness of John's large Dobsonian. Richard Gibbens was also there. Andy Blanchard from RASC Hamilton Centre was there with his Canon Image Stabilizing binoculars. Objects observed included Venus, Mars, Saturn, the double star Algieba and the Ring Nebula (M57).

Alexander DeSouza reported two groups of visitors and Peter Jedicke said that a school bus arrived with some 30 people as part of a family reunion outing. Konstantin spent a little time on the computer in the dome with Starry Night Pro II.

**Cronyn Observatory Open House, Thursday, June  
3rd, 2010**

Clouds with some clear sky greeted graduate student Amanda Papadimos and undergraduate students Patrick Cookson and Mat Abado at the Cronyn Observatory for the Open House on Thursday, June 3rd, 8:30 p.m. RASC London Centre members Dave McCarter, Peter

Jedicke and Bob Duff were also there. Amanda prepared to make the presentation, "Misconceptions in Astronomy." Patrick and Mat obtained a fairly pleasing image of Saturn in the 25.4cm refractor (32mm Erfle eyepiece, 137X), before directing the big telescope at Venus. However, none of the expected visitors showed up from the track meet on campus. The Observatory was closed at around 10:10 p.m. and London Centre members headed for the Dairy Queen for some refreshments.

#### **Cronyn Observatory Open House, Friday, June 4th, 2010**

Clouds with some heavy downpours of rain greeted undergraduate students Mat Abado and Melanie Wright at the Cronyn Observatory for the Open House, Friday, June 4th, 8:30 p.m. Mat prepared to give the presentation, "A Tour of the Solar System." RASC London Centre members Peter Jedicke and Bob Duff were also there. However, there were none of the expected visitors from the track meet. After some discussion the Observatory was closed around 9:45 p.m. RASC London Centre members met the students with friends at the Dairy Queen for refreshments.

#### **Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, June 5th, 2010**

Clouds with some light rain ruled out observing for the

Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, June 5th, and the dome remained closed. Peter Jedicke reported that he and Richard Gibbens (accompanied by two friends) were the only people joining graduate students Meghan McGill and Rhiannon Blaauw at the Cronyn that evening. Thus there were 2 graduate students, 2 RASC London Centre members and 2 visitors. They discussed issues in cosmology and, since no other public showed up, closed down at 10:20 p.m.

#### **Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, June 12th, 2010**

Cloudy skies ruled out observing for the Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, June 12th. Graduate student Robbie Halonen made his digital slide presentation, "A Brief look at the Lives of Stars," before a group of 8 visitors, including 2 children. They were joined by 6 more people later in the dome, for a total of 14 visitors.

Faculty member Dr. Carol Jones operated the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome, although there was no observing due to the cloudy skies. RASC London Centre members Dave McCarter, Peter Jedicke, Richard Gibbens and Bob Duff were there. Carol showed visitors the big telescope and Dave demonstrated the sky charting software on the computer in the dome to the 2 children and interested adults. The Observatory was closed down around 10:15 p.m., after an interesting evening despite the overcast weather.

