

POLARIS



Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
London Centre Newsletter
March 2010

Dr. David Toth: A Personal Remembrance David McCarter

I first met Dave Toth, he was in medicine at Western, at a London Amateur Radio Club meeting in 1975, when he proposed that the club VHF repeater, VE3LON, used to extend the range of low power radios, should be equipped with a phone patch to allow amateurs to make phone calls from their cars or on foot. The old guard harrumphed, said it was too technologically challenging, and no one would ever bother to use such a device. I soon learned that Dave ate difficult challenges for breakfast. Soon Dave and I were on the 401 to his dad's place in Windsor to load my 1973 Toyota station wagon with a rack of surplus radio equipment, which was then assembled in my basement. Using my VHF antennas and my telephone line the repeater VE3TTT (the last three letters stood for "Touch Tone Toth") provided service as far as the Ingersol 401 Service Centre, Parkhill, Dashwood, and St. Thomas.

Dave's ham radio call sign was VE3GYQ, which in phonetics was often rendered by him as "Gorgeous Young Queer" with a hearty laugh. Dave could make fun of himself.

Dave graduated from Western Med school in 1978, and after serving for a while with my family doctor, which made for some interesting moments, he opened a family practice in the Cherry Hill Professional Building, and practiced emergency medicine at University Hospital. I remember him sitting at our kitchen table stitching my discarded orange peels back together into a Frankenstein orange shell. Dave's exquisite skills later restored a friend's face after an unfortunate encounter with a garage door spring, so well that not a single scar is now visible. Seemingly never sleeping, it was not unusual to hear Dave on "TTT" at three in the morning while taking a shower after an emergency room shift. As often as not Dave would then turn up at my door wanting to add new functionality or repair something on the repeater, borrowing rather too freely from my electrical parts in the process. Fortunately the repeater found a new home on the top of the Canada Trust tower thanks to the efforts of Jim



DeZorzi, VE3ZK, and Dave's late night visits stopped. That repeater is still central to amateur communications in London. Dave became very active in the local amateur radio club, LARC, finally serving as its President in 1979.

At one LARC meeting in early 1992 Dave came to talk about telescopes. While his talk was very technical and lacked any references to the wonders of observing, I learned that he was now President of the local astronomy club, RASC London Centre, and that they met monthly at the Police Station. I began attending those meetings and became more involved in the club activities.

Continued on page four.

Moon Phases



March 23 2010



March 30 2010



April 6 2010



April 14 2010

Polarity Perils

We have all heard someone say:
Careful with that stick, you might put someone's eye out!
Or

Don't run with scissors, you might get hurt!
But when did you hear someone say:
Careful with the polarity of that battery, because
you might fry a circuit!

I wish I had remembered it. Because I had said it myself
before. Recently I hooked up a big car battery to my tele-
scope mount with reverse polarity and I fried a circuit
board on the mount! Doh!

Years ago I ran my DX440 shortwave radio off solar
panels and one day somehow I had switched the wiring
by mistake and it fried a small circuit in it.

Careful with that polarity Eugene!

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Find the Polaris newsletters on the internet at: www.patusratus.ca/Polaris

LONDON RASC MONTHLY MEETINGS

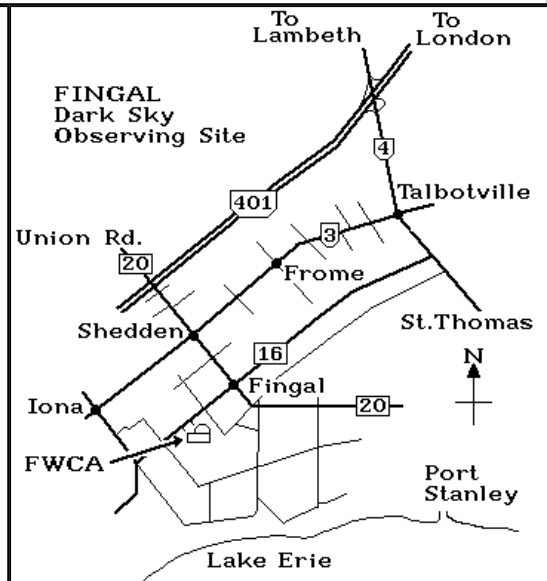
The London RASC group meets at Fanshawe College in London Ontario, September through July on the third Friday of the month at 19:00. We meet in room B1073.

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

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



Sky Events for late March and early April 2010

March 24, 28, 30, 31 Double shadow transit on Jupiter, early morning
 March 29 Full Moon, called the Worm Moon.
 March 30 Mercury and Venus in evening twilight
 April 2 Look for Zodiacal light in west after evening twilight
 April 3 Antares 1.6° S of Moon
 April 4 Double shadow transit on Jupiter
 April 6 Double shadow transit on Jupiter
 April 8 Mercury greatest elongation E
 April 8 Double shadow transit on Jupiter
 April 11 Double shadow transit on Jupiter
 April 15 Double shadow transit on Jupiter
 April 15 Mercury 1.5° S of Moon

Mercury is in the Western evening sky with Venus last week of month
Venus rising in the Western evening sky
Mars is visible most of the night, retrograding in Cancer
Saturn visible most of the night, at opposition on March 21 Rings are almost edge on, and very bright.



R.A.S.C. London Centre Library Books of the Month March 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 March 2010 are as follows:

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

The Backyard Astronomer's Guide, by Terence Dickinson & Alan Dyer. Revised Edition. 2002.

Pale Blue Dot: a Vision of the Human Future in Space, by Carl Sagan. c1994.

For a complete listing of our library collection please see our RASC London Centre Web site at:
<http://www.rasc.ca/london>

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



London Astrophotography Email List

London Centre has a new email forum for London Centre Astro photographers to communicate, share, and get assistance from other experienced members. As this list is about imaging, there is no restriction on file attachment size and therefore some **email messages may be very large**. But the images are worth it!

If you are interested in joining in, the URL is: <http://www.rasc.ca/mailman/listinfo/london-imagers>

There will also be an **Astro Imaging Workshop** at Fanshawe College, room G2010, on April 3rd at 9:30. Bring a lap top, raw images, or just a notepad, and of course your questions. There will probably be follow up sessions during the spring.

In the early nineties London Centre had a fair number of David's and it was suggested in jest that they form a separate organization called the Royal Astronomical Society of Dave's, or RASD. Each member would be given a number, and Dave Toth, as befitting the then president of London Centre, became Dave 1. There are currently 25 astronomers as members, and you can check it out at www.rasd.ca.

Dave became discouraged with the direction that the Canadian Health Care System was going, and decided to move to the States, eventually settling near Lima, Ohio. This was fortunate because it was so close to the Dayton Hamvention, the Ohio Valley Amateur Astronomers welcomed him, and there was a small airport nearby where Dave could store his twin engine Comanche when he was not flying cross country to either an Amateur Radio or Astronomy gathering.

Dave remained a RASC member attached to London Centre and attended meetings when in town, regularly attended Starfest where he set up his 178mm Astro Physics Refractor and worked on imaging. Dave loved to meet the many celebrities who came to give talks at Starfest, the Texas Star Party, the Winter Star Party, and others. These encounters added to his own expertise and opened new doors for him. He met Tom Bisque at the 1992 TSP and they quickly became close friends. Dave appreciated the excellence of Software Bisque products, and soon was using his vacation time to attend almost every astronomy conference and star party, wearing the Software Bisque polo shirt and spending long days in the Software Bisque booth fielding questions. He became effectively a forth Bisque brother, well respected for his expertise and willingness to help others get the most from their equipment and software.

Dave Rubenhagen, Mike Hanes and I ran into Dave at the Bisque booth at the 2007 Riverside Telescope Makers Conference, where the photo on page one was taken. As you can

see, Dave was so darn happy and completely in his element.

Dave, Joe O'Neil and daughter, Mike Hanes and I camped together at the 2009 Winter Star Party in February, 2009. A few weeks after returning home Dave began experiencing symptoms of the brain tumour that a year later would take his life. He had to put his medical practice on hold, stop his beloved flying, but he kept going as much as he could. In April I called his cell to see how he was doing, and caught him at the Bisque booth at NEAF, the North East Astronomy Forum. He was having a great time. Dave came to last summer's Starfest with the assistance of his caring wife Ronda, and everyone there will remember his emotion upon learning that asteroid 2004 RU247, discovered by Tom Glinos and David Levy at Jarnac Observatory, would henceforth be known as 154902 Toth. Many will also fondly remember his generosity when he gave his Starry Night Pro prize to Adam Prestap-Suttis, and Adam's most appreciative and overwhelmed response.

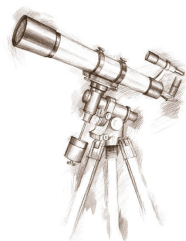
Dave so wanted to get to this year's Winter Star Party, but it was not to be. Joe O'Neil visited on his way south to the WSP, and reported that Dave very weak, sad to not be going too, but happy to see Joe. Dave Rubenhagen and Rick Saunders drove down to visit, and found him in good spirits and loved to have them there.

Dave was a passionate, intelligent, articulate man who lived life to the max, pursuing his many interests with enthusiasm, competence, and without limits.

Dr. David Bradley Toth, born Aug. 11, 1954, aged 55, died at 3:10 p.m. Feb. 26, 2010, at his residence south of Spencer-ville, Ohio. People with Dave's wide span of interests, skills, talents and accomplishments are few indeed.

March Pocket Sky Atlas Challenges

March is a changeable month weather wise, so any possibility for a reasonable night of observing is welcome. Be prepared for those nights by making up lists of objects you might want to visit. To get the most out of your observing sessions, try to arrange the lists so that each list has objects in a close neighbourhood. Remember that even a small slice of sky is just packed full cosmic goodies. I've indexed the object to its star chart page.



Naked Eye:

All of Gemini, page 25 Sirius, Mirzam, Adhara and Aludra, Page 27 .

Small Scopes and binoculars:

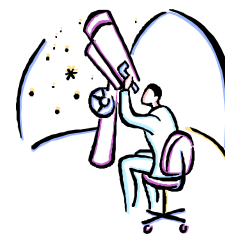
M44, Page 24. Mirfak, Page 13. NGC 2420, Page 25

Larger Scopes:

NGC 2782 page 22; NGC 2239, Page 26; NGC 2286,Page 25

Bonus objects:

NGC 2281 Page 23 ; Struve 1291, Struve 1187, Page 22 (Refer to page viii for notational notes!).



**Happy hunting.
John Kulczycki**

The Bob Duff Report

Exploring the Stars, Cronyn Observatory, February 24th—March 18th, 2010

By Robert Duff

I assisted at all of these events (with the exception of February 27th and March 10th) bringing the RASC London Centre's photographic display and setting it up and laying out some of our brochures.

Exploring the Stars, 36th London Guides, February 24th, 2010

Graduate student Alexander DeSouza made his PowerPoint presentation, "Constellations," before a group of 24 visitors (20 Guides, 1 Pathfinder and 3 adults) from the 36th London Guides, Wednesday, February 24th, 6:00 p.m. Hazy clouds permitted us to show them the Moon through the big 25.4cm refractor in the Cronyn Observatory dome. Galileo Moment cards and two "Star Finder" planispheres were distributed. They were delighted with the evening and gone by 7:45 p.m. Exploring the Stars, Cronyn Observatory Open House, February 27th, 2010

Cloudy skies and mild weather greeted 10 visitors to the Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, February 27th. With one person initially, graduate student Alexander DeSouza began his PowerPoint presentation at 7:15 p.m., with other people arriving until there were 10 (7 adults and 3 children) visitors in all. After the presentation he showed them the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome and answered a few questions.

Exploring the Stars, Lucan Girl Guides, March 2nd, 2010

Graduate student Amanda Papadimos made her digital slide presentation, "Our Solar System" before 55 visitors from the Lucan Girl Guides, Tuesday, March 2nd, beginning 6:30 p.m. They viewed Mars in the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome (28mm Meade Super Wide Angle eyepiece, 156X) and the Orion Nebula (M42) in the RASC London Centre Dobsonian (17mm Nagler eyepiece, 67X). Amanda gave out 5 copies of "Mary Lou's New Telescope" (including 3 in answers to questions) and Galileo Moment cards. Everybody was very pleased, asked numerous questions and were gone by 8:25 p.m.

Exploring the Stars, 80th London Brownies, March 3rd, 2010

Clear skies greeted the 80th London Brownies for an evening of Exploring the Stars at the Cronyn Observatory, Wednesday, March 3rd, 7:00 p.m. Graduate student Alexander DeSouza made his digital slide presentation, "Our Solar System," before the group of 27 visitors, including 16 chil-

dren and 11 adults. New RASC London Centre members, Paul and Charlene Kerans also arrived, with binoculars.

Alexander showed them Mars (156X) and the Pleiades (84X) through the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome. Through the RASC London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian we showed them the Orion Nebula (M42), using the 17mm Nagler eyepiece (67X) and Mars (6mm Orthoscopic eyepiece, 190.5X). We were surprised by the International Space Station pass at 8:03 p.m., which I later verified on the ISS—Visible Passes Web site.

Exploring the Stars, 50th London Guides, March 4th, 2010

Graduate student Amanda Papadimos made her digital slide presentation, "Constellations," before 17 visitors (10 children and 7 adults), from the 50th London Guides, for Exploring the Stars at the Cronyn Observatory, Wednesday, March 4th, 6:30 p.m. Harold Tutt and another visitor interested in joining the RASC London Centre joined us.

Amanda showed the group Mars through the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome (28mm Meade eyepiece, 156X). Harold and I showed them the Orion Nebula (M42) through the London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian (17mm Nagler eyepiece, 67X), together with the Orion Narrow Band Light Pollution Filter, which enhanced the contrast and gave the stars and nebula a blue-green colour. Amanda pointed out stars and constellations and I used my green laser pointer. Removing the Orion Filter we viewed the Pleiades in the Dobsonian. When everybody had gone we viewed Mars (6mm Orthoscopic eyepiece, 190.5X). Amanda gave the group 12 Star Finder planispheres and some Galileo Moment cards. Everybody was gone by 8:15 p.m. after what was an enjoyable evening of stargazing.

Exploring the Stars, Northridge Public School, Grade 6, March 9th, 2010

A clear somewhat hazy sky greeted 17 visitors (11 children and 6 adults) from the Northridge Public School Grade-6 class at the Cronyn Observatory for Exploring the Stars on Tuesday, March 9th, 6:30 p.m. Graduate student Amanda Papadimos made her digital slide presentation, "Big Bang," followed by the activity, "Rocket Races."

The visitors viewed Mars in the big 25.4cm refractor (156X). They also observed the Orion Nebula (M42) in the RASC London Centre 25.4cm Dobsonian (67X), and in new member Paul Keran's 12-inch (30.5cm) Meade Lightbridge Truss-Tube Dobsonian. There was an unexpected International Space Station pass, which I later verified on the Heavens Above ISS—Visible Passes Web site as occurring at 7:24 p.m. I gave a brief sky tour with my green laser. It was a successful evening with visitors gone by 8:30 p.m.

(Continued on page 6)

Exploring the Stars, Pizza Hut, March 10th, 2010

RASC London Centre member Paul Kerans reported that there were just 2 adult visitors from Pizza Hut for Exploring the Stars at the Cronyn Observatory on Wednesday, March 10th, 7:00 p.m. Graduate student Alexander DeSouza made his presentation, "Constellations," and this was followed by some discussion. There was no observing due to light rain.

Exploring the Stars Open House, March 16th, 2010

Clear skies greeted visitors for the Exploring the Stars Open House at the Cronyn Observatory, Tuesday, March 16th, 7:00 p.m. Graduate student Amanda Papadimos made her digital slide presentation, "Planets, Planets, Planets," before 11 people, who were later joined by 3 more who arrived later for a total of 14 visitors (7 children and 7 adults).

The visitors viewed the communications tower in south London through the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome and, as twilight deepened, Mars (28mm Meade eyepiece, 156X). They viewed Mars in the RASC London Centre's Dobsonian (6mm Orthoscopic eyepiece, 190.5X) and then the Orion Nebula (M42) and the Pleiades (17mm Nagler eyepiece, 67X). Saturn was low in the east and blurry in the Dobsonian.

We observed an ISS pass, 8:08—8:13 p.m., in the north-east sky. Amanda gave them Galileo Moment cards. The visitors had an enjoyable evening and we closed the Observatory around 8:50 p.m.

Exploring the Stars Open House, March 17th, 2010

Wednesday, March 17th, was an exceptionally clear evening for Exploring the Stars at the Cronyn Observatory with 8 visitors (4 children and 4 adults), including new RASC London Centre member, Ramona Coutney. RASC London Centre members Harold Tutt and I were there. Graduate student Alexander DeSouza made his digital slide presentation, "'Big Bang," beginning around 7:00 p.m.

Visitors observed Mars through the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome (28mm Meade eyepiece, 156X). The north polar cap of Mars was visible and the view quite sharp. I also showed them Mars in the Dobsonian (6mm Orthoscopic eyepiece, 190.5X), and the Orion Nebula (M42), using the 17mm Nagler eyepiece (67X). They also viewed Saturn (190.5X), which was low in the east, and the Pleiades (67X), in the Dobsonian. I had forgotten the ISS Pass at 8:32—8:37 p.m. until a few minutes after. However, one girl happily reported seeing it travel

overhead.

Alexander gave one child a copy of "Mary Lou's New Telescope" and I provided some Galileo Moment card. Everybody left around 9:00 p.m. after a very successful evening.

Exploring the Stars Open House, March 18th, 2010

Thursday, March 18th, was another clear night for the Exploring the Stars Open House at the Cronyn Observatory. Graduate student Emily McCullough made her digital slide presentation, Stellar Spectra, before 3 visitors, from the Space Society of London (SSoL). We were later joined by 3 more people (2 adults and 1 child) for a total of 6 visitors.

Splendid views of crescent Moon and Mars were obtained through the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome (28mm Meade eyepiece, 156X). Visitors also had a good view of the Orion Nebula (M42) in the 25.4cm refractor (156X) with the Orion Narrow Band Light Pollution Filter. Through the RASC London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian, visitors observed the crescent Moon (17mm Nagler eyepiece, 67X), Mars (6mm Orthoscopic eyepiece, 190.5X), the Orion Nebula (67X with the Orion Narrow Band Filter), Saturn (190.5X) in the east, the Pleiades star cluster, and the stars Regulus and Algieba in Leo, and Mizar and Alcor in the Big Dipper. We observed an ISS Pass beginning at 8:57 p.m. and travelling nearly overhead.

Emily gave the visitors Star Finder Planispheres and Galileo Moment cards. Some visitors stayed late and we closed the Observatory around 10:35 p.m., after a very enjoyable evening of stargazing.