

POLARIS



Royal Astronomical Society of Canada London Centre Newsletter October 2010

Bargain: Starry Night Pro 6 Patrick Whelan

If you have been reading my articles for the last couple years while I have been the editor of this newsletter you should know a couple things about me. I like software. I like bargains.

I found out recently that Western students were selling their textbooks from last year on Kijiji. These books go for a good price and it is a good place for new students to pick up the books for much less than the new price. I was surprised to find out there was a book being sold called *The Cosmic Perspective* and it came with astronomy software called *Starry Night Pro 6*. The software normally costs \$150 and the book and software was being sold for \$70. That was a good enough deal for me but the person selling the book talked themselves down to \$50 so I was even more happy.

I was worried the software might not be complete (crippleware) since it was included in a book but I was wrong to worry. The software is the same as the store bought version.

I installed the software. At the end of the installation it also installs a package that will control telescopes if you hook them up to your computer. (ASCOM) A nice bonus. After installing I went to their website and downloaded the latest updates. That brought me up to version 6.3.9.

I have not fully explored the software by any means but let me type about what I have found so far.

You get updates all the time. New comet in the sky? (like Hartley?) *Starry Night Pro 6* (SNP6) downloads updates from their website all the time. You can set how often it looks, and the feature is great. New comets show up on the screen soon after they are discovered. It will also track satellites in orbit and spacecraft in transit. You have the ability to load 3DS models. These are 3D models of spacecraft and satellites and such. You can position yourself near one and the view on the screen is awesome. It comes with many models and you can download and

add more if you want.

Like many astronomy software packages you can view the sky from any time in the past or future from anywhere on the Earth. You can also view from the Moon or any planet or in orbit around a planet or the Sun. You can position yourself above the Sun and watch the orbits of the planets. You can create animations that show planetary retrograde motion. I created a quick map showing the location of comet Hartley over the course of a week. That made it really easy to find!

You can create an equipment list. I have all my telescopes in SNP6 and my eyepieces too. (and my binoculars) With a click of the mouse a circle representing the field of view (FOV) of an eyepiece in a particular telescope shows on the screen. This is really helpful in finding very dim objects or just helping to know if you can see all of a particular target (say an open cluster) in a given eyepiece.

There are many options for viewing stars and deep sky objects. More than I can point out in this article. NGC, Messier, IC, constellations, Chandra, Spitzer etc. There is a built in calendar that shows lunar phases and includes sky events to look for. Like Jupiter moon shadows and the like.

Live Sky is interesting. All kinds of solar and aurora and Earth images. They are all current for today at the click of the mouse. Sure you can find all these on the 'net, but they are all in one place in SNP6.

You can print out all sky charts much like a planisphere. (180 degree charts) Or you can print out 3 panel charts with each panel at a different magnification.

Just checking SNP6 now, I see that comet Hartley is beside the constellation Perseus. Very neat.

If you want a bargain in astronomy software buy the book off kijiji and get SNP6. You won't regret it!

Moon Phases



October 14 2010



October 23 2010



October 30 2010



November 6 2010

Q: How many astronomers does it take to change a light bulb?

- A: None! Astronomers aren't afraid of the dark.
- A: I thought astronomers used standard candles.
- A: Two: one to change the bulb, the other to complain about the light pollution.
- A: Three, plus or minus seventy-five.
- A: None, they wouldn't change it because it ruins their night vision.
- A: What's a light bulb ?
- A: Four. One to actually change the darn thing. One to operate the CCD camera to measure the number of photons it emits. One to operate the computer to do the task. And another to complain about how the CCD is out of focus and how the light bulb actually looks like a polo mint.

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

LONDON RASC MONTHLY MEETINGS

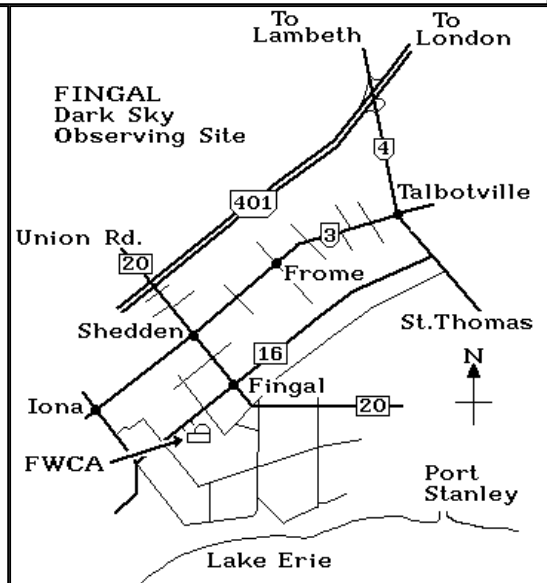
The London RASC group meets at Fanshawe College in London Ontario, September through July on the third Friday of the month at 19:00. We meet in room B1073.

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.

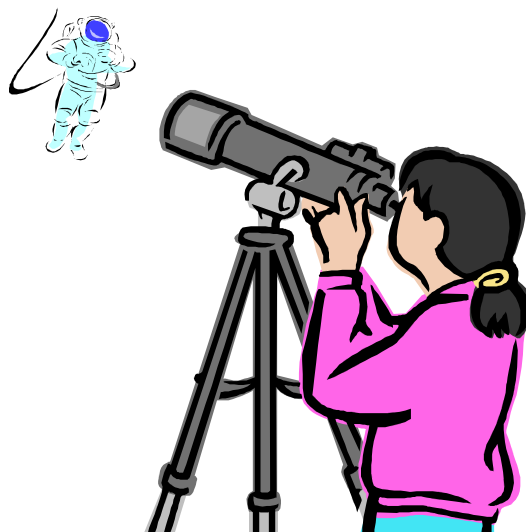
The London RASC webpage can be found at: www.rasc.ca/London

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



Sky Events for late October and early November 2010

Oct 24 Double shadow transit on Jupiter
 Oct 25 Moon 1.2 S of Pleiades (M45)
 Oct 27 Moon 0.7 S of M35
 Oct 31 Double shadow transit on Jupiter
 Nov 2 Juno 0.7 S of Moon
 Nov 7 Daylight saving time ENDS
 Nov 7 Double shadow transit on Jupiter
 Nov 7 Mars 1.6 N of Moon



Mercury is not visible this month
Mars is low in the Western early evening sky
Venus descends rapidly into the western evening twilight
Jupiter visible most of the night just past opposition
Saturn in conjunction with the Sun, not visible
Uranus visible most of the night in Pisces-Aquarius
Neptune is well placed in the sky near Aquarius-Capricornus

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

On account of our Guest of Honour, Terence Dickinson, who gave a splendid slide talk, no book exchange took place at our September 17th meeting. Consequently the "Books of the Month" for October are the same as those submitted in the September 2010 issue of *Polaris*.

As always, these "Books of the Month" are available for loan to members, to be returned at the following monthly meeting. The books for October 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 One, Andromeda—Cetus.

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.

Universe on a T-shirt: the Quest for the Theory of Everything, by Dan Falk. c2002.

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

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



Astronomers do it all night.
 Astronomers do it annually.
 Astronomers do it cosmologically.
 Astronomers do it hyperbolically.
 Astronomers do it in clusters.
 Astronomers do it in the dark.
 Astronomers do it in voids.
 Astronomers do it meteorically.
 Astronomers do it on mountain tops.

Astronomers do it orbitally.
 Astronomers do it parabolically.
 Astronomers do it spectroscopically.
 Astronomers do it telescopically.
 Astronomers do it under the stars.
 Astronomers do it universally.
 Astronomers do it variably.
 Astronomers do it with binaries.
 Astronomers do it with dwarfs.

Astronomers do it with giants.
 Astronomers do it with lenses.
 Astronomers do it with light.
 Astronomers do it with lights out.
 Astronomers do it with long tubes.
 Astronomers do it with mirrors.
 Astronomers do it with sextants.
 Astronomers do it with stars
 Astronomers do it in X-rays.

Star Nights & Other Events

By Robert Duff

International Observe the Moon Night, Cronyn Observatory, September 18th, 2010

By Dave McCarter and Robert Duff

On Saturday, September 18th (6:00—10:00 p.m.), The International Observe the Moon Night was held under cloudy skies at the Cronyn Observatory, sponsored by the Canadian Centre for Lunar and Planetary Exploration and was attended by six RASC London Centre members, including Bob Duff, Bill Gardner, Richard Gibbens, Peter Jedicke, Dave McCarter, and Dave Rubenhagen.

Graduate student Amanda Papadimos was looking after the various displays in the lecture room, Emily McCullough was giving tours and animated explanations of the various instruments in the observatory dome, and Lora Thomson answered questions with the lunar globe. Undergraduate students were also there helping out, including Diline Subasinghe, Mat Abado, Patrick Cookson and Neil.

In room 2022 of the Engineering building a series of slide presentations were given, including Mr. Paul Graham discussing the "Open Luna" initiative (a private venture to send people to the Moon), a presentation on the Aitkin Basin on the Moon by a student, and incredible LRO images of the lunar topography discussed by Dr. Phil Stooke of the Geography Department.

Back in the Cronyn the Moon photo contest votes from each attendee were counted and announced with great fanfare. The first prize winner was Dave Rubenhagen with his composite photo of the moon near first quarter, the second prize went to Dave McCarter for a crescent moon in twilight, and the third prize winner was Bill Gardner for a

lunar eclipse image.

Amanda Papadimos then began the draw for two door prizes and went through a lot of ballots for people who had not stayed. The book NightWatch finally went to Richard Gibbens and the NASA T-shirt was won by Amanda herself. There was much laughter when she announced that she would keep it. Centre members then went to the Dairy Queen for further discussion.

Amanda estimated that we had a turnout of about 80 people for the International Observe the Moon night.

Byron Northview Public School Star Night, September 29th, 2010

Dave McCarter reported being on the cusp of clear skies for the Byron Northview Public School star night, Wednesday, September 29th. Everything to the northwest (Ursa Major, Bootes and Hercules) was visible, while thin clouds overhead obscured Lyra and Cygnus. Everything to the south-east was clouded out, including Jupiter.

Ryan Fraser, with his 20.3cm Sky-Watcher Dobsonian; Mike Roffey, with his 15cm Celestron Newtonian; and Peter Jedicke joined Dave, who brought his 25.4cm Dobsonian. There were two grade-6 classes for an estimated 40 or more students plus about 25 parents. Following Dave's outdoor digital slide presentation people observed M13, M51 and a few double stars. They saw two Iridium satellites flare to first magnitude, one after another. Ryan Fraser reported showing a few people M81 and M82 briefly, despite the poor seeing conditions. Jupiter made its appearance after 10:00 p.m., after everyone had left.

It was a good night and the teachers were happy and there was talk of a star party, minus the slide talk, for April or May with Saturn and the Moon visible.

October Pocket Sky Atlas Challenges

The chill is in the air and the nights are getting longer, leaves are falling exposing new opportunities in viewing fields not available during summer. This year October has two special treats: Jupiter and Comet Hartley-103P near Cassiopia.

A telescope set up near the front door of your home during Halloween is an excellent idea for neighbourhood outreach. Good targets are M31 (page 3), M45 (page 15 also see close up chart "A" at the back of the atlas.) and the Double Cluster (page 13).

I've indexed the object to its star chart page.

Naked Eye:

Alderamin and Errai page71, Alpheratz and Matar page72

Small Scopes and binoculars:

M73 and M2 page 77, M15 page 75

Larger Scopes:

NGC 7626 and 7619 page 74, V509 Page 72

Bonus objects:

PK 72-17.1 (Abell 74) page 75, NGC 6940, page 73

Happy hunting.

John Kulczycki

