

# POLARIS



Royal Astronomical Society of Canada  
London Centre Newsletter  
September 2008

## Fingal Warm Up Room Progress

By Dave McCarter

Now that fall is here Mike Hanes and I have had some free time to work on the warm up room. A few weeks ago Mike installed some red LED truck taillights and a mechanized timer switch so that people warming up can do so without being in the dark.

Last weekend Mike and I completed the wheelchair access ramp at the front of the Warm Up Room, which has been part of the plan from the start. A single step leads to the west, and the ramp is to the east.

The deck in front of the door is wide enough to allow two chairs to be placed outside for comfortable sky viewing, and two support posts at the corners of the deck have been purposely left high so that we can mount supports for binoculars or cameras for your viewing pleasure.

During the last few days Mike has been busy fabricating a concrete structure in which we can safely store the propane tanks for the heater, and by the time you read this article we should have installed it at Fingal. This will allow us to be more prepared for a cold night observing session.

Peter Raine has put the finishing touches on a fold down desk which will soon be mounted on the right side wall in the Warm Up Room. This will be useful for Sky Charts and laptops.

Our next plans are to install the storage batteries and solar panel so that light and furnace power can be had at the flip of a master switch.

Last weekend a small group met to discuss detailed plans for an observatory. We have received word that the Ministry of Natural Resources is in agreement with the building of an observatory at Fingal, provided that "the building is not permanent". We

plan to have a detailed proposal available for final approval by the end of the month, and building should proceed shortly thereafter. At the moment a roll off roof building is planned, to be 7.31m by 4.87m, which will house three fixed piers and perhaps several Dobsonian telescopes. It will be located just to the west of the Warm Up Room.

The photograph shows Mike putting deck boards on the wheelchair ramp.



## Moon Phases



September 7 14:04



September 15 9:13



September 22 5:04



September 29 8:12

### Letter from the Editor September 2008 Hubblesite.org

The internet can be a fun place. One spot I like to frequent is [www.hubblesite.org](http://www.hubblesite.org). They have all the pictures from Hubble that have been released to the public. They have a section where you can download images that are formatted just for printing. They support 4x6, 5x7, 8x10 and 16x20. They have a copyright letter for you to bring to the photo lab that says you are allowed to print them. A new thing there is a HUGE black and white image that prints out to a wall mural. You can download 8 16x16 inch pictures that will assemble to a 64"x32" mural or 8 20x20 inch pictures that create a 80" x40" mural. Wow!

## London Centre Executive

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## LONDON RASC MONTHLY MEETINGS

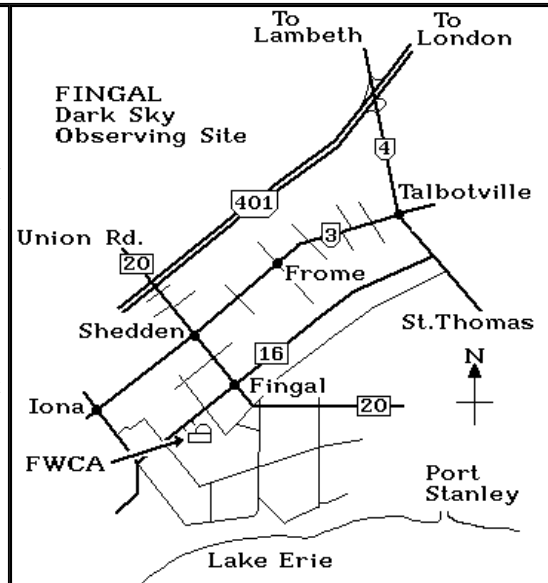
The London RASC group meets at Fanshawe college in London Ontario, September through July on the third Friday of the month at 19:00. They meet in room B1073.

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:

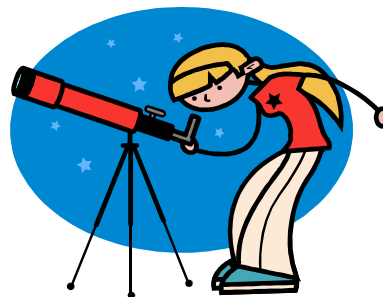
[www.rasc.ca/London](http://www.rasc.ca/London)

They have a preferred observing site at Fingal Wildlife Management area.



## Sky Events for September and October 2008

September 20 Moon 1.0° N of Pleiades (M45)  
 September 22 Equinox  
 September 24 Moon 0.7° S of Beehive (M44)  
 September 26 Regulus 1.7° N of Moon  
 September 27 Zodiacal light  
 September 30 Mercury 1.1° N of Moon  
 October 4 Antares 0.1° N of Moon  
 October 7 Jupiter 2.0° N of Moon  
 October 10 Neptune 0.9° S of Moon  
 October 17 Moon 0.8° N of Pleiades (M45)



**Jupiter is high in the southern sky in the evening and transits at 19:13 on the 15th of September**

**Saturn is in conjunction with the Sun on the 4th, and is not viewable**

**Uranus is in Aquarius all year and is at opposition on September 13th, it is visible to the unaided eye from a good site**

### R.A.S.C. London Centre Library Books of the Month September 2008 *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 September 2008 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.

Kepler's Witch: an Astronomer's Discovery of Cosmic Order Amid Religious War, Political Intrigue, and the Heresy Trial of His Mother, by James A. Connor. c2004.

A Portfolio of Lunar Drawings, by Harold Hill. 1991. (Practical Astronomy Handbooks, 1)

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

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)



## Sky and Telescope Subscriptions

Sky & Telescope subscriptions are available at a discounted rate through the London Centre. The cost is \$39.95USD instead of the normal \$49.95USD subscription rate. Please see Bill Gardner for details.

## Cronyn Observatory Sessions

**Saturday, July 19th, 2008**

**By Robert Duff**

I arrived around 8:15 p.m. at the Cronyn on Saturday, July 19th, under cloudy weather with showers. Dr. Carol Jones and graduate student Amanda Papadimos were there along with some 6 visitors. I set up the RASC London Centre's photographic display, which I had created for the 2008 General Assembly, on the table near the east wall of the lecture room.

Shortly after 8:30 p.m. Amanda began her digital slide presentation on small bodies of the solar system (asteroids, comets, meteors, Kuiper-belt objects and dwarf planets). Two more visitors arrived bringing the total to 8.

Carol Jones went up into the dome to show several interested visitors the Observatory's 25.4cm refractor. Four more people arrived to see the telescope in the dome. There was a young couple there, including a lady who had purchased a telescope. She asked about bringing her newly purchased telescope to the Cronyn to get some help learning how to use it. I told her that RASC London Centre members would be at the Observatory every Saturday evening until the end of August and that she could certainly bring her telescope. I gave her a RASC London Centre brochure and showed her the 2008 General Assembly photographic display in the lecture room.

We left the Cronyn Observatory possibly a little after 9:30 p.m. I took the RASC London Centre's 2008 General Assembly display with me. In all there were 12 visitors on this cloudy, rainy night.

**Saturday, July 26th, 2008**

**By Robert Duff**

Clear skies promised a night of reasonably good seeing on Saturday, July 26th, when I arrived at the Cronyn Observatory around 8:15 p.m. Dr. Martin Houde was there to make a digital slide presentation on sub-millimetre astronomy, while graduate student Talayeh Hezareh operated the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome. I set up the RASC London Centre's photographic display, which I had created for the 2008 General Assembly, on the table near the east wall of the lecture room.

Adam Priestap-Suttis was there with his father Dave and Peter Jedicke arrived around 8:40 p.m. Adam set up his 60mm refractor on the east end of the roof patio. With Dave's help, I set up the RASC London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian on the west end of the roof patio. With the Dobsonian telescope I used the Observatory's 17mm Nagler (67X) and 6mm Orthoscopic (190.5X).

Visitors had a pleasing view of Jupiter in the south-east at twilight through the Dobsonian, using the 17mm Nagler eyepiece for a magnification of 67X. Jupiter's four Galilean moons were visible along with the North and South Equatorial Belts on the planet's surface. A good view was also obtained later as Jupiter rose higher in the sky, using the

6mm Orthoscopic eyepiece for a magnification of 190.5X. Other objects observed through the Dobsonian included the red giant star Antares, the orange and blue double star Albireo, the Ring Nebula (M57), the "Double-Double" star system Epsilon Lyrae and the stars Mizar and Alcor. At the end of the evening Talayeh had the 25.4cm refractor directed towards the globular cluster M13 in Hercules.

I gave out a couple of RASC London Centre brochures to people who were interested. It was an excellent evening of observing with an estimated 50 visitors at the Cronyn. We left the RASC London Centre's photographic display, created for the 2008 General Assembly, on the table near the east wall of the lecture room.

**Saturday, August 2nd, 2008**

**By Robert Duff**

Clear skies greeted some 80—85 visitors to the Cronyn on Saturday evening, August 2nd.

Astronomy faculty members included Dr. Sarah Gallagher, Dr. Amelia Wehlau and graduate student Teznig Pugh.

Adam Priestap-Suttis and his father Dave were there. Adam had his new 20.3cm Sky-Watcher Dobsonian as well as the 60mm alt-azimuth mounted refractor, which he set up on the roof patio. Adam was the only RASC London Centre person there and said it had been fun being the "patio man." Jupiter was the favourite sight for the crowd and Adam reported that there was a good turn out with a mix of young and older people.

**Saturday, August 9th, 2008**

**By Robert Duff**

Rain and clouds dominated the sky when I arrived at the Cronyn on Saturday evening, August 9th, at around 8:17 p.m. Dr. Els Peeters and Dr. Jan Cami were there, along with two undergraduate students. No visitors had arrived and we wondered whether anybody would show up on such an unpromising night. Then 5 visitors arrived at 8:45 p.m. and Els Peeters immediately began her presentation with the IYA 2009 trailer followed by a digital slide show on the solar system. Other people began to arrive.

Jan Cami and I went up into the dome and, as the sky began clearing to the west, Jan began making ready the big 25.4cm refractor while I carried the London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian out on to the Observatory's roof patio. For the big refractor Jan used the 35mm Erfle eyepiece (125X). I used the Observatory's 17mm Nagler (67X) and 6mm Orthoscopic eyepiece (190.5X) with the Dobsonian.

The clouds moved rapidly from west to east throughout the evening and when they cleared away visitors were shown pleasing views of the first quarter Moon through the Dobsonian telescope, using the Observatory's 17mm Nagler eyepiece, for a magnification of 67X. We also observed Jupiter at 67X with three of its Galilean moons visible along with the North and South Equatorial Belts on the planet's surface. Other objects observed with the Dobsonian

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## Starfest 2008

Dan Tremblay

Well I usually don't get out observing very often. Although lately I've made efforts to do so. I had previously made plans to attend Starfest this year and made sure, and hoped nothing would squelch the anticipated pilgrimage. I even booked a weeks vacation to hopefully leave on Thursday. When the anticipated day arrived, I was up by 6 a.m. and the car packed by 8:30 a.m. After taking care of a few business affairs, I was off by 2 p.m. I arrived by 4 p.m. and was set up 5 p.m. Even though my tent gave me grief setting up; it served me well. Except for the fact that I was camped not far from the outhouse, the stench was enough to shock anyone into reality. I suddenly developed a new appreciation for the lowly porcelain toilet.

Thursday evening wasn't all that good. Lingering cloud bands kept moving over from the previous

monsoons that hit the area earlier. But all was not lost. A good crew of us had gathered and did observe through Jeffs binoculars and later my 10 inch reflector. Joe O'neil, Gary hinks, Jeff from Whitby?, Jason Priestap and his mom Cheryl, Steve Aurenberg, and Bill Gardner and myself all

had good fellowship. Observing through cloud breaks was better than nothing I guess ?

Friday was different. A good different of course. Things were abuzz with talks and vendors. Sue French's talk was very much enjoyed by yours truly. After the fabulous potluck at Rick Saunders, and David Rubenhagen's complex, the firmament had cleared. I later took a walk and examined a

couple of other instruments out on the field. One looked like a restored Alvin Clark refractor the other, a piece of furniture. Or I should say a fine hand-crafted 16 inch reflector made of African rose wood. Very nice. M-27 appeared very sharp in it. The night turned out great. In my 10 inch reflector I was able to find a couple of faint planetaries in Aquila. NGC6804 appeared faint but not difficult. It was fan-shaped with a star on the eastern end .No colour or central star seen. The other was NGC6781. Quite big and round. Some darkening seems to have been seen towards the center. No central star was seen. It appeared grayish in color. Another planetary was observed in Andromeda. It was NGC7662 otherwise known as the snowball nebula. it was fairly bright, with a bluish tint to it. It was ovalish in shape, and the edges were sharp and distinct, opaque across the disk with no central star seen. Other objects observed were the Saturn and Helix nebula in Aquarius and M-8 and M-20 in

Sagittarius and also M-7 in Scorpius.

Gary Hinks introduced me to the dark nebula B-86 in Sagittarius. I found it interesting in his binoculars. According to Sue French it shows up well in a rich field scope. Patrick Whelan's 5 inch Maksutov scope produced great images of Jupiter.

Well, the weather on Saturday put a damper on things, literally!

Behold, the first thing I saw when I peered out of my tent in the morning were clouds of doom. It pretty much rained cats and dogs all day. Trying to be optimistic about things, I stuck it out until 5 p.m.. The thunder got the best of me, since I didn't want to find out if it handle lightening bolts well. So I packed up and called it a vacation. In spite of the rain, it was a great time.



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included the stars Mizar and Alcor, the orange and blue double star Albireo, the Ring Nebula (M57) and globular cluster M13. The Moon was observed again later in the evening with the 17mm Nagler eyepiece at 67X and with the 6mm Orthoscopic eyepiece at 190.5X. However, the image of the Moon at 190.5X was noticeable less sharp due to atmospheric turbulence.

People had good views of the Moon through the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome and, towards the end of the evening, globular cluster M13 and the Double Cluster in Perseus. The Open House ended around 11:00 p.m. In all there were 19 visitors, not bad for an evening that had started out with rain and clouds.

### **Saturday, August 16th, 2008**

**By Robert Duff**

Clouds and clear sky prevailed as I arrived at the Cronyn Observatory on Saturday, August 16th, at around 8:15 p.m. Astronomy faculty members Dr. Peter Brown and Dr. Margaret Campbell-Brown were there as well as one graduate and one undergraduate student. Margaret gave the digital slide presentation, preceded by the IYA 2009 trailer, while Peter Brown operated the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome.

RASC London Centre member Adam Priestap-Suttis and his father Dave set up Adam's 20.3cm Sky-Watcher Dobsonian on the east end of the roof patio. I also set up the London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian on the west end of the roof patio. We were joined by Dan Tremblay and his wife and son. Dan set up his 80mm Stellarview refractor on its Russian equatorial mount on the roof patio between Adam's and the London Centre's Dobsonians. Steve Imrie set up his 20.3cm Orion Dobsonian on the Observatory's front lawn. Greg Andres and his son were also there and set up their 20.3cm Sky-Watcher Dobsonian in the centre of the traffic circle. Peter Jedicke arrived with his binoculars. Richard Gibben also arrived, bringing some eyepieces and spending the evening on the roof patio.

I spent the early part of the evening showing visitors the planet Jupiter through the London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian. The Observatory's 17mm Nagler eyepiece gave a bright splendid view of Jupiter at 67X. The North and South Equatorial Belts were visible on the planet's surface along with the four Galilean moons. Using my 7mm Nagler eyepiece (163X) later in the evening revealed more cloud belts. Other objects observed were the Full Moon (67X and 163X) and the orange and blue double star Albireo. Dan Tremblay located globular cluster M13 in Hercules for me in the London Centre's Dobsonian. I also located the Ring Nebula (M57) in Lyra. My search for the planet Neptune near the Full Moon was unsuccessful due to the Moon's glare.

The observing session ended around 11:00 p.m. with an estimated 100 people visiting the observatory. Many thanks go to RASC London Centre members Adam Priestap-Suttis, Dan Tremblay, Steve Imrie, Greg Andres, Richard Gibben and Peter Jedicke for helping make this an excellent star

night at the Cronyn.

### **Saturday, August 23rd, 2008**

**By Robert Duff**

The sky was hazy and cloudy when I arrived at the Cronyn Observatory around 8:15 p.m. on Saturday, August 23rd. Dr. Jeff Hutter of the Physics faculty was there along with Master's students Andrea Domokos and Jessie Silaj. I set up the RASC London Centre's photographic display, which I had created for the 2008 General Assembly, on the table near the east wall of the lecture room.

Jeff made ready the 25.4cm refractor in the dome installing the 17mm Nagler eyepiece (258X) in the diagonal. Jeff directed the telescope at the "A Channel" TV tower in the south of London.

I set up the RASC London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian on the west end of the roof patio, and used the Observatory's 28mm Meade Ultra-Wide (41X) and 6mm Orthoscopic (190.5X) eyepieces.

Andrea started her digital slide presentation before an audience of 35 people with more visitors arriving later in the evening. Another RASC London Centre member, Greg Andres, arrived with his son and they took in the slide presentation before coming upstairs to the Observatory's roof patio; but they did not take their telescope out of the car because of the poor sky conditions.

I began the observing session with the Dobsonian telescope and 28mm Meade Ultra-Wide eyepiece by showing visitors the top of coniferous tree to the east and then the construction crane to the south. I began showing visitors the star Vega overhead during brief apparitions between the clouds. I also showed them Arcturus, to the west during brief appearances between the clouds. The clouds finally cleared away to the south to reveal Jupiter, which appeared as a small disc at 41X through the 28mm Meade Ultra-Wide eyepiece. We obtained a much better view through the 6mm Orthoscopic eyepiece at 190.5X, with Jupiter's cloud belts visible. Clouds continued to obscure Jupiter from time to time and I showed people the stars Altair and Albireo.

Jeff showed visitors the TV tower for a while and then directed the big refractor towards Jupiter, swapping in the 35mm Erfle eyepiece for a good view at 125X.

We began closing down the Observatory around 10:50 p.m. In all, we had about 50 visitors to the observatory in what was a fairly successful evening in spite of the hazy, partly cloudy sky.

### **Saturday, August 30th, 2008**

**By Robert Duff**

Exceptionally clear skies greeted visitors for the last Cronyn Observatory Open House of the 2008 summer season on Saturday evening, August 30th. I arrived at 8:00 p.m. to find graduate students Meghan McGill, Draco Szathmary and Frances MacKay greeting visitors who were finding seats in

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the lecture room.

I set up the RASC London Centre's photographic display, created for the 2008 General Assembly, on the table in the lecture room and went up into the dome. Draco made ready the Observatory's 25.4cm refractor, selecting the 28mm Meade Ultra-Wide (156X) and one or two other eyepieces for the evening's viewing. Adam Priestap-Suttis and his father Dave arrived and quickly set up their 20.3cm Sky-Watcher Dobsonian on the east end of the roof patio. I set up the RASC London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian on the patio's west end and selected the Observatory's 17mm Nagler (67X) eyepiece, to be used along with my Meade MA 25mm (46X) and 7mm Nagler (163X) eyepieces.

I counted 45 people in the lecture room around 8:37 p.m. as Meghan was addressing the group and introducing them to the evening's program. More people arrived and I'm sure we had more than 50 visitors. Richard Gibbens was in the audience and later came up on to the roof patio to talk to the visitors. Richard also brought some of his eyepieces.

I located Jupiter in the 25.4cm Dobsonian using the Observatory's 17mm Nagler (67X) eyepiece and then switched to my 7mm Nagler eyepiece (163X). Jupiter made a pleasing view with cloud belts on the planet's surface and three Galilean moons visible. Adam also directed his 20.3cm Dobsonian telescope towards Jupiter, using a new 8mm to obtain a very fine view at 150X.

People were enthusiastic about the view they had through the telescopes and asked many questions concerning astronomy and telescopes. Other objects that I showed visitors through the London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian included the Ring Nebula (M57), the "Double-Double" star system Epsilon Lyrae, the globular cluster in Hercules, M13 and the orange and blue double star Albireo. These were outstanding sights in the 7mm Nagler at 163X, with M13 most notable resolved into stars.

Draco directed the big refractor in the dome towards Jupiter, which made a pleasing image when I looked through the telescope a little before 11:00 p.m. He also directed it at other objects using his laptop sky charting program to provide celestial coordinates and using the big telescope's setting circles.

The Observatory was closed down by 11:00 p.m., with most of the visitors gone. It was an exceptionally clear sky for the last Cronyn Open House of the 2008 summer season. Our sincere thanks go to everybody who made this a great evening of observing.

### **Cronyn Observatory Saturday Open House 2008: Summary Report By Robert Duff**

As Public Star Party and Hume Cronyn Observatory Coordinator for the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, London Centre, I would like to acknowledge with my deepest thanks the London Centre members who participated in Open House evenings, including: Harold Tutt, Bill Gardner, Dave

McCarter, Peter Jedicke, Fraser McCrossan, Steve Imrie, Marcus Stevens, Peter Raine, Cheri McCracken, Suzie Chelico, Richard Gibbens, Dan Tremblay, Adam Priestap-Suttis, Eric Clinton, Robert Duff and Greg Andres. In my September letter of thanks to Dr. Els Peeters, I mentioned that the Moon and the planets Saturn and Jupiter were the showpiece solar system objects this summer. Other objects viewed by visitors through telescopes this summer included Albireo, Mizar and Alcor, Epsilon Lyrae, the Ring Nebula (M57) and the globular cluster M13. We answered many questions and a number of people inquired about the club.

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### **Quai du Vin Winery Star Night Saturday August 2nd, 2008 By Robert Duff**

Peter Jedicke reported a very successful star night at the Quai du Vin Winery on Saturday, August 2nd. The weather was excellent and about 170 members of the public turned out. Two or three new enthusiasts were there, bringing their telescopes for expert help from RASC London Centre members. Peter recalls that one of them was Reg but he can't remember the others. There were a dozen members there with either telescopes or binoculars, including Steve Gauthier, Richard Gibbens, Jon Gunning, Steve Imrie, Craig Levine, Cindy Marks, Dave Nopper, Ron Sawyer, Dave Rubenhagen, Rick Saunders, Harold Tutt and Peter Jedicke.

A twilight digital slide talk was presented by Peter Jedicke, which ended with a beautiful over flight of the International Space Station (ISS). There were line-ups at the telescopes until almost midnight. There were two bright Iridium flares just above the treetops. Afterwards, London Centre members sat around with Rob Quai swapping stories until 1:00 a.m.

Peter says that he thinks Quai du Vin is his favourite outreach event and perhaps other members feel the same way. Rob sets up a cozy environment with only one streetlight visible in the distance and the sky glow from London mostly blocked by trees on the northwest perimeter. Aylmer is a minor annoyance to the northwest. The Fruit Ridge provides a favourable microclimate for both wine and astronomical seeing.

### **Quai du Vin Winery Star Night Sunday, August 3rd, 2008 By Robert Duff**

The second half of the Quai du Vin Winery star party on Sunday was an even greater success than the one on Saturday, as reported by Peter Jedicke. Temperatures were comfortable with no wind and less humidity than on a normal clear summer night.

Visitors seemed to prefer showing up late, after dark, but it seemed pretty sure that some 200 people were eventually seated. Peter made essentially the same digital slide pres-

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entation as on Saturday night and included the IYA 2009 trailer as well.

RASC London Centre members, with or without telescopes, included Mike Costa, Cheri McCracken, Dave Nopper, Peter Raine, Ron Sawyer, Marcus Stevens, Harold Tutt, Roman Dubinski, Suzie Chelico and Peter Jedicke. There were also Margaret and Greg.

There was a spectacular ISS pass at 10:13 p.m. and three not very spectacular Iridium flares low in the west. It was a great night, just slightly less transparent than Saturday.

The RASC London Centre wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the excellent job that Rob Quai does in setting up the place for us. There is a big screen, red tea lights, a sound system with soothing music for observing, blacking out the store windows, turning off the security lamps, and wine and cheese for the participants after the public had left—an outstanding venue for us.

### **Stratford Public Library Star Night Tuesday, August 12th, 2008 By Robert Duff**

Despite uncertain weather during the day on Tuesday, August 12th, the Stratford Public Library star night went well, with clear skies in the evening. Peter Jedicke reports that almost 100 people showed up for this star night, which was held at the Beacon Herald newspaper parking lot near Hwy 7, on the southwest edge of Stratford.

Three staff members were there from the Stratford Public Library. Bill Gardner, Gary Hinks and Adam Priestap-Suttis with his parents Cheryl and David were there with telescopes. Richard Gibbens was also there with binoculars. There was also one member from the Stratford Astronomy Club with his home-built 25cm Dobsonian. There were four telescopes in all. Unfortunately, nearby urban lighting diminished seeing conditions and so the astronomers focussed on the brightest celestial objects, the Moon and the planet Jupiter.

Peter Jedicke set up his laptop computer and showed people the International Year of Astronomy (IYA) 2009 video. This immediately gathered a crowd and Peter then used his laser pointer to give them a tour of the brighter summer constellations. The astronomers were very busy with questions throughout the evening and they did not pack up until after 11:00 p.m.

We thank Peter Jedicke, Bill Gardner, Gary Hinks and Adam, Cheryl and David Priestap-Suttis for making this and excellent evening under the stars for the Stratford Public Library Summer Reading Program.

### **McCully's Hill Farm Star Night Wednesday, August 20th, 2008 By Robert Duff**

The McCully's Hill Farm Star Night, organized for the St. Mary's Public Library Summer Reading Program, was a great success thanks to exceptionally clear skies and the

dedication of some RASC London Centre members.

Arriving at 7:45 p.m. I met the two summer student coordinators of the St. Mary's Library Reading Program and also found Peter Jedicke. The summer students brought from the St. Mary's Public Library an 11.4cm Newtonian reflector, on a Vixen style German equatorial mount, which Peter eventually took charge of for the evening.

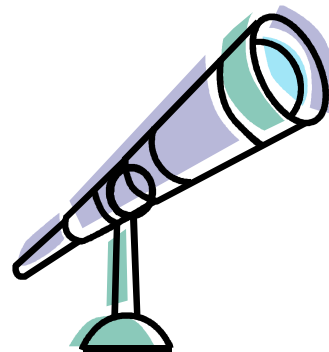
I set up my 20.3cm Meade Starfinder Newtonian reflector with its Dobsonian mount on the big grassy lawn behind the McCully's store. We were soon joined by Adam Priestap-Suttis with his parents, Dave and Cheryl. Adam brought his 20.3cm Sky-Watcher Dobsonian. Gary Hinks brought his 80mm alt-azimuth mounted refractor. Steve and Christie Arenburg arrived with their 15cm Dobsonian and 15 X 70mm binoculars. Richard Gibben brought this 20.3cm Dobsonian. There were also a couple of young people, not RASC London Centre members, who brought a small 60mm alt-azimuth mounted refractor.

In all we had 7 telescopes including 5 brought by London Centre members, one from St. Mary's Public Library and the 60mm refractor brought by two young non-members. There were also Christie Arenburg's 15 X 70mm binoculars.

Peter Jedicke gave a twilight talk to start off the evening from on top of a fire pit in the middle of the grassy area. He called everybody's attention to an Iridium flare to the north at 9:00 p.m. He later gave a laser guided sky tour of stars and constellations as darkness settled.

Jupiter was the main attraction as twilight gave way to darkness. All four Galilean moons were visible as well as cloud belts on Jupiter's surface. I started out using my 25mm eyepiece (49X) and soon swapped in my 7mm Nagler eyepiece for an excellent view at 174.3X. Other objects observed through my telescope were the Double-Double star system Epsilon Lyrae, with all four components nicely split at 174.3X, the Ring Nebula (M57) and the globular cluster M13 in Hercules, nicely resolved at 174.3X. I also took a quick look at the orange and blue double star Albireo. Gary Hinks located the Andromeda Galaxy with my telescope in the bright light polluted sky to the east. In spite of the haze of light to the east, the Milky Way was visible over our heads.

There were in all about 50 members of the public and they were very much impressed by the views through all our telescopes. We packed up before 11:00 p.m. I wish to thank everybody who turned out to make this a successful and enjoyable public star night.



## August Good For Eclipses

By Dave McCarter

As you most probably know, this past August 1st featured a solar eclipse that began in Canada's high Arctic near Cambridge Bay and moved across the polar sea into Russia and then China. Normally Starfest is held near new moon, but this year it was delayed a week so that organizers could be in far off lands to catch the eclipse. This was the first Starfest I've missed since 1993, and not because I was in the path of totality, but because I was, on August 1st in northern Italy, the little Mediterranean town of Bordighera.

According the maps developed by Fred Espenak I should have been right on the edge of the partial coverage, with a tiny bite out of the sun at 9:30UT. As luck and the Mediterranean climate would have it, the skies were totally clear as I watched the sun through a solar filter. The only eclipse I observed was momentarily caused by a pigeon. I could not convince myself that I could see even the tiniest notch out of the sun.

A wonderful touristy week passed in Florence, Sienna, and other small hillside Italian towns, while we stayed in a rented Tuscan villa, visited the Science Museum in Florence to view the Galileo's Telescope display, and enjoyed the fine food. We visited Rome for several days, and one evening I photographed the almost full moon over the Coliseum. Then we went by high speed train to Naples, and took a "rustic" subway like train to Pompeii.

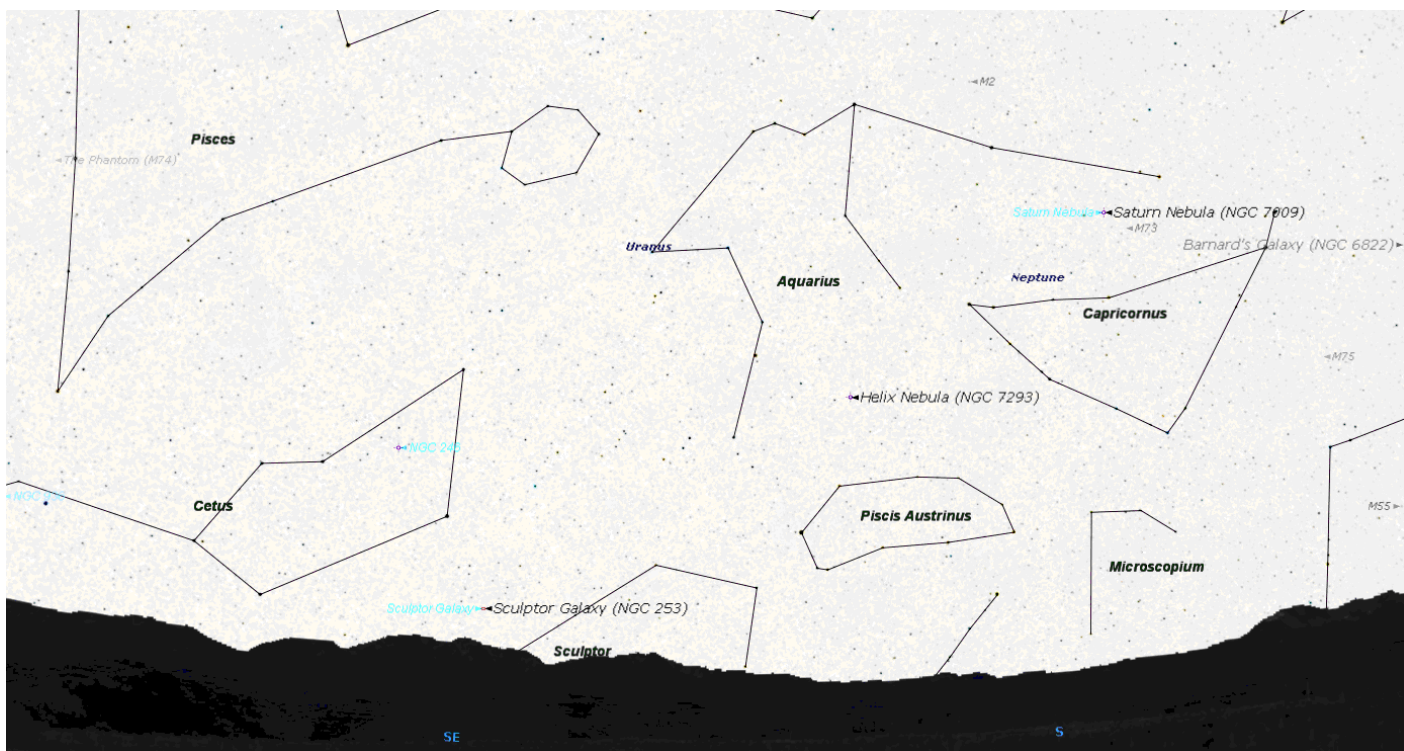
On the evening of August 16th, after a full day touring the ruins and visiting the peak of Mount Vesuvius we dined in a fine local restaurant and had a memorable meal. While wandering back to our hotel I looked up at the full

moon rising over the Sorrento Mountains and was startled to see a big bite out of the bottom of the disk. I had completely forgotten the date of the partial lunar eclipse. Our pace back to the hotel quickened considerably.

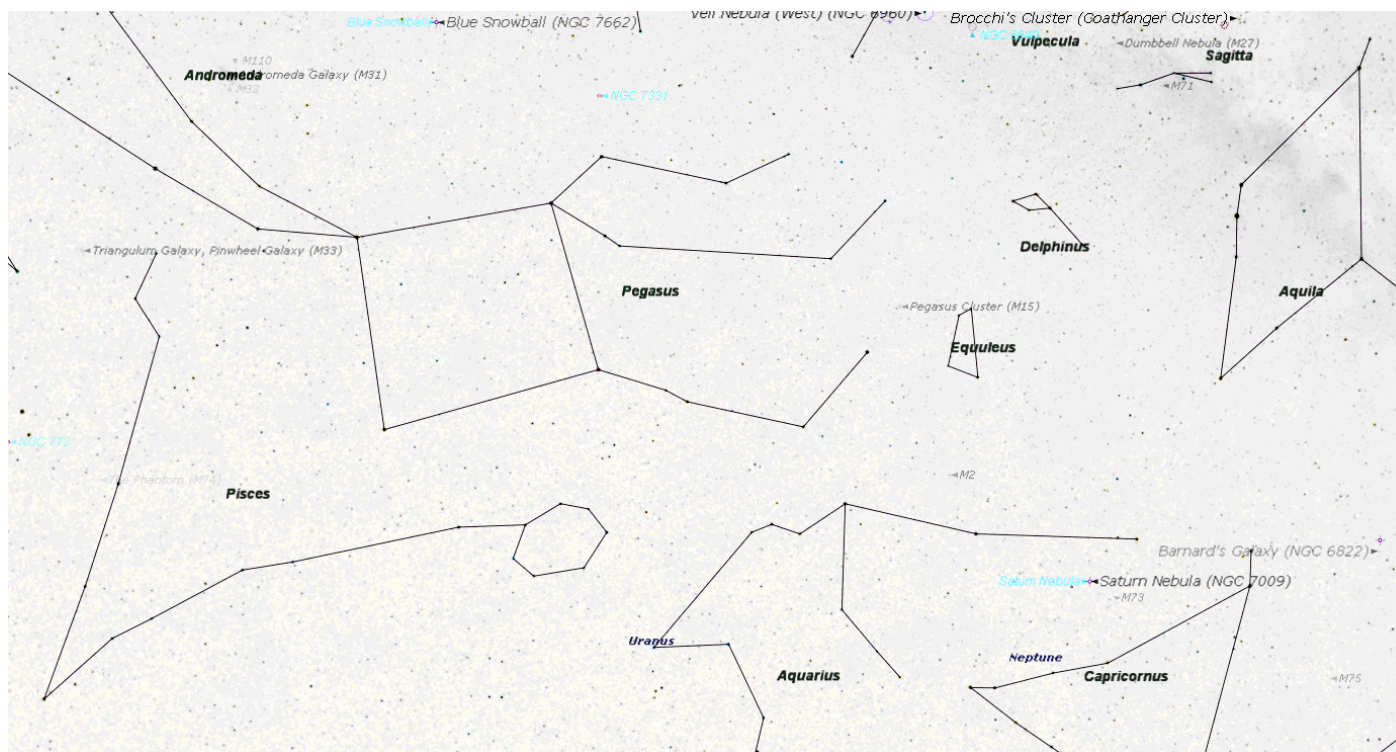
Our room had a south facing balcony, and I set up my tiny portable tripod and digital camera to photograph the eclipse. As it was partial, with at most only 80% of the moon covered, it was difficult to properly capture the colour of the umbra, a dark reddish orange without overexposing the sun lit portion.

The wide angle photo shows the scene from my balcony with the moonlight illuminating low cloud over the mountains. The telephoto shot was done with a 200mm lens and shows the moon at maximum eclipse. The lunar eclipse was simply a bonus to an incredible trip.





This image should help you find Uranus in the southern sky. The image represents the sky on October 1st around 10:30 pm. You can see Uranus and the constellations around it near the horizon.



This image should also help find Uranus. It is from the same date and time as the image above. You can see the position of the upper constellations in relation to Uranus. Pegasus is a rather familiar constellation.