

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA - KINGSTON CENTRE  
AND THE  
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ASTRONOMY CLUB  
MID-JUNE, 1978

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A Major New Canadian Observatory

This year may be remembered by Canadian astronomers, professional and amateur, for various reasons, depending on the person's interests, but one reason 1978 could possibly be remembered by many could be that it marks the inauguration of a major Canadian observatory.

The new observatory on Mont Megantic in the province of Quebec is to swing into full operation this month and with it a telescope ( a 1.6 metre (63 inches) Cassegrain-Coudé reflector) which is the third largest in Canada, exceeded only by the ones at the David Dunlap in Toronto and the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory near Victoria, B.C. This three-million dollar facility may be more fortunate than the other two as far as nearby light pollution is concerned since it is forty miles from the town of Sherbrooke and 140 miles from Montreal and sits at a 3,700 - foot elevation near the Quebec-Maine border.

A number of students at the University of Montreal and at Laval, both of whose institutions will be able to use the site, will have an opportunity to do serious advanced research with the latest in equipment and without having to travel an enormous distance or go to another institution. Besides providing students in the province of Quebec with a chance to do astronomical research at home, the Mont Megantic Observatory will be able to assist in popular education by being a place where people can come to see an observatory in operation. One feature which should greatly assist the public program is a closed-circuit television which in effect allows a large number of people to view the sky at once.

To all those who will be using the Mont Megantic Observatory, the best of luck with your beautiful, new facility and with your research projects!

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Mother Nature Takes Care of Her Own

An observer from the northern part of our district wants other observers to know that Mother Nature, faithful and true as clockwork, has once again provided for her little creatures. Yes, this year's crop of mosquitoes has hatched out right on schedule (or before it) and is coming along just fine. No need to worry about their health at all!

(Remember one of the major outings from last year.)

## A Good Time For Beginners

This month is an excellent time to introduce someone to planet observing. Perhaps you have a friend or relative who has said that he or she would like to go out observing, but has <sup>never</sup> actually done it. Perhaps also the person has made excuses by saying, "I don't know anything about it!" or "I can't see anything happening.", or "Nothing seems to change very much, from one night <sup>to</sup> the next."

This month there is an excellent chance that you can prove him wrong on one or more of his excuses and besides get him interested in the fascinating hobby of planet watching. What in the world could be simpler than inviting the person outside on two or more successive evenings, pointing out to him the planets, Venus or Mars, and asking him to remember or record where he sees them in the sky with respect to other bright objects?

At our last meeting I pointed out what a remarkably different configuration the planets, Venus and Jupiter, made on the three successive nights, May 27th, 28th, and 29th. The movement of Mars with respect to Saturn has been interesting to see from night to night.

During the next month it will be worth watching a very bright Venus move rapidly against the background of stars of Gemini, Cancer and Leo so that by mid-July it is very close to the star Regulus. Have your friend watch the movement of Mars among the bright stars of Leo and later in the summer among those of Virgo.

By then he may be asking you about the movement of Saturn because he may have detected it himself.

So, come on! Get that friend out observing! Prove to him that you can show him change and movements in the planets which are very noticeable from one night to the next.

P.S. And while you are discussing it, invite him to come to our centre's next meeting.

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## Schedule

Remember the next two meetings: June 13 and June 27. Doug said he would give a talk on June 13 about Stonehenge (an appropriate topic as we approach the June solstice).

The meeting dates in July and August are to continue as usual:

July 11, July 25

August 8, August 22

Let's have more people bringing their astrophotography - prints or slides. The ones that have been shown recently have been good. Let's have even more.

Summer Activities of Our Centre

If anyone in our centre still has not had a chance to complete the questionnaire about the planned Summer Activities 1978, and would like to take part in any of the events, that person is asked to get in touch with me as soon as possible. Remember that there were plans for a Summer Solstice Outing, a Perseid Meteor Shower Observing Session, and a 45th Parallel Outing. There were other minor events planned which do not yet seem to have grown into major events.

GOOD OBSERVING!

*Leo*

A LAST MINUTE FLASH

There was a delay in the typing of this newsletter. The meeting of June 13<sup>th</sup> has already taken place. At that meeting, it was decided to try Thursday as the night for our meetings, beginning with the first meeting in September. The meeting dates, therefore, are:

- Thu. Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Thu. Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Thu. Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Thu. Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Thu. Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Thu. Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Thu. Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Thu. Dec 14<sup>th</sup>.

Please retain this schedule for reference.