



# REGULUS

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1994

NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON CENTRE  
OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

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OUR KINGSTON PHONE NO.: (000) 549-1461

## MEETINGS AND EVENTS HORIZON

**Regular Meetings** of the Kingston Centre, RASC, are held on the **second Friday** of each month (unless noted otherwise) at **8 p.m.**, in **Room B-201, Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Queen's University**. **Non-members are welcome.** Executive Council Meetings are at 7 p.m.

**Fri., Jan. 14**      **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.**  
**Speaker, Judith Irwin. Topic: "Outflows From Spiral Galaxies."**

**Sat., Jan. 15**      **G.A. BID COMMITTEE MEETING—2 p.m.**  
**Meet at 797 Candover Crescent, Kingston.**  
**All Centre members welcome.**

**Fri., Feb. 11**      **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.**  
**Speaker, Peggy Torney. Topic: "The Art of Astronomy."**

**Fri., Mar. 11**      **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**  
**Program: "Astronomy Workshop."**

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Christine Kulyk

I'd like to begin by thanking everyone in the Kingston Centre for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president and to be involved in planning our group's activities over the past year. Together we've been able to organize several highly successful special events, in addition to our regular meetings. It's been great to see several special Centre projects and plans come to fruition over the course of the year, as well as to watch some even more exciting projects beginning to get under way.

Among the highlights of the year have been events like our highly successful Astronomy Week activities this spring, our Perseid meteor-watching party out at Steve Mander's farm in August, and visits from two of Canada's most outstanding amateur astronomers, Jack Newton and David Levy. From close to home, yet another of Canada's top amateur astronomers, Terence Dickinson, treated us to a stunning presentation on the southern sky as seen from Las Campanas, Chile. That talk in May drew the largest attendance of any Kingston Centre meeting ever, and Terry has informed me that it was also a record-sized crowd for any of his presentations in the Kingston area to date!

I also have many very fond memories of my trip to the RASC General Assembly in Halifax this summer. The Halifax Centre showed us a great time, and I was pleased to have the chance to renew acquaintances with many other RASC members from across Canada, as well as meeting David Levy for the first time. A large and very enthusiastic contingent of Kingston Centre delegates made quite a splash on the Atlantic Coast at the 1993 GA, as well as happily bringing home several awards from the Display Contest.

It has been my pleasure throughout the year to plan the programming for our regular monthly meetings. We truly have a wealth of talent to draw upon, both within our own Centre membership and among the local community of professional and amateur astronomers. Many of our members made my job easy by coming forward spontaneously and offering to give a talk. And much to my delight, every person I approached as a potential guest speaker was eager to give a presentation to our group. In fact, I quickly found myself running out of months into which to slot them all! (Consequently, I already have a whole list of people ready and willing to be on our program for next year...)

I've also been especially pleased to see the growth in our Centre's membership over the past year. All told, we enjoyed a substantial increase of 15 members this year, bringing us to an all-time record of 65! And partly as a result of this increased membership, we have just recently decided that we are now ready to seriously consider putting in a bid to host the RASC General Assembly a few years from now—which would be another first for the Kingston Centre. We already have formed the beginnings of a very enthusiastic and capable GA-Bid Committee, with Peggy Torney as chair and Denise Sabatini as vice-chair.

So it looks like it was really not a moment too soon that we managed to secure a much larger and better—equipped meeting room at Queen's this year than the one we were in before. And I'm also delighted that we now have our Centre Library here in our meeting room as well, so that it is accessible to us all.

To every one of our members and friends who have participated in our activities and helped to make 1993 another fine year for the Kingston Centre, I say a hearty THANK YOU. Thank you especially to all of the Centre Executive Council members and to our Committee Chairs, for all your hours of work on behalf of the Centre this year. Thank you to the many members who come so regularly to our meetings and other events. Thank you especially to those who must drive from as far away as Belleville, Trenton, Oshawa, Brockville, and so on—your participation and enthusiasm is very much appreciated and very valuable to our group.

I want to single out for special mention a few people who have been working very diligently on our behalf behind the scenes throughout the year. First, Kim Hay who courageously took on two jobs in the Centre Executive this year—adding the job of Treasurer to her previous post as Centre Secretary—and managing to do both jobs so smoothly and efficiently, to boot! Thank you, Kim, for all your hard work in two jobs which are so crucial to the ongoing operation of our Centre. Second, Bill Broderick, who not only produces our fine Centre newsletter, Regulus, virtually single-handedly and always on schedule, but he also does a really outstanding job of publicizing our Centre's activities to the news media and the general public. The brochure that Bill put together for us this year has proven to be worth more than its weight in gold as a means of attracting new people to our Centre. On top of which, Bill designed and built a very impressive set of display boards for us, for which he took home two awards from the Halifax GA this year. His light pollution display, in particular, was the subject of a great deal of positive attention at our Astronomy Day shopping mall exhibit, and this year, Bill has volunteered to serve on the national Light Pollution Committee as well.

Another person who has been extremely helpful and generous in promoting our group's activities is Terry Dickinson, who has given us a wealth of wonderful publicity through his articles in the Whig-Standard and his announcements on CBC-Radio, and who also routinely refers new people to our group when they call him up asking for information about local astronomy-related activities or observing nights.

I also want to applaud the three Kingston Centre members who have been responsible for setting up and running the computer Bulletin Board Systems which now carry messages specifically for RASC members, both locally and nationally. Mark Kaye, Kevin Kell, and Ian Levstein operate these BBSs completely at their own expense and with a considerable investment of time and computer hardware and expertise, and they've done a terrific job of making them accessible to RASC members both in our local area and as far afield as Vancouver. Anyone who has access to a computer and a modem can now make use of this valuable—and fun—method of communicating with other members and getting all the latest news in a jiffy!

Finally, I owe a great personal debt of thanks to two members who have helped me throughout my year as president—Denise Sabatini and Leo Enright, who've been unflinching fonts of valuable advice and assistance, even to making sure that I always have a ride to meetings.

I've had a very challenging and rewarding year serving as your president, capped off so wonderfully when I heard Leo call my name to come up and accept the 1993 A. Vibert Douglas Award from the hands of our Honorary President, David Levy. That Award means so much to me; it will occupy a treasured place in my heart and on my wall forevermore. I truly regret that because of personal reasons, I am not able to run for a second year as president. I see lots of great things on the horizon for our Centre in 1994, with my capable successor at the helm. But you won't be losing me; I still plan to be active in the Centre as Past President, I'm on the GA-Bid Committee, and I'd like to serve as a member of our Education Committee and help to plan some exciting activities for next year. As we astronomers say: the sky's the limit!

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### ECLIPSE CHASING, ANYONE?

**The H. R. MacMillan Planetarium and Gordon M. Southam Observatory in Vancouver are organizing two eclipse expeditions for the GSAE (Great South American Eclipse) of November 3, 1994. One for the hard-core eclipse-chaser, is to Bolivia. The other is to Brasil, for those who want an exotic vacation wrapped around an eclipse. Both are for approximately 14 days and are priced at \$3600 and \$3500 respectively. For more information, contact a member of the Kingston Centre Executive to let us know of your interest.**

## THE OCTOBER 1993 NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

By Walter MacDonald, National Council Rep

A national council meeting was held in Toronto on Saturday, October 30th. The meeting ran from 10am to 5:30pm (with one hour for lunch). Though it took three hours just to get through the president's business, the rest of the agenda proceeded smoothly and efficiently. So, much to the surprise of everyone, all items on the agenda for this meeting were completed in the allotted time!

The meeting opened on a grim note as president Peter Broughton read a letter of resignation from 2nd VP Mike Watson. Mike was unhappy at all the non-constructive criticism directed towards the national executive by various members over the last couple of years (and since the last GA in particular), and felt the best thing to do under the circumstances was to resign. This is a great loss to the RASC. In addition to serving a 2nd VP, Mike was the chair of the Constitution Committee, co-chair of the Solar Eclipse 1994 Committee, member of the Finance and GA Guidelines committees, and was also the Society's legal counsel. His most notable contribution to the RASC was the overhaul, completed in 1989, of the RASC constitution (known as By-Law No. 1). He was the recipient, last year, of a Service Award. Mike's departure leaves a tremendous gap in the workings of the RASC and he will be greatly missed. In the meantime, the executive will be appointing someone to serve as 2nd VP until the elections at the next GA.

The next item concerned a controversy involving a London Centre member who felt she'd been harassed at a member's home. The London Centre president, Dave Toth, gave a detailed account of the whole situation. He expressed great concern that n-th hand stories about this alleged incident had raced from coast to coast before the London Centre knew about it and thanked the Halifax Centre for at least inquiring about the facts of the matter. Council is seeking input from the member involved before taking action.

Some changes were made to the proxy form for use in next year's GA. More instructions were added to the form to clarify its use. There was much discussion about proxies, and in particular, their limitations. It was emphasized that the proxy is not a ballot and is used differently. Probably a motion will be made at the next annual meeting to implement a radically altered proxy form or to move to a ballot vote, at least for membership fees.

The next item, which was not concluded until after lunch, concerned the expulsion of a member by the Montréal Centre. The RASC executive had previously asked the Montréal Centre to comply with the requirements of By-Law No. 1 regarding expulsion of members from centres. The rules require (in addition to what the Montréal Centre executive has already done) a meeting of the Centre's membership to discuss and vote on the member's expulsion. A two-thirds vote is required to expel a member from a centre, at which point that member becomes an unattached member. The Montréal Centre president, Louis Bernstein, asked national council to turn a blind eye to their non-compliance. In addition to several centre members present on behalf of the centre's executive, there were five other centre members present. They opposed the expulsion and asked national council to enforce the rules. There was much debate between the two Montréal factions. A motion to delete the sections of by-law no. 1 which give primacy to the by-law over centre by-laws was defeated. Council then passed motions which urged the centre to comply and which re-affirmed the support by national council and the centres of the primacy of by-law no.1. It remains to be seen how this dispute will be settled.

It was announced that Patrick Moore has accepted honorary membership in the Society. Also, Alan Batten has accepted the position of Honorary President. A number of Messier certificates were approved for several members. Among these was the Kingston Centre's Bill Broderick. Congratulations Bill! Of interest to anyone else in the Kingston Centre who may be working on their M certificate, was a change was made to the requirements for getting one. All 110 objects still have to be observed, of course. But now, instead of having to get the signatures of witnesses, a complete listing of all the objects must be supplied, as follows:

- ☞ Messier object (in numerical order)
- ☞ date and time of observation
- ☞ telescope used and magnification
- ☞ remarks

The treasurer reported on the ongoing efforts to manage the society's finances more effectively. Changes have been made in the use of the AccPac accounting program to make it easier to use. Lotus 1-2-3 will soon be used for budget

preparation and reporting. New standardized forms for annual centre reports to national office are now ready. A potential problem with the RASC insurance was raised. Apparently most centres are not really covered for Astronomy Day events. This is being looked into.

In yet another glorious moment for the Kingston Centre (there have been a lot of them this year, haven't there?!), it was announced that Kim Hay will be taking over the RASC promotional item program. Congratulations Kim, and good luck!

\$500 was approved to create a prototype of a combined Journal/Bulletin publication. Hopefully this will be ready early next year. Once approved by Council, copies of the prototype would be sent to the centres. It should be noted that this does not mean the Journal and Bulletin will be merged, just that the idea is being explored.

The Astronomy Day Coordinator's report was heard at the meeting. The week of April 11-17, 1994 will be International Astronomy Week. Saturday, April 16th will be Astronomy Day. The theme for next year will be "Astronomy for Children".

Boxes of the Beginner's Observing Guide were distributed at the meeting to the centre reps in order to save on courier costs. Each box would have cost between \$20 and \$36 to ship, depending on where in Canada it was going.

"Looking Up, A History of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada", by Peter Broughton is now available. For more information, see the ad elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Edmonton Centre put forth a proposal for the 1996 GA. Perhaps the Kingston GA committee should think about submitting a proposal at the October 1994 national council meeting for the 1997 GA?

A \$500 grant was approved for the Edmonton Centre's grazing occultation expedition. IOTA is contributing US \$200 towards the expedition which, if successful, will produce some data of scientific value. Hopefully they won't get clouded out!

The matter of centres issuing tax receipts was raised. This was of particular interest to the Kingston Centre. As it turns out, there is no way for centres to bypass national office in this area except by getting their own tax numbers. Steve Spinney of the Toronto Centre indicated that a centre does NOT have to be incorporated to get a tax number. Though there will inevitably be a little more paperwork for the centre, the expense of incorporation would not have to be incurred.

The formation of an informal group, RASC 2000 was announced. The purpose of this group is to serve as a catalyst for changes in the RASC. Among other things, they plan to nominate candidates for national executive positions. The steering committee for this group consists of several RASC members from across Canada. Anyone wishing information on RASC 2000 can contact Doug George (Ottawa Centre) at 613/225-7182 or on e-mail at [george@sce.carleton.ca](mailto:george@sce.carleton.ca). A copy of the one page information sheet on RASC 2000 can be found in the centre's library.

Finally, a motion to study the possible phasing out of the unattached category of membership was defeated.

For anyone wishing more information on the doings of National Council at these meetings, the minutes will be available in the near future from either the Centre President or National Council Rep (soon to be the same person!).

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### A NOTE OF THANKS

**Back in October we had the pleasure of being treated to two outstanding public talks, first by our Honorary President DAVID LEVY on Friday October 1, and again by astronomy writer and lecturer TERENCE DICKINSON on Friday, October 22. David's talk was "Year Of The Comet: Collision With Jupiter" and outlined the events surrounding the discovery of the "String of Pearls Comet" which will collide with Jupiter next July. Terry's talk "From The Big Bang to Planet X" was a lively "take off" on his just-published book of the same title. Both were quite well-attended. Thanks David and Terry for two terrific public presentations.**

## SEVEN TOP TIPS FOR STARTING IN ASTRONOMY

By Gary Seronik

Reprinted with adaptations from "This Sky Tonight"  
in NOVA, newsletter of the Vancouver Centre, RASC,  
for January-February 1993

1. **It's your universe too.** Keep in mind that when you start out in astronomy, you are really beginning a deeply personal relationship between yourself and the universe. There are no rights or wrongs in how to proceed, so long as you develop a relationship that you enjoy. Don't let others tell you how you should conduct what is exclusively your relationship—it's entirely up to you.
2. **Buy some good books.** A good book can save you a lot of frustration and even inspire you in your exploration of the heavens. Terence Dickinson's **Nightwatch** is as good a first book as any I have seen. (Also, **The Beginner's Observing Guide** by Leo Enright, available from our Centre Secretary-Treasurer. ED)
3. **Use binoculars.** If you don't own a telescope, and even if you do, your initial exploration of the sky is made much easier with a pair of binoculars. Their generous field of view and use provide wonderful views of bright clusters, galaxies, comets, and even the moon. A good pair, will serve you well throughout your years of observing regardless of what telescope, if any, you wind up with.
4. **Observe with others.** A night out with other amateur astronomers will afford you the opportunity to see how they do it. You will probably learn more in a single evening observing with others than in a month alone. Whatever difficulties you might have encountered, chances are that someone else has been through the exact same thing.
5. **Read the magazines.** Both **Astronomy** and **Sky & Telescope** magazines are excellent sources of information on astronomy in general and specifically on what there is to see in the current month's sky. A subscription to either will serve you well.
6. **Observe what you want.** Some astronomers specialize in deep sky objects, some in planetary observing and others in astrophotography. Don't feel at this early stage that you have to limit yourself to only one aspect of the hobby. In time, you probably will develop your own preferences, but for now keep all your options open. You'll specialize when/if you want to.
7. **Observe when you feel like it.** This sounds obvious, but clear nights can be quite rare and when they do occur you might feel compelled, as if it is some sort of duty, to go out and spend time with the stars and the planets. Well, relax, you don't have to. You have your whole life to enjoy the sky, so you might as well do it when you feel like it. Nothing kills the enjoyment of astronomy faster than turning it into work. Enjoying yourself under the stars is the most important part of recreational astronomy.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** When I read the above article in NOVA I thought, "How appropriate!" We have quite a number of fairly new members here in Kingston Centre. I don't know how experienced they are, or aren't, but I can remember how intimidated I used to feel when I attended meetings or the Toronto Centre many years ago and everyone seemed so much more knowledgeable than I. Today, of course, I know better. Regardless of our level of knowledge or expertise, we are all learning about our wonderful hobby and universe, and we all have the right to learn in our own way, at our own pace. Further, there are now facets of our hobby that didn't exist when I got into it, like computers and CCD imaging, and there may well be some "old guard" amateur astronomers around who know less about these things than a novice may know about polar alignment and setting circles. In amateur astronomy, the sky is always the limit. There is always room to grow, and grow some more.

# NEWS AND NOTES

## VAL KROTKOV AND ARTHUR COVINGTON RECEIVE LONG-MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATES

The RASC's **Certificate of Long Membership** was awarded to two Kingston Centre Life members in November and December. ARTHUR COVINGTON, who has been a member of the Society since 1946, received his certificate from the hand of Society President PETER BROUGHTON at our meeting on November 12. VALENTINA KROTKOV, who joined the Society in 1957, was presented with her certificate by Centre President CHRISTINE KULYK and Centre Vice President LEO ENRIGHT, at her home on Friday, December 10. A number of friends and relatives were present for the occasion. Both Arthur and Valentina came to Kingston some years ago. Arthur originally was affiliated with the Ottawa Centre and Valentina with the Toronto Centre. Congratulations and best wishes to both. And thanks to IRENE COLLIN for doing the calligraphy.

## NEW MEMBERS--WELCOME

Three new members have recently joined Kingston Centre: JOHN D. BAKER of Glenburnie, CHARLOTTE HARRIS of Corbyville and DAVID PIANOSI of Belleville. A hearty welcome to all. It's a real pleasure to have you with us.

## BILL BRODERICK WINS MESSIER CERTIFICATE

The RASC's **Messier Certificate** was awarded to BILL BRODERICK at our meeting on Friday, November 12. Bill completed his Messier search in the early morning hours of Wednesday, August 25 around 4:45 a.m., snagging M74, a faint elusive spiral galaxy (magnitude 9.2) and M77, a Seyfert galaxy (magnitude 8.8). A few days previously, on August 21, he had bagged M76, the "Little Dumbell Nebula" (listed as the faintest of the Messier objects at magnitude 11.5). Bill's search of all 110 objects listed in the Messier Catalog began more than two years before in March 1991. Bill says he is not a "night person," but after picking up M78, he noted that he had only two more Messier objects to go to complete the list. Rather than waiting several months for the changing seasons to bring these objects into the evening sky, he resolved to do some "wee hours observing" and finish it off immediately. Congratulations, Bill!

## MIRROR GRINDER FINDS A HOME

The Kingston Centre's **mirror grinder**, which has been reposing in a basement storage area somewhere in the bowells of Queen's University for lo these many years, is finding a new home with the NORTH YORK ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY. We just weren't using it, and in fact had lost track of its existence until reminded of it recently by Queen's U, and requested to take it off their hands. Hopefully, North York will put it to good use and along the way some amateur astronomers will be made happy with the mirrors they will grind with this equipment.

## GA BID COMMITTEE

The GA BID COMMITTEE continues to make good progress in its deliberations--looking forward to hosting the 1997 RASC General Assembly here in Kingston. The meeting of Saturday, November 20, held at STAN HANNA's Church in Harrowsmith, was well-attended and a beginning was made at laying down some concrete plans. The next meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, January 15, at 2 p.m.** and is being held at the home of RUTH AND TERRY HICKS, **797 Candover Crescent, Kingston**. Everyone interested is welcome.

## QUEEN'S ASTRONOMY CLUB

Congratulations and best wishes to the newly-formed QUEEN'S ASTRONOMY CLUB. Meetings will be in Theatre "A", Stirling Hall, commencing in late January. Anyone wishing more information on this group can contact Ken Richardson, 000 XXXXXXXXXXXX, Kingston, XXX XXX, or a member of the Executive.

## **PRODUCT REVIEW** -- By Bill Broderick

The Kwik Pocus Lens Cap, manufactured by P & S Sky Products, 20095 Concession #7, Mount Albert, Ontario LOG 1M0, for use on Meade, Celestron and other Schmidt-Cassegrain telescopes. For 8" SCT, about \$40; for 10" and 11", \$50; for 14", \$60.

If you're into astrophotography but find getting the focus "just right" something of a problem, the KWIK Focus Lens Cap may be just what you're looking for.

My camera, a Pantax K1000 has a viewfinder which is part of the camera body. As such, I'm stuck with a mediocre view-screen that makes focusing on astronomical objects a real problem. I find that with the Kwik Focus Lens Cap on my telescope, focusing is a snap.

Basically, the Kwik Focus is simply a metal cap crafted to fit over the "sky end" of your Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope (in my case a C-11). What makes it work are the two round holes (about 2" [49mm] diameter for the 8" SCT model and 3" (77mm) diameter for the 10" and 11" SCT models), set far enough apart to clear the secondary mirror mounting. While looking through the eye-piece or the camera viewfinder at the moon, planet, or star, I simply note that the out-of-focus image appears double. By turning the focusing knob, I need only bring the two images together and (voila!) I'm in focus.

Kwik Focus has other uses besides focusing for astrophotography. On nights of "poor" seeing, Kwik Focus can be used to "stop down" the telescope, which can greatly improve the image. I've found that with Kwik Focus in place, lunar detail becomes incredibly sharp. Another asset of Kwik Focus is that it cuts down lunar glare and makes observing our moon quite comfortable. I've modified my Kwik Focus so that I can cover one of the holes if I want to, thus reducing the f/ratio even more.

Knowing what Kwik Focus is and how it works, any handy amateur astronomer can easily make one out of cardboard, plastic or sheet metal. In fact, it's probably in your interest to do so—to see how you might benefit from owning one. If you decide that you find it useful, you can go for the "real McCoy."

Kwik Focus is a Canadian-made product developed by a Canadian amateur astronomer, available through Khan Scope Centre, Perceptor, Efstonscience, and similar outlets. I recommend it.



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**NOTE:** See SKY & TELESCOPE Test Report, June 1992, for additional information on the Kwik Focus Lens Cap.

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**FOR SALE -- BUSHNELL-BAUSCH & LOMB CRITERION 8000 TELESCOPE with case, tripod with case, and accessories which include 30mm B&L Criterion eye-piece, 18mm B&L Criterion eye-piece, star diagonal, eye-piece adapter, three wing nuts. This 8-inch scope has been hardly used and is in excellent condition. \$1100. Contact: Margaret FitzPatrick, 000 XXXXX XXXXXX, Kingston, Ontario XXX XXX. Telephone: (000) 000-0000.**

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*T'was the night before Christmas...a night clear and chill  
A full Moon shone down o'er the dome on the hill  
The frost glistened white on the branches of trees  
While indoors the dog barked and scratched at her fleas.  
And Jack with his "PC",  
And me with my wine  
Had just settled down for an evening divine.*

*When outside the house someone started to curse.  
At first it was gentle, but soon became worse.  
A lead-footed Rudolph had snagged a back hoof  
On the curve of the dome as he rounded the roof.*

*The sleigh tipped and spilled its load all asunder  
While startled below, our eyes filled with wonder  
"Up Donder, up Dancer and Comet and Cupid"  
We heard Santa cuss, Geez these reindeer are stupid!!*

*Get going Blitzen, and Vixen....you too..  
Fetch the Elves quickly, they'll know what to do.  
We came by the Newtons' to deliver more toys  
Not to crash through the ceiling and make a big noise!"*

*Jack dashed upstairs quickly to survey the mess  
But happily, his worst fears were soon laid to rest  
His scope was unscathed; the same for his CAT  
The ST6 not harmed, (and thank God for **that** !)  
Cold camera parts lay all over the floor  
But oh well, who uses them anymore?  
Computers and disks none the worse for the wear  
And ditto for 500 disks of software.*

*But next year when we write to our friend Kris Kringle  
Our list will include nails and black roofing shingles  
And the usual plea for skies always clear  
Which is our wish to you for the coming New Year!!*

Alice Newton

*kindest Regards,  
 Jack + Alice*

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Order form for

**LOOKING UP**

**A History of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada**

See other side

# Dundurn Press announces

# Looking Up

## A History of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

by Peter Broughton



One hundred and twenty-five years ago eight men met on December 1, 1868 to form the Toronto Astronomical Club. Among them were a tailor, a teacher and a cabinetmaker. How surprised these ordinary citizens would be to see that their little group has grown into an organization of over 3000 members in all parts of the country, in the United States and overseas. Twenty-two cities from St. John's to Victoria have local chapters or "Centres" of the RASC. Novices and naturalists, amateurs and professional scientists all play important roles in this remarkable success story.

General readers will be surprised to find out what amateurs can learn from the sky, at

meetings and through the Society's publications. Leaders of other volunteer organizations, educators looking for ways to promote greater appreciation of science and local historians interested in the role of the Society in the life of their communities will find helpful ideas in this book. And members themselves will be better equipped to make decisions for the future through an appreciation of the development of the Society, its individual Centres and the men and women who have led them.

PETER BROUGHTON, a teacher by profession, has been a member of the Society for thirty years. He has written several articles on historical astronomy and is intimately familiar with the operation of the Society through work on many committees and in a number of positions. He is currently RASC President.

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