



## A Wide-Field View of the Horsehead Nebula Region

This image was taken by **Brian McGaffney** on 2009 March 28 from the dark sky area in Hastings at **Nutwood Observatory**. Equipment: Televue 132 IS, 6303e CCD with Borg 70 Guider. Exposure: LRGB (H $\alpha$ ) 30, 30, 30, 20, 10 minutes. You can see more of Brian's images at [nutwood-observatory.com](http://nutwood-observatory.com)

## Regulus is Changing!

Kevin Kell

**WHAT:** Effective with the 2009 September issue, *Regulus* will no longer be produced on paper, by default, for all members. Instead we will only produce enough paper copies for those member who have specifically OPT IN between now and then.

**WHY?** Producing a paper *Regulus* newsletter is our single biggest expense line item. Technology marches on and we hope that many of our member will be happy with the online, high resolution, colour, and more timely Adobe Acrobat PDF file.

We realize that not everyone can or want to access this online only version. So as a compromise to see the effectiveness of this cost reduction, we WILL print and mail

out paper copies to those members who contact the Treasurer Kim Hay between now and August 30th, 2009 and tell her that you wish a no-extra-charge paper copy of *Regulus* for the next year.

The plan is to ask you again each year before September 1st to specifically and consciously opt-in.

**HOW:** *Regulus* is currently published  
*Continues on page 10...*

## In this issue:

- ▶ Then and Now: Prominences . . . 2
- ▶ Directors & Coordinators . . . . . 2
- ▶ *Regulus* Needs You! . . . . . 2
- ▶ Relay for Life/SCO Update. . . . . 3
- ▶ May Observing Reports . . . . . 4
- ▶ Book Reviews/History&Trivia . 5
- ▶ Reflections on 20 Years. . . . . 6

## Upcoming Meetings

**Friday, June 12, 2009**

7:30-9:30 p.m.

### Members' Night

Speakers: various Kingston Centre members.

**Tuesday, June 16, 2009**

7:30-9:30 p.m.

### IYA Public Lecture (see page 12)

Speaker: Sandra Faber

**Friday, September 11, 2009**

7:30-9:30 p.m.

### Members' Night

Speakers: various Kingston Centre members.

### No meetings in July or August

Meetings are held at Stirling Hall Theatre "A" on Bader Lane at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Our meetings are co-sponsored by the Queen's Physics Department and include astronomy lectures open to the public. ★

## KAON Public Observing

**Saturday, June 13**

9:00-10:30 p.m.

**Saturday, July 11**

9:00-10:30 p.m.

**Saturday, August 8**

9:00-10:30 p.m.

**Saturday, September 19**

KAON (Kingston Astronomy Outreach Network) sessions are held at Queen's Observatory on the 4th floor of Ellis Hall. ★

## Other Events

**June 5**

**Relay for Life**

**July 18**

**IYA Observing**

**August 27**

**IYA Observing**

More information at [kingston.rasc.ca](http://kingston.rasc.ca)

- ▶ Astronomy Day Reports . . . . . 8
- ▶ Special Events / Slacking Off . . 9
- ▶ Regulus Revealed . . . . . 9
- ▶ Orion—Suite for Orchestra. . . 10
- ▶ Newt . . . . . 10
- ▶ Napanee Library Talk . . . . . 11
- ▶ Ring of Fire / SLOOH Update 11
- ▶ New SolarMax / Then&Now . 11
- ▶ A Room with a View. . . . . 12

## Then and Now: Prominences

Walter MacDonald

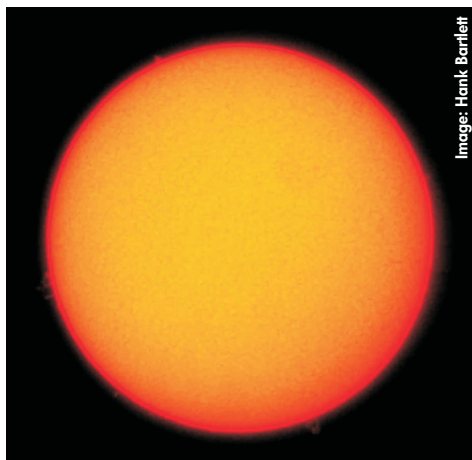


Image: Hank Barlett

Mr. A. F. Miller handed in a drawing of the solar disc, September 24th [1893], at 11 o'clock, showing accurately the position of the sun-spots and faculae, by projection, and, at the same time, the position-angles and shapes of the numerous red prominences scattered around the Sun's limb and visible by the spectroscopic method. The sketch was the first of the kind made in Toronto.

—*Transactions of the Astronomical and Physical Society of Toronto*, 1893, p.88.

IT IS INTERESTING to note how progress has changed observational Astronomy over the decades. A good case in point is Hank's H-alpha solar imaging. Viewing and recording solar prominences (other than at a total solar eclipse) only became

possible in the late 19th century, at which time it was "cutting edge" work (as shown by the quote above and on page 8 of the last issue). Fast forward one century and now it is available to the masses. This is especially good since sunspots have been rather scarce lately! ★

## Regulus Needs You!

Items of interest from members—full articles, or even just a couple of paragraphs are always welcome. Items are gratefully accepted on each and every day of the year! Send items to:

walter2 (at) starlightccd (dot) com  
or:

Walter MacDonald  
PO Box 142  
Winchester ON K0C 2K0

### The Fine Print:

Members of the Kingston Centre receive *Regulus* as a benefit of membership. Non-commercial advertisements are free to members of the Centre. Paid commercial advertising is also welcome and should be in electronic format.

Submitted material may be edited for brevity or clarity. © 2009, all rights reserved. Permission is granted to other publications of a similar nature to print material from *Regulus* provided that credit is given to the author and to *Regulus*. We would appreciate you letting us know if you do use material published in *Regulus*. ★



**RASC Kingston Centre**  
PO Box 1793  
Kingston ON K7L 5J6

**E-mail:**  
kingston@rasc.ca

**Infoline:**  
613-377-6029

**Website:**  
[kingston.rasc.ca](http://kingston.rasc.ca)

## RASC-KC Board of Directors

<b>President:</b>	Kevin Kell
<b>Vice President:</b>	Susan Gagnon
<b>Secretary:</b>	Steve Hart
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Kim Hay
<b>Librarian:</b>	David Maguire
<b>Editor:</b>	Walter MacDonald
<b>National Council Rep:</b>	<i>vacant</i>

## 2008-09 Committee Chairs/Coordinators

<b>Astronomy Day:</b>	Kim Hay
<b>Amateur Telescope Makers:</b>	<i>vacant</i>
<b>Awards:</b>	Kevin Kell
<b>Banquet:</b>	<i>vacant</i>
<b>Education:</b>	<i>vacant</i>
<b>Equipment Loan:</b>	Kevin Kell
<b>Fall 'N' Stars:</b>	Kim Hay
<b>KAON:</b>	Susan Gagnon
<b>OAFN Instructors:</b>	<i>vacant</i>
<b>Observing:</b>	<i>vacant</i>
<b>Publicity:</b>	<i>vacant</i>
<b>Relay for Life:</b>	Kim Hay
<b>Responsible Lighting:</b>	Kim Hay
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Walter MacDonald

Friday June 5th, 2009 was our 4th appearance at the Cancer Society *Relay for Life* event, this year at the Royal Military College Parade Ground.



Kim & I arrived on scene at 6 p.m., found our location and started to set up in a minimal footprint. One table, our decorative astro table cloths, and 50 packs of handouts in ziplock bags. In the past few events, Susan's idea of packaging handouts has worked out much better than many loose sheets of paper, blowing in the breeze, getting wet, dirty, etc. These included the latest issue of *Skynews*, our own RASC-KC brochures, a starfinder, some meteor notes and brochures, our business card, a star chart, and a *What's Up in the Sky* handout with map.

We set up the 25cm Douglas scope with the 32mm University Optics eyepiece (44x) and viewed the sun for a short time with a full aperture Baader film filter until it set behind the buildings.



That was followed by an almost full moon from around 7:45 p.m. onwards. Saturn popped out of the bright sky and from behind the tree around 9:30 p.m. and we spent the rest of the evening showing over 402 people Saturn at 88x with a 2x barlow with the 32mm eyepiece. The centre banner was up along with the IYA banner.



So much for the technical stuff. This was an evening of emotion. Group after group of cancer survivors and supporters stopped by to observe something new, something also from the world around them. Some stopped by to talk about their ordeals with cancer, and the need to share their experiences, and gave us more of an understanding of what they faced, and conquered. The number of small children with cancer survivor ribbons on them looking at the Moon and Saturn was something else, it was a Galileo Moment that meant a little more to them. We had people step out of the initial survivors' lap to thank us for coming out and giving them a chance to take a break or just come over to talk.

A COUPLE OF CHANGES have been made to reduce power load at the Starlight Cascade Observatory:

1. The all-sky camera workstation now only runs at night (daytime images were saturated anyways) using a dusk-to-dawn timer. It gets shut down in software at an arbitrary time before "dusk," then the power shuts off. When the power comes back up, so does the work-station.
2. The system that runs the weather monitoring station, the solar radio telescope, and the FM meteor detection needs to run 24/7, so we replaced the old P4 1.8 GHz machine with a new Intel Atom CPU system (4 watts for the CPU, compared to 50+ for the old P4) and it has worked great for over a year now.

I've started to see the first plug in replaceable LED consumer bulbs for the home. They have the same socket as regular bulbs but the insides are filled with LEDs. They are very pricey however, much like the initial CF bulbs that came out in the 1980s. They are highly directional but most also have lens to spread the light around a bit. ★



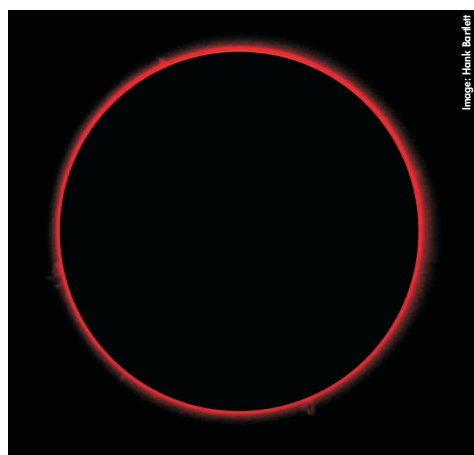
Kim was handing out astrocards left, right, and centre over the course of our six hours there. A couple of members stopped in to chat and take some astro images of the moon. They had a good time, and we certainly did as well. We finally packed up after midnight and got home just before 1a.m.

The sky was hazy and transparency was not the greatest, but that did not dampen our memories of this night. They will be with us for along time, and the strength of the survivors gives us the strength to do this again next year. ★

# May Observing Reports

## Saturday, May 2 Astronomy Day

**Hank Bartlett:** What a great time and the venue worked out very well! The Sun cooperated with some great prom-inences in the early morning. This was the first time I had spent a solid 7 hours in a row observing H-alpha. It was so cool to see how quickly some changes took place. I really enjoyed the day and the company, the public was for the most part patient and very interested. The weather was a little hazy at times but the big clouds stayed away.



**Susan Gagnon** replies: I agree completely! It was a great day and the Cuban Festival made it even better. Thanks to Kim for selecting the site. Thanks to Kim and Kevin for making up the handout packets that are wind-proof. I know that some will say it was a shame that there was no evening session but I for one was happy to call it a day at 4 p.m. I am getting too...?—something...for the astro day double header. I also enjoyed the treat of all day monitoring with the H-alpha!

## Friday, May 8 ISS Flares Up

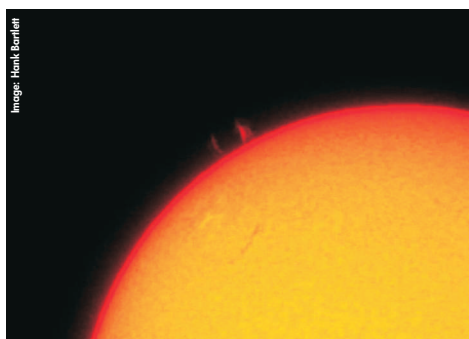
**Kevin Kell:** A serendipitous pass of the International Space Station (around 04:39:55 EDT), 81 degrees altitude in the NE, an opening in the clouds and the all-sky camera up and



running to get this shot of the station pass with a flare. The predicted magnitude was -2.2.

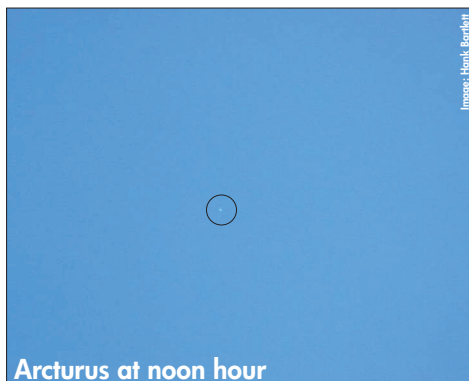
## Monday, May 11 The Sun & Stars by Day

**Hank Bartlett** comments: Maybe the Sun is finally waking up! Check out this prom, filament and active region (between the filament and the edge) from the Sun's east side. This was taken about 2:00pm today.



**Susan Gagnon** replies: We can always hope; pretty soon the sun will be all there is to see with the days getting so long.

**Kevin Fetter** reported imaging stars while waiting for the sky to get dark for his satellite monitoring program.

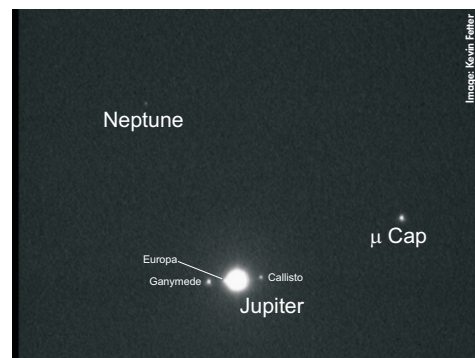


Arcturus at noon hour

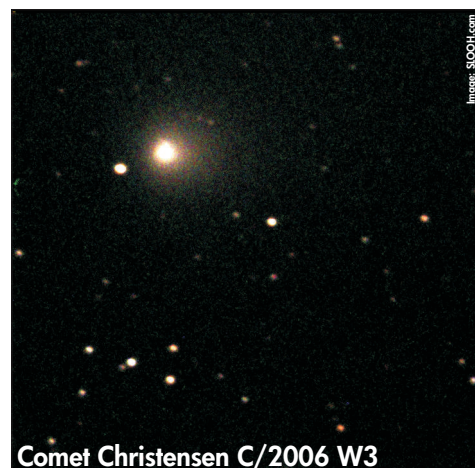
**Hank Bartlett** went one better, posting an image of Arcturus, taken 2005 on September 28, 2005 at 12:18 p.m. in a nice still sky, with a Meade SN 10".

## Monday, May 25 A Real Galileo Moment

**Kevin Fetter** imaged the Jupiter-Neptune conjunction on video. Such a conjunction was observed by Galileo in 1612/13 (see *Regulus*, February 2009, page 4).



**Walter MacDonald** imaged on six nights in May and also did a couple of deep sky visual sessions with his 17½" light bucket (cool, very transparent nights with no mosquitos!), as well as a few SLOOH imaging sessions. One SLOOH image captured was of Comet Christensen (C/2006 W3)—an 8th magnitude comet that should be a decent telescopic target in June and July. See <http://cometchasing.skyhound.com/> for a summary of current comets. ★



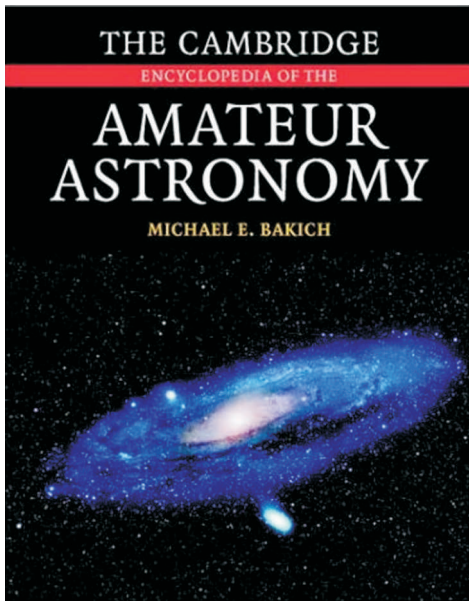
Comet Christensen C/2006 W3

## Two Recommended Books

Kevin Kell

## History & Trivia

Walter MacDonald



**The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Amateur Astronomy** by Michael Bakich. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

THIS IS A GREAT BOOK! Recommended for purchase and reading! It provides a comprehensive overview of amateur astronomy, astronomers, and equipment. It goes through, for example, optics types, mount types, and the listing of various eyepiece

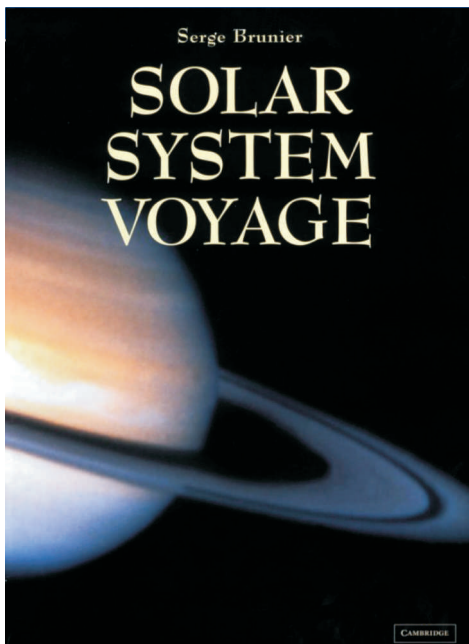
classes (which alone makes this a good read).

One of the new resources I liked was the filter section where he describes common filters but then applies them to a whole list (10 pages!) of specific objects. For example: M16 Eagle Nebula gives a paragraph or two on each of : Deep Sky, UHC, OIII, and H-beta filters, along with a recommendation for the best one to use.

Chapter three opens up with tips on how to observe and moves from eye to camera to photometry and spectroscopy. It moves into what to observe, starting with the sun, moon and planets, comets and finally into deep sky objects.

Lots of images throughout make this a good reference for the intermediate astronomer as well as a great starter reference for the beginning observer.

Check out your local Chapters or Indigo discount area for a copy. ★



**Solar System Voyage** by Serge Brunier. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

THIS IS A 248-PAGE COFFEE TABLE BOOK originally published in 1993 and translated from French in 2002. This presents a visual voyage through the solar system (hence the title) starting at the sun and moving out through the planets with stops at asteroids and some of the larger moons.

Loads of imagery, some of which are full page, and the translation flows quite well. Some of the imagery and text are a little dated but it still makes for a pretty picture book.

Recommended for purchase if you can find a copy in the discount bins. ★

A NEW FEATURE recently added to the KC website is “**This Day in History.**” It appears automatically at the top of the right-hand column on days for which we have at least one item, so be sure to watch for it! Already there are items for 232 out of 366 days. Building this collection of historical items is a quite pleasant project that will be ongoing for years to come!

While updating the list of historical events recently, I noticed some interesting trivia:

The discoverer of Uranus, William Herschel, died at 84 years of age—which is coincidentally one Uranian year. The discoverer of Neptune, Johan Galle, died at 98 years of age—which is *not* one Neptunian year, but at least he tried!

September 23rd, it turns out, is a date which is heavily involved with the planet Neptune. It is, of course, the day Galle discovered Neptune at Berlin Observatory, in 1846; it is also Berlin Observatory director Encke’s birthday; sadly, it is also the day Leverrier (one of Neptune’s mathematical discoverers) died, at age 66 in 1877. ★

**“Pluto has been nicknamed ‘the puzzling planet.’ It seems to be in a class of its own; its orbit is unusual; and its makeup is probably different from any other member of the Sun’s main family. It may even be that Pluto does not deserve to be ranked as a true planet at all.”**

**—Patrick Moore, 1980**

*Prescient Premonition? Planetary Predicament Predates Present!*

To paraphrase the Beatles, who said it so much better than I ever could, “It was 20 years ago today...” That was when I joined the Kingston Centre—summer, 1989.

At **Leo Enright’s** urging, **Peggy (Torney) Hurley** and I drove to Kingston in April that year to listen to a lecture on Mayan astronomy by **Denise Sabatini**. Peggy and I both had a cursory interest in astronomy at the time, but it wasn’t something about which we were really knowledgeable. Oh, on occasion I’d look at the Moon and the stars with a pair of 7x50 binoculars but I really wasn’t much more interested than that.

At the time, Denise was President of the Kingston Centre and she gave a great talk. Afterwards, Peggy and I hung around for a bit to meet some of the other people who were there: **Mark Kaye, Kevin Kell, Gerald Moriarty-Schieven** (who left early in 1990 to work at the JPL), **David Stokes, Bill Broderick** and, perhaps most famously, **Arthur Covington**—the pioneer of Canadian radio astronomy.

That first meeting changed my life... and before the evening was done, I decided that I really liked this group of people—a very special lot who would do pretty much anything in order to bring astronomy to the people. It wasn’t until a few months later though, that I finally committed to the Centre...and the obligatory après-meeting at Harvey’s.

This was a very exciting time for the KC. In October, Kingston played host to **Clyde Tombaugh**—who discovered Pluto in 1930. Of course, Pluto was still a planet in those days! How many of us in attendance at his lecture that evening can ever forget

his incredible puns and his winter “snow job?” A videotape was made of that lecture and, many years later, I burned it to a DVD—so if anyone wants a copy, just let me know. The sound isn’t great, but considering its historical importance, it’s just fine! Sadly, he died early in 1997.

During the annual elections that December, I let my name stand for Secretary and was elected (taking over the reigns from **Eldon Adams**)... I was well on my way to becoming PFL. Oh...here’s a list of the other executive members that year... anyone you know? President: **Denise Sabatini**; Vice President: **Hein Van Asperen**; Treasurer: **Peter Kirk**; Librarian: **David Stokes**; Newsletter: **Bill Broderick**; National Council Rep: **Leo Enright**; Alternate NCR: **Walter MacDonald**; and Astronomy Day Coordinator: **Stan Hanna**. And who on earth was **David Levy** the Honourary President? How does someone get to be an Honourary President?

During my term as Secretary (1990-1991), I gathered all the Centre’s correspondence together for as far back as it existed (early 1960s), and set about organizing things chronologically. Did I mention that I’m really anal retentive? It took me several months to put things together, and I read just about every word that was written in those papers. It was a crash course on the history of the Centre! Does anyone remember **Larry Manuel**, who refurbished the A. Vibert Douglas Memorial Telescope? Does anyone remember room D-214 of Mac/Corry Hall? How about D-216? Ah...those were the days! I’ll note with regret, that **Dr. A. Vibert Douglas** (who was President of the RASC (1943-44) and founded the Kingston Centre in 1961) died in 1988 at age 93, so I never had the honour of meeting her.

Not satisfied with simply being a member of the Executive, I decided to put together a short talk, and in March 1990, I brought together my two favorite hobbies—astronomy and science fiction. The talk revolved around astronomy in SciFi films. I’m pleased to say it was well received...at least, that’s my story and I’m sticking to it. For the record, I am still a huge *Star Trek* fan!

In May that year, I learned why **David Levy** was the Honourary President—he was a comet hunter... and a damned good one at that. Comet Levy 1990c was David’s 6th comet discovery, and it made a terrific showing during the summer/fall of 1990. I have a clear memory of taking photos of Comet Levy 1990c—the first time I used my own tiny Bausch & Lomb 4" SCT for astrophotography! Still...it was a damn fine photo. In November, David discovered his 7th comet—Shoemaker-Levy 1, and in December, David came to Kingston for a public lecture!

When the opportunity to run for office again presented itself, I jumped on the chance...and was elected President in 1991. My lifetime dream (well...maybe 1.5 years) of becoming PFL had been fulfilled—I was finally *President For Life (PFL)*, and I wasn’t ever going to let go! Fortunately, I had a lot of good help that year...**Kim Hay** stepped up to serve as Secretary, and **Vic Smida** served as my Vice President. Vic was the only person I knew, who could take Einstein’s  $E=MC^2$  formula and explain it step-by-step in such a way that even a non-scientist could understand exactly how the formula was derived.

My main goal that year was to encourage teachers to get involved in astronomy.

I phoned, I wrote letters (e-mail, as a common means of communication, was still a few years away), and I talked at length to teachers. If I have any regrets from those years, it's that I didn't make as large a change as I would have liked—and, even today, trying to get children (and teachers) interested in astronomy remains a challenge.

In April that year, I once again stepped up and gave a talk on the Apollo Lunar Landing Program. I called the talk "The Surface is Fine and Powdery." I thought it was a very clever title, but apparently no one knew what it meant until about 2/3 of the way through the program when it was revealed that those were the words that **Neil Armstrong** spoke from the Moon right after his famous, "That's one small step for [a] man; one giant leap for mankind." He went on to say, "Yes, the surface is fine and powdery. I can kick it up loosely with my toe. It does adhere in fine layers, like powdered charcoal, to the sole and sides of my boots." For those of us who watched the event live on TV, it was a thrilling moment forever etched in the mind.

Astronomy Day that year was lots of fun, but does anyone remember that I had a photo of the full moon and taped it way up high on a wall at the Kingston Shopping Centre? Then, after cleverly aiming a telescope, we invited people to view the full moon during daylight hours from inside the mall? Great fun! I forgot to take down the photo when we dismantled the display, and it was 3 or so months before someone at the mall finally removed it. The original mall was demolished in 2004 and rebuilt. Hmm...progress!

Speaking of jokes, there are many of us who know the great wit and speedy retorts of **Walter MacDonald**—

indeed, many of us have fallen prey to his myriad barbs...but nowhere is this better demonstrated than in the various parody issues of *Regulus* that Walter published in the early years of the 1990s. Called *Ridiculous*, it was humour *par excellence*. If you haven't seen one of these issues, let me know...I have copies from 1991, 1992, and 1993. And does anyone remember his terrific interview with **Jeff Stop**, astrophotographer?

Who here remembers the total solar eclipse of July 11, 1991? While I believe **Leo** was in Mexico observing it live, I remember watching it on TV. There was a phone-in session taking place and the experts were inviting people to call in to ask about the event. The most memorable question of the session was from one person who asked, quite innocently, whether July 11 was the best day to watch the event or would it be better either the day before or after!

In December, I gave yet another talk—this time on the *Harmony of the Spheres*. Of the four talks that I gave during those years, it was my favorite... and the best received. By the end of 1991 I was elected to a second term as President, and **David** had captured 12 comets! Some guys have all the luck!

1992 was an historic and very exciting year both for the RASC in general and KC in particular. That was when Comet Swift-Tuttle returned; that was when **Leo Enright's** *The Beginner's Observer's Guide* was first published; that was when the KC's Light Pollution Committee was formed; and that was when yours truly participated in a speaker's exchange trip to Calgary. Okay, maybe that last one wasn't really historic!

In October that year, I was honored to

receive the A. Vibert Douglas Award for service to the Centre, and while I had intended to remain PFL, I stepped down at the end of 1992 and allowed others to take up the reigns of control. **Christine Kulyk** was elected to succeed me. It was a bittersweet time for me as personal issues came to the surface and took hold for a few years thereafter. In February 1993, I gave a final talk to the members of the KC—*Planets and Parchment, Astronomic Hebraica*—which dealt with the importance of astronomy to the ancient Hebrews. One month later, **David Levy** co-discovered a new comet. This one made a really big splash...Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 crashed into Jupiter in July 1994.

After my 2-year stint as President, I pretty much sat back and became just a regular member of the KC. It was a welcome respite. I had never really been more than an armchair observer and I looked forward to becoming a couch potato once again.

Of course, it wasn't always just a passive involvement—as noted by the great 1993 Halifax GA trek. Two cars, 3 men, 2 women, a lot of Star Trek, a lot of driving, and 5 people sharing one small hotel bedroom in Edmundston, NB. It was a definite change of pace and, as Walter would later quip, "we discovered there was no night life—except at the local Tim Horton's where the air was so thick with smoke we could hardly breathe!" With me on the trip were **Walter MacDonald**, **Cathy Hall**, **Barb Wight** (Hamilton Centre), and videographer **Jon Buchanan** (Ottawa Centre). I maintain to this day, that Canada's worst drivers live in and around Montreal. Do you guys remember the day we saw the world on the back of a truck? Remember the cruise on the Bluenose II?

Continues on page 9...

# Astronomy Day Reports

Kim Hay, Fred Barrett

KIM HAY, ASTRONOMY DAY CHAIR

On May 2, 2009 the RASC-Kingston Centre changed its venue for Astronomy Day by setting up at the local Farmers' Market. Setting up early and finding a great location for solar observing and foot traffic gave us a great opportunity to bring Astronomy to the public.

Our day was filled with sunshine and music from the local Cuba Fest Kingston Festivities (see link below) which brought over 400 people to our two telescopes that were set up on the sun, both in H-alpha and white light. Many IYA materials were handed out, with lots of questions from the public on current space programs, the sun, and astronomy in general.

A few clouds threatened the event, but all ended well. By the end of the day we had four happy astronomers that were able to bring outreach to the public on a subject that we all enjoy.

FRED BARRETT  
REPORTS:

**Leo Enright, Frank Hitchens** and myself set up a display in a commercial area known as Code's Mill. We had a steady flow of people of all ages stop by since we were nicely situated in an area near the front of a coffee shop. I set up my C8 for solar viewing outside in a grassy park area and I had more than 30 people stop to look at the sun and ask questions. It turned cloudy around 1:30 and I packed up in case of rain.

It was a good day. We had planned to come back later for night observing but the weather looked just too threatening. As it turned out, it was a nice clear night. ★



Web Link

Cuba Fest Kingston: <http://www.cubafestkingston.ca/Home.html>

**"Ask an amateur astronomer about Saturn. He won't just tell you; he'll drag out his telescope and show you. He'll break your arm to show you."**

**—Larry Niven, World of Ptavvs**



Above: Hank with the SolarMax 60 scope.



Left to right: Kim Hay, Susan Gagnon, Kevin Kell, Hank Bartlett.

## Special Events 2009

### RASC 2009

**General Assembly**  
Registration is now open!  
It will be held at Cypress Hills



Interprovincial Park, Saskatchewan (Centre Block—30km South of Maple Creek on Hwy 21) on August 13–16, 2009 in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Summer Star Party. Presented by the Saskatoon and Regina Centres of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

More information is available at:  
<http://homepage.usask.ca/~ges125/rasc/sssp2009.html>

### Fall 'N' Stars

2009



### Fall 'N' Stars 2009 Star Party

Friday-Sunday, September 25-27, 2009 at Vanderwater Conservation Area Boy Scout Camping Area near Thomasburg, Ontario. This year is the 10th anniversary!

Registration is now open at:

<http://www.rascbelleville.ca/fallnstars/>

### M108



Teide2 HM combined images: 1x5m L, 3x5m LRGB, taken Feb 18 & 22, Mar 23.

## Regulus Revealed

IN JUNE 2008, Doug Welch wrote a great article for the blog at **Slacker Astronomy**. Entitled *Regulus - Just when you think you know a star*, it starts out with this introduction: "Looking out at the night sky, it is easy to believe that we've learned everything there is to know about the brightest stars. Fortunately, they keep surprising us!" Regulus, as it turns out, is no exception:

<http://www.slackerastronomy.org/wordpress/index.php/archive/regulus-just-when-you-think-you-know-a-star/>

## Slacking Off

Walter MacDonald

THANKS TO THE INTERNET, we live in an age awash in information—too much, it seems at times, and not all of it of high quality. The trick, of course, is to find and concentrate on the “good stuff.” One site that fits this category is *Slacker Astronomy*.

*Slacker* started as a **podcast** in early 2005 and now consists of “an audio podcast, video podcast, collaborative blog, webcomic, discussion forums and a wikipedia-style online encyclopedia.” **Blog** entries can be produced any time, while 1-hour podcasts are produced monthly, interspersed with shorter podcasts.

It is not just the high quality of the content that makes *Slacker* so great, it is also the underlying philosophy of the operation: “All elements revolve around the world of astronomy told through silliness and humor, while respecting the intelligence of the audience.” Check it out for yourself—there is a good chance it will become one of your favourite Astronomy podcasts! ★



## ...20 Years as an RASC-KC Member

...continued from page 7.

My active participation as a member of KC continued up until September, 1996 when I moved east to Halifax for a couple of years, and then south to Kentucky in 1998 where I still live today. Before leaving Kingston, I sold my 4" SCT to **Kim Hay!** Because of the distance, I am not now able to attend KC meetings, but I maintain contact with many KC members—all of whom I still consider very dear friends...even after all these long years. I also manage to attend the occasional GA, most recently the 2008 GA in Toronto.

In 1998...my wife, Sheila, and I took a trip to Roswell, NM—you know the place...a UFO crash landed there in 1947. While exploring one of the many UFO museums and bookstores there, I came across **Terry Dickinson's** article about Zeta Reticuli—the star system from where the aliens who abducted Barney and Betty Hill in 1961 were supposed to have originated. The Hill's story is documented in the book, “The Interrupted Journey.” It's a great

article, by the way, regardless of your beliefs!

These days, I observe with a mid-1970s bright orange Celestron C8 (8") SCT which I won on eBay in 2002. The scope was in almost pristine condition and came complete with the original heavy-duty packing cases, tripod, lenses (including 4 that the previous owner purchased), drive, motor, wedge, and the original instruction manuals...it was a steal for only \$750.

As most of you know, for the past year or so I have been the Editor of the RASC's *Bulletin*—a monthly eNewsletter distributed to all RASC members. It has been an honor serving the RASC in this way, and I hope you all enjoy reading each issue—it is truly a labour of love! Speaking of love's labours, I recently completed a 5 movement Orchestral Suite called *Orion*, and dedicated it to the RASC...perhaps you heard it. I'm sure someone you know has a copy of it. If not, you can download it. [*See next page—Ed.*]

So, what will the next 20 years hold in store? One can but wonder! ★

## ...Regulus is Changing!

...continued from page 1.

10 times/year (September-June), odd numbered months on paper and mailed out as well. It is not published July and August, coinciding with the time when we take a summer recess and do not hold regular meetings either.

We hope to achieve at least a 50% drop in paper publication costs and optimistically 75% or more.

WHERE: Lastly we have surveyed other Centers in the RASC and currently we are one of the last to

produce complete paper runs for all members, all of the time.

HOW TO ASK FOR A ONE YEAR PAPER SUBSCRIPTION:

Contact the Treasurer, Kim Hay:

- ▶ by e-mail at [kingston\(at\)rasc\(dot\)ca](mailto:kingston(at)rasc(dot)ca),
- ▶ by postal mail to the Centre address (see page two),
- ▶ by telephone to the RASC-KC hotline at 613-377-6029,
- ▶ in person at any meeting or event. ★

## LEADING EDGE HOBBIES

We are proud to carry the complete line of Sky-Watcher Telescopes. Come by and see what we have in stock today!



699 Gardiners Rd.  
Kingston, ON  
Tel: 613-389-4878  
Toll Free: 866-389-4878  
[www.leadingedgehobbies.com](http://www.leadingedgehobbies.com)

Space: the final frontier...

Ian Levstein

## Orion—Suite for Orchestra

Most of you know me as the editor of the RASC's monthly *Bulletin*. Those of you in the Kingston Centre may also know that I did my undergraduate degree in Music Theory and Composition. Over the past 15 months, I've been working on a new composition for orchestra—inspired by my love of astronomy, and now dedicated to the RASC.

**Orion – Suite for Orchestra**, is in 5 movements subtitled: Horsehead, M42, Orion's Belt, Betelgeuse, and Rigel. I am making the MP3 file of

the entire suite available for download to RASC members at no charge. The entire suite is a little under 28 minutes with the movement durations lasting 5m32s, 6m6s, 5m35s, 4m47s, and 5m55s respectively. Depending on the speed of your broadband Internet connection, it may take up to 10 minutes to download the MP3 file.

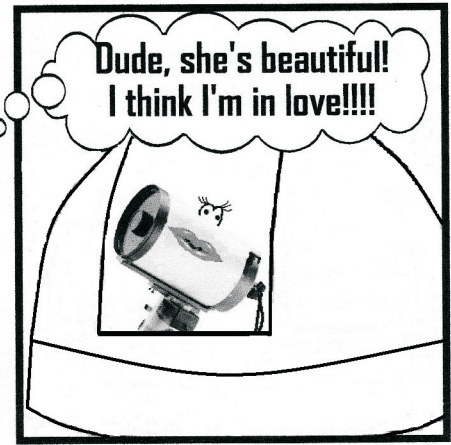
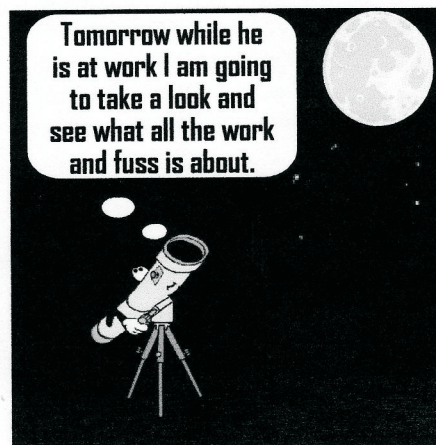
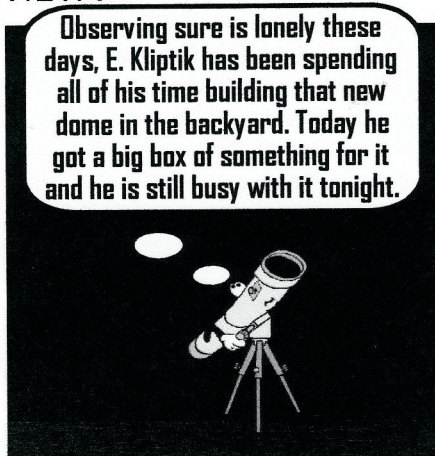
**Terms of use:** 1) Do not use the MP3 file, or any portion thereof, for anything other than personal use; and 2) If any RASC Centre wants to use the MP3 file, or any portion thereof, as background music for a RASC-sponsored event, I would appreciate a

brief mention as the author and copyright owner. Easy, eh? ... Now the big one) neither the MP3 file, nor any portion thereof, is to be used for any commercial purpose whatsoever without my personal written authorization. I'll warn you now... both of my stepchildren are lawyers—and they love me dearly!

You can download the file (25.5 megabytes) from here: <http://www.rasc.ca/im/bulletin/Orion.htm>. Please note the additional instructions on that page. ★

*Ian is well known to longtime KC members as the Past President-for-Life.*

NEW by E. Kliptik



Some characters in this cartoon are adapted from The Print Shop Ensemble III

## Napanee Library Talk

Hank Bartlett

THE NAPANEE LIBRARY TALK was at 10:30 a.m. on May 13th. The PowerPoint & talk went well; unfortunately, though, there were only seven in attendance. I guess the clear, warm weather sent people to their gardens rather than indoors. I also partially blame the a portion of the advertising that stated “speaker: Astrologer Hank Bartlett” ARRRRGH. Of course I began the PowerPoint with the “Astro Rant.” Just the same it was a fun event and all will go home tonight with their IYA star finders and pull out the binoculars and journey across the night sky before the rain hits.

After the talk we went out to the parking lot and observed the Sun with the Coronado 60 and then Venus with the C4.5". Unfortunately there was only one pale prominence; the beautiful crescent Venus was the observing hit of the day.

Fellow member **Norm Welbanks** was there for moral support/heckling.

Truthfully, it was nice to have a second person there while I was setting up the telescopes and searching for Venus. There was also another Norm there who was very keen on picking up astronomy as a retirement hobby and it was recommended he attend our meetings and observing sessions, by Norm.

That is another 2 hours toward the *Million Hours of Astronomy*. ★

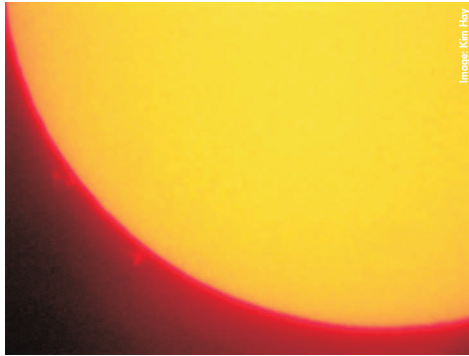


June 2009

## New SolarMax! Kim Hay

AFTER WAITING 8½ MONTHS, my SolarMax 60 arrived last week on May 6th (that is a tale for another day). We have enjoyed it very much, and after the usual yard/garden work is done, we sit and enjoy the view.

On May 19th, I took a few images of some solar prominences and also sketched them (see image below). I have more images from May 18th, but they did not turn out so well. The shots so far are a bit over-exposed; they were taken at 1/60th second using our Canon Powershot A540. They may not seem precisely focused either, but I am still making my way up the long learning curve of digital photography.



The magnification used on the scope was 66x, using the 2x barlow and a 12 mm eyepiece. ★

## Then and Now

WITH THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY of the first manned moon landing coming up, here is a look back at how our perspective has changed. Below left is a vision from 1904, and at right is Apollo 8's view from 1968. ★

Left: from *Astronomy for Amateurs* by Camille Flammarion, 1904. Below: Apollo 8 NASA image AS8-14-2383HR.



## The Ring of Fire

SPEAKING OF THE SUN, **Kevin Fetter** reminded us recently that May 10th was the 15th anniversary of the *Ring of Fire* annular eclipse, which was quite a nice show.

Kevin recounts that he was living in Toronto at the time, attending college. He viewed it from the place he was staying at, located near Jane Street and Wilson Avenue. It was a nice sunny day, from what he remembers, but he didn't get any images of it.

**Your editor** observed the eclipse with an NYAA group next door to the Cayuga speedway.



Kevin is looking forward to the next big local solar eclipse 15 years from now: the April 8, 2024 total solar eclipse. *We're halfway there folks!* ★

## SLOOH.com Update

SLOOH's new reservation system is up and running at long last so users can once again make object requests. The new observatory in Australia has entered the testing phase (as the all-sky view below shows).



*Announcing the Kingston International Year of Astronomy  
and CAVE Public Lecture*

# **A Room with a View: Perspectives from Earth on the Cosmos**

**Professor Sandra Faber  
University of California, Santa Cruz**



**World renowned astronomer Sandra Faber has been studying the cosmos for over thirty years. She will present a broad overview of why we are here and where we are going ... cosmically speaking!**



**Tuesday, June 16, 2009 - 8 pm**

**Queen's University  
Biosciences 1101**

**ADMISSION IS FREE**



**Queen's  
UNIVERSITY**