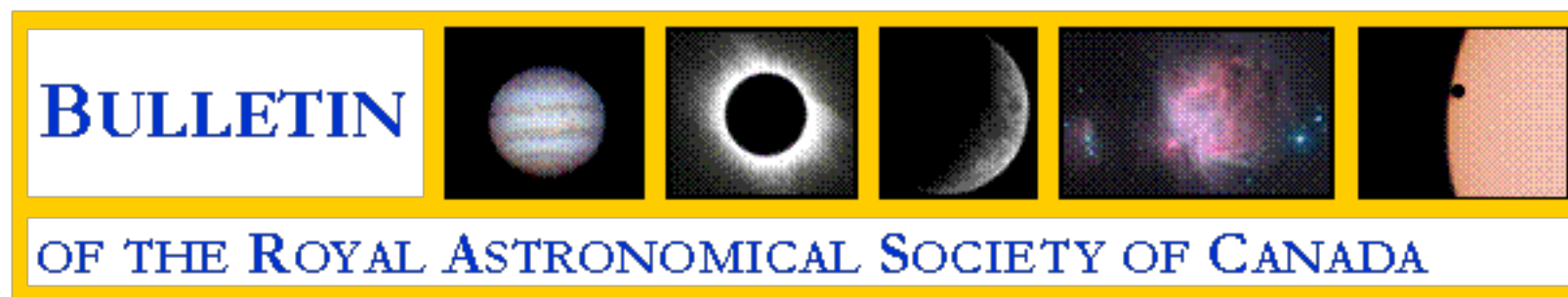


2009-04



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Ian Levstein, Editor

We welcome your comments on the *Bulletin*. Email them to the Editor at bulletin@rasc.ca [1].

Member: ~FULL_NAME~, RASC ID: ~ID~

► [News @ RASC.ca](#)

2009 RASC General Assembly

Join us at the 2009 RASC General Assembly in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park on 2009 August 13-16. More information [here](#) [2].

Galileo Observing Challenge

by **Randall Rosenfeld**, RASC Archivist and Chair, MAP; and **Kim Hay**, Chair, Education Committee

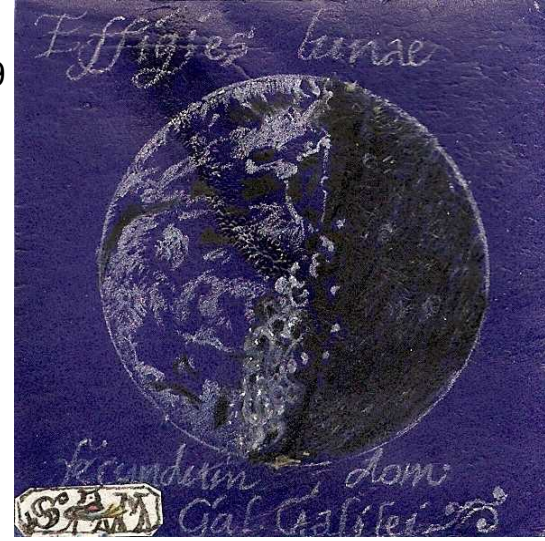
Follow in the footsteps of Galileo, and enter into your own observing dialogue with the lead astronomer of IYA 2009!

The RASC Astrosketchers' Forum is sponsoring a "Galileo Observing Challenge," to encourage RASC members to enter into their own dialogue with any portion of Galileo's early telescopic observing work.

The principal is simple; the rules few. Create your own hand-drawn image(s) of any objects Galileo reported in his *Sidereus Nuncius*, using any optical means you like - provided that the combined magnification of your system is between 3x - 30x (like those employed by Galileo), and submit the electronic jpegs of your images (300dpi) [here](#) [3] by 2009 September 1. Pending approval, there may be a



small exhibition of selected images (submitted before June 1) at the 2009 GA. For more rules, guidelines, and resources, click [here](#) [4].



Spring Meteorite Recovery

The University of Calgary invites interested RASC members to participate in the upcoming meteorite recovery effort near Lone Rock, Saskatchewan. More information [here](#) [5].

► Across the RASC

Niagara Centre Activities

by **Philip Downey**, Secretary, Niagara Centre

Niagara Centre has plunged into a full calendar of IYA 2009 events. We've already had public starnights and stardays at schools, museums, libraries and YMCAs. This summer, we'll branch out to Provincial parks and conservation areas. Nearly all our events now include a 30 - 60-minute indoor presentation, giving the public a reason to attend even if it's cloudy. Our most successful event so far was at the Lock 3 Museum in St. Catharines on February 15, when 200+ children and parents had Galileo Moments throughout the day and evening. For 100 Hours of Astronomy, we will be at Fairview Mall in St. Catharines on April 3/4, from 10 am to 6 pm, with a display indoors and solarscopes outside. On the night of the 4th, we will be at Firemen's Park in Niagara Falls from 6 to 11 pm. All told, that's 21 hours and pretty good coverage for our 100-member Centre. Much of our success this year has been due to President **Brian Pihack** and Vice-President **Stan Sammy**, who have been tireless in their organization of and participation in these events.

Regina Centennial History

by **Ross Parker**, Regina Centre This is what I sent out to the Regina Centre members on February 17, which is the one-year countdown to our Centre's Centennial. **[Editor's Comment]** You can read the entire article [here](#) [6].

Semeniuk Now Embedded!

Toronto Centre member **Ivan Semeniuk** is now an "embedded journalist" -- not in a war zone, but in the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics at the University of Toronto. This gives him unprecedented access to what is going on in international astronomy, and he now shares his experiences through a regular blog and podcast - both of which can be subscribed to. Find out more [here](#) [7].

► International Year of Astronomy 2009

CPC Involved with IYA



by **Kim Hay**, Kingston Centre

[Canadian Parks Council](#) [8] is forming relationships with all Astronomy Clubs (RASC, FAAQ, and other astronomy clubs) across Canada. CPC, which includes the National Federal parks, Provincial, Municipal, and private parks, is bringing IYA into the parks and, with the help from all astronomy clubs, hopes to promote IYA to its visitors.

There are already strong relationships with some parks across Canada, but we are hoping that with the contact information here, parks interpreters and astronomy groups will connect to bring IYA to the public, and build on their relationships for future events which will promote a legacy



effect. One of the largest events that CPC holds is their country-wide Park Day. Celebrating their 20th year for the event, it's on Saturday, 2009 July 18. For more information on Parks Day click [here](#) [9], and for links to parks across Canada, click [here](#) [10].

Sarnia's First IYA Event

by **Ron Warren**, Sarnia Centre Sarnia Centre's first IYA 2009 event promoting astronomy was successful. We weren't sure how many kids and parents would come out, but there were over 70... with kids making up at least 40, and many were girls! **[Editor's Comment]** You can read the entire article [here](#) [11].

Results of the Special Event IYA Call Sign

by **Malcolm Scrimger**, VE7DAO, Victoria Centre

I have received reports from the following radio amateurs who indicated they were going to be active during the IYA Ham Radio Prefix Period. **[Editor's Comment]** You can read the entire article [here](#) [12].

Canada Post Issues IYA Stamps

Canada Post's new IYA stamps are being issued on April 2. There are two 54¢ stamps, one showing the DAO and the Horsehead Nebula; the other the CFHT and the Eagle Nebula. Details will be available [here](#) [13], **once** they have been released.

Victoria IYA Events

by **Chris Gainor**, Victoria Centre

On March 22, I took part in one of the more unusual events happening anywhere in connection with the International Year of Astronomy, the Star Gazer's tour of Ross Bay Cemetery in Victoria. **[Editor's Comment]** You can read the entire article [here](#) [14].

► The Sky this Month

What's New in the Sky

Readers are encouraged to check out the **Northern Skies** [15] section of the RASC Web site. Thanks to **Gary Boyle** for keeping us all in the know!

Vegans in broad daylight!

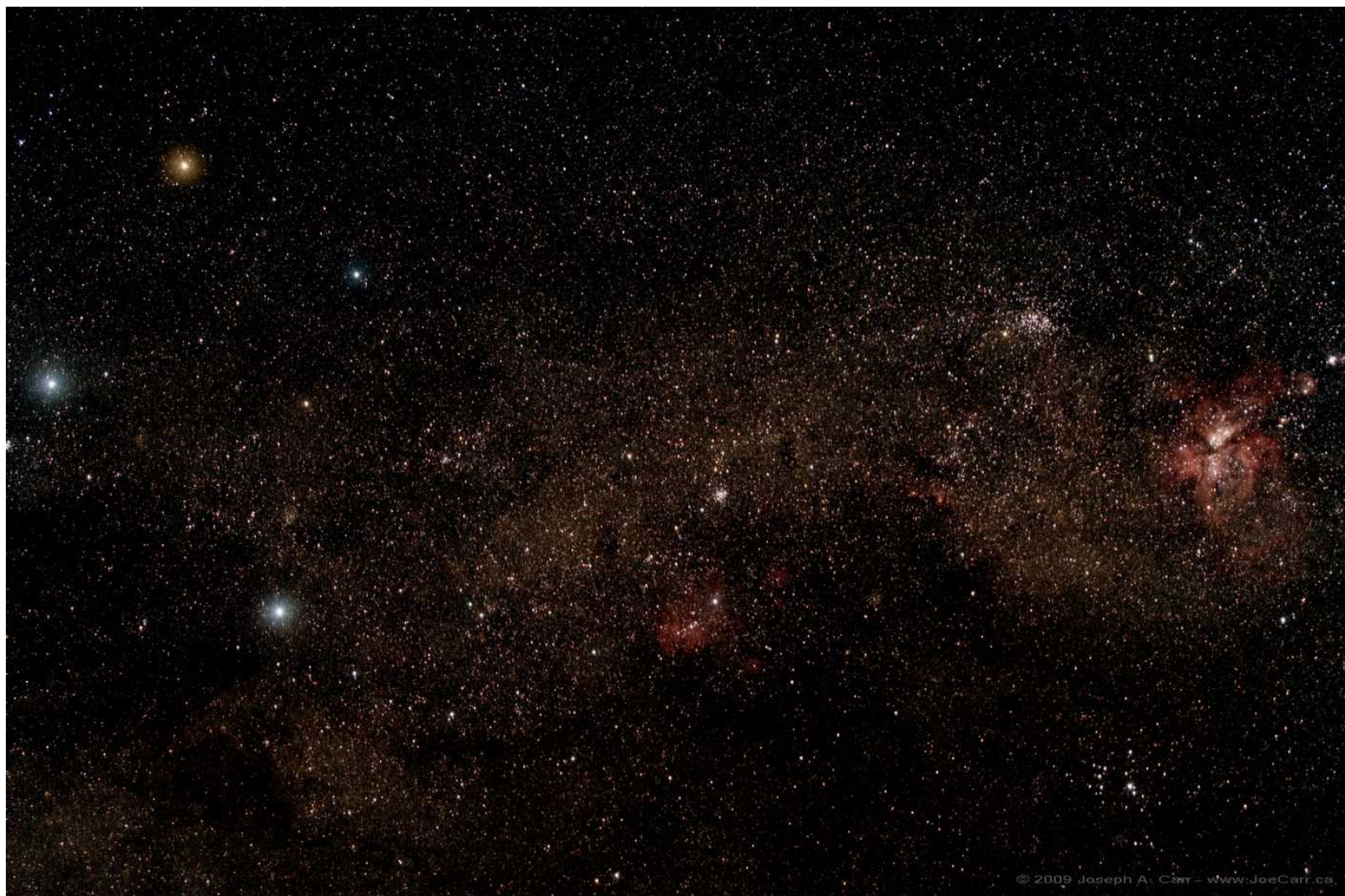
by **Alister Ling**

It's a well-known fact that on crisp October mornings one can follow Sirius into daylight after the Sun has risen. It's more of a challenge, but still achievable, to follow Vega until after sunrise. Here are a few pointers to follow if you want to put this celestial feather in your observing toque. Observe in comfort! If you walk outside and try and look high overhead chances are you won't find it. Have a deck chair or air mattress to lie on, and settle yourself in with a mornin' brew to perk up and warm your insides. Make sure the Sun isn't shining directly on your face – block the east! You'll want to start observing at least 20 minutes before sunrise in order to find Vega. It's easily lost in a wide open sky. It will help if you have a tree branch as a reference, as long as it's not close enough to affect your focus. The RASC Calendar notes April 5th. Why? On this day, Vega is 90° from the Sun, smack in the middle of the sky's polarization band, the darkest part of the sky. To boot, it is almost overhead, suffering the least extinction possible. A

few days on either side will not matter greatly. Here's a trick: position yourself more or less north/south and put on polarized sunglasses. Yes, you will be dimming Vega a bit, but just as with nebula filters on those deep-sky faint fuzzies, it's the sky that will darken dramatically, thereby increasing the contrast and allowing you to detect Vega. You may have to resort to binoculars at first. It will depend on the clarity of the atmosphere. If you have had a recent rain, then there's a decent chance the sky will be a dark clean azure blue. If it's at all hazy, your chances will diminish considerably. The odd cloud is not bad as long as the transparency is good – in fact, the cloud gives your eye something to focus on. Without a definite object, our eyes tend to focus closer than infinity – a contributing factor in the Moon illusion. Good observing!

► *Bulletin Photo of the Month*

Crux and Carina Constellations



Crux and Carina Constellations from Costa Rica - 2009 February 27, 1:10am-2:55am CST

Joe Carr of Victoria Centre took this wide-field photo of the Southern Cross to Eta Carina Nebula region of the southern sky while on S&T's Southern Sky Fiesta tour in Costa Rica., operated by TravelQuest and hosted by **Gary Seronik**.

L-R: Coalsack dark nebula and the Southern Cross, IC 2944/8 nebula, Stock 13 cluster, the Eta Carina nebula, and the IC 2602 cluster (Southern Pleiades).

Details: Hutech-modified Canon XTi dSLR, Canon EF 70-200mm L zoom lens operating at 70mm, ISO 1600, 31 raw exposures at 2 minutes each, f/5. Astrotrac tracking mount on a Manfrotto tripod. 27°C, 70% humidity, no dew, some clouds.

Image processing: ImagesPlus 3.5 – raw digital development, dark frames, auto alignment, average combine, moderate contrast stretch. ACDSee Pro 2 – cropped & size reduced, converted to 24 bit jpg.

► Dates to Remember

- - **2009 April 2-5** - 100 Hours of Astronomy
 - **2009 May 2** - Astronomy Day
 - **2009 June 19-21** - EfstonScience Star Party, DSP in Gordon's Park
 - **2009 July 16-26** - Total Solar Eclipse Tour, China
 - **2009 July 17-21** - Stargazing Manitoulin, DSP in Gordon's Park
 - **2009 August 13-16** - **RASC General Assembly 2009**
 - **2009 August 13-16** - Saskatchewan Summer Star Party in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park
 - **2009 August 14-18** - Manitoulin Star Party, DSP in Gordon's Park
 - **2009 August 21-23** - Nova East Star Party, DSP in Smileys Provincial Park, Nova Scotia
 - **2009 September 18** - Huronia Star Party



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The *Bulletin* of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

is a benefit of membership in the Society.

Radio IYA

Results of the Special Event IYA Call Sign, January-February, 2009

I have received reports from the following radio amateurs who indicated they were going to be active during the IYA Ham Radio Prefix Period. They had requested the Special IYA Ham Radio card that they could use to send to the contacts they made.

Bill Haskin, VA3AY; **Robert Mazur**, VA3ROM; **Karl Hamilton**, VE3RRP; **Gary Hammond**, VE3XN; **Steven Leblanc**, VE9SY; and **Tony Fonseca**, VE7ACF.

One of the most active for the IYA initiative was **Paul Leger**, VE9NC.

Paul Leger, normally VE9NC in Hampton, New Brunswick, logged a staggering 1,518 contacts. He is primarily a digital operator, which means he uses a digital modem in conjunction with his Ham Radio. In North America he made 279 contacts, 1199 in the European Union, 6 in South America, 2 in Hawaii, 16 in Africa, and 12 in Asia. Of all his contacts, 24 of them were by voice.

Grant Hollands using CF7GO (normally VA7GO), logged 200 voice contacts in Canada, USA, and 8 other countries around the world.

I was using CG7DAO (normally VE7DAO), and made only 3 contacts on HF.

At this point I cannot say for certain how many Amateur Radio enthusiasts in Canada participated in the Special Prefix, but I am sure the Amateur Frequency bands were busy with many discussions on the topic of Astronomy during the time period.

I have written articles for "*The Canadian Amateur*" a ham radio-related periodical for radio enthusiasts who belong to the Radio Amateurs of Canada organization. In the article, I covered what IYA was all about and how the Amateur Radio community around the world could get the word out about it.

It has been very exciting for me to bring this concept from an idea to a reality over the last year and to see how the Amateur Astronomical and Radio communities have embraced and participated in it.

The next exciting part comes in June, when VE7IYOA, a Special Station call sign will be on-the-air in Victoria to coincide with Amateur Radio "Field Day." June will be a very exciting time for all as I'm going to have an IYA event with both hobbies going on at the same site for the public to see and participate in.

I'm looking for similarly oriented individuals with interests in Amateur Radio at other RASC Centres who might like to apply to Industry Canada for a similar Special Event Station like VE7IYOA in other provinces.

Information on the project can be found [here](#) ^[18].

Regina 100

RASC Regina Centre Centennial

BEGINNINGS

Our Society was born on February 17th, 1910. It has been said in a article in the *Morning Leader* in 1910, that our group was part of the Regina Philosophical Society formed in 1893.

On that date, according to the account in the *Morning Leader* the next day, six men resolved to meet and call for the formation of the Astronomical Society.

Mr. McMurphy was voted to the chair.

Mr. A.J. Pike was the secretary.

It was then moved by **Mr. Bryant** and seconded by **William Trant**, that the Astronomical Society be formed and the motion was unanimously approved.

Short speeches were given by several in favour of this endeavour. Trant spoke of a society in Leeds, England of which he was a founding member. His speech then was reminiscent of many we have today. As he went on, he digressed into the importance of creating a stable mount for the telescope the Society was no doubt going to acquire, and in the importance of eliminating vibration. They ended by resolving to call another meeting in one week's time. At that time the Society was formally constituted.

They also discussed joining the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada which, at that time, was entering its 20th year.

*"Within a few months, that is exactly what happened. On 1910 October 11, twenty-seven members from Saskatchewan were elected to membership in the RASC, and the Regina Centre was born, the first outside Ontario. Among the charter members were **H.S. McClung**, an optometrist who later proposed the corneal reflex test for use in mirror grinding, and **J.A. Covington**, who was yet to become the father of Canada's pioneer radio astronomer, Arthur Covington."* [From the book "Looking Up" - A History of the RASC].

Largely due to the Charity of **Mr. Justice J.T. Brown** a 4.5 inch telescope was donated to the Society in 1910. Originally purchased from John A. Brashear Telescope of Pittsburgh, PA. The plaque on the telescope reads:

"Presented by the Honorable Mr. Justice Brown to the Saskatchewan Astronomy, Society Regina Sask. June 22nd 1910".

At first, they used it with a tripod. Later in 1913, the telescope was sent back to Pittsburgh, Pa., U.S.A., to be prepared for its home on Regina Collegiate. *"When finally equipped it will be equatorially mounted and fitted with circles and clock motions"*. [source, *Morning Leader*, 1913 September 16]. Later, they mounted it on Central Collegiate. This observatory, called the Meteoritical Room, was built in 1914.

In 1915, the membership of the Regina Centre stood at 16. By 1920 the membership was down to 4. After that time no records exist until the 1930's.

REVIVAL

In January 1934, the Society met again at 2331 Victoria Ave. At that time, 25 people were in attendance. During those quiet years Regina astronomers had been busy. At that time they resolved to purchase a 4" objective to replace the original one for the Brashear which had been lost. This was done at a cost of \$160.00. A fortune back then.

Herbert McClung provided most of the funds and spent the next 15 years collecting it back from the group.

After that meeting they went outside to Observe M42 in Orion's Sword, Betelgeuse, Rigel and Mizar in Ursa Major. This time, membership fees were set at \$1.00, and a sustaining membership was \$5.00. This was in the middle of the Depression Years.

The Brashear itself was removed from Central in 1934. The pier was removed in 1938. At that time as well, the Observatory there was also removed. **Herbert McClung** stored the Brashear telescope at his home during those years.

During those years the club used the children's cottage at the Red Cross Hospital for its meetings. The pier was stored in the coal room at the Red Cross Hospital.

In 1939 the War intervened and records ceased.

A NEW START

In December 1945, activities resumed and continued to the present date. After this time log books were kept, detailing the exploits of the Society.

NEW BEGINNINGS

In 1989, the Regina Astronomical Society once again joined The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

More to come later.

Sarnia IYA

Sarnia's First IYA Event

by Ron Warren, Sarnia Centre

Sarnia Centre's first IYA 2009 event promoting astronomy was successful. We weren't sure how many kids and parents would come out, but there were over 70... with kids making up at least 40, and many were girls!

We had nine members participate in: Travel the Universe in Nine Steps; two free Internet sites about Moon exploration and Mars; All About Binoculars; Meteorite Presentation; the Night Sky for March and Basic Astronomy (using Stellarium); and Junior Certificate Observing Programs. We also had four scopes, one of which was made by one of our members... and displays, books and

actual meteorites. Members linked them to astronomy very nicely!

Material for the Junior Certificates and other astronomy information was given to each child (and adults for other kids at home) as they left. Two kids left with a door prize - a very small meteorite.

Of course, the cookies, brownies, hot chocolate, and juice at two breaks were very much appreciated.

Viewing was cancelled due to thick clouds which, of course, cleared about one hour after everything was finished.

Victoria IYA

Victoria IYA Events

by **Chris Gainor, Victoria Centre**

The Victoria Centre is continuing with IYA events, including an exhibition of astronomical photos at the Bay Centre downtown Victoria in February and at Victoria International Airport in March. Many people passing by the exhibits stopped and picked up IYA literature and had "Galileo moments." And another event...

On March 22 I took part in one of the more unusual events happening anywhere in connection with the International Year of Astronomy, the Star Gazers tour of Ross Bay Cemetery in Victoria.

The Old Cemeteries Society of Victoria holds tours on various topics most Sundays at Ross Bay, and occasionally at other cemeteries in the Victoria area. As a member of the Old Cemeteries Society and as a neighbour of the cemetery, I was looking forward to this tour, particularly because I had seen little evidence of Victoria's astronomical history amongst the gravestones of Ross Bay, which opened in the 1870s.

Tour leader **Joyce Mackie** began by discussing the history of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory in Saanich, and its important leaders such as **Dr. John Plaskett** and **Dr. Robert Petrie**. Neither of them are buried at Ross Bay, and their graves are more likely to be found at Royal Oak Cemetery in Saanich, which supplanted Ross Bay as Victoria's primary cemetery in the 1930s.

Most interesting to me was the final stop in the tour, the unmarked grave of **Oregon Columbia Hastings**, an American who had set up a photography business when he moved to Victoria. In 1891, Hastings built a home on St. Charles Street between present-day Rockland Ave. and Fort St., near the site of the present-day water tower. Behind the home, Hastings built the first observatory in Victoria, and for a number of years the area was known as Observatory Hill. When Hastings' fortunes deteriorated after the turn of the century, the Hastings family moved and Hastings' telescope was moved to what became the Gonzales meteorological observatory.

Mackie's tour features the Gonzales observatory and **Edmund Baynes Reed**, who helped set it up and is also buried at Ross Bay. **Francis Napier Denison**, who took over from Baynes Reed, is the best-known name attached to the observatory, which remains a major landmark in Fairfield.

