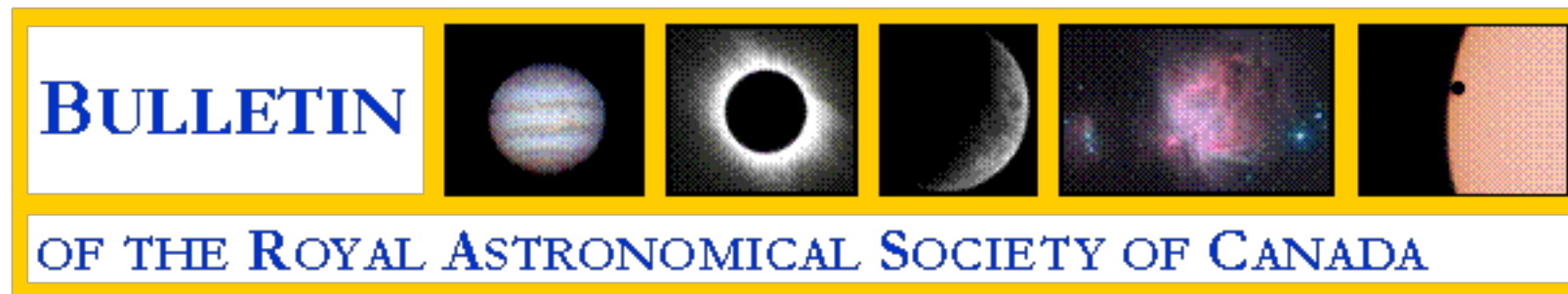


2010-02



February 2010 - Volume 5, Number 2

Ian Levstein, Editor

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

► [News @ RASC.ca](#)

2010 General Assembly Information Goes Live

by **Paul Gray**, RASC 2010 GA Chair

The New Brunswick Centre would like to notify the membership that the Web site with information on this year's General Assembly is now active and online.

Information on location, travel, accommodation, tours, activities, and the most up-to-date schedule are all listed so you can start to plan your trip to this year's GA. To see the latest information visit the [Web site](#).

Accommodation Reservations Can Now Be Made

You can start booking your [accommodations](#) for the 2010 General Assembly starting today, February 1. We also encourage you to come and stay before or after the GA and visit our province. Fredericton is well located to provide easy day trips to most of the province. You can book your GA room for any number of days before or after the GA for a longer stay. Just make sure you tell the accommodation staff at UNB when you contact them as stated below.

Booking can be done by calling the main line at UNB Accommodations (506) 453-4800. Indicate that you are attending the RASC General Assembly and the type of room you wish to book.

You can also book by [email](#) [2]. Include the following information: full name, contact address, phone number, arrival date, departure date, type of room you wish to book, and the Conference name: RASC

2010 GA. A confirmation email will be sent to you to confirm your booking and information. Cancellation requires 24 hours prior notice. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [Misty McLaughlin](#) [3] or call (506) 453-4856.

Green Lasers and You

by **Randall Rosenfeld**, Chair, RASC GLP Committee

Irresponsible use of green laser pointers (GLPs) continues to make the news. Fortunately, no amateur astronomer in Canada has yet been charged or implicated in flashing an aircraft with a GLP, but such actions should concern us, as we will increasingly have to deal with the fallout, which may result in a country-wide ban on civilian GLP use. We, as responsible members of the astronomical community and concerned citizens, must strive for best practice in GLP use amongst ourselves, and work to educate the general public in safe GLP use, while at the same time defending the legitimate place of GLPs in astronomy education and public outreach (EPO).

At its fall meeting, the National Council established a GLP Committee to deal with these issues, and with help from various members across the country the committee has crafted a guide to GLP best practice. This can be found [here](#) [4].

The interpretation and enforcement of Canadian laws regarding GLP use are continually developing as Transport Canada develops policy. Their efforts are aimed at putting a stop to deliberate flashing of aircraft. It is not clear how far their rules and procedures are meant to apply to astronomical EPO. For a statement of current Transport Canada policy, see [here](#) [5].

Note that a conviction for deliberately aiming a GLP at an airplane could result in a five-year jail sentence, and a maximum fine of \$100,000. This is not a trivial offence, and is commensurate with placing the lives of fellow citizens at risk.

As RASC members, please familiarize yourselves with our GLP guidelines and act as mentors, guides, and ambassadors in educating the public in responsible GLP use. Our IYA2009 successes show what we can do in communicating astronomy; now we can do the same with GLP awareness.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to address them to the [RASC GLP Committee](#) [6].

Executive Perspectives

by **Mary Lou Whitehorne**, 1st Vice President, RASC Excerpted from the *JRASC* [February 2010, Volume 104, Number 1]

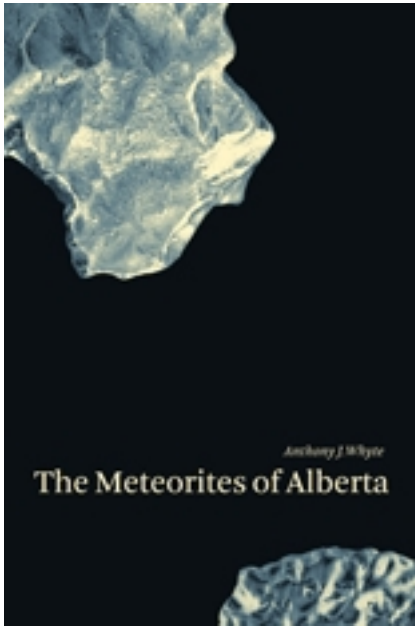
There is an old Chinese curse that goes something like this: "May you live in interesting times." There is more than one way to interpret this, of course. But no matter how you look at it, the last couple of years have indeed been an "interesting time" on the RASC national executive committee. The executive committee has been busy juggling quite a few challenging issues, as we work to put the Society on a stronger footing to move into the future. One of the unfortunate drawbacks has been a necessary

curtailing of other, more enjoyable activities in the RASC, like spending time communicating with our Centres and their members. There just aren't enough hours in the day!

One thing we have noticed is the existence of a misperception among a number of our members about the "national RASC." Sometimes we hear comments referring to "us" (members and Centres) and "them" (the national arm of our Society). So I must ask the question: who is the national RASC? The answer to this question is four-fold.

Editor's Note - This is a terrific article, and I recommend that every member read it. The entire article is available [here](#) [7].

Meteorites of Alberta



by **R. A. Rosenfeld**, RASC Archivist

In The Meteorites of Alberta, **Anthony J. Whyte** (Edmonton Centre) presents the story of the truly remarkable record of falls and finds in the wild rose country. He engagingly tells the story of discovery, analysis, and local, national, and international interest for each of the Alberta meteorites - from the Belly River to the Vulcan specimens. The writing is clear, the detail is accessible, and there is a profusion of images, tables, and maps. There is no better place to get an orientation of the material. It's published by the University of Alberta Press [8] (ISBN 978-0-88864-475-6), and widely distributed. It is also reasonably priced!

► Across the RASC

Crater Identification

by **Chuck O'Dale**, Ottawa Centre

I've started a series of articles [9] on the empirical evidence that I have gathered during my explorations that can be used to confirm a geological structure (on this planet at the present time) as an impact site. It will be updated monthly.

Video for Light-Pollution Displays

by **Larry McNish**, Calgary Centre

If your Centre promotes responsible lighting at general meetings or environmental conferences, you may be interested in a video of the [Earth at Night](#) produced by Larry McNish for the Calgary Centre's table at the annual Mayor's Environmental Expo in Calgary. Created from the same source as the famous *Earth at Night poster* ^[10], this video shows one complete Earth rotation bringing each continent into view - all in darkness with thousands of city lights glowing and sparkling. It has no title or credits so it can be set to play repeatedly at a booth to get more people's attention than the static poster. It is a 640x480 resolution 8 MB Windows wmv file that you can install on a laptop and play without requiring Internet access.

I also have a higher resolution mpg file that looks better (especially in full screen), but it's 46 MB and must be played on a PC that has a DVD movie player installed (which provides the "codec" needed to play the mpg file), or the PC user must install a 3rd-party video player such as the free [VLC](#) ^[11]. Please [contact me](#) ^[12] directly if you're interested in the [larger](#) file.

Editor's Note - The 8-MB video is available for download [here](#) ^[13].

► [Bulletin Photo of the Month](#)

Ghost Nebula in Cepheus



The Toronto Centre's Kerry-Ann Lecky Hepburn and Paul Mortfield collaborated on this stunning image of vdB 141, a reflection nebula in Cepheus. Kerry-Ann and Paul used a 16" f/8.9 RCOS telescope and an Apogee U16M camera. Imaging time was 6 hours (LRGB: 3:1:1:1) on 2009 June 5. The nebula is often referred to as the Ghost Nebula for its faint outlying companions, or the Cosmic Surfer, for more aesthetic reasons.

Excerpted from the *JRASC* [February 2010, Volume 104, Number 1]

► [The Sky this Month](#)

What's New in the Sky

Members are encouraged to check out the [Northern Skies](#) ^[14] section of the RASC Web site. Thanks to **Gary Boyle** for keeping us all in the know!

► Dates to Remember

- 2010 March 27 - National Council Meeting, Toronto, ON
- 2010 April 19-25 - Astronomy Week
- 2010 April 24 - Astronomy Day
- 2010 July 1-4 - **RASC General Assembly 2010**, Fredericton, NB
- 2010 July 9-12 - Stargazing Manitoulin [15], Gordon's Park DSP, Manitoulin Island
- 2010 August 6-9 - Manitoulin Star Party [16], Gordon's Park DSP, Manitoulin Island



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Earth at Night

Earth at Night Video

Here is the link to the Earth at Night Video [19].

NOTE: Please **right click** on the link and select "Save Target As..." then save the file to your hard drive. For those of you with something other than a PC running Windows, do whatever you have to do to save the file to your hard drive.

Exec. Notes

Executive Perspectives

by Mary Lou Whitehorne, 1st Vice President, RASC

There is an old Chinese curse that goes something like this: “May you live in interesting times.” There is more than one way to interpret this, of course. But no matter how you look at it, the last couple of years have indeed been an “interesting time” on the RASC national executive committee. The executive committee has been busy juggling quite a few challenging issues, as we work to put the Society on a stronger footing to move into the future. One of the unfortunate drawbacks has been a necessary curtailing of other, more enjoyable activities in the RASC, like spending time communicating with our Centres and their members. There just aren’t enough hours in the day!

One thing we have noticed is the existence of a mis-perception among a number of our members about the “national RASC.” Sometimes we hear comments referring to “us” (members and Centres) and “them” (the national arm of our Society). So I must ask the question: who is the national RASC? The answer to this question is four-fold.

1. National Office: This is the home of the day-to-day business of our Society. It is the RASC’s physical address where records are kept and where a lot of work gets done. It is the hub for all of our financial transactions with members, Centres, subscribers, customers, advertisers, printers, and everyone else with whom we do business. It is the nerve Centre for the production and distribution of publications, mailings, membership records, donations, and it’s the place where a lot of phone calls and e-mails land. Here is where our one-and-only full-time employee works – Jo Taylor, our Executive Secretary. She is assisted by a part-time membership and publications clerk. It is a busy place!
2. National Executive Committee: This is a group of elected members of the Society. They can be from any RASC Centre, or be unattached members, and they can be from anywhere in Canada. They are all unpaid volunteers who have spent years working at the Centre and national levels for the good of the RASC. They do not work out of the national office. Most importantly, they are members of our Society and they almost always come from our Centres.
3. National Council: National council is the governing body of the Society, and it carries out the functions, and assumes the responsibilities, of a corporate board of directors. National council is made up of the national executive committee, the chairs of our standing and special committees, plus the representatives from our 29 Centres. All of these people are volunteer members, and they come from the Centres. In fact, most of national council is comprised of Centre reps!
4. National Volunteers: Did you know that over 50 people volunteer each year to produce the Observer’s Handbook, and the Journal has a volunteer staff of over 25? We also have a dozen national committees working on everything from the society’s observing certificate programs to developing and approving new Dark Sky Preserves in Canada.

The point I want to drive home here is that the national RASC is its members. It is no more and no less than RASC members. Almost everything that is done in this great Society is done by members, for members. So there really is no “us” or “them.” Truth be told, there is only “us.”

I will be the first to acknowledge that these are not readily self-evident truths. Our Society is large and has a long history. We have a complicated structure and operating system. All of it is described in our By-Laws and in various policy documents, available to members on the members-only section of our Web site (<http://www.rasc.ca/rasc-member-area> ^[21]). But it’s not exactly light reading! For those who care about our Society, it is worth spending some time with these documents to gain a deeper understanding of where we came from, how we got where we

are now, and how our organization functions.

We are deeply dependent on the generosity of our member volunteers, whether at the local or national level. The focus of effort, and the point of view, is different depending on whether you volunteer at the Centre (local) level or at the national level. For most of us, the action happens at the Centre level. From here, it's pretty easy to see what's going on, why it's happening, and how it works. Unfortunately, from the Centre level, much of what goes on at the national level is less clear and generally harder to fathom.

This is where your Centre's national council representative comes in. He or she is a member of national council. One of her or his chief responsibilities is to keep Centre members informed and up-to-date on the whys and wherefores of Society activity at the national level.

From the national perspective, everything is done for the benefit of the Society as a whole. That includes our 29 Centres, without whom there would be no RASC. The point-of-view is necessarily different because the RASC is a federally incorporated body that is a registered charity. We are held to a very high standard and we have to abide by the rules as dictated by Canadian law. National council, led by its national executive committee, works to ensure the Society does what it is supposed to do, and maintains its reputation, its integrity, its legitimacy, and its assets. National council is responsible for the financial well being of the entire Society, as well as for its future stability, growth and success.

I hope this helps clarify who and/or what the "national" RASC is. Simply put, it is us. I invite you to delve into our governing documents. There you will find a treasure trove of information about us, our history, objectives, what we do, how we do it, and why. Read and enjoy, for someday you may be national president during interesting times!

Quo ducit Urania!

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Source URL (retrieved on 2015/08/10 - 09:37): <https://www.rasc.ca/bulletin/2010-02>

Links:

- [1] [mailto:bulletin@rasc.ca?subject=Bulletin Mail](mailto:bulletin@rasc.ca?subject=Bulletin%20Mail)
- [2] [mailto:stay@unb.ca?subject=Accommodation - RASC 2010 GA](mailto:stay@unb.ca?subject=Accommodation%20-%20RASC%202010%20GA)
- [3] [mailto:stay@unb.ca?subject=Information - RASC 2010 GA](mailto:stay@unb.ca?subject=Information%20-%20RASC%202010%20GA)
- [4] <https://www.rasc.ca/green-laser-pointer-usage>
- [5] <http://www.tc.gc.ca/civilaviation/aerodromeairnav/standards/ais/directed-bright-light/menu.htm>
- [6] [mailto:glp10016@rasc.ca?subject=GLP Committee](mailto:glp10016@rasc.ca?subject=GLP%20Committee)
- [7] <https://www.rasc.ca/bulletin/2010-02/whitehorne>
- [8] <http://www.uap.ualberta.ca/UAP.asp?LID=41&bookID=671>
- [9] http://ottawa-rasc.ca/wiki/index.php?title=Odale-Articles-Crater_Identification
- [10] <http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/ap001127.html>
- [11] <http://www.videolan.org/>
- [12] [mailto:rascwebmaster@shaw.ca?subject=Earth at Night Video](mailto:rascwebmaster@shaw.ca?subject=Earth%20at%20Night%20Video)
- [13] <https://www.rasc.ca/bulletin/2010-02/earthatnight>
- [14] <https://www.rasc.ca/news/northern-skies>
- [15] <http://gordonspark.com/wp-content/uploads/2014-SM-Brochure.pdf>
- [16] <http://gordonspark.com/wp-content/uploads/2014-MSP-Brochure.pdf>
- [17] [mailto:nationaloffice@rasc.ca?subject=Request for Info](mailto:nationaloffice@rasc.ca?subject=Request%20for%20Info)
- [18] <http://www.rasc.ca>
- [19] https://www.rasc.ca/sites/default/files/Earth_at_Night_for_LPAC.wmv
- [20] <https://www.rasc.ca/content/jrasc-2010-february>
- [21] <http://www.rasc.ca/rasc-member-area>

