

Saskatoon Skies

The Newsletter of the Saskatoon Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

Volume 57, Number 04

April 2026



Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
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To view *Saskatoon Skies* digitally, see our website:
<https://saskatoon.rasc.ca/newsletters.html>

In This Issue:	
Membership Information / Officers of the Centre	2
Newsletter Info / U of S Observatory Info	3
Calendar of Events & Meeting Info	4
Books and Equipment For Sale	6-7
Telescopes for Rent	7
Minutes of March Meetings	7-9
April Night Sky Events & Info / Reimbursement for Centre Expenses	10-12
Clear Sky Chart / Weather Info / Light Abatement Info	13
Observing Certificates & Clubs	14-15

MEMBERSHIP? JOIN TODAY!

Regular: \$121.00 /year

Youth: \$71.10 /year

Family: \$115.50 + \$41.00/additional adult + \$22.20/additional youth

The Saskatoon Centre operates on a one-year revolving membership. You will be a member for the next 12 months no matter when in the year you join. Members are encouraged to renew early to avoid disruption in publications. Renew through the National Office at <http://www.rasc.ca/join>.

Benefits of Membership in the Saskatoon Centre

- knowledgeable & friendly amateur astronomers
- use of the Sleaford Observatory
- use of the U of S Observatory (after training)
- Saskatoon Skies Newsletter
- Observer's Handbook
- borrow the Centre's projector to give astronomy outreach presentations - contact Les Dickson at astrochem@sasktel.net
- rent the Centre's Telescopes <https://saskatoon.rasc.ca/telescopes.html>
- use of the Centre library
- Journal of the RASC (electronic format)

SASKATOON CENTRE'S MAIN OFFICERS:

President - John Takala

Vice-President - Nick Larsen

Secretary - Lorie Tedford

Treasurer - OPEN (Les Dickson to fill in until filled)

National Council Rep - Joelle Sheard-Patrick

Canadian Tire money - Darrell Chatfield

If you cannot attend a meeting but would like to donate your old Canadian Tire money please to assist with club purchases, email Darrell at novachat@sasktel.net.

NEWSLETTER & U OF S OBSERVATORY INFO

Newsletter Editor - Colin Chatfield

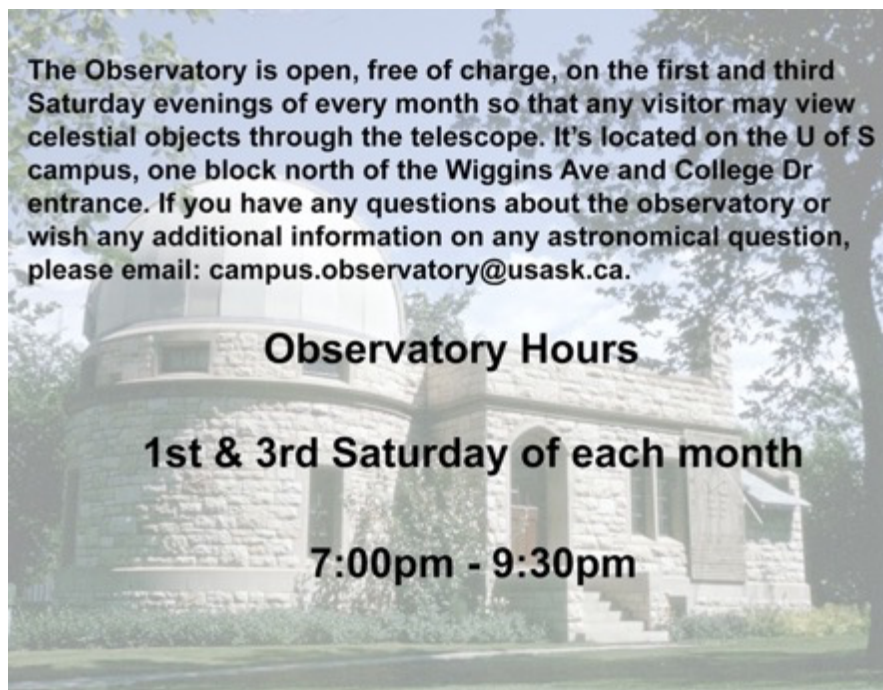
Copy & Collate - Les & Ellen Dickson

Labels & Temps - Mark de Jong

Web Posting/Content Editor - Tenho Tuomi/Andrew Kostiuk/Brent Burlingham

Saskatoon Skies is published monthly by the Saskatoon Centre of the RASC. Distribution is approximately 80 copies per issue. Saskatoon Skies welcomes unsolicited articles, sketches, photographs, cartoons, and other astronomy or space science material. Submissions should be sent by e-mail to the editor at colcha@gmail.com in MS Word or text format. Images (new or old): any format, less than 30MB, sent by e-mail as attached files. Send any articles of interest to the night sky or astronomy. **Deadline for submission of all articles for an upcoming issue is the first Friday of each month!**

Saskatoon Skies is also posted on our Saskatoon Centre homepage as a .pdf file and can be downloaded free-of-charge. Members may choose to receive the newsletter by regular mail or via the Internet. Articles may be reprinted from Saskatoon Skies without expressed permission (unless otherwise indicated), provided that proper source credit is given. Saskatoon Skies accepts commercial advertising. Please email the editor at colcha@gmail.com for rates. Members can advertise non-commercial items for free.



Hours subject to change, so check below for more info -

Website - <https://artsandscience.usask.ca/physics/community/observatory.php>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/usaskobservatory/>

RASC CALENDAR OF EVENTS & MEETING INFO

Apr 18	Observer's Group	Nick Larsen
Apr 20	RASC Saskatoon Centre General Meeting	John Takala

Observer's group viewing starts at dusk at the Sleaford Observatory dark site. Get there early and set up for a great night of observing! Members and their guests only.

For a complete list of club events, please visit: <https://saskatoon.rasc.ca/activities.html>

April RASC General Meeting

for all members and guests

Join us on April 20th, 2026, at 8:00PM (Executive meeting at 7:00pm)
Webinar (info below)

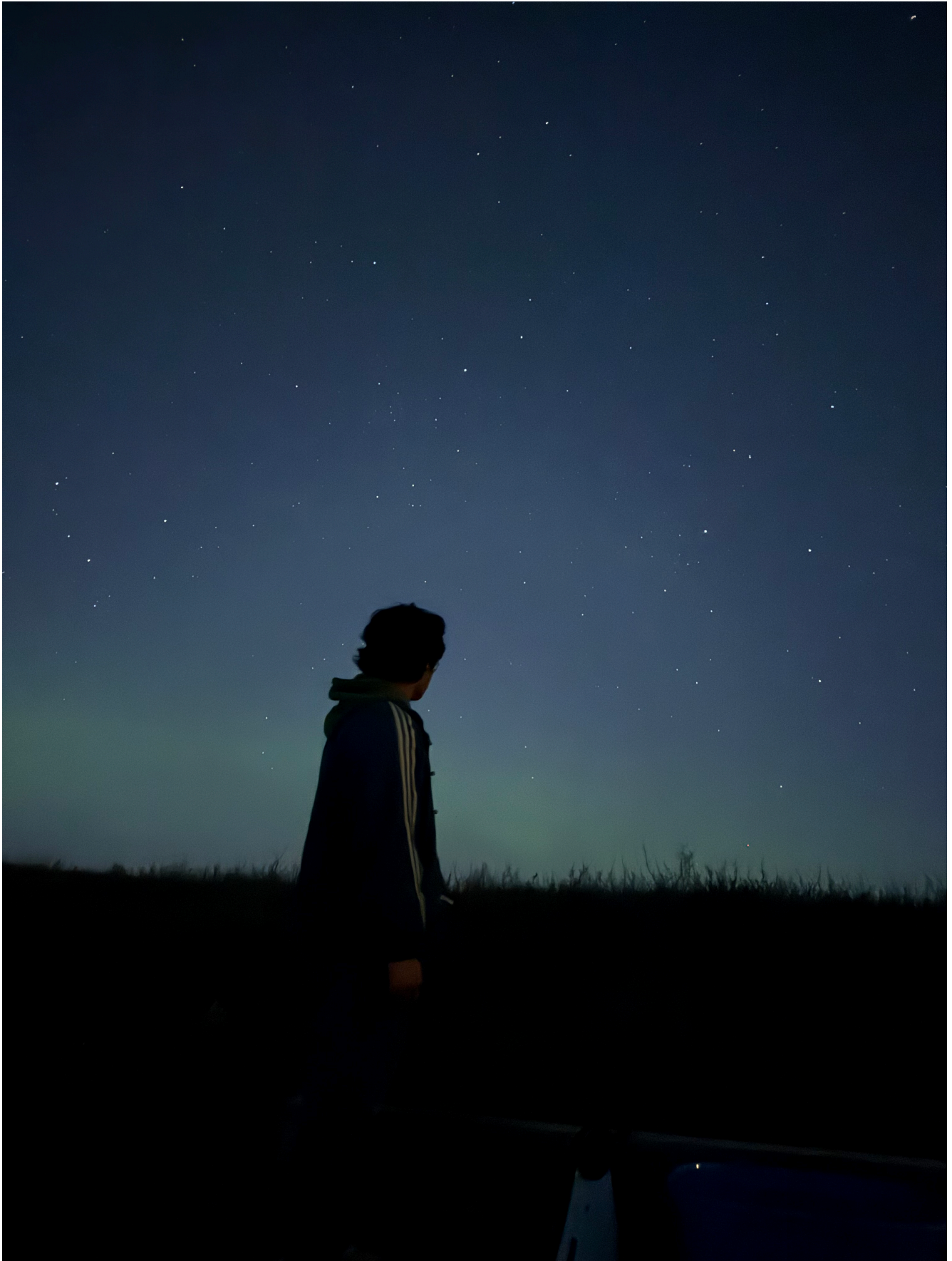
***Please note:** the meeting will be at the U of S Observatory at 108 Wiggins Ave (on the U of S Campus)*

7:00pm - **RASC Executive Meeting** (Members may attend the executive meeting as observers if they wish)

A Zoom registration link and phone-in numbers will be emailed to Members. After that, the procedure to register and join the meeting is the same as for the webinar (explained below).

NOTE: links to register to attend the webinar will be emailed out as well so we know who is planning to attend. After registering, an email invitation will be sent with a link to join via computer or a number to phone in. When joining via computer, participants will have to first download and install the Zoom app, if they have not done so already.

8:15pm - **Main Program - "Assembling a telescope for visual, remote, and Automated observing" - Yannis Pahatouroglou**



Al Jon Clemente headed out to Aspen Ridge last Sunday night (April 5, 2026) after checking the forecast (a lovely clear, dark sky). “In the middle of setting up my gear, we were surprised by the northern lights and managed to get this picture.”

BOOKS AND EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

All books are in either new, or like new condition. Retail price in brackets. Please email at novachat@sasktel.net or text/call 306-222-0515 if you want a particular book or to make arrangements. All books being sold by Darrell Chatfield.

“Deep-Sky Observers Handbook” Volume 1-5	Enslow-Lutterworth	\$40.00
“International Encyclopedia of Astronomy” 1987	Patrick Moore Color	\$10.00
“Backyard Astronomers Guide” T. Dickinson & Alan Dyer 2008	Color	\$25.00
“Atlas of Deep Sky Splendors” 1978	H. Verhenberg B & W	\$22.00
“Amateur Astronomers Catalog of 500 Deep Sky Objects” Vol 1 1980	B & W	
R. Morales		\$15.00
“Observing the Constellations” 1989	J. Sanford Color charts	\$10.00

- **2 - 1.25” rack and pinion focusers** for refractor type telescopes. Brand new. Never used. Inset diameter is 57mm. Heavy duty type with metal knurled knobs. All have boxes. \$20.00 each.

- **Original Celestron orange tube C5” scope** with tangent arm. Fork arms. SCOPE ONLY. No tripod or wedge. 5 x 30 finder, 1.25” visual back, diagonal, eyepiece, lens cap, metal case. Was used as a spotter scope. Not a mark on the tube. Clean looking. \$250.00

- 1 1.25” eyepiece extender - 3” long \$20.00
- 1 1.25” Celestron off axis guider c/w 12.5mm ep. Can be illuminated. New. \$45.00
- 1 Celestron 1.25” reticle. Can be illuminated \$20.00
- 1 3.5” long 1.25” tele-extender \$20.00
- 3 1.25” visual backs new \$10.00 each
- 1 1.25” to 0.965’ visual back \$10.00
- 1 Camera to visual back adapter Lightly used \$10.00
- 1 Threaded visual back to 16mm male threads camera adapter \$10.00

- Original orange tube Celestron finder. 10 x 40mm. 304mm (12") long. Comes with bracket meant for a C8" telescope but would fit other scopes. Not a mark on these items. \$65.00

- 6" primary mirror in a 3- point adjustable mirror cell. Some mirror spots. Nice condition. \$85.00 (came from the following tube).

- 7" diameter x 48" long aluminum Newtonian style tube. Ivory exterior with blackened interior. Also has a focuser. Finder bracket supplied as is. There may be some packing tape on the outside that needs to be removed. \$75.00

Telescope for sale: Celestron 1100 EdgeHD on CGX mount. Includes 3 counterweights, finder scope, t-adaptor, dovetail bar, dew cap/lens shade. Excellent telescope in very good condition. New price on this equipment is over \$10,000. Asking \$6500.

Orion auto-guider for sale including Orion 80 short tube OTA with guide scope rings, and ring mounting bar and Starshoot auto-guider - \$400.

Contact Kevin Fenwick at k.fenwick@sasktel.net for more information.

TELESCOPES FOR RENT

Jeff Swick

Saskatoon Centre has made its telescopes available for rent to RASC members on a monthly basis. We have three Sky-Watcher 8 inch Dobsonian telescopes, each with a kit of eyepieces and Antares 8x50 right angle finder scopes. Also we have one Telrad Reflex Sight.

Visit the website for more info -

<https://saskatoon.rasc.ca/rent.html>

NOTE: The club's 3 new smart scopes have now arrived. RASC Saskatoon now owns one SeeStar s50 and two Dwarf 3's. They will soon be available to loan out to club members, and for use at future outreach events. We will be discussing the logistics at the next meeting so stay tuned for more details.



MINUTES OF MARCH MEETINGS

Lorie Tedford

**Minutes of the Monthly Executive Meeting of the RASC Saskatoon Centre
Monday, Mar 16th, 2026 - 7:00 pm Hybrid: Online & In-person U of S Observatory**

Attending: Joelle Sheard-Patrick, Les Dickson, Brent Burlingham, Darrell Chatfield, John Takala, Yannis Pahatouroglou, Tenho Tuomi, Jeff Swick.

- 1. Call to order** 7:00 pm - John Takala (President and Chair)
- 2. Call for additional announcements/items** to add to the agenda - none

3. **Approval of the January and February Executive meeting minutes** as circulated in the meeting invite and March newsletter. Moved by Darrell Chatfield, seconded by Jeff Swick, carried.
4. **Announcements from the chair** - none at present
5. **Reports from the Executive Council:**
 - a. **President's Report** - John Takala - none at present
 - b. **Financial Report** - Les Dickson - none at present
 - c. **Fundraising** - Verity Moore-Wright - none at present
 - d. **National Council Rep** - Joelle Sheard-Patrick
 - i. Volunteers for the virtual GA meeting are needed
 - e. **Activities Coordinator** - Joelle Sheard-Patrick - none at present
 - f. **Sleaford Updates** - Darrell Chatfield
 - i. The RM has been called to snow blow Sleaford prior to the next observing night
 - g. **Media Coordinator for Advertising** - Jeff Swick - none at present
 - h. **SSSP 2026 Update** - Rick Huziak
 - i. Planning is going well with most of the programming figured out
 - ii. There will be slight increase in prices due to inflation and increased costs to book the hall etc.
 - iii. If there is any interest in volunteering, reach out to Rick Huziak at rickhuziak@shaw.ca.
6. **Old Business**
 - a. **The Treasurer and Telescope Rental Coordinator** positions are still open. If anyone is interested, please contact John Takala or email sk_centre@rasc.ca.
 - i. Joelle Sheard-Patrick has volunteered to be the interim Telescope Rental Coordinator.
 - ii. There are some pieces of equipment missing from the rental scope accessory kits. All scopes are currently rented.
 - b. **Smart scopes for Rental Program** - Joelle Sheard-Patrick
 - i. Smart scopes are ready for members to rent. There are new rental forms.
 - c. **Library Outreach** - Joelle Sheard-Patrick
 - i. Thurs, Mar. 19th from 2-5 pm at Frances Morrison Library for a come and go tea.

- ii. A telescope has been purchased and will arrive this week to be given to the library.
- iii. April is Astronomy Month. Discussed the possibility of hosting an outreach event at some point in April. Joelle Sheard-Patrick will arrange and announce more details.

7. New Business

a. Web Site Revision - Jeff Smith.

- i. A proposal for a new site was made. It was composed under the assumption that the info needed already existed. Jeff Smith is looking to meet with a few members to gather more information to put into the site.

Motion to adjourn. Moved by Joelle Sheard-Patrick, **seconded** by Brent Burlingham. **Carried.**

Minutes of the Monthly General Meeting of the RASC Saskatoon Centre Monday, Mar 16th, 2026 - 7:00 pm Hybrid: Online & In-person U of S Observatory

- 1. Sharing/Networking time 8:00 - 8:15 pm**
- 2. Call to order: 8:18 pm - John Takala**
- 3. Call for additional items** or changes to the agenda
- 4. Call out to new members/guests: none**
- 5. Adoption of the January and February General meeting minutes** as circulated in the March newsletter. Moved by Lisa Caldwell, seconded by John Takala, carried.
- 6. Executive Meeting Summary - John Takala**
- 7. Open Positions**
 - a. Treasurer
 - b. Telescope Rental Coordinator
 - c. Aurora Cam at Sleaford
 - i. There was an all sky camera on the top of the physics building at one point. Yannis Pahatourogrou will look into the details.
- 8. Program**
 - a. My Astronomy Journey - John Takala

Motion to adjourn - 9:10 pm moved by Brent Burlingham, **seconded** by John Takala. **Carried**

SPRING ASTRONOMY DAY

Joelle Sheard-Patrick

Spring Astronomy Day, Saturday April 25th - Space Storytimes/Stargazing at SPL.

The programming team is planning space themed storytimes for April 25th at J.S. Wood and Frances Morrison Central Library to coincide with Spring Astronomy Day. These will replace the regular Family Storytimes at 10:30am. I will supply the SPL with a poster advertising the stargazing later that day and drop off some space themed stickers and goodies for the kids. Any ladies willing to do some small crafts with the kids and I?

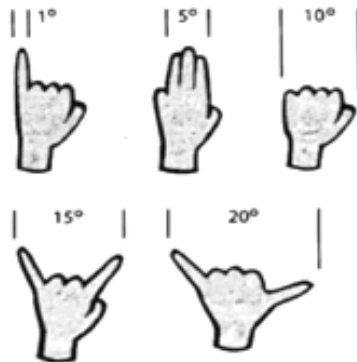
If you can come and join in a stargazing evening in the park by J.S. Wood, which the library will promote, at the same time as the Space themed storytimes. Sunset is approximately 8:22 that evening. Please contact Joelle at jsheard@sasktel.net.

APRIL NIGHT SKY EVENTS AND INFO

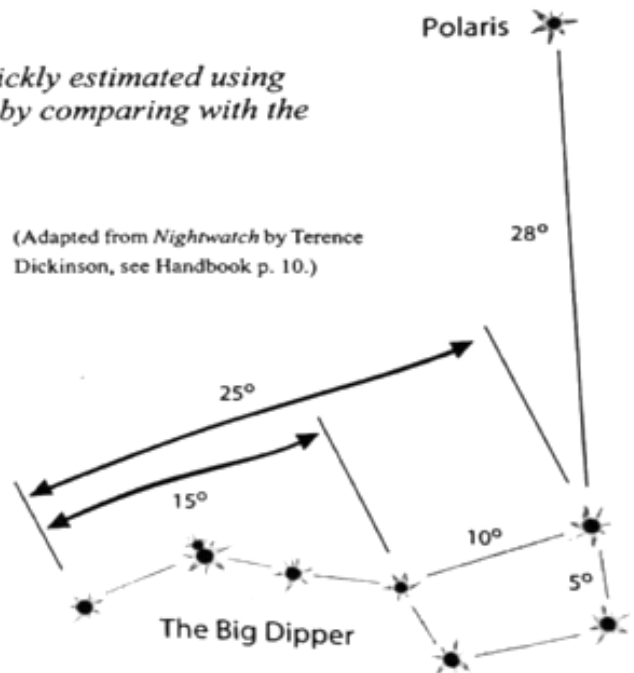
Images on the next few pages used, with permission, from the 2025/26 Observer's Handbook. It can be obtained by joining the RASC here <http://rasc.ca/join> or ordered from <https://secure.rasc.ca/store>.

HANDY SKY MEASURES

















Angular measure in the sky can be quickly estimated using the fingers of an outstretched arm, or by comparing with the star separations in the Big Dipper.

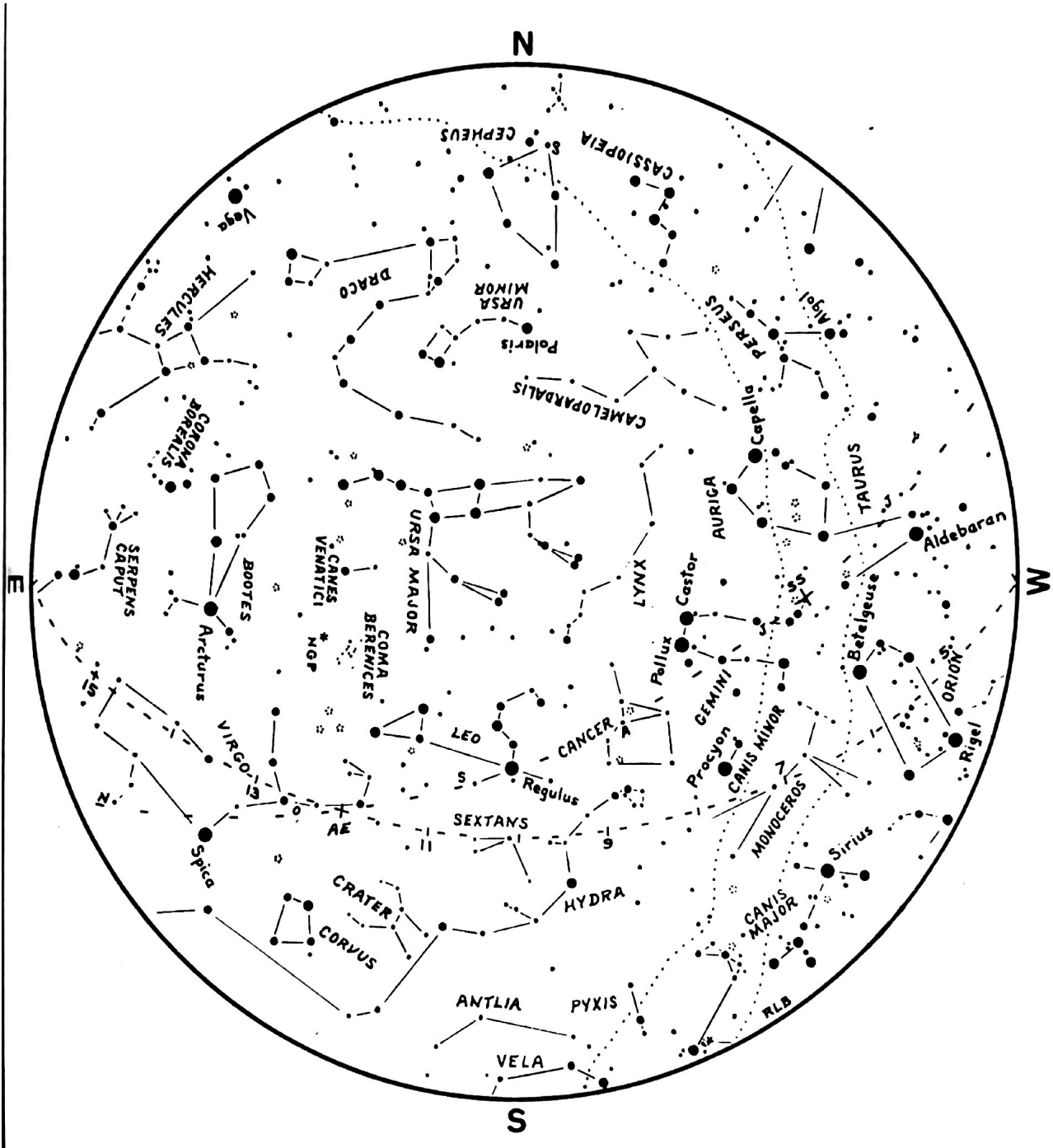


(Adapted from *Nightwatch* by Terence Dickinson, see Handbook p. 10.)



RASC OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK 2024 – STANDARD EDITION

Time (UT)			APRIL EVENTS	Jupiter's Satellites	
d	h	m		West	East
Wed.	1				1.0
Thu.	2	2 12	full Moon		2.0
Fri.	3	2	Spica 1.8° N of Moon		3.0
		5 39	Algol at minimum		3.0
Sat.	4	23	Mercury greatest elongation W (28°)		4.0
			Mercury at aphelion		4.0
Sun.	5				5.0
Mon.	6	2 28	Algol at minimum		6.0
		20	Antares 0.6° N of Moon, occultation¹		6.0
Tue.	7	9	Moon at apogee (404 970 km)		7.0
Wed.	8	23 17	Algol at minimum		8.0
Thu.	9				9.0
Fri.	10	4 52	last quarter		9.0
Sat.	11		Venus at ascending node		10.0
		20 06	Algol at minimum		10.0
Sun.	12				11.0
Mon.	13	23 43	Moon at ascending node		12.0
Tue.	14	16 55	Algol at minimum		12.0
Wed.	15	19	Mercury 5° S of Moon		13.0
Thu.	16	1	Mars 4° S of Moon		14.0
		6	Saturn 5° S of Moon		14.0
Fri.	17	16	Mercury 1.4° S of Neptune		15.0
		11 52	new Moon (lunation 1278)		15.0
Sat.	18	13 44	Algol at minimum		16.0
					16.0
Sun.	19	7	Moon at perigee (361 630 km)		17.0
Mon.	20	9	Venus 5° S of Moon		18.0
		17	Moon in Pleiades (M45)		18.0
Tue.	21	0	Mercury 1.8° S of Mars		19.0
		8	Mercury 0.5° S of Saturn		19.0
Wed.	22	10 33	Algol at minimum		20.0
		18	Mars 1.3° N of Saturn		20.0
Thu.	23	7 22	Lyrid meteors peak		23.0
Fri.	24		Jupiter 4° S of Moon		24.0
		2 32	Algol at minimum		24.0
Sat.	25	5	first quarter		25.0
		8	Venus 0.8° N of Uranus		25.0
Sun.	26		Moon 1.0° N of Beehive (M44)		26.0
		1 4 11	Regulus 0.2° S of Moon, occultation²		27.0
Mon.	27	14 36	Algol at minimum		28.0
			Moon at descending node		29.0
Tue.	28				30.0
Wed.	29	1 60	Algol at minimum		31.0
Thu.	30	9	Spica 1.8° N of Moon		31.0



REIMBURSEMENT FOR CENTRE EXPENSES

The Centre has a reimbursement procedure on submission of expense claims. A writeable pdf claim form can be found on the Centre webpage under the Executive tab. The expense form **must** be submitted *along with original receipts* to the Treasurer within 30 days of the transaction. All expenditures must be preapproved by the Executive or be within allocated budgets.

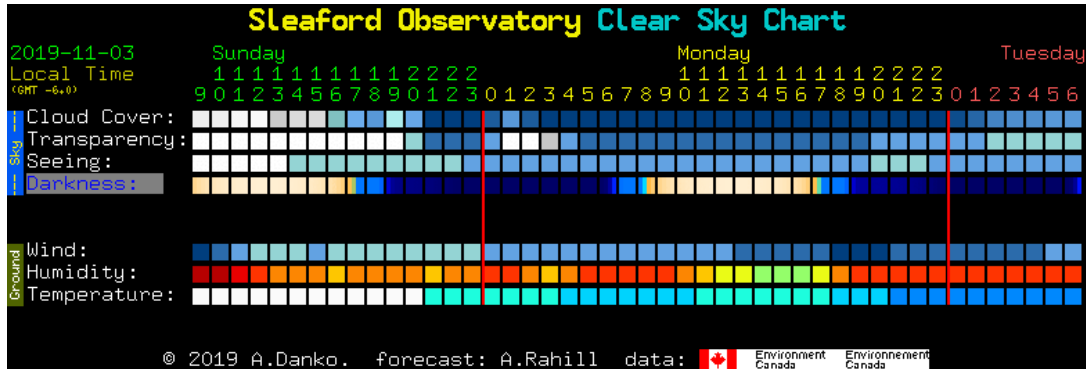
Please contact the Treasurer with any inquiries.

CLEAR SKY AND WEATHER INFO

To find clear skies, visit the Clear Dark Sky website -

<https://www.cleardarksky.com/csk/>

Once there, one can enter your location to find clear skies. The chart will appear as follows:



Environment Canada provides weather information for astronomy -

www.weather.gc.ca/astro



Saskatchewan Light Pollution Abatement Committee -

<http://myotherlife.net/slpac/>



www.darksky.org



Pictures of the total lunar eclipse on March 3. First picture (above) is a series of pictures taken from 3:50 am to maximum eclipse at 5:35 am through a 350mm lens at about every 20 minutes. Then I switched the camera to the 12" telescope and took three pictures (right) from maximum eclipse to 6:17 am as the Moon climbed out of the earth's shadow. Photos taken by Tenho Tuomi.



OBSERVING CERTIFICATES AND CLUBS

RASC OBSERVING PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATES

The RASC offers four observing certificates for members who observe all objects in each of the following observing lists in this chapter:

- THE MESSIER CATALOGUE (p. 312)
- THE FINEST NGC OBJECTS (p. 316),
- THE DEEP-SKY CHALLENGE OBJECTS (p. 320),
- DEEP-SKY GEMS (p. 322).

See rasc.ca/certificate-programs for details and contact the RASC Observing Committee Chair at rasc.ca/contact/observing for further information.



The RASC also offers the **Explore the Universe Certificate** for novice observers (who do not have to be RASC members), the **Explore the Moon Certificate** for beginning members, and the **Isabel Williamson Lunar Observing Certificate** and the **Double Stars Observing Certificate** for intermediate to advanced members. In addition, **Astroimaging certificates** are available for those members with a photographic bent. See rasc.ca/astro-imaging-certificate

Join the Club! Observe all 110 Messier, 110 Finest NGC, 400 Herschel I or II, 140 Lunar, 154 Sky Gems or 35 Binocular objects, or Explore the Universe and earn great OBSERVING CERTIFICATES!

MESSIER CLUB

Certified at 110 Objects:

*R. Huziak, G. Sarty,
S. Alexander, S. Ferguson,
D. Chatfield, T. Tuomi, L.
Scott, G. Charpentier, B.
Johnson, L. Dickson,
B. Burlingham, Norma Jensen,
Donna-Lee May*

Ron Waldron	108
Brent Gratias	104
Marcel Müller-Goldkuhle	94
Wade Selvig	75
Wayne Schlapkohl	43
Ellen Dickson	34
Graham Hartridge	9

CHATFIELD BINOCULAR CERTIFICATE

Certified at 35 to 40 Objects:

T. Tuomi, R. Huziak

Jim Goodridge	12
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FINEST NGC CLUB

Certified at 110 Objects:

*R. Huziak, G. Sarty,
D. Chatfield, T. Tuomi*

Larry Scott	110
Scott Alexander	97
Norma Jensen	83
Sandy Ferguson	23
George Charpentier	13
Brent Burlingham	97

EXPLORE THE UNIVERSE

Certified at 55 to 110

Objects: *T. Tuomi, B. Gratias*

Wayne Schlapkohl	55
Jim Goodridge	35

ISABEL WILLIAMSON LUNAR OBSERVING CERTIFICATE

Certified at 140 Objects:

T. Tuomi, N. Jensen

EXPLORE THE MOON CERTIFICATE

T. Yaworski

Brent Gratias	37
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HERSCHEL 400 CLUB

Certified at 400 Objects:

*R. Huziak, D. Chatfield,
T. Tuomi*

Gordon Sarty	251
Scott Alexander	117
Larry Scott	45
Sandy Ferguson	18

HERSCHEL 400-II CLUB

Darrell Chatfield	400
Tenho Tuomi	378
Rick Huziak	246

LEVY DEEP-SKY GEMS

Certified at 154 Objects:

Tenho Tuomi	150
Darrell Chatfield	70

Messier, Finest NGC, and David Levy's Deep-Sky lists in the *Observer's Handbook*.

The Explore the Universe list is available here <http://www.rasc.ca/explore-universe>
Messier and Finest NGC lists, charts and logbooks: <https://www.rasc.ca/certificate-programs>

Herschel 400 List: <http://www.astroloague.org/al/obsclubs/herschel/hers400.html>

Chatfield Binocular List is at: [https://saskatoon.rasc.ca/Chatfield Binocular List.pdf](https://saskatoon.rasc.ca/Chatfield_Binocular_List.pdf)

“Isabel Williamson Lunar Observing Program Guide” program details can be found at:

<https://www.rasc.ca/isabel-williamson-lunar-observing-program>