



# Winnicentrics

*The Journal of the Winnipeg Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada*

## Saturn on February 2nd

*by Darren Gillis*

### The Short Version:

Saturn in M44, Titan visible, Cassini division discernable.

M42 and trapezium (A-D) visible @ 48X.

Castor split at 137X, not 48X.

Feet cold.

### The Long Version:

When I finally headed home Thursday night I saw something unbelievable—clear skies! When I got back to apartment I opened the door and saw – a storm door covered with a thin layer of ice and frozen shut. This is where the "grab and go" of my 70mm Ranger came into play. I pocketed my 10mm Radian, I put my 3.5mm Nagler in the scope, grabbed a small screwdriver and then began to get dressed. Some time passed until I resembled a MEC catalogue picture (at least the clothing), and then I headed out. A 5 minute walk down the street put me up on a levy by the Red River. It was time to "zero in" my scope. I turned on the "red dot" and pointed at Sirius. The scope was well lined-up for lower powers, but at 137X it was a bit off. I fiddled for some time until my screwdriver found the slot (-15C?) and then the scope had to be realigned! Then I had to find the slot again! After a few attempts, colourful mutterings, and freezing fingers I just gave it a semi-random twist. Then, I looked and - it was aligned!

Let the fun begin. Saturn looked good at 137X, but appeared bright and surrounded by haze - poor transparency? Titan was visible above Saturn and the Cassini division was visible as a darker region toward the edge of the rings – not too bad since the 70mm Dawes limit is 1.6" and the width of the division is around 0.5" (so I've heard). In Orion, the A,B,C, and D elements of the trapezium in M42 also were clearly visible, as was some of the nebulosity. However, with 10mm (48X) much more of the nebula was visible and I could still see all 4 elements clearly! To test the sky further I pointed at Castor in Gemini. It split! With the 10mm (48X) it was almost split, but at 137X there was clear black between the two elements. With a separation of > 4" and growing, not the toughest test for a 70mm scope, but still reassuring. Now my boots were starting to freeze.

I slipped the 10mm back in and looked at Saturn again. This was the treat – Saturn, Titan, and several M44 stars were all visible in the same 1.25 degree field. A nice view before I hobbled back home in my now frozen boots (-20C ?). I'm warming my feet tonight, but if the skies stay clear I'll try again on Saturday - with more socks.

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# MEETINGS

Room 118, St. John's College

Beginners' Session 7:00

Regular Meeting 7:30

## Friday March 10

We start the meeting at 7 o'clock p.m. with a Beginners' Session with a difference: a continuation of last month's. Gerry Smerchanski will be offering us "Observing Planets - The Sequel".

The regular meeting starts, as usual, at 7:30 p.m. with a few announcements, and it will be time for the "Lunar Observing Certificate" presentation by Mike Stephens. Then Gail and our "Constellation of the Month", followed by "Jay's What's Up", and "Jen's What's New" with the intro of "Picture of the Month". This will bring us to coffee, cookies, and our time to talk to each other. For the "Main Event" Sean Ceaser has offered us his really interesting and challenging "Messier Marathon" explanation. When we think we are really good at finding our way around the sky, March is the month when we can find out if we are or not. See Sean's presentation to see what I mean. Ten o'clock and it's time for Boston Pizza.

## Friday April 21

### *Note 3rd Friday*

The second Friday is Good Friday so this meeting is on the third one, April 21. It begins in the usual lecture room at 7 o'clock p.m. with our "Beginners' Session" about Astronomical Events.

Then a few announcements and we hear more about the "Explore the Universe" from Lindsay, followed by Gail's "Constellation of the Month". We shall see and hear from Jay, "Jay's What's Up" and from Jen, "Jen's What's New" and introduce the next "Picture of the Month". Then comes time for coffee and cookies, ( YAY ! ) Following the break Gord Tulloch will tell us what we need to know about cleaning optics. You will not want to miss this evening if you have ever looked at your expensive but dusty lens or mirror and wondered, "Should I or should I not?" come on out and get the answer. After this we shall be away to our usual fun night out at Boston Pizza.

## **Members' Observing Nights Glenlea Observatory**

### **Saturday March 11**

8 P.M. to ???

Yours hosts this month: Fred and Stephen

The warmer weather is on its way! Come out and see what the spring sky has to offer. We even have a couple of planets up. When it gets chilly we have coffee, tea, hot chocolate and cookies to help warm us. If you are really ambitious this month you can practice for the Messier Marathon . . .

### **Saturday April 22**

8 P.M. to ???

Yours hosts this month: Ron and Jay

It's time again to welcome our old friend Leo and look at all his wonderful galaxies. Plan to come out for the evening and stay as long as you would like.

### **News in a Minute**

Two items were left behind at the Potluck: a serving spoon and a pair of reading glasses. If they are yours please contact Gail at 794-2624.

Remember that our April meeting will be held one week later, on April 21. The Members Observing Night will therefore also be one week later, on April 22.

Saturday May 6 will be Astronomy Day. It is a bit later this year, (blame the moon phase). We shall be out talking to the public during the day and again in the evening. Details have not been made final at time of writing, but please reserve the date, and we shall be calling for willing workers soon.

#### The Winnipeg Centre Executive Council

President

Lindsay Price 227-4684

flprice@mts.net

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President

Ron Berard 668-6551

rcberard@mts.net

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President

Jennifer West 284-6548

westjl@cc.umanitoba

Past-President

Gail Wise 794-2624

wgail@mts.net

Secretary

Jay Anderson 474-1485

jander@cc.umanitoba.ca

Treasurer

Mike Stephens 832-0485

mikestephens@shaw.ca

#### **Councilors**

Kevin Black 224-0182

cblack@shaw.ca

Marlene Wallace 999-7423

mtlwallace@hotmail.com

Stephen Smyth 837-3579

weatherwisentrentals@hotmail.com

Ralph Croning 885-4326

rcroning@mts.net

Nicole Choptain 255-5682

nicolewpg@shaw.ca

Ken Metcalfe 857-9843

metcalfe@cips.ca

#### **Appointed Positions**

Librarian

Fred Wood 774-3238

fred\_wood@shaw.ca

Observatory Director

Ray Andrejowich 667-6896

saturn3@mts.net

Observatory Bookings

Kevin Black 224-0182

cblack@shaw.ca

Webmaster

Gord Tulloch

gtulloch@shaw.ca

Winnicentrics Editor

Gail Wise 794-2624

wgail@mts.net

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## **Light Action: Current Activities In The Battle Versus Light Pollution**

*By Gord Tulloch, RASC Winnipeg Centre*

The intent of this and future reports (which will be mirrored with additional resources on the Web Site) is to encourage the membership to "Take Action On Light Pollution". In addition to the status report, this report will include Calls to Action, things YOU can do to help curb light pollution.

**J**n October this initiative got under way by the author contacting the office of the Minister Of Energy, Science, and Technology of the Province of Manitoba, and the City of Winnipeg Mayors Office to express concern on Light Pollution and in particular in relation to the new developments in S. St. Boniface and Waverly West. Copies of these letters are on the web site.

Both responded promptly with confirmations of receipt, but the Province was the only organization to respond, with a call back from Ken Klassen (Policy Analyst - Energy Policy) who was knowledgeable about light pollution and had a number of suggestions of avenues to pursue to exert some pressure on various agencies to make Light Pollution Abatement part of their agendas. His comments make it clear that there are a number of people who are interested and committed to LPA and who are looking for popular support to push the politicians at various levels to do what they are recommending. That's where we come in!

*Action Item:* There is an Energy Code Advisory Committee chaired by Rodney McDonald, MB Hydro that is looking at making recommendations for changes to codes to provide reductions in energy consumption for commercial establishments. Ken recommended that we contact Rodney and request that if LPA is not on their agenda, it should be. In particular we should request that external commercial lighting such as parking lots etc. be on their agenda for significant efforts.

*Action Item:* Ken also suggested getting hold of Gerald Alcock, Lighting Systems Engineer at the City of Winnipeg. He can tell us what their policy on LPA is and any initiatives under way to reduce it, and any changes to requirements for the new housing schemes. We have minimum requirements for homes (which is news to me) but nothing for commercial.

*Action Item:* Manitoba Hydro also has a lighting specialist who is involved in LPA activities and who would like to see some grass roots support to get the politicians to support strategies that have already been formulated. We need to contact this person.

*Action Item:* Ken also referred me to the City of Winnipeg Civic Environmental Committee website at <http://www.winnipegcec.org/main/index.html>. They have a comprehensive Environment Strategy document on their site that doesn't appear to address the LPA issue. Unfortunately, a recent newspaper article has made it clear that this Committee hasn't been overly successful in their mandate and will likely not be renewed in the future. This makes it imperative that we directly contact the politicians. At present we can contact Gord Steeves, who chairs the Committee.

One comment Ken made is that the Light Pollution maps can be a bit misleading since if the maps were made in winter, Winnipeg will be very prominent due to reflectance from snow (94%) rather than grass (4%) so the lesson is that we cannot rely solely on satellite imagery to prove our point, it might backfire if it's easily explained away.

**CALL TO ACTION**

The Action Items above will be addressed in the next month – if you'd like to help out contact the author. However, it is vitally important that we make our collective voices heard by the City and Province, who jointly set the standards for lighting in the Province. Your call to action this month is to send supporting letters / emails to the Province and the City to indicate that light pollution is a definite concern to you, and what you require them to do about it. Since we will be directly contacting people in these organizations, no one will need to contact you for more information although if so, simply refer them to Gord Tulloch, [gtulloch@shaw.ca](mailto:gtulloch@shaw.ca), 256-0714 who will coordinate a response. Also, please let Gord know if you are going to send something out so we can gauge response to this initiative.

**Call to Action #1: Letter/Email to David Chomiak, Minister, Energy, Science, and Technology**

Call to Action #2: Letter/Email to Gary Doer, Premier of Manitoba

Call to Action #3: Letter/Email to Sam Katz, Mayor of the City of Winnipeg

Call to Action #4: Letter/Email to Gord Steeves, Chair of the City of Winnipeg Environment Committee

Call to Action #5: Report significant Light Polluters

The latter Call to Action is aimed at identifying a steady stream of organizations that are significantly polluted our night time skies with light. Note that this does not include individuals – in future reports we will look at how to help your neighbors light responsibly. Once we have targeted organizations for action, future Calls to Action will include either collective or individual communication to the target organization until the problem is resolved.

For more information or to volunteer, please see the new Light Pollution page on the Web Site or contact Gord Tulloch.

**Only by taking action now can we save our skies.**

*Welcome to our new members!*

Sheldon Ball, Winnipeg  
Bruce Campbell, St. Andrews  
Michael Conway, Winnipeg  
Matthew Furgale, Winnipeg  
Eric Johnston, Winnipeg  
Patrick Nolan, East St. Paul

# Members' Observing

The following members are working towards their:

Messier Certificates:

Eugene d'Auteuil	41
Murray Rennie	19
Lindsay Price	37
Kris Keller	68

Finest NGC's:

Sean Ceaser	70
Mike Stephens	96
Ray Andrejowich	100

Herschel 400's:

Stan Runge	153
Sean Ceaser	136
Mike Stephens	125

Explore the Universe:

Terra Jentsch	51
Stan Runge	13
Tim Kennedy	46
Judy Starr	22
Ray Starr	21
Eugene d'Auteuil	12
Murray Rennie	6
Sandy Shewchuk	28
Peter Toth	5

Isabel Williamson Lunar:

Mike Stephens	52
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If you are interested in using the Warm Room please contact Lindsay Price for a key (\$10.00 deposit required). If you would like training on the LX200 Lindsay will be running training sessions, but not on Members Observing Nights. You can contact him at 227-4684 or flprice@mts.net or talk to Lindsay at a meeting.

*The following members have completed their:*

<u>Explore the Universe</u>	<u>Messier Certificates</u>	<u>Finest NGC's</u>
Gail Wise	Kevin Black	Kevin Black
Janet Pollock	Alan Sherlock	Stan Runge
Janice Low	Mike Stephens	Gail Wise
Mike Stephens	Rick Turenne	
Lindsay Price	Gail Wise	
Ralph Croning	Ray Andrejowich	
	Stan Runge	
	Bernie Plett	
	Sean Ceaser	
	Mike Karakas	

Are you working on an observing list? Let me know how many you have and I will publish it here so we can encourage each other!

# Mr. Bud . . . does astronomy

by Murray Toews



## **Mars Observing Event**

***By Ralph Croning***

Hosted by the Manitoba Planetarium and assisted by a group of volunteers from the Winnipeg Centre of the RASC, this year's Mars Observing Event finally took place as planned around the Oodena Celebration Circle at the Forks.

It was to be a three night event but cloudy skies dampened the first two. On the night of November 10, 2005 the clouds went elsewhere and left us with a clear sky and a nice moon too. Most people were interested in Mars but some telescopes were occasionally pointed to the moon especially the Planetarium's 8" SCT which had a CCD camera attached and gave some spectacular views projected onto a screen.

There were eight telescopes in total and the line ups at each were long with people moving from scope to scope. There were plenty of "ooohs", "aaahs", "cools" and "awesomes" and the infrequent but expected "that's it"??? A lot of questions were asked and the volunteers did a fabulous job fielding them.

At about 11pm the crowds thinned out and it was wrap up time. Some of the volunteers headed out to a nearby Salisbury House for coffee to help thaw our frozen hands, feet and faces.

On November 22nd the Manitoba Planetarium hosted a volunteer appreciation night with a special showing of Return of the Red Planet, the Destination Mars exhibit and refreshments.

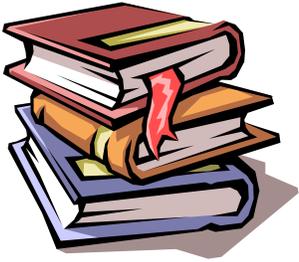
**Mars Observing Event**  
*Pictures taken by Ralph Croning*







## ***From the Library***



### **Seeing in the Dark ... How Backyard Stargazers Are Probing Deep Space and Guarding Earth from Interplanetary Peril**

Written by Timothy Ferris

Published by Simon & Schuster, 2002, 379 pages, Hard Cover

Donated to the Winnipeg Centre Library by Nicole Choptain

Reviewed by F. Lindsay Price

Firstly, the thing that most needs to be said is what an enjoyable book this is to read! It does teach us things, for sure, on a wide range of subjects from planets to galaxy super clusters, but it also introduces us to a number of very interesting people on a personal level. It has information like a text book, but reads like a narrative. At times it even becomes a little autobiographical and we can follow a poor kid in small town Florida whose interest in astronomy waxes and wanes through adolescence, just like many of us, but who eventually ends up with his hands on the controls of interplanetary space probes! One of his consistent themes is the important work that is being done by amateurs, and by amateur / professional collaboration. He starts off, at home under the Florida skies, then expands in stages. First is space flight, the upper atmosphere, the solar system, then the Milky Way, galaxies and beyond, all the way to the cosmic microwave background. Interspersed are interviews with a number of people who can teach or inspire, but usually do both. His explanations are lucid! There have been many books on all of these topics, and several points that had me my knowing but without understanding, were brought into clear focus by this one volume.

Here is the best part. One finds one's self, checking to see where this Timothy Ferris lives, because the book seems like it was written by one of us! Several of his references are from the Observer's Handbook, and his interview subjects include: Jack Newton (first) a former Winnipeg Centre member; David Levy originally from Montreal, and known to any of us who have attended G.A's, and Don Parker, who spoke at the Millennium GA here in Manitoba. He quotes Terrance Dickinson and Alan Dyer, (former Winnipeg Centre member) and in the notes at the back, needing a reference on how asteroids get named, the asteroid chosen as the typical example is on page 330: P/1996 A1 Jedike! Guess where that one got its name!

So, if you like learning about astronomy and cosmology, if you like being inspired to get outside and see things differently, if you like reading biographical or insights into the lives of successful astronomers both amateur and professional, or, if you need only an interesting and enjoyable book to read as we work through our third successive cloudy month, you will love "Seeing in the Dark".