Volume 67 Issue 6 **November - December 2009**

Winnicentrics

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

SUN SPOTS "We Look At The Sun"

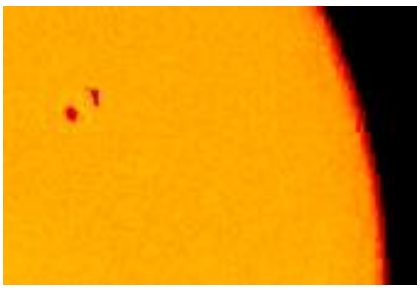
by Guy Westcott

I actually had some time on the 23rd of September to do some solar observing. The time was 14:00 CST. The weather was clear and 26C. After setting up the C5 on the roof deck and waiting an hour to level the temperature, I installed the full solar filter, slapped in a 30mm wide field and WOW two nice spots were visible at the 2:30 location; that's how prominent they were. After scanning the solar disc carefully, another smaller group was visible at the 5:30 location. At this location with an 18mm and then a 10mm the surface appeared whiter and I could see the surface flickering. I believe these groupings are the beginnings of the new Solar Cycle 24. I attached my Canon Rebel, focused and shot off 10 shots. I will be taking more and recording them as they appear, weather permitting.

In future articles I hope to explain how to observe the sun safely, and how to make your own solar filter. If you wish to view with me and it is sunny, give me a call and come on over.

PS - I only do solar observing in the daytime.

Group 1



Group 2

MEETINGS

Robert B. Schultz Theatre. St.John's College,
University of Manitoba Fort Garry Campus

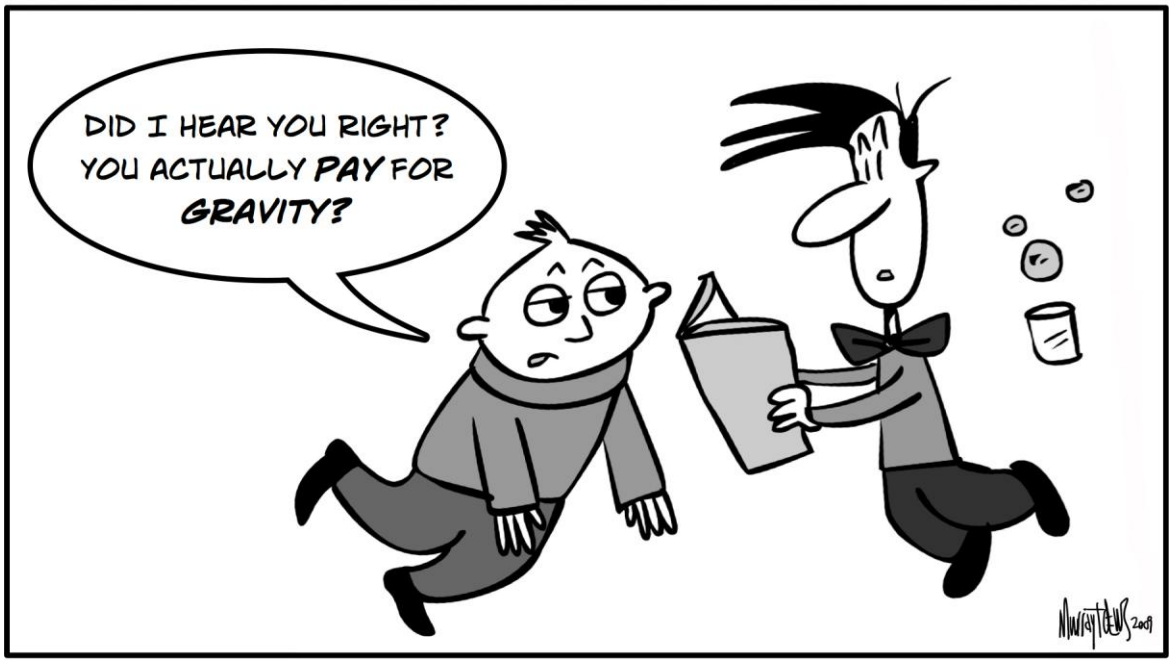
Friday November 13

7:00-7:30 Beginner's session: Topic TBA
7:30-7:40 Welcome and Announcements: Peter Toth
7:40 – 7:50 Constellation of the Month – Pisces the Fish: Gail Wise
7:50-8:00 Explore the Universe with Stan Runge
8:00-8:10 What's up: Jay Anderson
8:10-8:30 What's New: Jennifer West
8:30-9:00 Refreshment Break
9:00-9:10 Guest Speaker: Ed Cloutis from the U of W: Asteroid Surface Structures

Friday December11

7:00-7:30 Beginner's session: Topic TBA
7:30-7:40 Welcome and Announcements: Peter Toth
7:40 – 7:50 Constellation of the Month – Auriga the Charioteer: Gail Wise
7:50-8:00 Explore the Universe with Lindsay Price
8:00-8:10 What's up: Jay Anderson
8:10-8:30 What's New: Jennifer West
8:30-9:00 Refreshment Break
9:00-9:50 Guest Speaker: TBA

Mr. Bud . . . in "Gravity" *by Murray Toews*



News in a minute . . .

The Council has decided to start mailing the Winnicentrics out to members once again. If you prefer to read the newsletter on the website and do not want to receive a printed copy, please let Gail know at wgail@mts.net, 253-8297 or talk to Gail at a meeting.

It's so easy being green – how can the Winnipeg Centre do better? Tell Gail your ideas. Let's start with bringing your own coffee cup (with a lid if possible) to the meetings.

Oak Hammock Marsh Astronomy Nights starting at 7:00pm

November 19 – "Northern Lights"
December 17 – "The Winter Constellations "

These are IYA events put on by Oak Hammock Marsh in cooperation with the Winnipeg Centre. Volunteers will get back some of the cost of gas to travel out there. Contact Ron Berard or Jacques Bourgeois for more information or to volunteer .

We have two new members!

Cris Mcdowell, Winnipeg

Brian Horky, Winnipeg

Welcome to our Club!

The Winnipeg Centre Executive Council

President
Peter Toth 757-9300
pt40fathoms@yahoo.com
1st Vice-President
Kris Keller 667-5540
keller1@mts.net
Past-President
Ron Berard 668-6551
rcberard@gmail.com
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
Ralph Croning 885-4326
rcroning@mts.net
Roger Todd 275-2059
rogertodd@shaw.ca
Gail Wise 253-8297
wgail@mts.net
Appointed Positions
Librarian
Fred Wood 774-3238
fred_wood@shaw.ca
Observatory Director
Ray Andrejowich 667-6896
saturn3@shaw.ca
Observatory Bookings
Kevin Black 224-0182
cblack@shaw.ca
Webmaster
Paul Trudel 866-4394
ptrudel@trudel-networks.com
National Rep
Mike Stephens 832-0485
mikestephens@shaw.ca
Winnicentrics Editor
Gail Wise 253-8297
wgail@mts.net

Winnicentrics is published six times each year by the Winnipeg Centre, RASC. *Winnicentrics* is produced by and for the members of the Winnipeg Centre, and any opinions expressed are those of the author. If you have comments, questions or concerns about *Winnicentrics*, you can contact any of the councilors or write to RASC, Winnipeg Centre, Box 2694 Winnipeg MB R3C 4B3

Star Party in the Park September 25

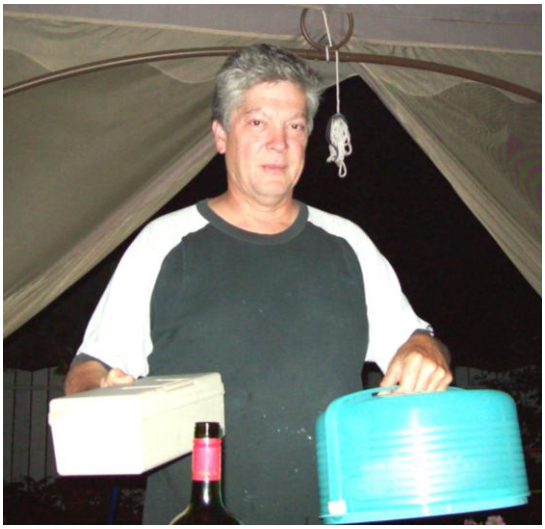
It was a clear, warm night at Assiniboine Park where six center members turned up to show the public images of the Moon and Jupiter. Gail had her usual pink panther there; Silvia and Gerry were discussing the set up of binoviewers on different types of telescopes, and Brendan came out with his little scope. Other members and prospective members turned out to view through the telescopes. My grandson Ethan brought his telescope to a star party for the first time and was proud to set it up and show people the Lunar craters. We were there from 7:00 pm until 9:30 pm. Unfortunately, on this night the lights on the pathways were all turned on and although it was clear this made it extremely difficult to view any Deep Sky Objects. Gail and I noted that It was a lot darker over on the front cricket pitch, and maybe our next observing night would be better there. An estimated 60 people viewed through the telescopes and received their Galileo Moment cards.

Guy Wescott

Now that SWSP 2009 is over we can show you what we *really* do at those planning meetings

Sandy and Marni pretending
to do *some* work

A loaf of bread, a jug of wine and gAIL



Is it time for pie yet?

Did somebody say pie?

Virtual Astronomy by blkhole.

As many of you may know, Paul Trudel is a very capable web designer and web manager. Not only has he handled our site but also the site of Astronomers Without Borders. A few weeks ago Paul introduced me to this group and I found a whole new way to participate in the hobby of astronomy. AWB had arranged a virtual telescope observing session with Dr Gianluca Masi at his Bellatrix Observatory (+41 34' 06 +13 19' 43 E) at Ceccano, Italy about 90 km South of Rome.

The virtual telescope session was on Friday the 25th of September at 2pm and lasted until 4:30pm. We had 97 people on the chat and over 1200 more watching. Dr Masi skilfully guided the telescope on a tour of objects visible in the night sky. At each object we stopped and took ccd images. These were partially processed using Registax 4 but are mostly raw images. The most striking image was that of Jupiter. Closest to the Earth as the objects viewed go, Jupiter with its many cloud bands swirling in disaray about the planet was beautiful. As a bonus the great red spot was visible clearer than I have ever seen. Many of the onliners were new to astronomy and words like awesome and spectacular were often seen typed over and over. I totally enjoyed this virtual session and look forward to others being arranged by AWB. Maybe Australia or South America will be next so that we Northeners can actually get a look at our home galaxy. Thank you, Dr Masi and AWB for this enjoyable afternoon of observing. Definitely a Galileo moment.

Bellatrix Observatory.

The main telescope is a C14 f 8.7 running an ST8 CCD imager with a .62"/pixel scale.

The second telescope is a Coronado SolarMax60 H-alpha OTA on computerized Vixen SP equatorial mount, for amazing views of our star. It uses a DBK 31AF03.AS Imaging Source color CCD camera for imaging.

Another telescope, based on a paramount ME + C14 OTA is going to be installed soon and will be a twin of the main telescope above. Also, a Takahashi FS-102NSV telescope will be available for excellent imaging of the Planets and Moon.

The observatory is served by a broadband internet connection and a network of three computers, to control everything and assure enough resources for image acquisition and data reduction. These software packages are used: for data reduction CCDSoft, IDL, Astrometrica and Iris.

Telescopes are hosted under a 14-square meters, sliding roof observatory.

Vixen ED80sf, Vixen ED100Sf, Celestron Onyx ED80 OTAs telescopes complete the instrumentation.

RASC Winnipeg Centre Awards

As many of you know, the RASC Winnipeg Centre relies heavily on membership volunteerism to do the work of holding our various events. For example, council and executive members are not paid for the often challenging work of conducting the business affairs of the club and ensuring that the members can enjoy the many resources and activities offered as member benefits. Thankfully, we have many members who step forward to help out when the need arises.

Of course, there are those few who go above and beyond in their efforts to sustain our Centre's activities. It is for these few that we have two special awards:

Longstanding Service Award: awarded to the member whose cumulative efforts are found to be exceptional, both in quality and quantity. We have a number of members who have been diligently working for years to help keep our club as one of Canada's most vibrant and active RASC Centres;

Special Achievement Award: awarded to the member whose efforts have resulted in a remarkable contribution to the Centre, and has benefitted our membership and the Astronomy community as a whole.

If you feel a member you respect is deserving of either of these prestigious awards, you can nominate them by submitting a nomination complete with a citation of the candidate's accomplishments. The nomination committee will make their selections based on the number of members submitting nominations for a given candidate, as well as the contributions cited on the nomination form. Selections will be submitted to council by the nominations committee for a final decision and the recipients will be contacted in advance for approval. The awards will be presented at our annual Awards Banquet, which will take place early next year.

Nominations can be submitted to Ron Berard, Past President, Chair of Awards Committee: rcberard@gmail.com or via mail: Attention: Ron Berard c/o RASC Winnipeg Centre, P.P. Box 2694 Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4B3 Note: Nominations will close December 31, 2009. Mailed nominations should be submitted no later than December 15, 2009.

Bylaws Amendment:

The following proposal for amendment to the RASC Winnipeg Centre Bylaws is being moved by council for approval by the general membership at the Annual General Meeting, to be held January 8, 2009 at 7:30 pm in the Robert B. Shultz Theatre, St. John's College, 92 Dysart Rd., University of Manitoba.

Be it resolved that:

> 5.7.2 The term of office of a National Council Representative is one year. No person may hold the office of National Council Representative for more than three consecutive terms, but such person may be re-elected after a lapse of one year.

Be amended to read as:

> 5.7.2 The term of office of a National Council Representative is two years. No person may hold the office of National Council Representative for more than three consecutive terms, but such person may be re-elected after a lapse of one year.

The purpose of this amendment is to synchronize all elected offices to concurrent terms of 2 years so that elections need not be held yearly other than in the event that offices are vacated prior to the end of term.

The amendment shall pass by a simple majority vote of members in attendance. Members not able to attend may submit their vote by proxy using the form below:

RASC Winnipeg Centre 2010 AGM Proxy voting form:

I, _____ being an RASC, Winnipeg Centre member in

good standing, hereby grant _____, also a member in good

standing, to act as my proxy in the Winnipeg Centre Elections, to be held on January 8, 2009. My vote is as follows:

In the matter of amendment of bylaw 5.7.2:

I am in favour:_____ I am opposed: _____

Signature: X_____ Proxy: X_____

RASC Winnipeg Centre Elections:

Winnipeg Centre Elections have been moved from fall to January to coincide with our Annual General Meeting which needs to occur at the end of our fiscal year. January 8, 2010 was selected to hold our AGM due to the need to have our financial statement for the fiscal year ready for presentation and approval by the general membership. Having our elections at the AGM will enable us to consolidate our important, but somewhat less than exiting business to one meeting yearly.

This year, the positions that are up for election are:

1. Secretary (two year term): Incumbent-Jay Anderson
2. Treasurer (two year term): Incumbent-Mike Stevens
3. National rep (two year term*): Incumbent-Mike Stevens
4. Councilor: (1 year interim term): Incumbent-Marlene Woligroski (resigned)

Nominations can be submitted to Ron Berard at rcberard@gmail.com or 938-5677 M-F 9:00 -5:00 pm. NOTE: Nominees must have consented to a nomination prior to submission.

If only one candidate is nominated for a given position, than they will be appointed by acclamation. Should there be a competition, candidates names will be published in the January – February 2010 Winnicentrics and on a special notice on the website. Members not in attendance at the AGM can submit votes by proxy using the form below.

RASC Winnipeg Centre 2010 Elections Proxy voting form:

I, _____ am an RASC, Winnipeg Centre member in good

standing, hereby grant _____, also a member in good

standing, to act as my proxy in the Winnipeg Centre Elections, to be held on January 8,

2009. My votes are as follows:

1. Secretary: _____
2. Treasurer: _____
3. National rep: _____
4. Councilor: _____

Signature: X_____ Proxy: X_____

Meteorites 101
Collecting and Caring for Your Meteorites

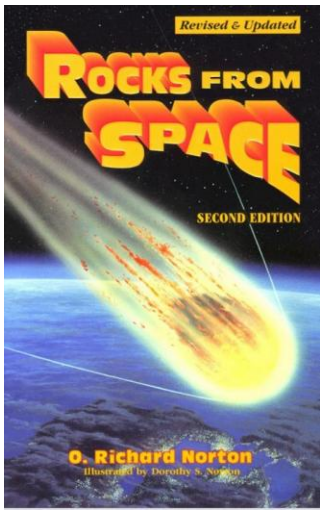
By Ralph A. Croning

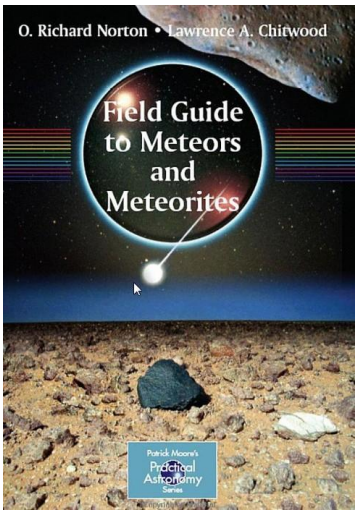
In this article I will briefly explain how you can get into collecting meteorites and how to care for them once acquired.

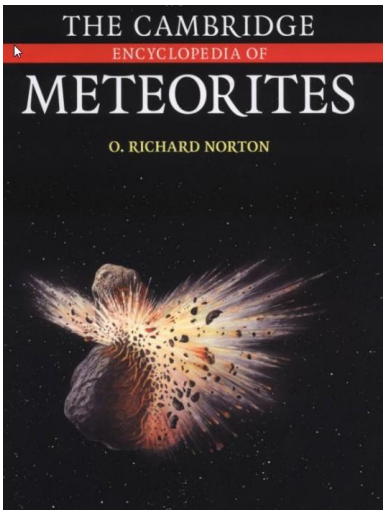
There are several ways in which you can buy meteorites. They include visiting rock and mineral shows, museum gift shops and ordering online. Since I have experience only in online buying I will elaborate on this method. As with anything, being an informed buyer is the best way to begin.

For starters, there are some very good books on the subject available. The three that I will recommend are all by the late O. Richard Norton. They are:

-Rocks from Space - Good for beginners.
-Field Guide to Meteors and Meteorites - Intermediate/advanced.
-The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Meteorites - Advanced.
(This is out of print but some sources still have inventory)







Also at your disposal are a vast number of websites that carry some very good information on meteorites. The best ones are usually university sites that are up-to-date and accurate. Google *Meteorites* and you will have a choice of hundreds of sites. Choose sites that have lots of pictures of meteorites as well as of meteor*wrongs.* It is important, as a collector, to be able to recognize both.

Once you are armed with a fair working knowledge of meteorites, it's time to go shopping. Ebay currently is a hotspot for meteorite sales. But you must be very careful as there are also a lot of unscrupulous sellers who'll try to sell terrestrial rocks as meteorites. The best way to avoid being scammed is to find a few dealers that have good reputations. The few that I have dealt with, I will list below:

-Greg and Adam Hupe - USA (of the famous Hupe collection).
-Michael Cottingham - USA
-Dean Bessey (a Canadian now living in New Zealand)
-Eric Wichman - USA
-Steve Arnold - USA (of Brenham fame)
-Al Mitterling - USA

Do a Google search for their names and websites. They also have ebay stores. All are good people to deal with and always sell quality specimens.

Unless you have an unlimited budget, I would suggest a collection that contains the three main classes. This means three meteorites. Most people would be happy with that. If you're like me, that is not enough. So once you have the three, you can go on to buying specimens in the class groups and sub-groups. This can now get very addictive and therefore expensive, especially with the rare types.

One way to satisfy the "I want lots of meteorites" itch is to buy the unclassified stones that are coming out of North Africa. They can be purchased in kilo lots and may be as inexpensive as $0.40 to about $0.60 per gram. These unclassified stones are no less meteorites than their classified siblings. It's just that when a stone has been tested, given a name and registered with the Meteorological Society, its value increases. A simple analogy would be to compare the price of Kraft Dinner to no-name mac and cheese. They are both basically the same, except one has a name. William Shakespeare wrote "a rose by any other name....." That quote could just as easily be applied to meteorites.

Once your meteorite collection has started to grow, you need to care for it as with any other collectible. Iron meteorites rust very easily in our damp environment. They must be kept dry and relatively air-tight. I have used the following in my display and storage cases to good effect:

-Silica gel desiccant packs (available online in 50 bag bulk packs for $10).
-Volatile Corrosion Inhibitor foam (available from Lee Valley Tools).

Extend Rust Inhibitor (made by Loctite) is a spray coating that stops rust in its tracks. I have used it on several of my rusting iron specimens and not only have they not rusted again, but they have acquired a nice matte black surface. This is the result of the Extend reacting with any surface rust on the specimens and forming a thin layer that makes the specimen impervious to the effects of air and moisture. This does not mean that you can start touching these treated meteorites with wet hands. Iron after all does not exist in its elemental form on Earth and will always try to revert to its most stable state - iron oxide, aka rust.

Stony meteorites are quite stable but if they contain elemental iron flecks, as in the high iron types, then keeping them air-tight as well is a good idea. Desiccant packs work well in their display cases.

Stony-Iron meteorites are a whole different ball game, especially sliced Pallasites. Extend is not very good to use on Pallasites as they contain beautiful olivine crystals. The best methods are airtight containers with desiccant packs and/or VCI foam. There are treatment methods for rusting Pallasites that are beyond the scope of this article. If interested, please email me and I'll point you in the right direction.

This ends a very basic tutorial. Much more information can be obtained from the internet. Just a cautionary note in closing; not all sources on the internet contain accurate information so choose with caution. If in doubt, ask someone who may know. I am always available to answer any queries about meteorites. If I don't have a ready answer, I will find one for you.

I can be contacted at <rcroning@mts.net>