Winnicentrics

Newsletter of the RASC Winnipeg Centre

May/June 2023

Bringing Astronomy to the Public on Astronomy Day

Astronomy Day was Saturday, April 29, and the Winnipeg Centre was out in force, bringing astronomy to the public with both daytime and evening sessions. During the day, a group of members was set up at Indigo/Chapters Polo Park, with a telescope display and information table. Lots of folks had their questions answered and learned about the Centre, even though the planned-for solar viewing session was largely clouded out.

Later the same evening, a group of Winnipeg Centre RASCals was out by the Duck Pond at Assiniboine Park, showing people the first quarter Moon and other celestial sights. The sky stayed mostly clear and there were an estimated 350 people in attendance, sometimes with lineups of up to 20 people at a telescope. A great time was had by all, and both venues were eager to host us again. The next Astronomy Day is in October, but there will be other outreach events before then—stay tuned!

Images by Bryan Stach

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Centre at a Glance:

Fri May 12—Regular Meeting

Featured Presentation: "The Cost of Astrophotography"

Sat May 13—Observing Night

Members event at Glenlea (weather permitting) 9pm

Wed May 17—Daytime Occultation of Jupiter

See page 6

Fri Jun 8—Regular Meeting

Featured Presentation: "First Results from the James Webb Space Telescope"

Sat Jun 9—Observing Night

Members event at Glenlea (weather permitting) 9pm

Wed Jun 21—Solstice

See full event details inside.

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Website: Winnipeg.RASC.CA
Facebook: RASC Winnipeg
YouTube: RASC Winnipeg
Forums: rascwpg.groups.io
(For details on how to use the forums and join the various subgroups, see page 10.)

Winnicentrics is published six times a year by the members of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada—Winnipeg Centre, Incorporated. Any opinions expressed are those of the authour(s).

Submissions or comments can be sent to newsletter@winnipeg.rasc.ca.

The President's Corner

Hello everyone,

The nights are getting shorter, but it is a lot warmer and hopefully the clear skies will follow. As I write this the Red River should have crested and the threat of flooding to Glenlea this year will be in the past. One of the things Council will be looking at is whether or not Glenlea should be opened to having public events out there. Before this could happen, there are many things to be organized with the University and policies and procedures developed. The thought is that the observatory proper would be left closed and the warm room and pad would be used. Let us know what you think about the idea.

Planning for the Spruce Woods Star Party (SWSP) is underway and more information should be available soon. The dates for this year's event are September

Recently Astronomy Day outreach was completed, and it was a supernova of success. Thank you to Daemon, Mike, Bryan, Stan, Mark, gAIL, Kamala, Scott, Russell, James, Michelle, Kyle, and Ivan for organizing and volunteering at the two events. Council has received many requests for public outreach you will soon see a call for volunteers. The Centre will only support the ones we have enough volunteers for. So please volunteer if you can.

A thank you to Kamala for representing the RASC Winnipeg at Manitoba Education for their curriculum review.

You will see that a bulk purchase of cleaning supplies for your scope or binoculars will be sent out (see page 4). The hope is that enough members participate, and an even better rate can be achieved for the products.

The U of M has adjusted their mask policy and is now optional. Some will choose to mask, and we ask that you respect their choice as they may have a health condition but still want to participate in the public events.

Well, that is all for now. Clear Skies!

Dennis Lyons,
Centre President

Centre News

⇒ **Website woes:** As you may have noticed, the Centre's website has been down several times recently. Our webmasters have been working hard to repair the website and clean it up to make it easier for members to maintain.

Groups.IO and emails: The Centre has recently moved its forums and email lists to the Groups.IO platform. For details on how to use the Groups.IO forums, including how to prevent yourself from getting too many emails, check out the handy guide on page 10.)

⇒ **Moderation Policy under discussion:** After receiving several complaints the Council is currently reviewing an editorial and moderation policy for all of the Centre's publications, emails, and social media channels.

Regular Meeting Agendas

Regular meetings are held on the second Friday of each month in the Robert B. Schultz Lecture Theatre in St. John's College, 92 Dysart Road, on the University of Manitoba's Fort Garry Campus. To find the Schultz Theatre, From the front door go down the stairs to the left, then turn right and go down the hall until you reach the large open area with tables. The Theatre is on the right.

Regular meetings are "hybrid" meetings, with both in-person and online participation available. Members receive a meeting invitation with the Zoom link from the "rasc-main" forum on Groups.IO. The meetings are also live-streamed and archived on the Centre's YouTube channel at RASC Winnipeg.

After the meeting's conclusion, members are invited to retire to Boston Pizza on Pembina Highway south of Bison Drive for an informal social gathering. (This portion of the meeting is not available online or live-streamed.)

Friday, May 12, 2023	**Friday, June 9, 2023**
7:00 p.m. Beginner's Session - Silvia Graca, "Sketching for Beginners"	**7:00 p.m. Beginner's Session** - gAIL Wise, "Constellation of the Month"
7:30 p.m. Main Meeting • Dennis Lyons, Welcome & Announcements • Bryan Stach—"What's Up?" (the sky this month) • Dr. Michelle Boyce, University of Manitoba—"What's New in Astronomy?" • **Main Speakers:** Mike Karakas & Stan Runge—"The Cost of Astrophotography"	**7:30 p.m. Main Meeting** • Dennis Lyons, Welcome & Announcements • Bryan Stach—"What's Up?" (the sky this month) • Jay & Judy Anderson, "Solar Eclipse 2023" • **Main Speaker:** Dr. Erik Rosolowsky, University of Alberta —"First Results from the James Webb Space Telescope"

Other Events—May 2023

Saturday, May 13: Science Rendezvous

A free science festival at the University of Manitoba's Fort Garry Campus. Events run from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and include booths and activities by a variety of academic and community organizations, including RASC Winnipeg Centre! For details, visit the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Science.

Saturday, May 13: Members' Observing Night

The regular monthly observing night (weather permitting) at Glenlea Observatory.

Wednesday, May 31: Lockhart Planetarium Open House

The University of Manitoba's planetarium hosts an open house on the last Wednesday of each month (except December). The event is free but tickets should be reserved due to limited seating. Check the Lockhart Planetarium's website for details.

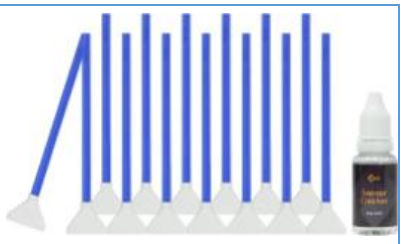
(NOTE: Oak Hammock Marsh astronomy nights are finished for the season and will resume in the fall; visit Oak Hammock Marsh for details.)

RASC Winnipeg Centre – Bulk Purchase

The Centre is ordering some optical cleaning supplies in bulk to be able to reduce shipping costs and the associated greenhouse emissions. You can pre-order any of the following supplies by sending an email to vc.scott.young@gmail.com and indicating the number of each item you want. (Placing an order is a commitment to pay for the supplies once they arrive!) Payment can be made by cash or e-transfer when picking up the supplies

Deadline for orders is 7 a.m. on Monday, May 29th. Once supplies arrive, they will be available for pick up at the June meeting (or by other arrangement).

Orders are for personal, non-commercial use by Winnipeg Centre members.

Lens Pen (Basic) $8	Lens Pen (Premium) $13	 Sensor Cleaning Kit $21 (fluid plus 15 swabs)
Lens Cleaning Paper $2 (300 sheets)	Zeiss Lens Wipes $17 (220 sheets)	Microfibre Cloth $16

Other Events—June 2023

Friday, June 2: First Friday at the Planetarium

As part of the First Friday event in the Exchange District, the Manitoba Museum, Planetarium, and Science Gallery are open from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. for free. Planetarium shows include live sky tours and Legends of the Northern Sky which explores traditional sky tellings of the Anishinabe and Cree peoples of Manitoba. For details and showtimes, visit the Manitoba Museum's website.

Wednesday, June 28: Lockhart Planetarium Open House

The University of Manitoba's planetarium hosts an open house on the last Wednesday of each month (except December). The event is free but tickets should be reserved due to limited seating. Check the Lockhart Planetarium's website for details.

(NOTE: Oak Hammock Marsh astronomy nights are finished for the season and will resume in the fall; visit Oak Hammock Marsh for details.)

Centre Member Benefits

As a paid member in good standing of the RASC Winnipeg Centre, you receive a number of benefits from the local group in addition to any benefits that come from the national Society. These include:

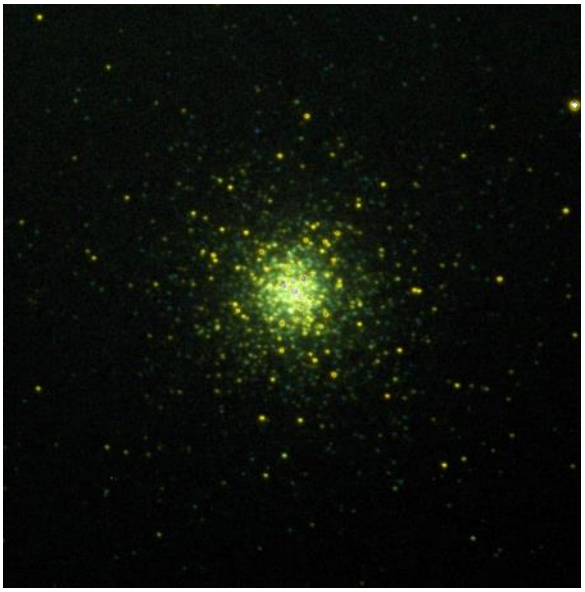
Access to the **Glenlea Observatory**, which houses a 12" Meade LX200 computer-controlled telescope under a dome, a 14.5" truss-tube Dobsonian reflector, and a warm room. There's also a concrete observing pad with power hook-ups to set up your own telescope. Member observing nights are held once a month (usually on the Saturday after the regular meeting), and members can use the observing pad and warm room any time. Once you've taken the training course you can also book the LX200 dome for your own use. (Booking the observatory can be done by sending an email to the Glenlea booking coordinator at observatory@winnipeg.rasc.ca.)

Telescope Lending Library: The Centre also has a number of portable telescopes that members can borrow on a first-come, first-served basis. The current inventory includes reflectors, refractors, and SCTs of various sizes, as well as some specialized gear such as a Coronado Personal Solar Telescope.

Spruce Woods Star Party: The highlight of the year, this weekend of observing and astronomy is available to Centre members and their families. Usually held in late August or Early September each year.

Online Forums: The Centre has a series of Forums on Groups.io, which all paid members are automatically subscribed to so they can receive announcements from the Centre. You can also sign up for other forums depending on your interest - go to Groups.io and sign in with the email address you used to sign up as a member.

Other local benefits such as attending **meetings** and **special events**, a **mentoring** program for beginners, this **newsletter**, **voting rights** at the Centre's Annual General Meeting (usually held in January each year), and **opportunity to serve** on the Centre Council – the group of folks who put together meetings and run the Centre!



Globular Cluster M3 is situated about midway between the bright star Arcturus and the handle of the Big Dipper, making it an excellent spring target. This image was taken through a Skywatcher 150P reflector at f/3.6 using a ZWO ASI187MM monochrome camera. 10 one-minute exposures were taken in red, green, and blue filters and the results combined to provide a colour image. *(Image: Scott Young)*

SkyWatch for May 2023

[Editor's note: With the discontinuation of Sky News magazine by the national Society, I had planned to recreate the popular "Sky This Month" feature for Winnicentrics, since current sky information is one of the most-used pieces of content provided by an astronomy club. I am happy to say that this will be the only such column in Winnicentrics, since I will now be producing the content for the Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (JRASC).]

This month, Venus and Mars dance with twin stars Castor and Pollux in the evening sky, with a special guest appearance by the Moon. Saturn rises near midnight while Jupiter, still low in the southeast before sunrise, undergoes a rare occultation by the Moon. Meanwhile, Mercury's morning elongation is mostly invisible for Canadian observers.

May 5: Full Moon. A penumbral lunar eclipse occurs, but it is a minor event and not visible from North America.

May 7: This year's annual Eta Aquariid meteor shower will largely be washed out by the light of the near-Full Moon. Dedicated observers or all-sky cameras might still spot up to a dozen meteors per hour in the hours before dawn.

May 12: Last Quarter Moon – the evening sky is now free of moonlight!

May 13: The waning crescent Moon sits 5° below Saturn in the morning sky.

May 17: The thin crescent Moon passes in front of Jupiter this morning, a rare planetary occultation visible for most of Canada except for western B.C. and the Yukon. For Winnipeg, Jupiter will disappear behind the bright limb of the Moon about 6:52 a.m. CDT, and reappear from behind the dark limb at about 7:45 a.m. CDT. The pair will be low in the east during the event and close to the bright sun, so you need to be extremely careful if you try to observe this. Set up behind a solid object that casts a shadow, so that you cannot accidentally point your telescope at the Sun!

The thin crescent Moon occults Jupiter after sunrise on May 17th. *(Image: Stellarium)*

May 19: New Moon

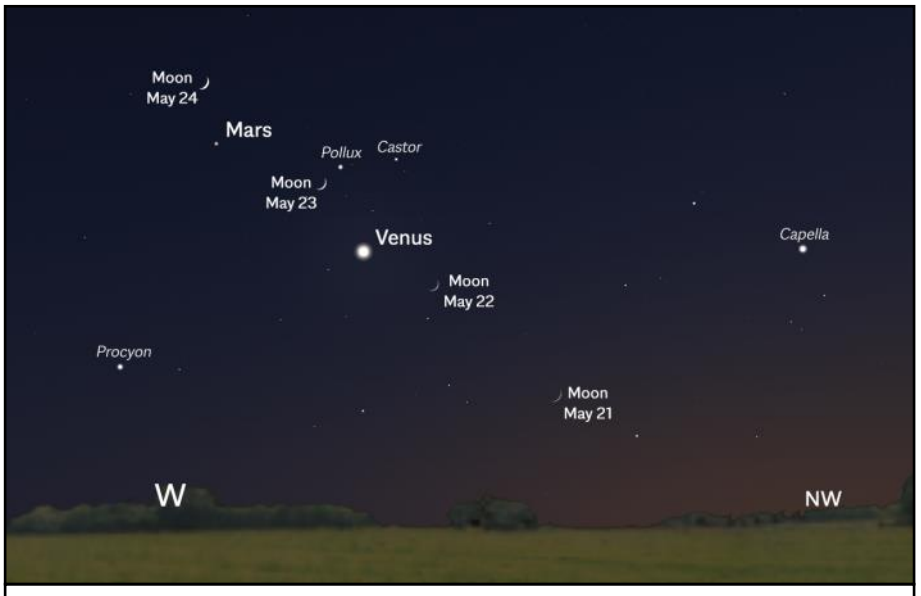
May 21 through 24: A trio of solar system objects gather in the western sky after sunset for the next several days, against the backdrop of the constellation of Gemini the Twins. Tonight, the thin crescent Moon, Venus, and Mars form a roughly straight line in the west after sunset. The two brightest stars in Gemini, Castor and Pollux, are above Venus. Over the next few nights, The Moon passes Venus and then Mars, while Venus slowly creeps closer to Castor and Pollux.

May 25 through 31: Mars, Venus, and the bright stars Castor and Pollux form a nice grouping in the west after sunset.

May 27: First Quarter Moon

May 29: Although today Mercury reaches its greatest elongation from the Sun in the morning sky, the low angle of the ecliptic will keep it very close to the horizon and difficult to see for Canadian observers.

May 31: Mars enters the Beehive star cluster (see map on page 7).



The waxing crescent Moon passes Venus and then Mars in the evening sky during the fourth week of May, 2023. *(Image: Stellarium)*

SkyWatch for June 2023

June brings the official beginning of astronomical summer in the northern hemisphere, and the least number of nighttime hours for the year. Venus and Mars draw closer together in the evening sky as they sink lower into the sunset glow, both planets passing near the bright star cluster M44, also known as the Beehive cluster, in Cancer. Saturn and Jupiter rise earlier but still hug the southern horizon, and Mercury is invisible as it swings around to the far side of the Sun.

Jun. 1: The planet Mars is in the Beehive star cluster, M44. For the entire night the reddish planet moves slowly past a backdrop of the cluster's hundreds of mostly blue-white stars.

Jun. 4: Venus reaches its greatest elongation from the Sun, which explains why it is visible so high above the horizon and for so late into the night.

Jun. 9: The waning crescent Moon appears about 7° degrees to the lower right of Saturn, low in the southeast in the pre-dawn sky.

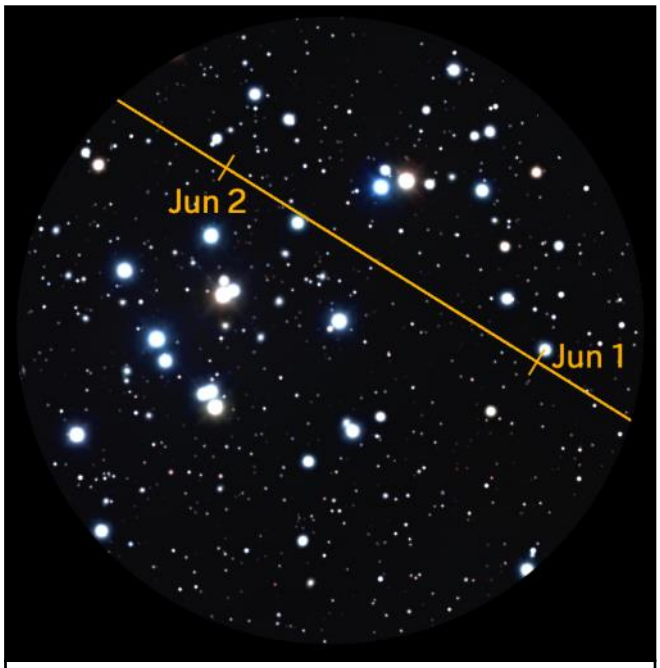
Jun. 10: Last Quarter Moon

Jun. 12 & 13: Venus sits just above the Beehive star cluster, M44, on both nights, with much fainter Mars 7° to the east (left).

Jun. 14: The waning crescent Moon is 3° to Jupiter's lower left in the morning sky.

Jun. 17-18: New Moon (the date depends on which time zone you are in)

June 21 marks the Summer Solstice in the northern hemisphere. Although mostly irrelevant to when summer starts to feel the like summer, the exact time of the solstice is 9:58 a.m. CDT.



Mars crosses the Beehive star cluster, M44, on the nights of May 31st and June 1st (Winnipeg time). The position for each date is shown at 3:00 Universal Time on the given date (10 p.m. CDT on the night before); the field of view is 1 degree. *(Image: Stellarium)*

Jun. 21 (evening): The crescent Moon, Venus, and Mars form a tight triangle in the western sky after sunset.

Jun. 26: First Quarter Moon

The view facing west after sunset on June 14th. Venus sits above the Beehive cluster, M44, with Mars much fainter and to the left. *(Image: Stellarium)*

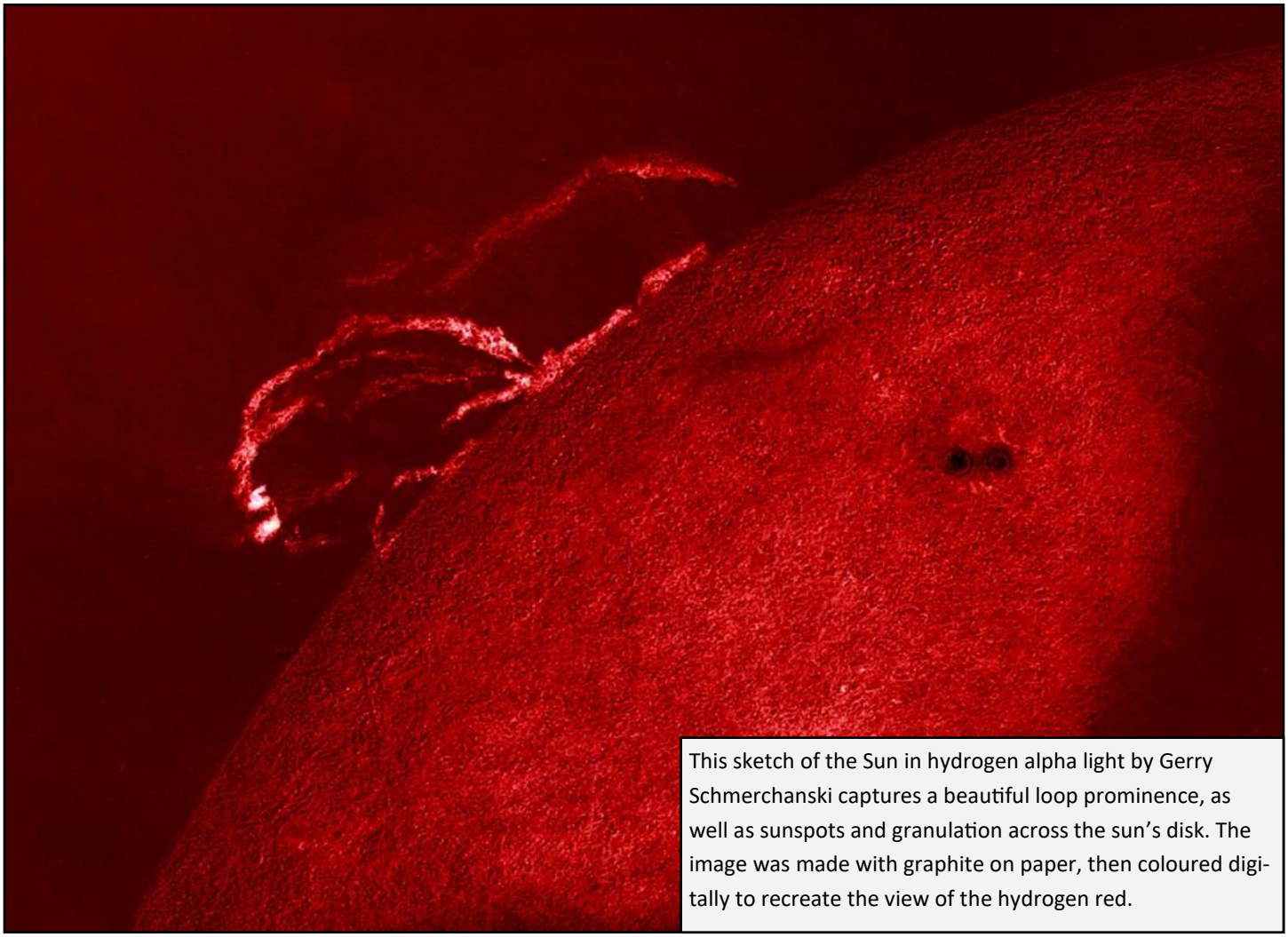
Did You Know…

There are active subgroups within the Centre? You can join the Binocular group, the Astro-sketching group, the solar observers' group, and other special interest groups on the Centre's forums. Sign in to groups.io with the email you registered your membership with (click on "forgot password" if it's your first time) and join in the conversations!

Members' Gallery

An awe-inspiring view of the totally-eclipsed sun as seen from southeast Asia on April 19-20, 2023. Centre Vice-President Judy Anderson took this shot and many others during their trip south to the see the eclipse; we hope to see some more images at future meetings and in the pages of this publication.

Members' Gallery (Continued)

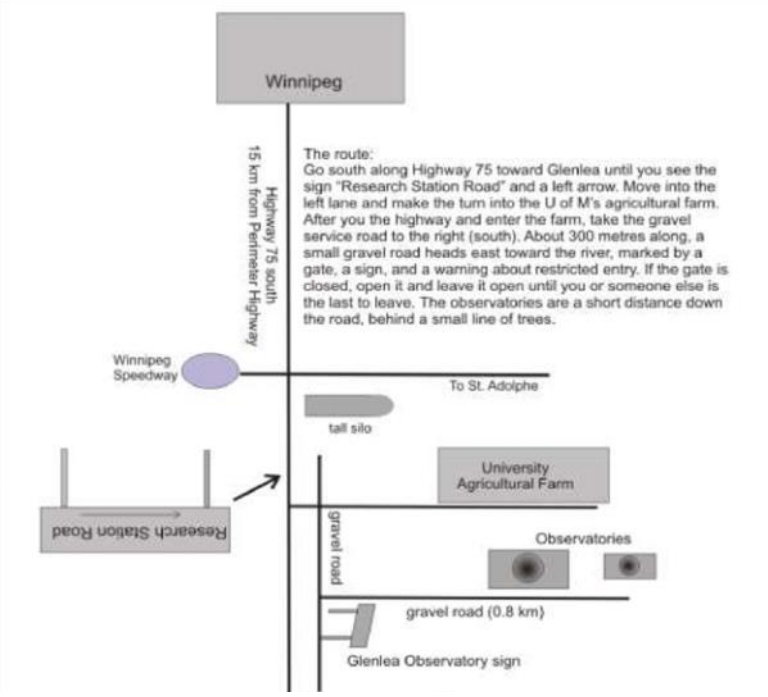


This sketch of the Sun in hydrogen alpha light by Gerry Schmerchanski captures a beautiful loop prominence, as well as sunspots and granulation across the sun's disk. The image was made with graphite on paper, then coloured digitally to recreate the view of the hydrogen red.

Glenlea Observatory

The Winnipeg Centre maintains a working observatory, pad, and warm room at the University of Manitoba's Research Farm. The observatory contains a 30 cm Meade LX200 telescope on a fork mounting. Members of the Centre who have taken a short training course can may sign up to use this telescope by emailing: observatory@winnipeg.rasc.ca

Etiquette requires that you approach the observing site with your headlights off if that's possible on your model of car. Headlights should remain off, but you can still use your parking lights to drive. Proceed slowly, and be careful about parked cars along the road, or people walking. If you cannot turn off your headlights, make a cardboard or garbage bag mask to dim the lights or, raise the parking brake lever one click-stop. This usually turns the headlights off on most, if not all, cars. You might wish to turn around at the end of the road so that you are facing the direction back toward the highway at the end of the evening.



Groups.IO: How to Use the Centre's Forums and E-Mail Lists

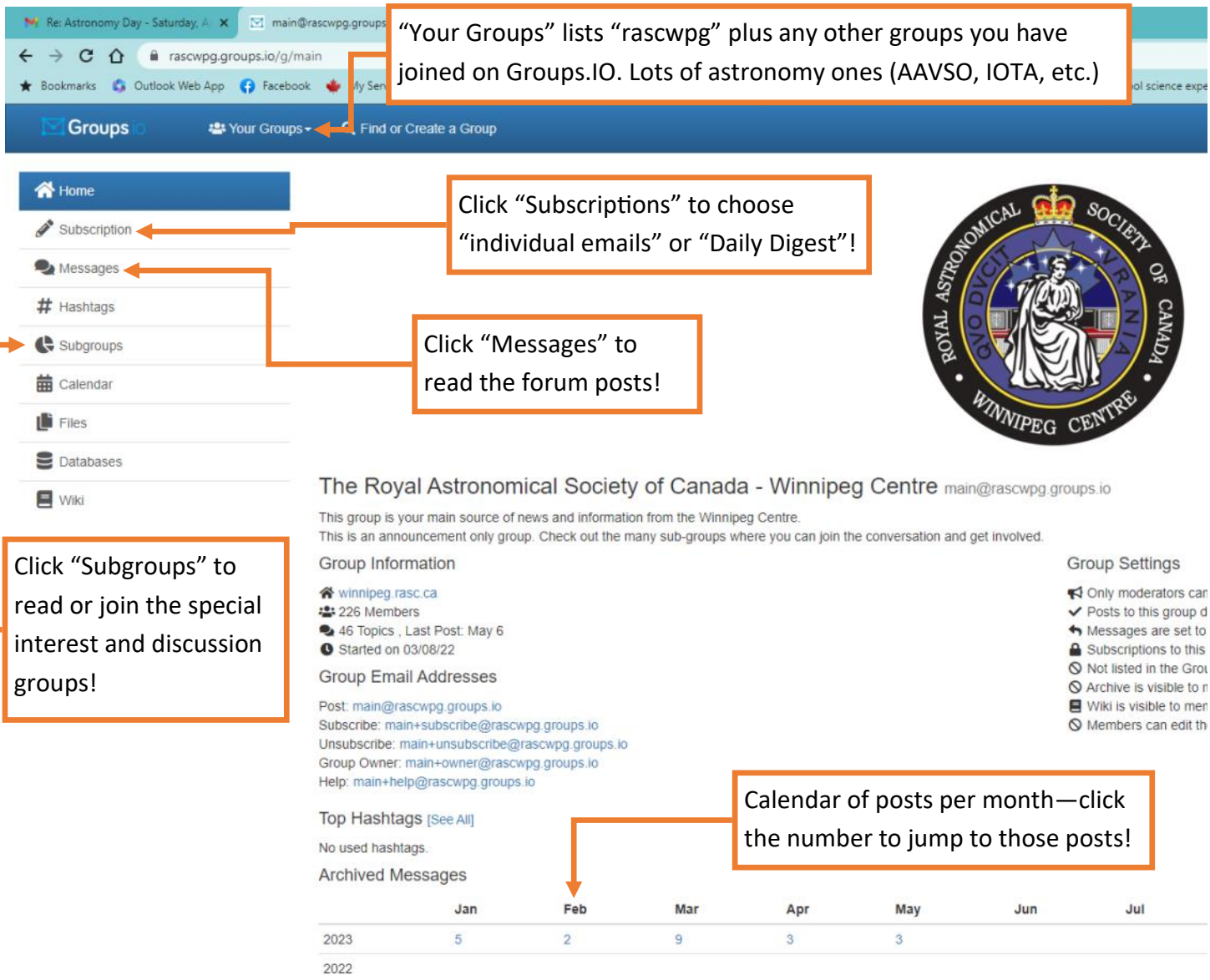
The Centre has moved to the Groups.IO platform for all of its forum and email services. This replaces the in-house forums and the old system of trying to mass-email all 200+ members. It really is a good system, both for the Council and for the users, but it is different and takes a bit of set-up.

If you've never used it before, it is very easy to access. Go to the website https://rascwpg.groups.io and click, "Forgot Password" when you are asked to log in. Enter the email that you used when you joined the Centre. You'll receive an email at that address telling you how to set up a password, and then you are good to go.

Once you've set up your password and logged in, you'll see a blue menu across the top of your screen. (See the next page for an annotated diagram.) If you click on "Your Groups", you will see that you are already subscribed to a group called "rascwpg.groups.io". This is the Centre's all-hands email, where we send meeting invitations, event news, and information we are required to send to all members (like calls for nominations for Board positions, news about the AGM, and so on).

When Council wants to send an email to everyone, they just make a post to this "main" group, and then everyone in the Centre gets an email. It helps prevent Centre mass emails from ending up in a spam folder or not getting through, and it also archives the email on the group where you can see it again. This "main" group can only be posted to by the Council Executive, and generates a few emails per month at most, so it shouldn't overwhelm most people with email.

(continued on page 11)



There's lots more than just the main announcement list, though. Click on "Subgroups" on the left-hand menu, and you'll be presented with a list of the various special interest forums attached to the rascwpg group. So far, there is a solar group, a sketching group, a binoculars group, a groups for posting astroimages,an armchair astronomy group, a buy & sell, an equipment discussion group, a solar system imaging group… you get the idea. If you are interested in a topic, click on that group and you'll be brought to that group's home page. You can click "join this group" here, and start getting the posts emailed to you, but you can also see how many messages have been posted in this group and even read them without joining. The calendar at the bottom shows how many posts were made each month, and by clicking on the number under a given month you will be shown the list of posts.

Some of the groups have a lot more discussion than others, though, and so you might not want 30 emails a day about a topic. Luckily, you can adjust the settings for each group. Go to the group you want to adjust, and click "Subscription" on the left-hand menu. This brings up the options for that group. You can elect to receive emails as individual messages as soon as they are posted—this is the best setting for the "rascwpg-main" group because it may contain timely information like a meeting change or observing session cancellation. For other groups where the information isn't time-sensitive, then "Daily Digest" is a good option—you'll only get one email a day from that group, containing all the posts that have been made that day. This prevents your email box from being flooded, but also sends you the content rather than you having to go look for it.

Every time someone posts to a group, every member of that group gets an email according to their personal settings. The emails are also archived, forming a valuable reference of the Centre's activities and discussions. There are some really good nuggets of wisdom in the forums already, and it would be a shame to lose them.

The key things to remember about Groups.IO:

⇒ if you unsubscribe from the "rascwpg-main" group, you will not receive Centre emails—this is the only way they are sent out! Please don't do this, or you will not receive important information.

⇒ Most conversation happens in the "rascwpg-general" forum, which roughly duplicates the function of the old RASC email list. Other groups are more focused in their topic. If you're not sure where to post a specific question or idea, "general" is the place for it.

⇒ You have to set your email preferences for each group—if you want daily digests, you have to set that up in the group's home page.

If you'd like help getting set up on Groups.IO, email newsletter@winnipeg.rasc.ca and we'll figure out a way to walk you through it.

The **Manitoba Schools Science Symposium** took place April 20-23, 2023 at the University of Manitoba. The RASC Winnipeg Centre awards a prize of $50 plus a one-year student membership to the Centre for Best Astronomy Project. This year's winner was in the Junior category, a solar system project by **Karanveer Sidu**. Congratulations!

Image: Bryan Stach