Winnicentrics

Newsletter of the RASC Winnipeg Centre

September/October 2023

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

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

Centre at a Glance:

Friday, Sep. 8—Monthly Meeting

Featured Speakers: Judy & Jay Anderson, "The 2023 Total Solar Eclipse"

Saturday, Sep. 9—Members' Observing Night

Members event at Glenlea (weather permitting) 8pm

Thursday Sept 14 through Sunday Sept 17—Spruce Woods Star Party

The Centre's biggest member event of the year! See page 3.

Friday, Oct. 13—Monthly Meeting

Featured Speaker: Dr. Marc Buie, on the LUCY asteroid mission

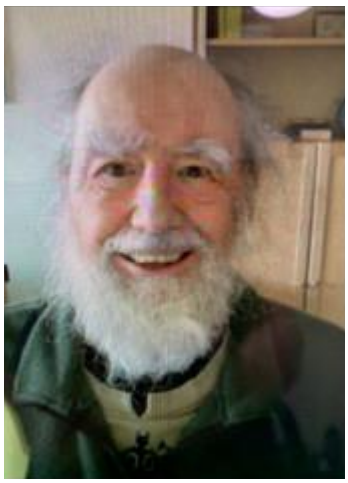
Saturday, Oct. 14—SOLAR ECLIPSE EVENT

Solar Eclipse viewing at Assiniboine Park, beginning at 10am. (**NOTE:** This event replaces the normal Members' Observing Night for October.)

Martin Clutton-Brock, Ph.D

October 7, 1932 - July 31, 2023

"Promise me you'll always remember, you're braver than you believe and stronger than you seem and smarter than you think." - Christopher Robin to Winnie the Pooh



Martin was born in Bexhill, Sussex, United Kingdom on October 7, 1932. As an only child he delighted in playing in their garden and considered studying entomology. He attended the prestigious Gordonstoun School boarding school which he declared was a 'painful part of his life!' After high school he completed two years in the British Airforce, then continued with undergrad degrees in math and physics from the University of Cambridge, UK, a Masters in Astronomy from the University of Victoria, BC and a PhD in Astronomy at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Martin accepted a position as a Professor of Astronomy at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg where he taught until his mandatory retirement at age 65 in 1997. To his last days, Martin expressed regret that he had to retire as he loved teaching and working with students. His view was that Astronomy was 'a very romantic area of study'.
An avid reader, Martin collected an extensive library of books on such topics as physics, mathematics, biology, philosophy, history, cosmology, and astronomy as well as books on artists and their work, cartoons, young adult novels and he adored the philosophy of life found in Winnie the Pooh. He owned a lot of books!

Martin had an artistic and creative side which was expressed through his work in several theatre companies, but his most successful dramatic venture was as lecturer in Astronomy at the University of Manitoba. He wrote one-man plays portraying the astronomers Newton, Copernicus, Kepler, Brahe and Galileo, describing their lives and theories while in character. He dressed in historical garb for the performances for which he often received applause and standing ovations from the students. He will be missed.

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Visit us online!

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

by Dennis Lyons, Winnipeg Centre President

Well, here it is, September already. However, that means the Spruce Woods Star Party is just around the corner. September 14-17 to be exact. Information and registration information is available on the website and groups.io.

Even though we had a smoky summer RASCals were busy with public outreach. A big thank you to Sivia Graca and her team for putting on stellar events at Spruce Woods and the Criddle Vane Homestead. Kamala was busy as well running an event at St. Vital Park. The next major outreach event will be for the partial solar eclipse at the Assiniboine Park with the Manitoba Museum. We are expecting large crowds and will need lots of volunteers. If you are available on October 14, please let Scott or one of the Board members know.

So, lots of things have been happening at the Council. There is now a finance committee in place, observatory committee, and eventually a fundraising committee. Finance is working on next years's budget; Observatory has multiple ideas to work through and Fundraising will help the Centre to achieve these goals.

Speaking of goals, the Strategic Plan will be reviewed and in particular a look at "Why does the Centre have observing resources?" With the follow on "What should our resources look like?" Got thoughts on this? Please contact and share them with the Observatory Committee or a Council member.

Recently a 4-inch Meade with accessories was donated to the Centre to raise funds for the "Telescopes for Kids" initiative. Look for more information on the Centre's Facebook page and Groups.IO forums.

Also, if you would like a calendar this year ($20 or less depending on the order) please send an email to finance@rasc.winnipeg.ca to reserve yours. We won't be ordering extras this year, they will only be available by pre-order (or directly through National).

Well, that is all for now. Look forward to seeing you at the SWSP and catching up with the rest at Glenlea or one of our outreach events.

Clear Skies,

Dennis Lyons

Centre News

⇒ **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.)

Regular Meeting Agendas

Regular meetings are usually 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, Sep. 8, 2023—Regular Meeting	**Friday, Oct. 13, 2023—Regular Meeting**
7:00 p.m. Beginner's Session - Dennis Lyons, "Getting Ready for the S[ruce Woods Start Party"	**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?" • Scott Young—"What's New" • **Main Speaker:** Judy & Jay Anderson, "The 2023 Total Solar Eclipse"	**7:30 p.m. Main Meeting** • Dennis Lyons, Welcome & Announcements • Bryan Stach—"What's Up?" • Dr. Danielle Pahaud—"What's New" • **Main Speaker:** Dr. Marc Buie, "Studying the Past with Shadows (and Changing Lives Along the Way)" - the LUCY mission to explore the asteroids

2023 Spruce Woods Star Party

September 14-17, 2023

Spend the September New Moon weekend in Manitoba's only Dark Sky Preserve! The Spruce Woods Star Party is a members-only event. Become a member to join us for our most fun-filled event of the year, as well as taking advantage of our other membership perks!

This year's event will focus on observing: camp in the group use area next to your telescopes, observe all night, and relax all day! Gerry Schmerchanski's binocular tour on Friday night and the annual swap meet on Saturday morning round out the event schedule. Cost for the weekend is only $25 per person, which includes rustic camping in the telescope field. (Bring your own tent, van, camper, or motor home. No electrical hookups available.)

To register, email Judy Anderson with the number of stargazers and whether you are bringing a tent, camper, or whatever. Payment should be made in advance by e-transfer to Finance@winnipeg.RASC.ca, or contact Judy to make other arrangements. Note that a provincial park pass is required for park entry. They are not sold onsite any more, you have to get them in advance online through Manitoba E-Licensing's website.

For the full schedule visit the SWSP webpage.

Other Events—September 2023

Saturday, Sep 9: Members' Observing Night at Glenlea

Monthly observing night for members. Come use the Centre's Meade 12" LX200 go-to telescope in the dome or one of the loaner telescopes on the observing pad, or bring your own. If the sky os cloudy, the event will run but will focus on training to use the facility. Observatory keys can be obtained at the event for a $10 deposit.

Tonight's MON Host is Dennis Lyons, and the theme will be the Explore the Universe Certificate program.

Thursday, Sep 14 through Sunday, Sep 17: Spruce Woods Star Party

The Centre's premier members' event. See page 3.

Thursday, Sep 21: Oak Hammock Marsh Astronomy Night

Oak Hammock Marsh's astronomy night series is back! September's theme is "Fall Constellations". An indoor presentation will be followed by an outdoor observation session from the rooftop, including a guided tour of the night sky, weather permitting. Admission is $6 for Oak Hammock members and $12 for non-members. Details at OHM's website.

Wednesday, Sep 27: Lockhart Planetarium Open House

The University of Manitoba's planetarium hosts an open house at 7:00 p.m. 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.

FOR SALE: Losmandy GM811G Go-to EQ Mount

Purchased late 2016, used a dozen times, excellent condition. Additions include RA extension (prevents meridian flip & breaks mount head into 2 pieces for ease of setup); two-piece counterweight shaft; clutch knob set; no-tool altitude adjustment & tripod knobs; additional counter-weights; JMI counterweight caddy; polemaster adapter (polemaster not included); mount head and electronics pack in custom-fitted Nanuk cases.

Losmandy LW tripod not included— Meade field tripod and Orion tote bag included (needs Losmandy MA adapter to fit on tripod).

Priced out new would run $5287 CDN plus taxes and shipping. Asking $3500 CDN.

Contact Bill Krosney at

204-227-8004

Other Events—October 2023

Friday, October 6: 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. RASC members are invited to bring their telescopes for solar and lunar observing around the Planetarium dome—contact Scott Young to sign up for this outreach event! For details and showtimes, visit the Manitoba Museum's website.

Saturday, October 14: Partial Solar Eclipse Public Viewing Event

Join us at Assiniboine Park to view the partial solar eclipse! The event begins at 10 a.m. with precise location to be determined. If you can volunteer to bring a safe solar telescope, or can help operate one of the loaner telescopes, please contact Scott Young at space@manitobamuseum.ca.

Thursday, October 19: Oak Hammock Astronomy Night

An indoor presentation will be followed by an outdoor observation session from the rooftop, including a guided tour of the night sky, weather permitting. Admission is $6 for Oak Hammock members and $12 for non-members. Details at OHM's website.

Wednesday, October 25: Lockhart Planetarium Open House

The University of Manitoba's planetarium hosts an open house at 7:00 p.m. 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.

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 features 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.

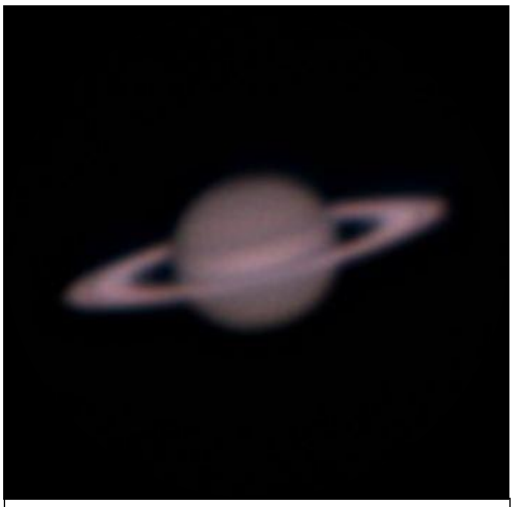
Spruce Woods Star Party: The highlight of the year, this weekend of observing and astronomy is available to Centre members and their families. This year's event is September 14-17, 2023.

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!

What's Up for September 2023

Planetary Highlights

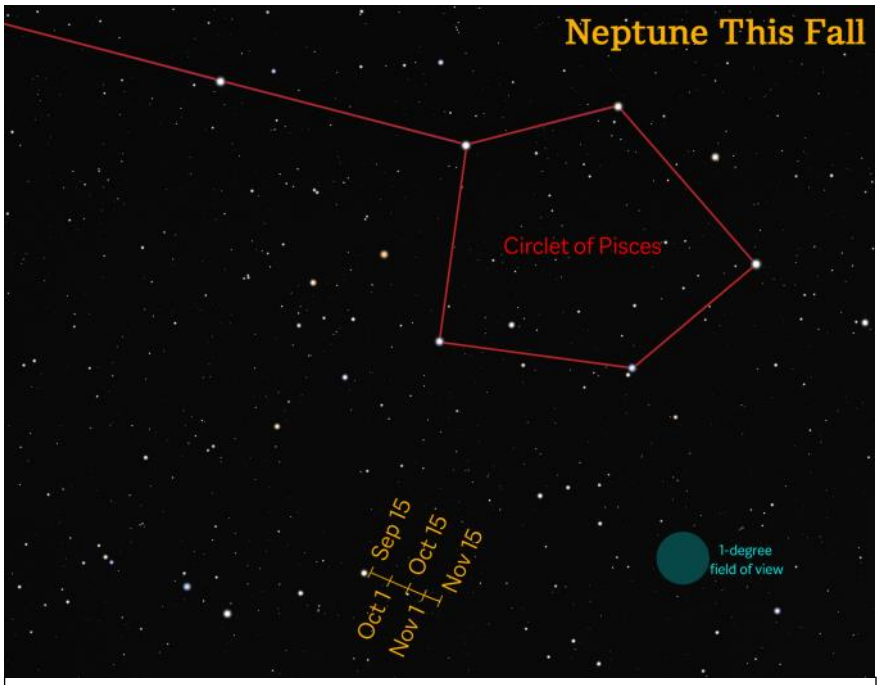


Saturn imaged through the Centre's 12" Meade LX200 telescope at Glenlea with an inexpensive one-shot colour camera. *(Image: Sean Workman & Scott Young)*

Saturn is visible all night, just past its August 27th opposition. This year Saturn's famous rings are tilted only about 10 degrees to our line of sight, still visible in a small telescope but making it more difficult to see details. The angle of the rings will remain nearly constant for the rest of the year but will decrease rapidly throughout 2024. The rings will next be edge-on to our line of sight in 2025.

Jupiter rises in mid-evening and stands high in the south at sunrise. The giant planet rises out of the murky air near the horizon before midnight, beginning several months of evening observing. **Venus** is visible in the morning sky, rising 3 hours before the sun and shining brightly in the east at dawn. It is joined briefly by **Mercury** towards the end of the month (see image below). Mercury reaches its greatest elongation west of the Sun on September 22nd , so the few days before and after that date are your best chance of spotting the innermost planet this month.

Mars is behind the Sun and out of view this month. Distant **Neptune** reaches opposition on September 19th , but still requires binoculars or a telescope to spot. Use the finder chart on this page to track it down!



Neptune sits below the circlet of Pisces for the rest of the year, shining about magnitude 8 and appearing as a faint star. High magnification will show a small, bluish disk. *(Image: Stellarium)*

Finally, planet **Earth** reaches a milestone in its orbit this month: the autumnal equinox occurs on September 23rd at 1:50 Central Time.

Photo Ops

- Sep 4: The waning gibbous Moon is above Jupiter as they rise in the east. By the following night the Moon has passed Jupiter and the two rise nearly level with each other.
- Sep 11 & 12 (pre-dawn): The waning crescent Moon is near Venus.
- Sep 20: The waxing crescent Moon is close to the bright star Antares, low in the southwest at sunset. The Moon will actually occult the star as seen from an area which includes much of Japan and some areas of the south Pacific, but we won't see it from North America.
- Sep 26: The waxing gibbous Moon is less than 4 degrees below Saturn in the sky.

What's Up for October 2023

Partial/Annular Solar Eclipse

Maximum eclipse as seen from Winnipeg. *(Image: Stellarium)*

There is a solar eclipse on October 14th , as the Moon passes in front of the Sun as seen from Earth. The eclipse is a partial one as seen from all of Canada, with more of the sun being eclipsed the farther south and west you go. For a narrow path from Oregon through Texas, the eclipse will be annular, with a thin ring of sun still visible around the moon.

Circumstances for Winnipeg

Partial Eclipse Begins: 10:28 a.m. CDT

Maximum Eclipse: 11:42 a.m. CDT

Partial Eclipse Ends: 1:00 p.m. CDT

Two weeks later, a partial lunar eclipse occurs on October 28-29, but it is not visible from Manitoba.

Planetary Highlights

October skies this year feature all four of the gas giant planets in our solar system. **Saturn** is already up in the south-east as darkness falls, reaching its highest elevation (and thus best telescopic viewing) by 11 p.m. at the beginning of the month and before 9 p.m. by Hallowe'en. **Jupiter** rises about 8:30 p.m. at the beginning of the month and is likely to be the planetary highlight of the fall, rising high enough even from western provinces to climb out of the murky horizon air. Meanwhile, **Neptune** hovers below the circlet of Pisces the Fish, requiring at least binoculars or a small telescope to track it down. **Uranus** is between Jupiter and the Pleaides star cluster. It's technically visible to the un-aided eye under a dark sky as a faint star-like point, but most observers will use binoculars or a telescope to identify it.

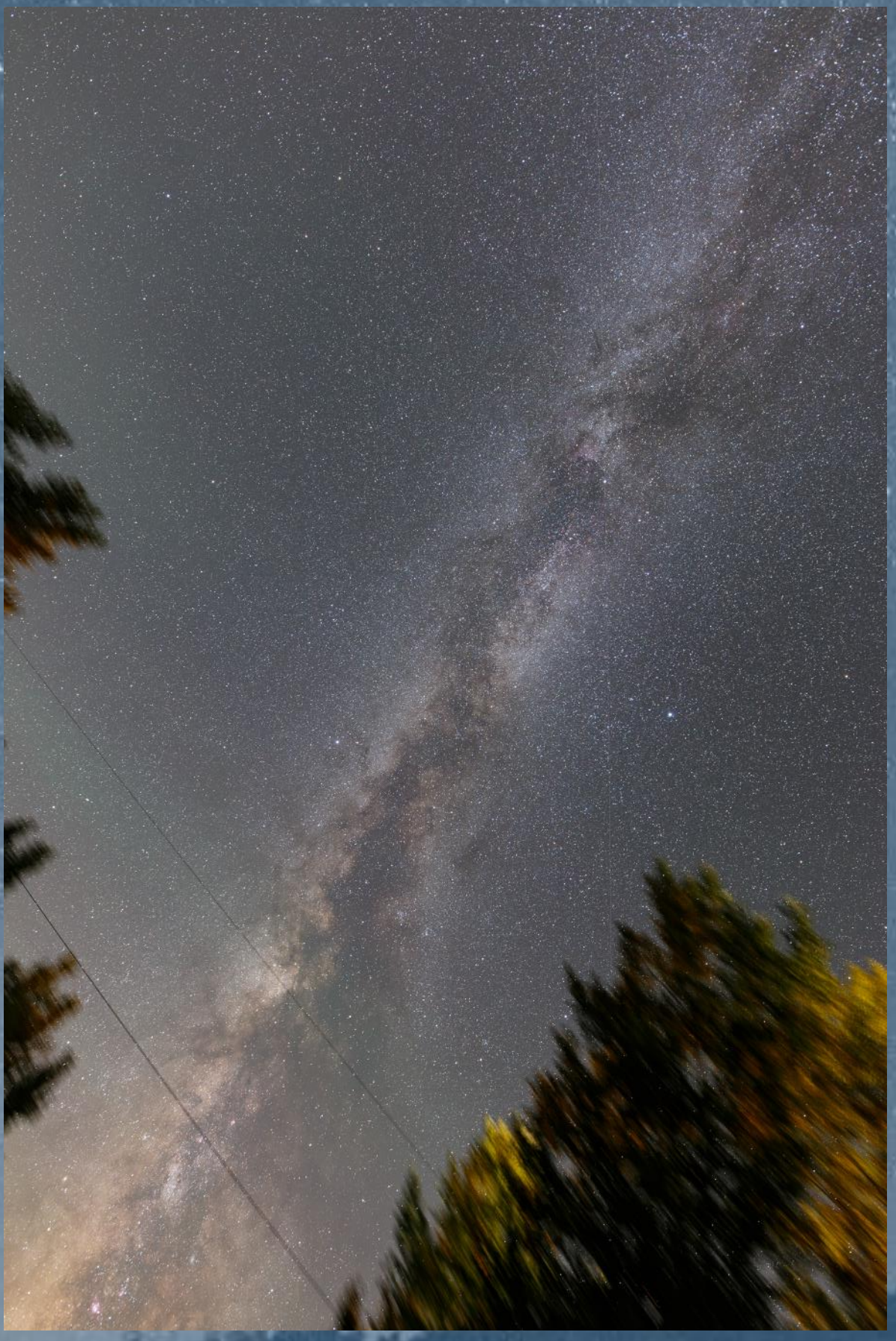
Of the other planets, **Mercury** begins the month very low in the east before sunrise, but quickly dives out of sight. It reaches superior conjunction on October 20th, passing behind the sun from our point of view. **Venus** is also in the morning sky but much higher, about 30 degrees above the east-southeast horizon by sunrise. **Mars** is lost in the evening twilight.

Photo Ops

- Oct 1-2: Jupiter is 3 degrees to the bottom right of the waning gibbous Moon.
- Oct 10 (morning sky): The waning crescent Moon is above and to the left of Venus.
- Oct 23 & 24: Saturn is close to the waxing gibbous Moon on both of these nights.
- Oct 28: The nearly-Full Moon is near Jupiter this evening.
- Oct 29: Uranus is in the same binocular field of view as the Moon.

Other events: Besides the pair of eclipses, two annual meteor showers peak this month. The **Draconids meteor shower** are often weak but occasionally have unexpected outbursts; they peak on the morning of October 9, with the Moon largely out of the sky. The **Orionids meteor shower** originates with Comet Halley, peaking on the night of October 21-22 with a waxing gibbous Moon in the sky. The best views will come before dawn on the 22nd after moonset.

Members' Gallery



Ivan Yuen writes:
"I've been to Steep Rock for 3 nights and the sky finally cleared (for 2 hours only) on the third night. Here is a Milky Way photo I took.
The sky is not as dark as Spruce Wood but still one of the best location for star gazing I encountered recently."
The image is a single 300—second exposure at ISO800 using a Canon 6D camera with Sigma Art 14mm lense at f/2.8. The camera was mounted on a Kenko Skymemo T (the same as the SkyWatcher Star Adventurer Mini).

Steep Rock Beach Park is on the eastern shore of Lake Manitoba about 2½ hours north of Winnipeg on Highway 6.

Members' Gallery (Continued)

(left) **Judy Anderson** relates her experience watching the Perseid meteor shower in August:

"I took this with a 14mm wide-angle lens on a DSLR 80D; 30 sec exposure. I like it with the meteor whizzing past Andromeda. There were quite a few meteors as we watched the whole sky for about 5 hours with Steve and Sheila, draped in blankets (which got wet from dew) on anti-gravity chairs. Some really bright or doubles one after the other in almost the same spot, and one with a skip that Jay's full-frame fisheye captured. The "best" was either a) an anti-Perseid (a sporadic meteor going toward the radiant instead of away, b) one that had a wide streaky trail and broke into pieces, or c) one that ended in a flash of brightness that cast a shadow (Jay saw the shadow and others saw the trail blaze out). Hard to decide!"

(right) Another of Judy Anderson's Perseid images, showing the effect of dew on the camera lense.

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

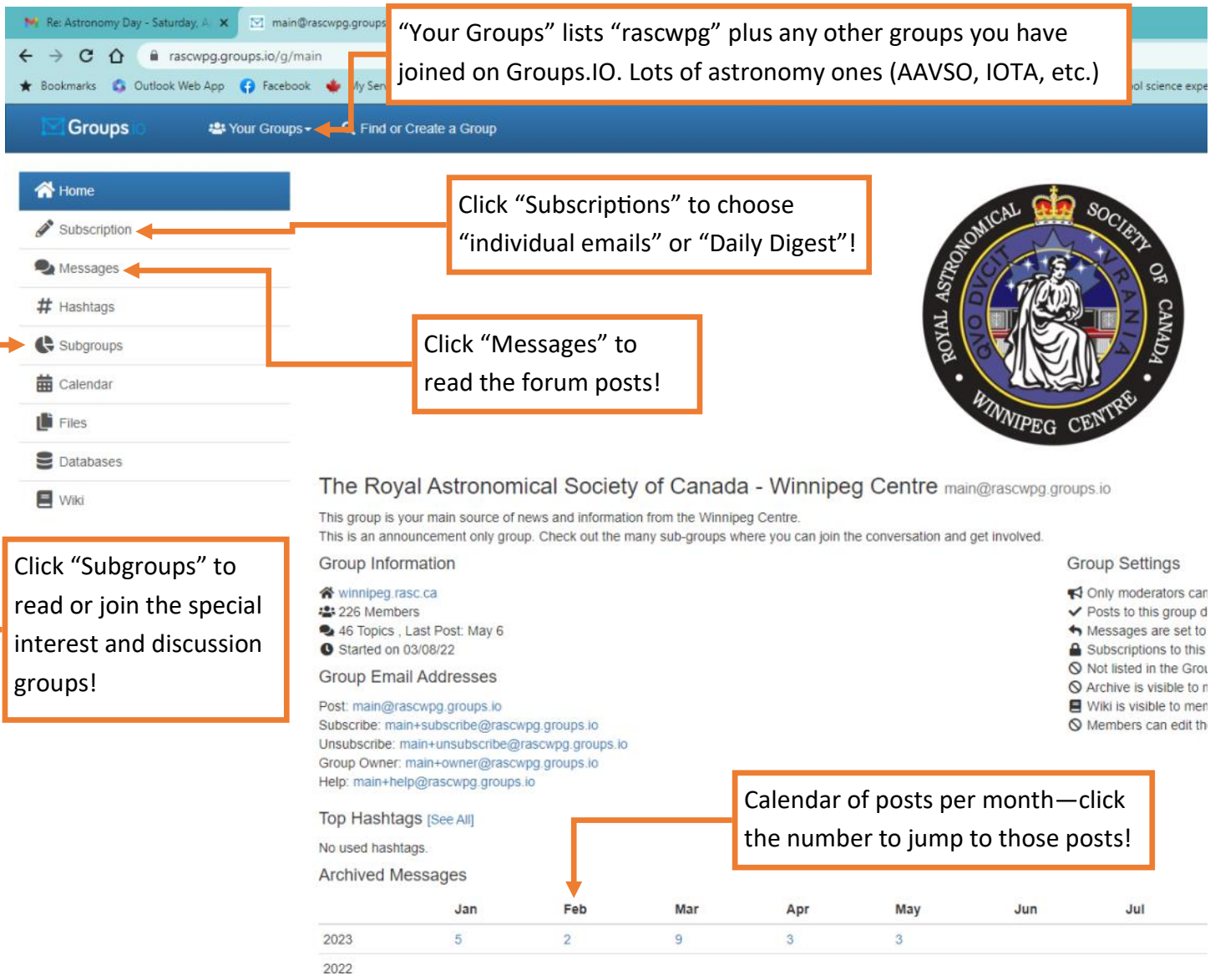
The Centre has moved to the Groups.IO platform for all of its forum and email services. This replaces the in-house forums and the old system of trying to mass-email all 200+ members. It really is a good system, both for the Council and for the users, but it is different and takes a bit of set-up.

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:

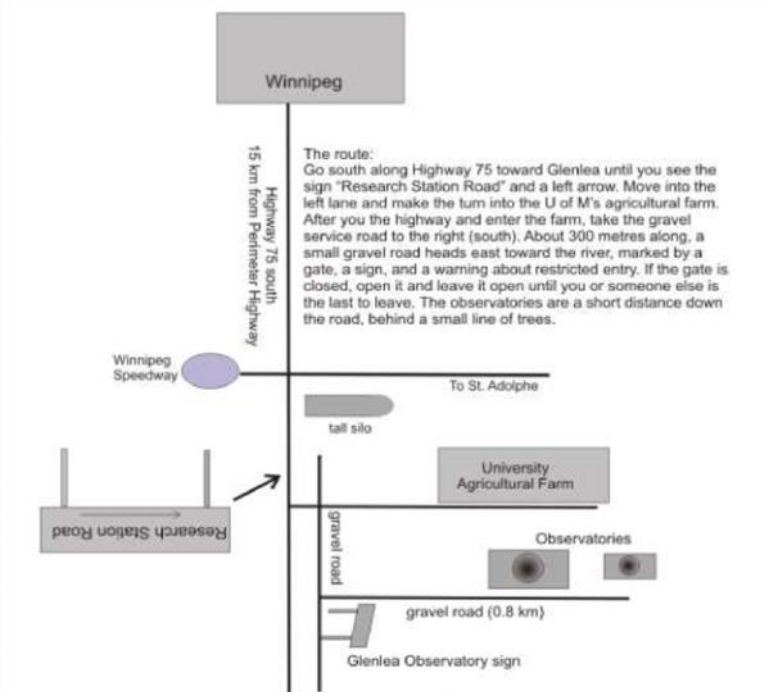
⇒ **if you unsubscribe from the "rascwpg-main" group, you will not receive Centre emails**—this is the only way they are sent out! Please don't do this, or you will not receive important information like noties of meetings, calls for elections, and other important stuff,

⇒ 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.

Glenlea Observatory

The Winnipeg Centre maintains a working observatory, pad, and warm room at the University of Manitoba's Research Farm. The observatory dome contains a 30cm (12") Meade LX200 telescope on a fork mounting. Members of the Centre who have taken the training course can reserve 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.