# Winnicentrics

Newsletter of the RASC Winnipeg Centre

March 2025

## Events at a Glance

**Thu Mar. 13, 2025:**
**Total Lunar Eclipse**
(see page 3)

**Fri Mar. 14, 2025:**
**Monthly Meeting & AGM**
Featured Speaker: Dr. Vesna Misolsevic-Zdjelar (see page 3)

**Sat Mar. 15, 2025:**
**Members' Observing Night**
Glenlea Observatory,
8pm start (see page 3)

**Fri Apr. 4, 2025:**
**Monthly Meeting**
Featured Topic: TBC

**Sat Apr. 5, 2025:**
**Members' Observing Night**
Glenlea Observatory,
8pm start

**Sat Apr. 5, 2025:**
**Spring Telescope Tune-up Workshop**
Our annual workshop to get our gear into shape for the beginning of the warmer weather observing season. Come and see demonstrations on collimation, optics cleaning, and getting your gear in shape. Event will be held at Eastview Church, and further details will be included in the April issue.

# AGM Special Edition

***by Scott Young***

Due to a time crunch, this issue of Winnicentrics contains only the information we need for the upcoming AGM in March; the rest of the March/April content will follow in a second issue in the next week or so, included another article by Gerry Smerchanski and a bunch more member images. Sorry for any inconvenience!

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# Elections for Council

At our upcoming AGM in March, several Council positions will become vacant and are up for election. The Nominating Committee (made up of Dennis Lyons, Scott Young, and Stan Runge) has provided the following list of open positions and the nominees for each. Nominations will also be taken from the floor at the AGM.

**Nominee for President**: Mark Irvine

**Nominee for Vice-President**: Judy Anderson

**Nominee for Treasurer**: James Fast

**Nominee for Councilor/Director**: Rhianna Cohen

**Nominee for Councilor**: Brian Stach

The incumbents in the positions of Secretary and the other Councilor/Director and Councilor positions are in the middle of their two-year terms and are not up for election.

A thank you to all of the volunteers and those who have served on Council. This is a group run by volunteers, and we depend on people who can help out in whatever capacity.

## Winnipeg Centre Officers & Volunteers

**President:** Dennis Lyons
**Vice-President:** Judy Anderson
**Secretary:** Scott Young
**Treasurer:** Mark Irvine
**Past President:** Bryan Stach
**Councillors:**
Wing Kwong
Daemon Nightshade
Stan Runge
Marc Sarrasin
gAIL Wise
Ed Wright

**National Representatives:**
Dennis Lyons & Bryan Stach

**Spruce Woods Star Party Chair:** Daemon Nightshade

**Webmaster:**
Marc Sarrasin

***Winnicentrics* Editor:**
Scott Young

**Glenlea Observatory Booking:**
Email observatory@winnipeg.rasc.ca

## 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 13.)

*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: my last Presidents Corner, and some amazing things have happened during my term. The RASC Winnipeg Centre was incorporated and new Bylaws passed. There is a working Finance, Fundraising, Observatory Committees and as usual The Spruce Woods Star Party Committee continues to deliver an excellent program. There are various workshops being held for all experience levels for the Members of the RASC Winnipeg Centre. There are Centre Volunteers who give their time to assist new members with their gear, and to benefit from what the Glenlea Observatory can offer. There have been countless outreach events big and small to the public. An active Council working on your behalf so that each member benefits in some way for being part of The RASC Winnipeg Centre. All of this could only happen if people like you step up and volunteer their time.

Haven't had the opportunity to volunteer yet? Haven't been asked yet you say? Well, I am asking you to become more involved. Some areas I have already listed. However, maybe you have a few minutes to put together a 5–15-minute presentation at the monthly meeting on anything related to Astronomy. Could be just showing the pictures you took on a recent vacation or at the cottage. Take a Green Laser Pointer course so you can be a spotter at an outreach event. Volunteering in the Winnipeg Centre does not mean committing to something forever. It means finding the hour or two, once in a while to say yes when the call goes out for volunteers.

In closing I do want to recognize all the volunteers who have served on Council during my time as President. They are a great bunch and were able to find some time to give back to their RASC Centre and fellow members. Without all of them and others the RASC Winnipeg Centre would not be what it has been and is today.

Clear skies,

Dennis Lyons,
President, RASC Winnipeg Centre

# March Centre Events

| Monthly Meeting and AGM<br>Friday, March 14, 2025 | 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 Theatre, enter through the front door and 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 Schultz Theatre is on the right.<br><br>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. (Unfortunately Boston Pizza is not live-streamed.) |
|---|---|
| 7:00 p.m. Beginner Session - Kim Hay, Kingston Centre RASC: "Solar Citizen Science"<br><br>7:30 p.m. Main Meeting<br>• Dennis Lyons, Welcome & Announcements<br>• Annual General Meeting and Elections<br>• Bryan Stach—*"What's Up?"*<br><br>**Featured Speaker: Dr. Vesna Milosevic-Zdjelar, University of Winnipeg**<br><br>Vesna is an experienced science communicator and will be speaking on how we can "trick" people into learning about the cosmos and our place within it. | |

## Thursday, Mar. 13, 2025: Total Lunar Eclipse

Winnipeg Centre has a front-row seat for the month's total lunar eclipse. Because of the late hour (11pm to 5am!) we are not doing an in-person outreach event, but we will be livestreaming the eclipse view provided the sky is clear. You can watch the live stream by tuning in to either the Winnipeg Centre's or The Manitoba Museum's YouTube channels.

## Saturday, Mar. 15, 2025: Members Observing Night

Join us starting at 8:00 p.m. for a farewell look at Jupiter in the big scope. We had excellent seeing for the February event and got some impressive views of ol' Jov. We'll also be doing tours of the facilities and some training on how to use the equipment. The event will run cloudy or clear.

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## March Sky Highlights

⇒ **Mercury** is at its best of the year for evening viewing, being visible under **Venus** for the first two weeks of March. By month's end both of the inner planets will have sunk into the sunset glare (although Venus will be visible in the morning sky before we lose sight of it in the evening sky).

⇒ The **Total Lunar Eclipse** begins late on the night of Thursday, March 13 and continues until the pre-dawn hours of Friday, March 14.

⇒ The Earth passes through the plane of **Saturn's rings** on March 23, but Saturn will be too close to the Sun for us to see it without its signature rings. By the time Saturn reappears in the morning sky in late May, the rings will be razor-thin but already visible again.

## Draft Bylaw Amendments

The following amendments are recommended by Council for adoption at the Annual General Meeting.

Moved to make the following amendments to the Centre's Bylaws:

1. Insert the following clause to Article 9 after "9.3 Finance Committee":

> "9.4 Observatory Committee
>
> > "9.4.1 The Observatory Committee shall be composed of a minimum of five (5) members of the Centre (a Chair plus 4), at least one of which is a current member of Council.
> >
> > "9.4.2 The Observatory Committee is responsible for:
> >
> > > "9.4.2.1 maintaining the Centre's buildings and equipment at the Glenlea Astronomical Observatory in operating condition, including regular and preventative maintenance and reasonable security of astronomical equipment and buildings; and
> > >
> > > "9.4.2.2 developing policies and training materials for facilities and equipment at Glenlea Astronomical Observatory."

and to re-number the following clauses in proper order;

2. Correct the reference in Article 8.10.1 from 8.8 to 8.9.

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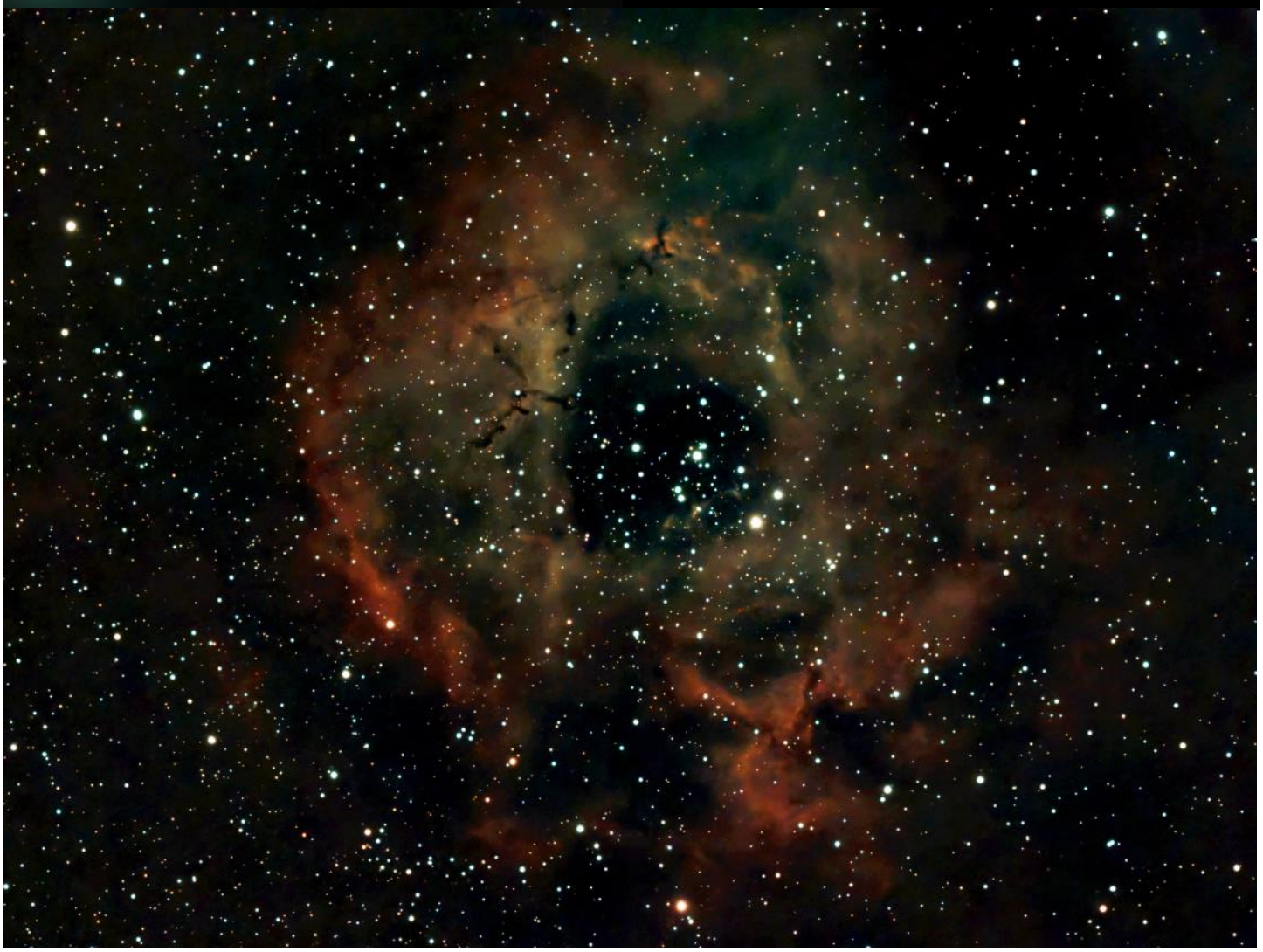
# Centre Member Benefits

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
- **Telescope Lending Library:** The Centre also has a number of portable telescopes that members can borrow. Speak to Mike Karakas at a meeting to see what is available.
- **Online Forums:** The Centre has a series of Forums on Groups.io (see page 10)
- 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!

Three deep-sky images by Rhianna Cohen, taken with her See-Star 50 smart telescope. Clockwise from upper left: the Orion Nebula (M42/43); the Crab Nebula (M1); and the Rosette Nebula (NGC 2237-8-9 & 2246, with embedded star cluster NGC2244).



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

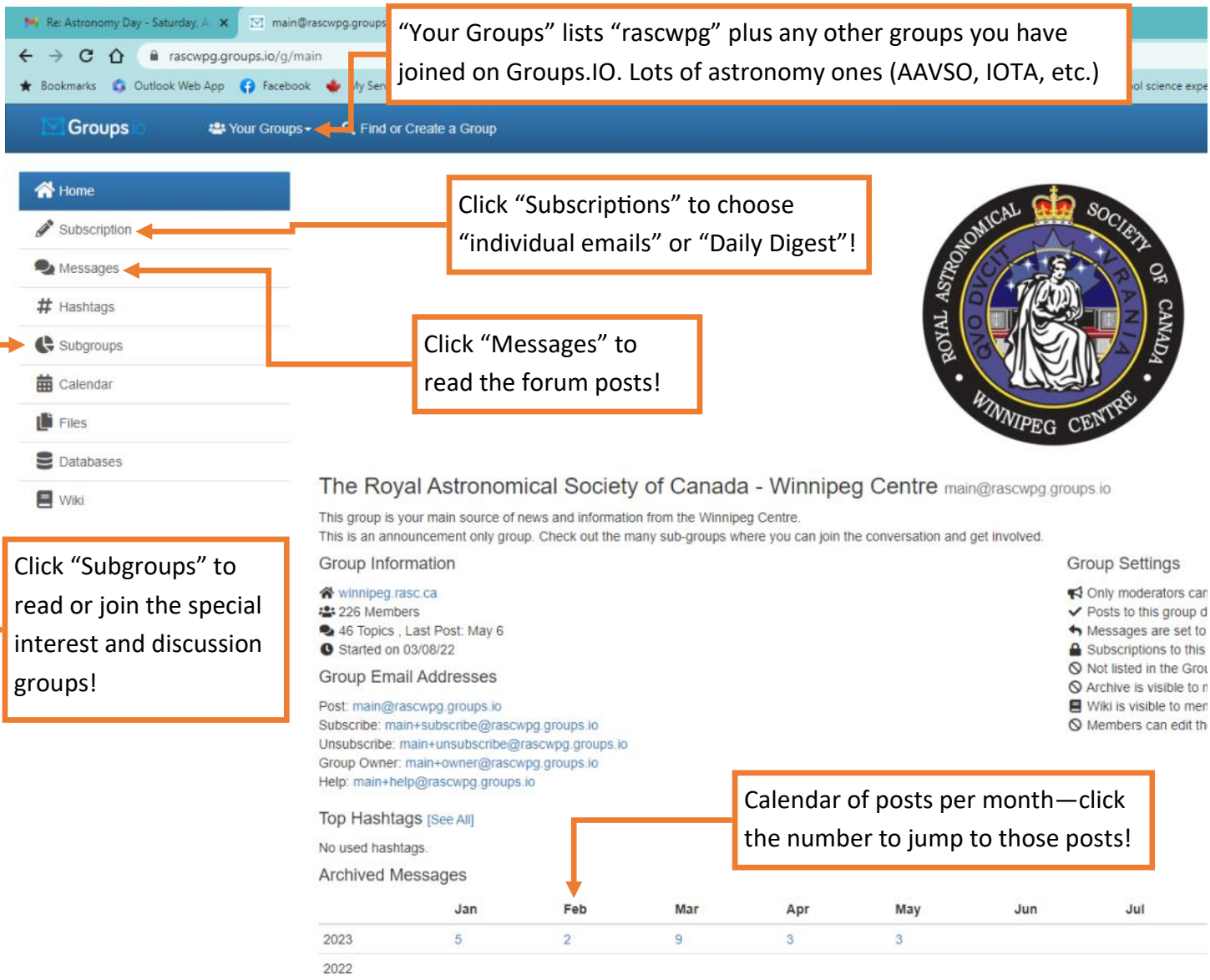
The Centre has moved to the Groups.IO platform for all of its forum and email services. This replaces the in-house forums and the old system of trying to mass-email all 200+ members. It really is a good system, both for the Council and for the users, but it is different and takes a bit of set-up.

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:

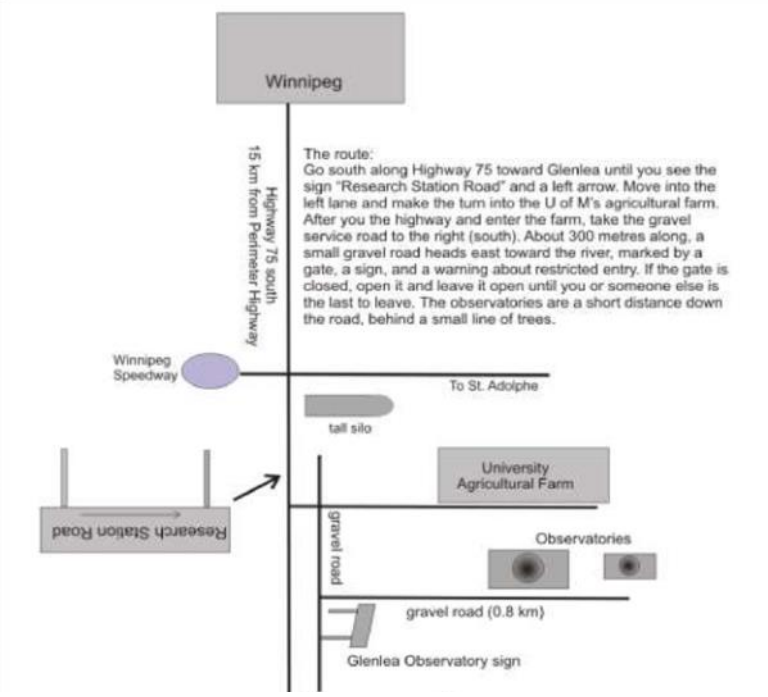
⇒ **if you unsubscribe from the "rascwpg-main" group, you will not receive Centre emails**—this is the only way they are sent out! Please don't do this, or you will not receive important information like noties of meetings, calls for elections, and other important stuff,

⇒ 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.