Winnicentrics

Newsletter of the RASC Winnipeg Centre

September/October 2025

Events at a Glance

Friday, Sep. 12, 2025: Monthly Meeting

Featured Speaker: "Astronomy vs. the Billionaire Space Race" , Dr. Samantha Lawler (see page 3)

Saturday, Sep. 13, 2025: Members' Observing Night
Glenlea Observatory, 8:00pm start (see page 3)

Sep. 19-21, 2025: Tipis and Telescopes
Dakota Tipi (see page 5)

Friday, Oct. 10, 2025: Monthly Meeting
Featured Speaker: Dr. Adam Sirek, Flight Surgeon for the Axiom 1 mission to the International Space Station. (see page 4)

Saturday, Oct 11, 2025: Southwood Circle Astronomy Night (rain date Oct 12)

Volunteers needed for this public outreach event! Ask someone on Council or email newsletter@winnipeg.rasc.ca to sign up.

Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025: Members' Observing Night
Glenlea Observatory, 8:00pm start (see page 4)

Find a Meteorite! How To Get the Most Out of the Centre's Loaner Metal Detector

by Ralph Croning

The Centre's Garrett Ace 250 loaner metal detector is a level above the base model Ace 150. In the right hands it can be a very good instrument and this article is written to help the user get the most out of it. There is an owner's manual and DVD included with the detector, so only the most important operational steps will be included here. The rest will be tips and tricks based on my personal experience with metal detectors in general, and knowledge gained from other experienced detectorists.

The Most Important First Steps

Metal detecting is a fun hobby that can provide hours of fun. That being said, the user should also have the detector adjusted to minimize strain and fatigue. This means the shaft length must be adjusted for the user's height. Adjust the shaft length so the user's arm hangs naturally and relaxed by the side, elbow slightly bent. The user's grip must be loose, and the rear of the coil should be about 12 inches in front of the leading foot, and the coil parallel to and about 1 to 2 inches above the ground. If hunting (continued on page XX)

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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 xx.)

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.

From the Editor

by Scott Young (newsletter@winnipeg.rasc.ca)

The Winnipeg Centre really is an amazing group of people, gathered together by our common love of astronomy (and astronomy-adjacent topics). When I first joined in 1987 (having found the group thanks to a Comet Halley public event), there were about 35 members. We still met the second Friday of the month at the University of Manitoba, although it was in St. Paul's College, next door to the existing St. John's College location. Back then, before cell phones and Zoom calls, when Pluto was a full-fledged planet, a small and dedicated group of volunteers put together a program every month that was the centerpiece of our activities. Members of today would recognize a lot of the format: there was "What's Up in the Sky", there was astronomical news and discoveries, and there was a featured speaker of some sort. Occasionally we'd have one of the local university professors, but often it was one of the members who would give the main presentation. Perhaps they'd built their own telescope, or we would see slide shows (on actual 35mm slides!) of someone's observing trip or astrophotography efforts.

Fast forward nearly four decades, and the Centre has come a long way. Now we all hear the latest astronomical news in near real time, and have no end of expert videos and sources of "what's up in the sky". Membership has increased sevenfold, and our featured speakers are often astronomers presenting current research from all over the continent. We have discussion forums, email, social media, and real-time teleconferencing that would have made NASA jealous in 1987. But we have the same sized Council as we did when we were 35 members.

One common thread through the past four decades at least has been this publication: *Winnicentrics*, the newsletter of the Winnipeg Centre of the RASC. It has been produced bimonthly with surprisingly few format changes despite the variety of Editors who have taken on the job, for one year or a dozen. I think this is my third time taking the Editor's chair in my Centre career, or maybe fourth… I've lost track. While most articles are written by other members, putting *Winnie* together takes probably 6 to 8 hours of formatting and editing every two months.

But *Winnicentrics* is different now than it was. It used to be *the* way members heard about meetings and events—now everyone gets an email directly. It used to be a good reminder of sky happenings—now all of that is available in real time from our phones. Really, the main function of *Winnie* now is as a forum for member images, but even that occurs via social media. So, I ask the question: Do we need *Winnie*? Or would those volunteer hours be better put towards other projects?

Either way, for me it is time to pass the Editorship on to someone else. If you are interested in becoming Editor or helping with the newsletter, please contact Council at newsletter@winnipeg.rasc.ca. Support and on-the-job training provided!

Cheers!

September Members' Meeting

Friday, Sep. 12, 2025 at 7 p.m.

7:00 p.m. Beginner's Session— Scott Young

7:30 p.m. Short Presentations

- Mark Irvine, Welcome & Announcements
- What's Up—Jay Anderson
- Member Show & Tell
- Social Break

8:30 p.m. Featured Speaker: "Astronomy vs. the Billionaire Space Race" by Dr. Samantha Lawler, University of Regina.

Dr. Samantha Lawler is an Associate Professor of Astronomy at Campion College at the University of Regina. A dynamic modeler with a strong background in observational astronomy, Dr. Lawler's recent interests include modelling and measuring pollution from satellites in low-earth orbit.

After the meeting, members are invited to retire to Boston Pizza on Pembina Highway south of Bison Drive for an informal social gathering.

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.

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.

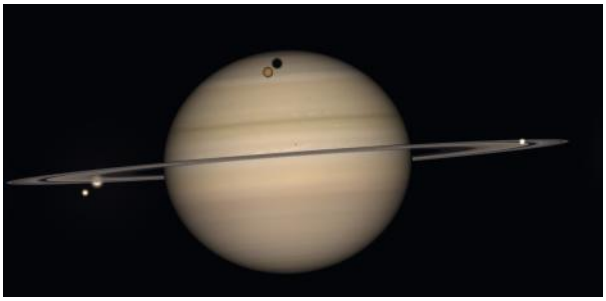
September Events

Saturday, Sep. 13: Members' Observing Night at the Glenlea Astronomical Observatory

Start time: 8:00 p.m. 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. The event runs cloudy or clear. Host: Wing Kwong.

Friday, Sep. 19: Titan Transit of Saturn

This event begins about 10:30 p.m. and sees Titan and its shadow both cross the visible disk of Saturn. High magnification viewing or imaging will be required to see the event. The image at right shows the view at 12:30 a.m. Central on the morning of the 20th.



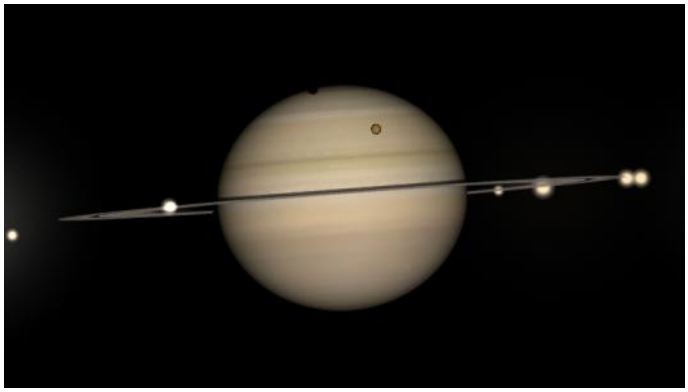
September 19-21, 2025: Tipis and Telescopes

The Centre is providing volunteers for this three-day dark sky event run by Dakota Tipi First Nation for five First Nations near Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. Volunteers will have get free camping space (bring your own gear) and all meals provided. Evening observing and daytime presentations by Indigenous Star Keepers like Wilfred Buck will make this a one-of-a-kind event. To volunteer contact Scott Young at space@manitobamuseum.ca.

Monthly Meeting Friday, October 10, 2025	
7:00 p.m. Constellation of the Month— gAIL Wise 7:30 p.m. Short Presentations • Mark Irvine, Welcome & Announcements • What's Up—Jay Anderson • What's New—Scott Young • Member Show & Tell • Social Break 8:30 p.m. Featured Speaker: Dr. Adam Sirek, Flight Surgeon for the Axiom 1 mission, a privately funded and operated mission to the International Space Station. After the meeting, members are invited to retire to Boston Pizza on Pembina Highway south of Bison Drive for an informal social gathering.	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. 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.

October Events

Sunday, Oct. 5: Titan Transit of Saturn



An early-evening event! Saturn's largest moon, Titan, begins its transit across the cloudtops of Saturn about 7:30 p.m. until 12:40 a.m. Central Time; Titan's shadow just skims the north pole of Saturn from about 10:30 p.m. to 12:35 a.m. Central Time. The image at right shows the view about 11:00 p.m. Central.

Saturday, Oct. 11: Southwood Circle Astronomy Night

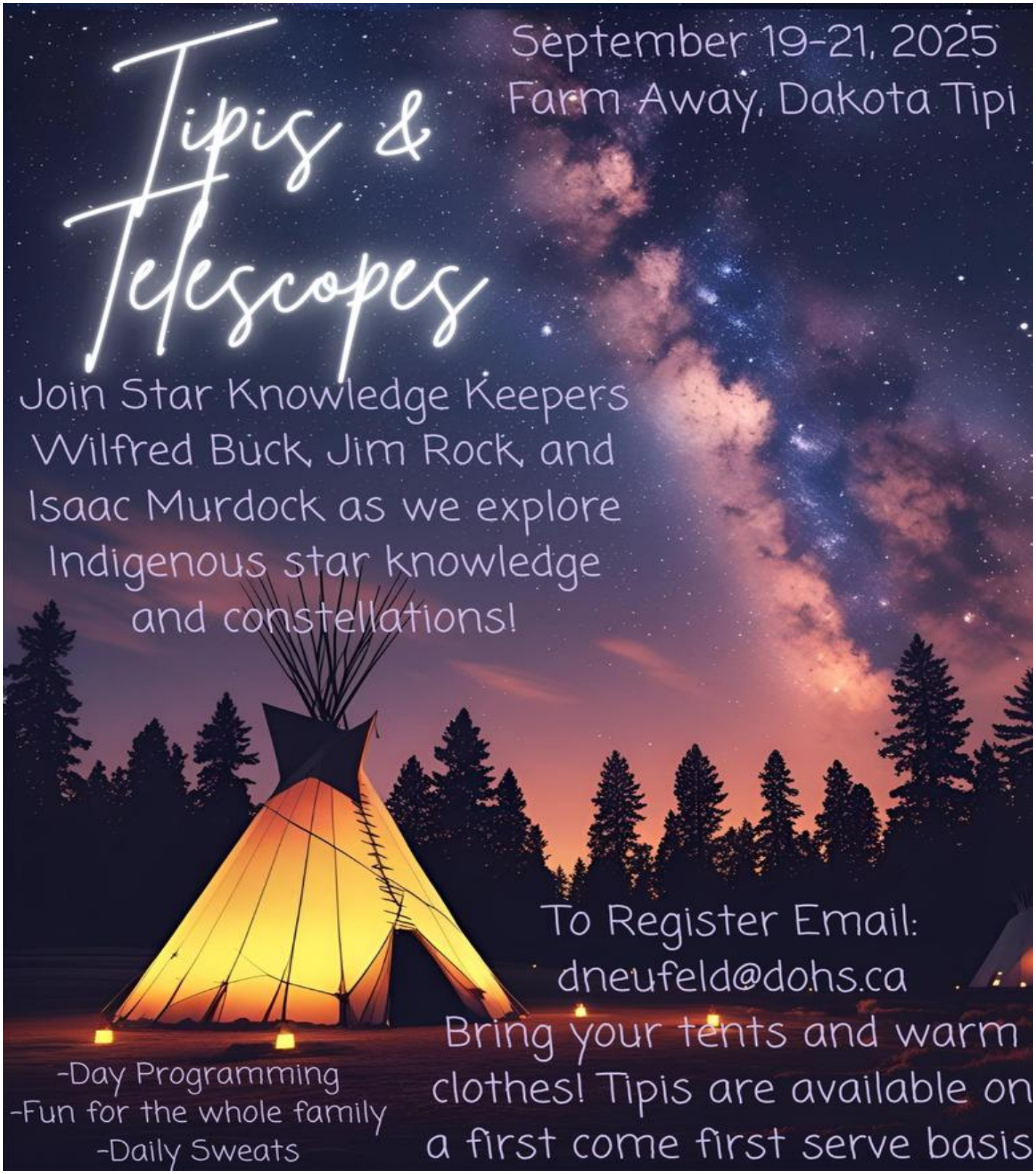
This public outreach event is presented in partnership with University of Manitoba. In case of inclement weather the event will be postponed until Sunday, October 12. More details TBA.

Saturday, Oct. 18: Members' Observing Night at Glenlea

Start Time: 7:30 p.m. 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 is cloudy, the event will run but will focus on training to use the facility. Host: James Fast will help people learn how to Star Hop to find objects in the sky.

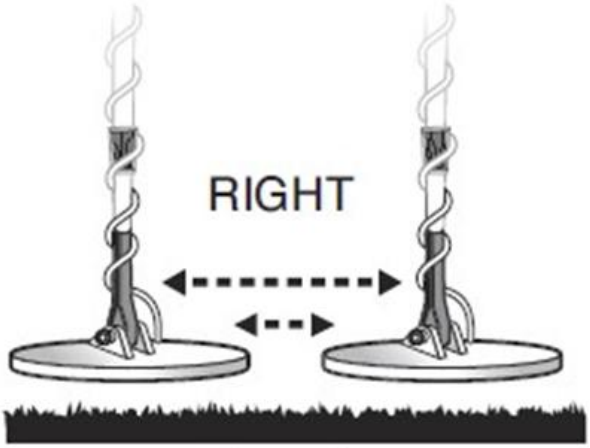
Friday, Oct. 31: Astro Trick or Treat

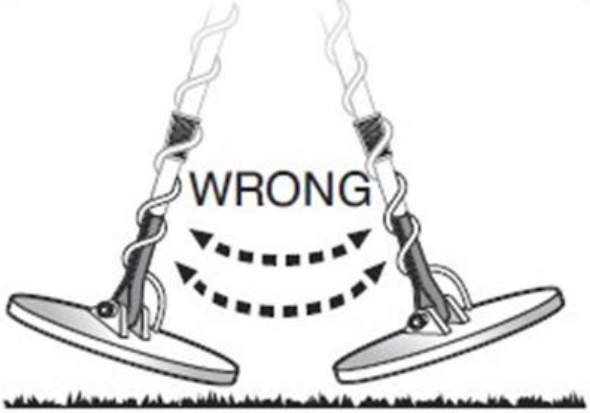
Hallowe'en is a great time for some sidewalk astronomy! You can point out star patterns like the Big Dipper, the Summer Triangle, and the Square of Pegasus, and check heavens-above.com to see if there are any bright satellite passes scheduled. With a telescope you can share waning gibbous Moon and even Saturn's rings with the kids as part of their "treat".



Winnipeg Centre members are providing telescope volunteers for this event. Volunteers will receive free camping space and all meals provided. To volunteer please contact Scott Young at space@manitobamuseum.ca.

(continued from page 1) in grassy areas, it is OK to have the bottom of the coil rub against the grass. Too high off the ground and one loses detecting depth. Once the shaft has been adjusted to the user's height, the swing is most important. Metal detectors are designed to be swung in a tight arc in front of the user while maintaining the coil parallel to the ground and at a constant height of 1 to 2 inches. Swinging the coil like a pendulum is the incorrect way. The user mustn't rush the swing a full swing cycle. Right to left and back to right again should take about 4 seconds, or 2 seconds per arc. Walking forward slowly is advisable and arcs should overlap so as to cover the most ground improving the chances of finding objects. See the following three diagrams.





Helpful Tips and Tricks

The metal detector produces a magnetic field in the shape of a cone above and below the detector. Therefore the coil's wire near the coil connector should be well secured. If it is loose and the wire is moved by brush or twigs, it will produce a false signal. The coil wire should be tightly coiled around the shaft but with enough slack at each end to allow the coil to be bent forward and backwards. Avoid a loosely coiled wire as this can snag when hunting in areas of heavy bush.

When sweeping, do not scrape the coil over bare soil, sand, pebbles or rocks. This will wear out the bottom of the coil housing and cause irreversible damage over time. Also, do not use the detector in the rain. The control box isn't waterproof. The coil however is and can be used in very shallow water at the beach. Ensure the coil is completely dry and clean after hunting at the beach. Any sand should be wiped off, especially where the coil is attached to the shaft.

Breakfast by th
Gerry's laser-g

(Images: Bryar

It's a good idea to always carry spare batteries. The Centre does not provide these and are your responsibility to buy. Do not use new and old batteries together. If the detector isn't being used for an extended period, remove the batteries. If returning the detector with batteries, remove and store them in a plastic zipper bag. If the batteries are close to depletion or depleted, dispose of them in a safe and responsible manner.

Can I Keep It?

When detecting in public areas the metal detectorist's Code of Ethics must be followed. This includes, but not limited to, the following compilation from the Minelab website.

- Do not trespass; always respect private property and do no metal detecting without the owner's permission.
- It is advisable to get permission in writing, and to get agreement in writing first to avoid disputes regarding the ownership of any subsequent finds. *(continued on next page)*

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- Never do anything that might contaminate wells, creeks or other water supplies.
- Respect the country code, leave gates as they are found, do not damage crops, never deliberately disturb wild or domestic animals.
- Never litter, always gather or collect any trash or debris you create or find.
- Leave as little sign of your passing as possible.
- Always use the correct digging or probing equipment to make the least intrusion or marks.
- Always fill in your holes, including in ploughed fields and beaches. Never throw trash finds back in the hole.
- Report the discovery of any items of possible significant historical value to a local historian or museum in accordance with the latest legislation of your area.
- Never go metal detecting around archaeological monuments.
- Report any live ammunition or other potentially lethal or toxic objects you may find to authorities after carefully noting or marking the location. Do not attempt to move or interfere with any such devices.
- Report all finds to the landowner/occupier.

And please remember, this metal detector is a privilege of membership in the Winnipeg Centre and as such it should be treated with care so other members can get as much enjoyment from it as you did. Please wipe off any dust on the detector with a soft cloth before returning it. DO NOT use water or a dripping wet cloth for this. If needed, a slightly damp cloth may be used for stubborn stains.

On a final note, have fun with it. If hunting for meteorites, the Ace 250 will detect iron meteorites only. A small iron meteorite specimen has been included with the detector as a "drop down" sample to give the user an idea of what one would sound like. For meteorite hunting, use the detector in "All Metal" mode. Be prepared to dig every signal as some ferrous objects, including garbage, will sound similar to an iron meteorite. If you have any questions specific to meteorite hunting, feel free to contact myself or Stan Runge. We are always happy to answer any queries. The User's Manual will provide you with all you need to know about how best to use the detector for other targets such as coins, jewellery and relics.

Happy Hunting!!

Ralph Croning is a Winnipeg Centre member and meteorite hunter who has found many meteorite specimens in the field. His self-published book, "Meteorite Hunting and Collecting: The Enthusiast's Guide", is a must-read for anyone interested in collecting or hunting for meteorites.

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, a composting toilet, 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, and see the article on page XX for our latest addition!

Online Forums: The Centre has a series of Forums on Groups.io (see page 10)

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.

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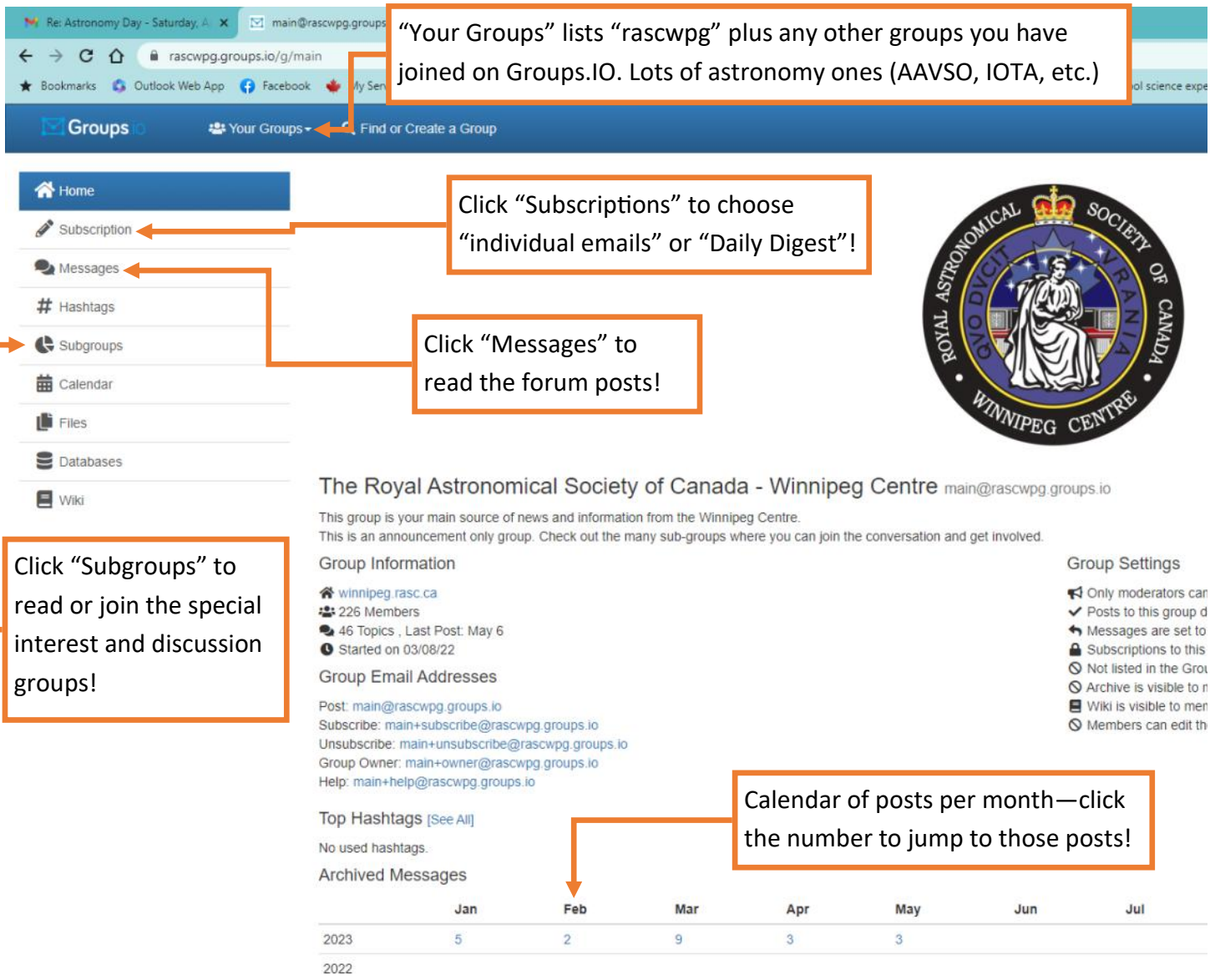


There's lots more than just the main announcement list, though. Click on "Subgroups" on the left-hand menu, and you'll be presented with a list of the various special interest forums attached to the rascwpg group. So far, there is a solar group, a sketching group, a binoculars group, a groups for posting 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:

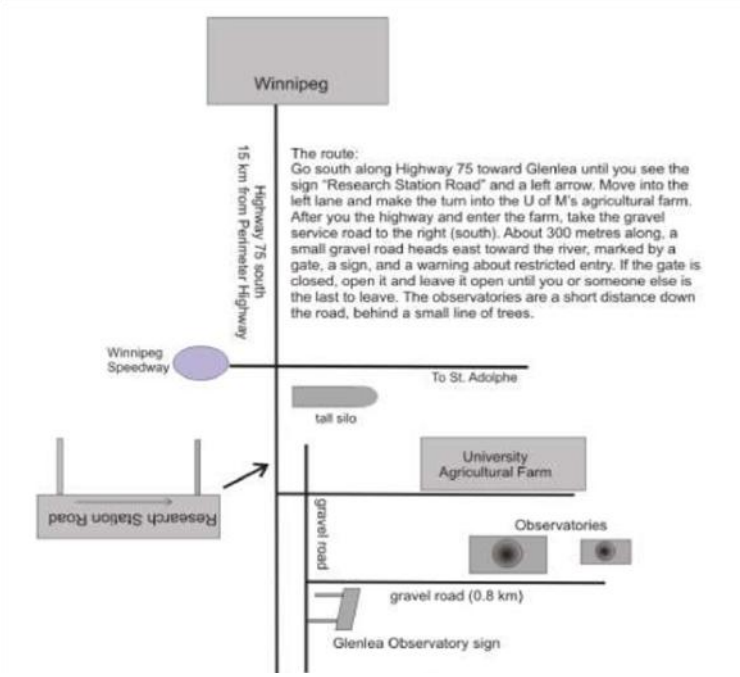
⇒ **if you unsubscribe from the "rascwpg-main" group, you will not receive Centre emails**—this is the only way they are sent out! Please don't do this, or you will not receive important information like notices of meetings, calls for elections, and other important stuff,

⇒ 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 Astronomical 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.