Coming Attractions

Friday, October 9, 2026:
Monthly Meeting

Featured Presentation:

Serendipity in Astronomy. Part of my Astronomical Journey...Get Out There and Look!

Alan Hwang, New Mexico

Saturday, October 10, 2026

Members' Observing Night

Glenlea Observatory,
7:00pm start (see page 9)

Friday, November 13, 2026:

Monthly Meeting

Featured Presentation: Astro-Shopping

James Fast & Scott Young

Saturday, November 14, 2026

Members' Observing Night

Glenlea Observatory,
7:00pm start

Winnicentrics

Newsletter of the Winnipeg Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

Spruce Woods Star Party was spectacular this year

2026 will go down as one of the best SWSPs because of the pristine night skies on three of the four nights and a pretty decent night on the fourth. The event, held between September 10 and 13, was blessed by a large upper-level ridge that kept skies clear at night (though it made the days and some evenings cloudy and even brought a touch of rain). About 50 members attended; many seemed scared off by forecasts of rain, even though amounts were predicted to be low and nights were largely clear.

The main tent went up without a fuss, even though Gerry wasn't there to super-vise, the first time in many years.

Sky Quality Meter readings touched a bit over 21.5 on the darkest part of the last night. That is a value just above Bortle 2 for those who keep score that way. Probably would have made it to Bortle 2 except for the glow of the Milky Way.

Dew was a significant problem, but most late-night observers were equipped to handle it and, if not, a small heat gun was available to help out. Pretty typical conditions for September.

John Childs is all smiles as he receives a Dwarf Mini from Daemon Nightshade

Gerry Smerchanski had a clear sky for most of his star-hopping presentation, a great improvement over last year and when it was done, shared visual treasures on an 18" Dob that he brought along.

The Swap Table had many goodies this year, but there weren't a lot of takers, even though prices were very good. Even free stuff had limited take-up.

The Saturday presentation on asteroids introduced a new target for dedicated observers and photographers.

Sunday breakfast was a treat, with a warming morning sun to chase off a cold night. Prizes were handed out after the breakfast and the big winner was John Childs (left), who took home a Dwarf mini camera. Three days later, he was deep into astrophotography.

YouTube

https://bit.ly/2FrcZJZ

https://bit.ly/3iSmFed

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

Images from the Spruce Woods Star Party

October Meeting Schedule
Friday, October 9, 2026 at 7 p.m.

7:00 pm: Beginner's Session: gAIL Wise: *Aquarius*

7:30 pm: Regular session

- Announcements
- Annual General Meeting and elections
- What's Up? – upcoming events in the sky
- What's New? – new discoveries in astronomy
- Astrophoto corner: *The 2026 Total Solar Eclipse*
  Judy Anderson and Abdul al Manni

8:30 pm: Social break

9:00 pm: Main presentation: *Serendipity in Astronomy. Part of my Astronomical Journey…Get Out There and Look!*

Alan Hwang, New Mexico

10:00 pm: after-meeting pizza at Boston Pizza

November Meeting Schedule
Friday November 10, at 7 p.m.

7:00 pm: Beginner's Session: Scott Young

7:30 pm: Regular session

9:00 pm: Main Presentation:

- Announcements
- Annual General Meeting and elections
- What's Up? – upcoming events in the sky
- What's New? – new discoveries in astronomy
- Astrophoto corner: *Photographing meteors*
  Jay Anderson

8:30 pm: Social break

9:00 pm: Main presentation: *Astro-Shopping*

James Fast & Scott Young

10:00 pm: after-meeting pizza at Boston Pizza

Regular meetings of the Winnipeg Centre are normally held in the Robert B. Schultz Lecture Theatre in St. John's College at the University of Manitoba, 92 Dysart Road. Free parking is available in the lot across the street. The theatre is on the lower (basement) floor of the College. Meetings are usually held on the second Friday of each month from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

After the meetings, members who wish to do so usually retire for pizza and more conversation about astronomical topics.

Meetings can also be attended on Zoom beginning at 7:00 pm on meeting nights. Zoom links are provided in an email note several days ahead of the meeting date.

Dates may be amended to avoid conflicts with exam schedules and Bomber games.

Meeting proceedings are also available on YouTube after the event.

Our thanks to DwarfLab for the donation of three Dwarf smartscopes to the Centre: a Dwarf mini and two Dwarf 3s

Upcoming Events in September, October and November

September 30: Moon in the Pleiades
October 4: Saturn at opposition; best view of the planet
October 5: Moon rises with Mars after 1 am
October 6, 3:40—4:06 am: Occultation of Jupiter and its moons by the Moon
First two weeks of October: Zodiacal light in the morning in a dark sky
October 11: Mars moves into the Beehive Cluster after 1 am
October 21: peak of Orionid meteor shower
October 24: Venus at inferior conjunction, 6.6 degrees below the Sun
November 1: Moon, Mars, and Jupiter high in the morning sky
November 1: Venus rises in the morning twilight
November 7: Venus and a thin crescent Moon in the morning
November 15: Mars and Jupiter conjunction
November 18: Leonid meteor shower peaks

Alexandr Salamatov captured this image of the Eagle Nebula from Glenlea using an Askar 88 mm f/4.8 telescope on a Star Adventurer mount. Exposure was 55x3 minute subs using an ASI 585 camera with an Optolong LPro filter.

President's message – September – October 2026
Greetings everyone:

It's *Winnicentrics* time again and since mid-summer we've been a busy centre!

On the outreach front, we supported the On the Move daycare at Carpathia School, our third year in a row supporting this event. Children never cease to amaze us with their knowledge and amazement of and in astronomy. We had several members attend to assist the children observe the Sun and daytime Moon: thanks go out to Ivan, Wing, Vicky, & Gordon. In particular, Gordon entertained the children with some Astronomy-themed slight of hand and magic tricks. Thanks also to Wing for making all the arrangements for the last two years for this event.

Our Spruce Woods Public event was held on August 22nd with many volunteers on hand. The arrangement is part of a partnership agreement we have the Manitoba Provincial Parks to provide Astronomy related support and lectures to the campers on a mutually agreed date in exchange for use of the Park's Winter site for the membership's Star Party.

The SWSP was another great success this year with approximately 60 members registered for the weekend of September 10th – 13th. Gerry hosted his annual laser guided sky tour, and many members enjoyed clear dark skies for astrophotography and visual observing. There were some terrific highlights: looking through the eyepieces of Mike's Ceravolo Maksutov Cassegrain and Gerry's (formerly, Cliff's) 18" Obsession Dob. These were part of the weekend's events, led by Daemon and the Spruce Woods Star Party Committee. Congratulations to Daemon and the Committee!

On Astronomy Day, September 19th we supported the Southwood Circle Astronomy Night event with many members of the Centre and public in attendance. Again thank you to Wing for organizing this event and all members in attendance.

We continue to monitor the progress on our Partnership between the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and our Centre for establishing a second Dark Sky preserve at The Weston Family Tall Grass Prairie Interpretive Centre near Stuart burn. The National RASC Dark sky committee continues to work on our application, but progress is never as quick as we'd like, but it is continuing.

The donated equipment I spoke about in my last update was successfully sold to members of the Centre on a best-offer basis and now there are some spiffy telescopes being returned to the night sky. Thanks to the Observatory Committee for managing this, the donors who provided the telescopes, and to Gord for shepherding the equipment sales, tracking of bids, and logistics of transferring the equipment to the new owners.

Lastly the Observatory Committee was able to strike a partnership arrangement with the University of Manitoba to have Observatory Road resurfaced with some new gravel, which helped with drainage and stability of the roadbed as well as safer access and egress from our Observatory Site. Thanks to those who helped with this: Jay, Ed, and Mark.

As always if you have an interest in getting involved, we can always use your time, talent and resources. Reach out to me at President@Winnipeg.RASC.ca or any member of Council to volunteer for your Centre

Have a great fall everyone, & Clear dark skies!
Mark

Scenes from the Summer

2026 was a busy summer for the Winnipeg Centre, with two events at Spruce Woods Provincial Park and public events at Assiniboine Park and the University of Manitoba. Not to mention the annual BBQ at Glenlea. If you missed some of them, here are a few scenes to catch the flavour.

Public Observing at Spruce Woods
August 22-23

This is a public event we do every year around the time of the Spruce Woods Star Party—it's essentially a "thank you" to the Park for providing us with space for the star party. The Centre conducts an afternoon presentation (Gerry's "solar system") with solar observing and then an evening presentation and star party with Gerry's laser constellation show. It's a popular event though crowds were a bit lower, probably because it was held two weeks before the long weekend. The daytime skies were brilliant but the evening, less cooperative.

Assiniboine Park Public Star Party
July 1

We had a good crowd for the Assiniboine Park show, but a daylight event on a warm July 1 always has a lot of traffic. Even the geese dropped in. Alas, the sky didn't cooperate as much as it could have, though we managed a few views of the Sun in between the clouds.

Southwood Circle Public Star Party
September 19

We were dodging thin clouds for the star party at the University of Manitoba, but still managed a steady collection of interested sky watchers when they found us on their evening strolls. The crews setting up for AC/DC at the Stadium gave us a taste of the light show that the band was going to be using the next evening.

Spruce Woods Star Party

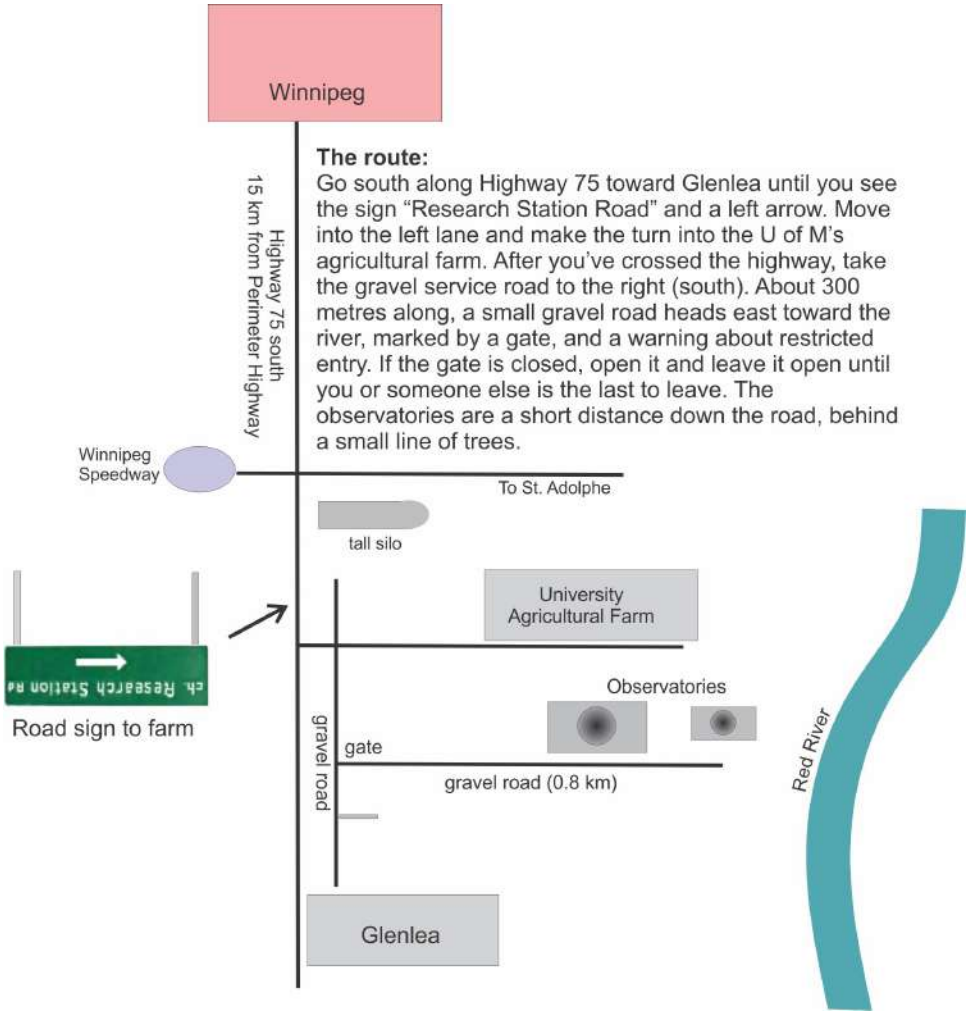
This year's SWSP was one of the best ever for clear dark skies. This year featured a number of smartscopes in the field, and so the photographers had a field day (or a field night?). We had a touch of rain on one day, but it was light and easy to ignore. Nights were humid, with lots of dew, but that's par for the course for a September star party. Sunday morning brought a marvelous blue sky and a welcome warming sun to chase away the night's chills. It also dried the tent, making it easy to fold up and put away.

Paul Shelton captured this wide-field image of NGC 7331 and Stephan's Quintet using a TEC 140 f/7 telescope. This image is composed from only 6 luminance frames, along with appropriate darks and flats. Paul counted over 50 galaxies in the field.

Mark Irvine used a SeeStar to capture this image of NGC 7635 (the Bubble Nebula) and the open cluster Messier 52 in Casseopeia at the Spruce Woods Star Party. The Bubble is faintly visible near the bright central star and nebulosity in the image. The "bubble" is created by the stellar wind from a young, hot O-type star embedded in a giant molecular cloud. The objects lie about 9,700 light years distant.

Getting to Glenlea Observatory

The Winnipeg Centre maintains a working observatory and warm room at the University of Manitoba's Research Farm, 15 km south of the city. The observatory contains a 30 cm Meade telescope on a fork mounting. Members of the Centre may sign out the use of this telescope provided they have first taken a short instruction course on its use.



The Meade provides outstanding views of the night sky. Its large aperture collects more than 1800 times as much light as the human eye. It is capable of magnifying more than 500 times under favourable conditions.

The warm room provides a convenient place for members to take refuge from winter temperatures and summer mosquitoes, or to wait out a passing cloud. The building also provides desk space and lighting for planning a night's observing session. A cement pad with power in front of the warm room and observatory provides a convenient space to place members' telescopes while conducting personal observing programs.

Entrance is by a service road parallel to Highway 75. There is a gate across the road that is not locked. It can be left open while you use the site, but should be closed by the last person leaving.

Etiquette requires that you approach the observing site with your headlights off if that's possible on your model of car. If possible, use your parking lights to drive toward the observing site. Proceed slowly, and be careful about parked cars along the road, or people walking. If you cannot turn off your headlights, dim them and turn them off when you reach the observatory. 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.

In order to access the facilities, you will need a key. These are available to all Centre members.

Remember to close up the buildings that you used, the observatory dome, and the gate, if you are the last one to leave.

To get there, go south on Highway 75 (Pembina Highway) until you see a sign pointing to the University Research Station. Turn into the Station, then make a sharp right turn (south) along the gravel access road. When you come to a steel bar farm gate along the access road, open the gate (if it's closed) and go down the dirt road to the observatory. Close up when you leave.

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

The Centre uses the Groups.IO platform for all of its forum and email services. To join, go to 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 a reply telling you how to set up a password. Once you've done this and logged in, you'll see a blue menu across the top of your screen (**See the diagram on the next page**). If you click on "Your Groups", you will see that you are already subscribed to "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).

The "main" group is used by Council to communicate with all members. This helps prevent important emails from ending up in a spam folder, and it also archives the email where you can see it again. This "main" group can only be accessed by the Council Executive; it generates a few emails per month at most, so it shouldn't overwhelm you with messages.

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. These include 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, and a solar system imaging group. 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" there, and start getting the posts emailed to you, but you can also read them without joining.

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 allows you to select how 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) or as a "Daily Digest," where all messages for the day are collected into one email.

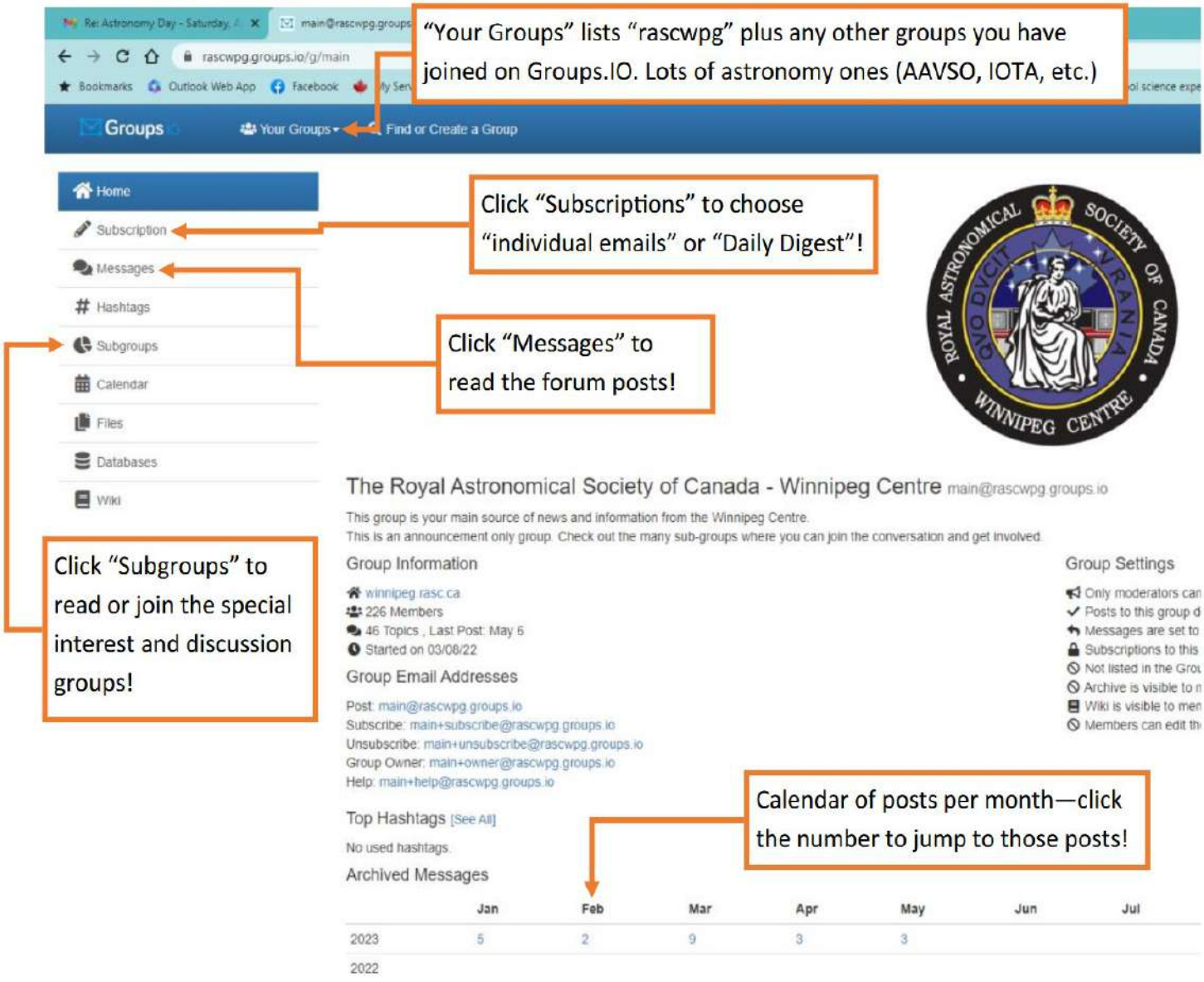
Every time someone posts to a group, every member in that group gets an email according to their personal settings. The messages are also archived, forming a valuable reference of the Centre's activities and discussions. There are some really good nuggets of wisdom in the forums already, and it would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

The key things to remember about Groups.IO:

- **If you unsubscribe from or haven't subscribed to 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, special observing sessions, and other important stuff,
- Most conversation happens in the "rascwpg-general" forum. 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.

Mark Irvine took this image of the Helix Nebula on September 13 from Spruce Woods Provincial Park.


"Your Groups" lists "rascwpg" plus any other groups you have joined on Groups.IO. Lots of astronomy ones (AAVSO, IOTA, etc.)
rascwpg.groups.io/g/main
Groups
Your Groups
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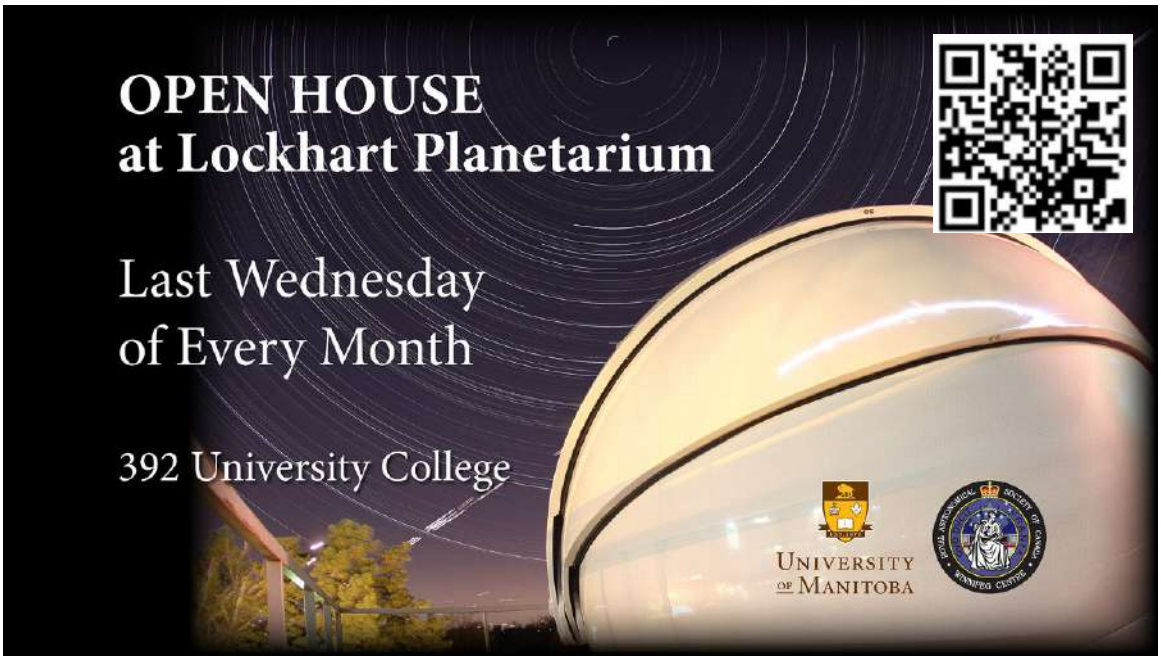
Click "Subscriptions" to choose "individual emails" or "Daily Digest"!
Click "Messages" to read the forum posts!
Click "Subgroups" to read or join the special interest and discussion groups!
The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Winnipeg Centre main@rascwpg.groups.io
This group is your main source of news and information from the Winnipeg Centre.
This is an announcement only group. Check out the many sub-groups where you can join the conversation and get involved.
Group Information
winnipeg.rasc.ca
226 Members
46 Topics , Last Post: May 6
Started on 03/08/22
Group Email Addresses
Post: main@rascwpg.groups.io
Subscribe: main+subscribe@rascwpg.groups.io
Unsubscribe: main+unsubscribe@rascwpg.groups.io
Group Owner: main+owner@rascwpg.groups.io
Help: main+help@rascwpg.groups.io
Group Settings
Top Hashtags [See All]
No used hashtags.
Archived Messages
Calendar of posts per month—click the number to jump to those posts!
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul
2023 5 2 9 3 3
2022


OPEN HOUSE
at Lockhart Planetarium
Last Wednesday
of Every Month
392 University College
University of Manitoba