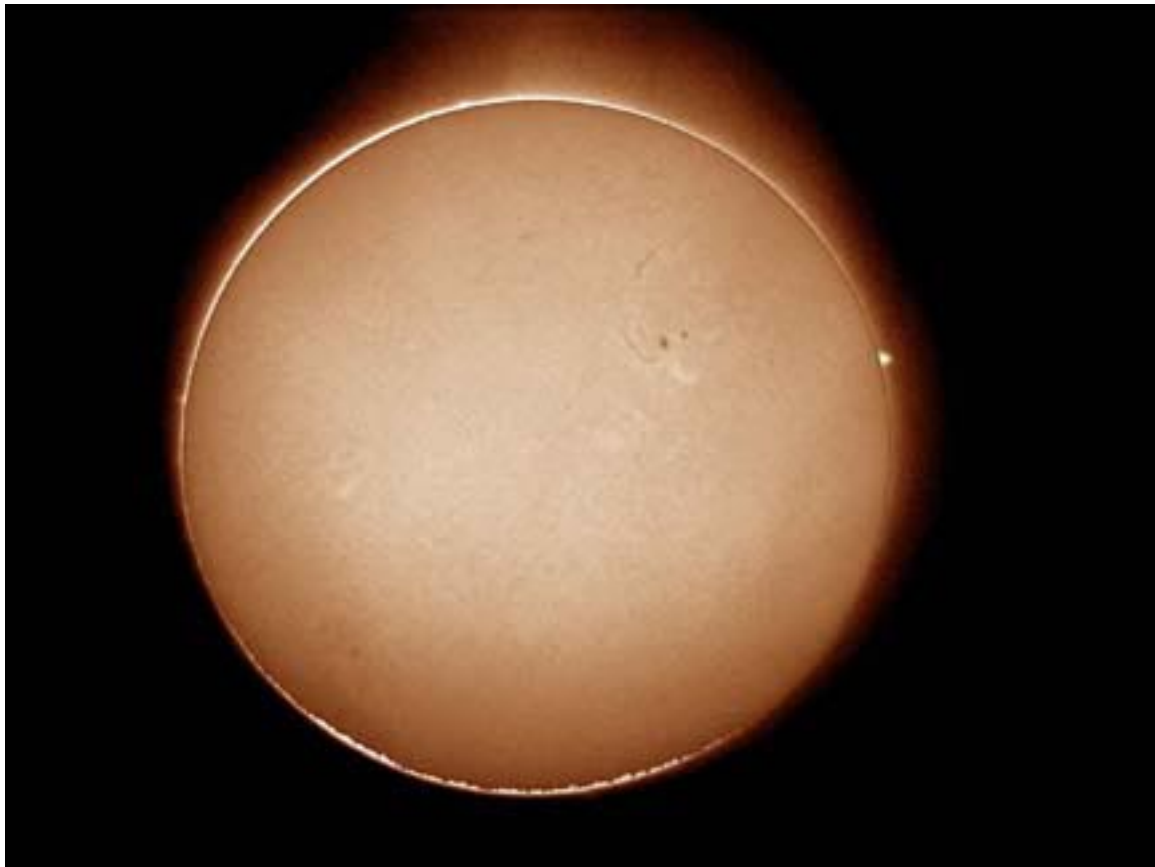


NIAGARA
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Volume 25 #5
November/December 2004

WHIRLPOOL



Philip Downey took this picture of the sun at Starfest in August with his Nikon 3100 and Les and Deloris Welgan's Coronado Maxscope 40. The Maxscope is a special solar telescope that only allows a certain wavelength of light called hydrogen-alpha through its filters. The photo was then processed in Adobe Photoshop to enhance prominences and surface features.

www.rasc.ca/niagara

NIAGARA WHIRLPOOL

**The Newsletter of the
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
Niagara Centre**

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Newsletter Info

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Original articles on astronomy and related subjects, observation reports, book reviews, letters, images and other items are needed. Please submit them at the meetings, mail them to RASC Niagara Centre, P.O. Box 4040, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 7S3, or e-mail them to the editor at niagarawhirlpool@yahoo.ca

Classified advertising is free for Niagara Centre members.

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General Meetings Coming Up:

Niagara Falls Public Library at 7:30 pm

November 18

December 16

January 20

Niagara Centre Website:

E-mail Discussion List & Member's Only Area

The Niagara Centre has an e-mail discussion list and a member's area on the website. By subscribing to the e-mail list you will be able to post messages and carry on discussions about astronomy and activities with other Niagara Centre members. This is a great way to interact and get to know other members, or enhance your knowledge of astronomy. Please note that a log-in procedure is required to initially join the Discussion List. Complete instructions are available on the discussion list page on the website.

A member's only area of the website is also available. This area contains Niagara Centre information for the use of its members only. The member's area contains astrophotography by Niagara members, the Niagara library book list, and lots of other Centre related info of interest to members.

To receive the log-ins and passwords for the e-mail discussion list and member's area, contact John VanderBrugge or Ron Gasbarini and they will send you the needed information by e-mail.

Outgoing President's Message

by Glen Pidsadnick

Being president of the Niagara Centre RASC was a very rewarding experience, one that I won't soon forget. We got a lot done in the past two years, and have attracted many new members. The CCCA observatory has been upgraded, and construction of the new observatory is well under way. It will house our new 12" LX 200 scope, with full GOTO capabilities and a CCD camera. We have also started great beginners' programs at A.N. Myer high school, the CCCA observatory and the library. There were also successful starnights for the public and members, and two great banquets.

I want to thank all of you for the support during the past two years. It made my post as president easy. Knowing Brian and the new executive, the next two years should be even better for our club.

Good luck, and thanks.



Incoming President's Message

by Brian Pihack

At our last meeting, as most of you know, there was a changing of the "guard." As a result this is my first address to the centre as President. Accordingly, on behalf of the centre, I thank the [now] Past President Glen Pidsadnick. I cannot even begin to imagine what it would be like to be visually impaired, legally blind and the president of an astronomy club. Nothing could slow this gentleman down. Glen is one of the few members who would make it out to almost every public starnight! He could organize member nights at the Fort in Niagara with such enthusiasm, he would pull everyone out! This centre owes a great deal to Glen for his leadership during his term as President. The centre implemented many changes and improvements from observatories and workshops to working CCD cameras. I'm sure Glen will fit right in with his new job as Past President, which includes acting as "The Official Greeter!" It will be his job to make new members feel at home at our meetings.

I am also fortunate that I will have working with me an executive comprised of individuals with the experience

and fortitude that is inherent to this group. It will make my job that much easier and I would like to thank them for that.

Lastly, I would like to remind members that most of what we do depends upon people who volunteer their time and effort. Over the last few years we have seen our centre grow significantly, due to the activities of its members. There are member and public star nights, four different types of workshops, and club events that need more participation. If you have to look for a reason to participate, just remember, there is one person who never looked for an excuse, and would find a way!

I am looking forward to the next two years as president of one of the most active clubs in the RASC.

***Outgoing Secretary's
Report***

by John VanderBrugge

This is my final report for the Whirlpool. The past six years I've had the pleasure of serving the Niagara Centre as Secretary. In this time I've learned much and made many great friendships within our club. We should not forget how well our club works together, and how lucky we are to have a membership that endeavours to push the club forward the way we do.

Many of you may not realize how rare that can be in a centre such as ours. We've seen many clubs where this is not the case.

The Niagara Centre has a well-known reputation for its friendly atmosphere and helping attitude. The members that volunteer for the executive work hard to keep the club on this path. I now know how they strive to keep our club alive and vital. I can honestly say my participation these past few years has helped my growth as well. Those of you considering helping out in any job in the club will be glad you did. The members of our centre enjoy the social aspects of the club, as well as the astronomy related ones.

I'll be taking a step back for a while to raise my little girl. But I'll be continuing with some smaller jobs to help out in the background. I have no doubt our new Secretary, Les Welgan, will take care of his duties well. Les has already demonstrated his commitment to the club the past few years in many ways. He will do a fine job, I'm sure. Take care all and I'll see you soon at one of our centre events.

Editor's Note

By Philip Downey

This will be my final issue as Editor of the Whirlpool. I took over the position in the fall of 2001, when I hadn't even been a member of the Centre for a full year. That shows what a great club this is, that someone so new was willing to jump right in.

I have enjoyed putting together the newsletter for you these past three years. But that has been long enough, and I am ready for a break.

I would like to thank John VanderBrugge, and Les and Deloris Welgan, who were the publishers during my tenure. They handled all the layout and distribution, and made sure the Whirlpool looked good, and was delivered on time.

Deloris Welgan has been appointed editor and publisher. I hope you will send her your best astronomical news, stories and pictures.

Niagara Whirlpool



Watching the Pleiades rise in the east marks the beginning of fall for many observers. Les Marczi took this photo with a Takahashi Astrograph and Canon 10D camera in October.



Nov. 7 Aurora captured by Les Marczi



FEATURE

My Lunar Eclipse Journey

By John Dean

Well, I did it again: a long road trip to see the lunar eclipse take place. It takes me to the Raquette River in the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York. It's the same place I observed the 2003 eclipse. It is a 5 1/2 hr drive there and then back. So it's a long ride by yourself. Thank God for cell phones to keep me occupied. It was cloudy in Buffalo when I left and for most of the drive there. I did have some clearing when I got to Syracuse and further north to Watertown. But it got cloudier as I arrived and I thought "Oh no, it's going to be a wash for me."



John Dean took this picture of the October 27 lunar eclipse from upstate New York.

When I got to the Raquette River it was cloudy with some sucker holes. I thought the only sucker was me. But it was only 8 p.m.

and early yet, so I just kept watching the clouds head off to the west, while I cursed the weather station for telling me it was going to be clear. Well, at 8:20 the skies cleared and the Milky Way lit up the river. The moon made it look like daylight out. So I started to set up and watch the eclipse begin. Two nearby beavers weren't too happy with me as I took their spot. But all they could do was swim by and slap their tails on the water.

I began watching the eclipse and was taking a reflection shot with star trails on the water when a meteorite flew over head going down river. I just happened to look up at that moment and was lucky to catch it.

When totality arrived I heard two loons cry out from the small island where I was standing, and a large pack of coyotes began to howl from across the road. It is true that an eclipse affects animals in different ways. It was a moment I will never forget to hear these sounds as I stood there taking pictures. I called our past and new presidents to share my enjoyment but neither had their phones with them.

By that time it was crisp out, in the low 30's and crystal clear. I watched the entire eclipse on the banks of the river along with the beavers who were still active after I was ready to head back home.

By the time the eclipse was over the air at ground level had fogged over – I could see the stars above but nothing below. Everything of mine was soaked with dew. I packed it all away and drank a cup of hot cocoa and started my long journey back, finally getting home at 6 a.m.

Will I do it again in 2007 for the next eclipse? Anybody else want to do a road trip?

Right: Scott Barnes was one of the few Niagara Centre members to catch a clear shot of the eclipsed moon on October 27. Twenty members gathered at Firemens' Park in Niagara Falls, which was unfortunately 99% clouds. A sucker hole at 8 p.m. got everyone very excited, but after that it was thick, with rare glimpses of the eclipse. Still, the temperature was pleasant, with no wind, so many members remained until late to enjoy the night.



Below: A beautiful aurora display was captured by Scott Barnes on November 7.



NASA News

National Aeronautics and

Space Administration

John F. Kennedy Space Center

Kennedy Space Center, Florida 32899

AC 321-867-2468

SWIFT SPACECRAFT LAUNCHING ABOARD DELTA II NOV. 17

The launch of the Swift observatory, a NASA spacecraft to pinpoint the location of gamma-ray bursts, is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 17. Liftoff aboard a Boeing Delta II rocket is targeted to occur at the opening of a one-hour launch window that opens at 12:09 p.m. EST. The mission will begin with a liftoff from Pad 17-A on Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida. Should launch be postponed for any reason, the next launch opportunity is on Nov. 18, also at 12:09 p.m. EST.

Gamma-ray bursts are distant yet fleeting explosions that appear to signal the births of black holes. They are the most powerful explosions known in the universe, emitting more than 100 billion times the energy that the Sun does in a year. Yet they last only from a few milliseconds to a few minutes, never to appear in the same spot again.

The Swift observatory is named for the nimble bird, because it can swiftly turn and point its instruments to catch a burst "on the fly" to study both the burst and its afterglow. This afterglow phenomenon follows the initial gamma-ray flash in most bursts and it can linger in X-ray light, visible light and radio waves for hours or weeks, providing detailed information on the burst.

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www.meade.com



Above: Venus & Jupiter's close encounter the morning of November 5, taken by Les Marczi.

Right: Les Marczi photographed two of summer's best known dark nebulae, Barnard 142 and 143, in September. The two are found near Altair, the brightest star in Aquila. The whole Barnard catalogue is now online at <http://www.library.gatech.edu/barnard/index.html>



Looking for a special Christmas Gift?

Is there a Birthday coming up and you just don't know what to get?

The club has a wide variety of T-shirts and sweatshirts in different sizes and styles for sale.

Contact **Glen Pidsadnick** if you are interested in purchasing one to support the club.

Black Hooded sweat shirts = \$35.00

Black regular sweat shirts = \$30.00

Black and Natural T shirts = \$20.00

Black and Natural Long sleeve T shirts = \$23.00

Niagara Centre Store

RASC 2005 Calenders	\$13.00
Beginner's Observer's Guide	\$13.00
RASC 2004 Observer's Handbook	\$16.00
Planispheres	\$15.00
RASC Lapel Pins	\$ 6.00
Centre Crest	\$ 5.00
Bumper sticker	\$ 3.00
RASC Cloth Crest	\$13.00

See Dave Stremlaw for above items.

Magazines

Group rates available for Sky & Telescope and Astronomy.

Anyone interested in getting the club discount for subscriptions to these magazines should contact Dave Stremlaw. With a group subscription plan you also receive 10% discounts on Sky & Telescope's wide selection of astronomy books.

Sign up with Dave at the next General Meeting or call him at 905-892-2767 to get these great discounts.

Astronomy stuff for sale?

Free ad space for members.

Contact Deloris Welgan - see contact information in this issue.

For Sale

Finished but uncoated 8-inch f/3.8 mirror, 1 3/8" thick Pyrex. Comes with proper plywood shipping crate. Suitable for a fast Newtonian or it is cored if you want to make a Cassegrain. If you would like to pick it up I will also include the tube and mirror cell that were built for this as well as a polished but unfigured Cassegrain secondary. Mirror was completed a year-and-a-half ago. It looks ugly as I started with a rough looking blank, but this will have negligible effect on the image. Asking \$100 or best offer. Contact Joe Iannandrea at 905-991-0781.

For Sale

Supercircuits PC-23C monochrome low lux video camera (unmodified). Asking \$100.00. Contact Rick Eller at 519-426-2471.

Slide/Negative Scanning

For anyone wanting to have their slides/negatives converted to digital files, I can scan them at high resolution, 2800 dpi, and save them onto a CD-R. Cost: \$1.00 per file, \$5.00 for CD-R. Contact Les Welgan at 905-934-4647, astro_nuts@cogeco.ca

For Sale

15 inch Obsession-style truss tube Dobsonian telescope

1. Primary mirror f/5-2inch thick with enhanced coatings (96%), Nova Optical Systems (Ronchi test provided), coated by Spectrum Coatings
2. Secondary mirror 2.6 inch with Dielectric coatings (98%), Nova Optical Systems (Ronchi test provided)
3. Protostar spider and secondary holder with internal dew heater
4. Kendricks dew controller and heaters, Telrad with internal heater
5. Sky Commander digital setting circles and encoders (9000 object database, Go-To)
6. Remote electric collimation system (allows user to collimate from eyepiece unassisted)
7. JMI DX-1 two-speed focuser (coarse and fine focus)
8. Astrosystems telescope cover for star parties, etc.
9. Onboard power consisting of 2 x 7 amp rechargeable batteries (14 amps, 12 volts)
10. Cast aluminum altitude bearings
11. Counterweight balance system to allow use of cameras, etc.
12. Quality construction with Baltic Birch hardwood, maple, stainless, aluminum, etc. A complete large aperture telescope ready for deep sky observing. Price: \$5700. Contact John VanderBrugge at 935-9355.

Event Horizon

- November 13 Members' starnight, CCCA Observatory.
- November 14 New moon.
- November 16 Leonid meteors peak.
- November 18 Beginners' session at 6:45 p.m. Meteorite exhibit and talk at General Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Niagara Falls Public Library
- November 20 Public starnight, Firemens' Park, Niagara Falls, sundown.
-

- December 2 Beginners' session at AN Myer, Niagara Falls. 7 p.m.
- December 11 New moon. Members' starnight, CCCA Observatory.
- December 13 Geminid meteors peak.
- December 16 Beginners' session at 6:45 p.m. General Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Niagara Falls Public Library. Christmas party afterwards at Chatters.
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- January 8 Members' starnight, CCCA Observatory.
- January 10 New moon.
- January 20 General Meeting, Niagara Falls Public Library, 7:30 p.m.

***Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year***