

R.A.S.C. - Belleville Centre

Newsletter - February, 2006

Volume 01, Number 02

Welcome to the February, 2005 edition of your Newsletter, presented by your ever popular and user-friendly Newsletter Editor, yours truly, Richard.

Well, some sufficiently good weather came through for us on Saturday, 28 January, 2006, in which some members of R.A.S.C. - Belleville Centre managed to do some observing on Baptist Church Road beside a real live cemetery. Present were Richard, Joseph, Wesley, Gregory and Larry. Some very aromatic doughnuts got the attention of two (2) constables from the local Quinte West Constabulary who happened to be driving by and decided to investigate what we were doing. They were very interested in what was going on and stayed for about fifteen (15) minutes.

A club observing session for this month will be discussed at this meeting and a possible date will be set.

There will be two important guests at the meeting tonight:

- 1) Peter Jedicke, R.A.S.C. National President, for his second visit,
- 2) Katrina Au-Yong, instructor/teacher of an astronomy programme at Loyalist College

A message from the president - February, 2006

The cold weather, not to mention this years relentless cloud, tends to keep us indoors during the cold months of January and February. This can create a lull in the drive to get out there and commune with the sky. It can also create a disconnect with the clockwork of the universe outside. Many has been the spring that I have stepped outside and found myself lost in a vast field of unfamiliar stars.

This year, the great ringed planet, Saturn reached opposition on January 28th. That means it is up all night, rising at sunset and setting at sunrise. Also, the best apparition of the Red planet, Mars in living memory is rapidly drawing to a close. Come the warmer evenings of late March, it will be all but gone, and will not return for another 2 years. These are two targets that can be enjoyed with a 20 minute session from an urban backyard. Hardly enough time to get cold. On those cold and windy nights when you just can't work up the energy to haul out the scope, Get bundled up nice and warm, take a cup of hot chocolate, and take a few minutes to introduce yourself to the winter constellations. Don't forget to watch for sporadic meteors, and take a look to the north for an unexpected aurora.

Last year I made a proposal that we become the first centre to have every member complete the "Explore the Universe" certificate program. This program requires naked eye observation of 12 constellations from a list of 24. All 6 of the winter constellations on the list are easily seen at this time. That's half the required number. Moon phases are a good short session target also. For the Solar System section, this could be the last chance for two years to get Mars checked off.

I will be handing out some "Explore the Universe" forms at the next meeting to get us all started. So lets all keep our fingers crossed for these clouds to break so we can get back to the thing that originally brought us all together.

Greg Lisk

President R.A.S.C. - Belleville Centre

Some pertinent observing information (derived from 2006 R.A.S.C. Handbook):

Lunar Observing:

First Quarter:	Sunday, 05 February, 2006	06 hr. 29 min.
Full Moon:	Monday, 13 February, 2006	04 hr. 44 min.
Third Quarter:	Tuesday, 21 February, 2006	07 hr. 17 min.
New Moon:	Tuesday, 28 February, 2006	00 hr. 31 min.

Planetary Observing

Mercury -reaches greatest elongation east (18°) on 25 February, 2006. It emerges before midnight very low in the west-south-west evening twilight sky.

Venus -improves in visibility in the morning sky this month and reaches its greatest brilliancy on 17 February, 2006. By the end of the month, Venus is very low in the east-south-east at the beginning of morning twilight and rises about 2.5 hours before the Sun.

Earth -not too easy to observe most of the time by most of the observers. Just what can I say about this planet unless discoursing about lunar and solar eclipses?

Mars - moves from Aries to Taurus early in the month. It stands more than 60° high in the south-west at the end of evening twilight and sets near 1:30 a.m. in the west-north-west.

Jupiter -in Libra, rises in the east-south-east after midnight and is about 30° high on the meridian at the beginning of morning twilight.

Saturn -in Cancer, stands nearly 40° high in the east at the end of evening twilight and sets in the west-north-west during morning twilight.

Meteor Showers

Date	Meteor Shower	Radiant R.A	Radiant Dec.	Z.H.R.
08 February, 2006	alpha Centaurids	14 hr 00 min	-59.0°	10
26 February, 2006	elta Leonids	10 hr 36 min	+19.0°	24
16 March, 2006	Corona Australids	18 hr 19 min	-42.0°	8
26 March, 2006	Virginids	12 hr 24 min	±00.0°	6