**Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Halifax Centre**

# Annual General Meeting (AGM)

**Saturday, December 6, 2025 – 1:00-1:35 PM**

**Via Zoom - Meeting ID 849 0006 6600**

| Time | Item |
|---|---|
| | ***Annual General Meeting (AGM)*** |
| 1:00 PM | ***1. Welcome & Opening Remarks***<br>a. Approval of 2025 Agenda (poll)<br>b. Approval of AGM Minutes (December 7, 2024) (poll)<br>c. Appointment of Auditor for 2025-2026 (poll)<br><br>***2. Reports***<br>a. Q&A regarding pre-circulated reports (Note: reports are not read at the AGM)<br>b. Financial reports<br>• Auditor Report – David Chapman (poll)<br>• Treasurer Report – Gregg Dill (poll)<br>c. Approval of Pre-Circulated Annual Reports (with any amendments) (poll)<br>• President Report – Tony McGrath<br>• VP Report – Peter Hurley<br>• Secretary Report – Judy Black<br>• National Council Representative Report – Judy Black<br>• Dark-Sky Preserve Committee – Peter Hurley, Tony Schellinck<br>• Education & Public Outreach (EPO) Chair – David Hoskin<br>• Governance Committee – Judy Black<br>• Nova East Star Party – Chris Young<br>• Nova Notes – Lisa Ann Fanning, John McPhee<br>• Observing Chair – David Hoskin<br>• St. Croix Observatory (SCO) – Tony McGrath<br>• Webmaster – Jerry Black<br><br>***3. Call for Nominations and Election of 2024 Board of Directors***<br>a. Nominating Committee Report –<br>• Nominations for Board of Directors<br>• Elections for Officer and Director positions (poll, if needed)<br><br>***4. Call for Nominations for Appointed Positions***<br>a. Nominations for Appointed Positions<br><br>5. ***By-Law No. 1 Amendments***<br>a. No amendments are recommended this year |
| 1:45 PM | ***6. Adjournment of AGM*** |

To be approved Dec. 5, 2026

## 1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Tony McGrath welcomed the 7 RASC Halifax Centre members meeting by Zoom and the 18 attending in-person and noted that because there was business requiring voting at this meeting, there would be voting and that polls will be provided electronically to those attending via Zoom. Only members in good standing are allowed to vote.

Halifax Centre welcomes all with an interest in astronomy, without prejudice, and that the stars belong to everyone. Halifax Centre also respectfully acknowledges that we live and observe on the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. Quorum was met.

**a. Approval of 2025 Agenda**

The agenda was presented for approval. It was explained the Treasurer, Nominating and By-Law Review reports would be addressed individually. The other reports cited had been pre-circulated and discussion for clarification purposes only would be held.

Tony invited members to participate at some level, to come have fun and be part of the Centre Team. He noted the acronym TEAM – Together Each Achieves More.

***251206AGM-Mot01***:
It was moved by Blair MacDonald and seconded by Bob Russell to approve the December 6, 2025, AGM agenda as circulated.
CARRIED unanimously.

**b. Approval of 2024 AGM Minutes**

The minutes of the December 7, 2024, AGM had been pre-circulated to members and were also available online for one year. No errors or omissions were noted.

***251206AGM-Mot02***:
It was moved by Mary Lou Whitehorne and seconded by Paul Gray to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2024, AGM as posted on the RASC Halifax Centre website.
CARRIED.

c. **Appointment of a New Auditor, 2025-2026 Fiscal Year**

Dave Chapman agreed to continue in his role as Auditor for 2025-2026.

***251206AGM-Mot03***:
It was moved by Chris Young and seconded by David Hoskin to approve the appointment of David Chapman as the 2025-2026 Auditor.
CARRIED unanimously.

## 2. Reports

***(Note: Compiled reports will be included in the Jan/Feb 2026 edition of Nova Notes.)***

Tony McGrath noted the reports from the Board and the appointed positions had been pre-circulated on 3 occasions so would not be read during this meeting.

**a. Auditor Report**

Dave Chapkman's report was presented on screen. Tony noted the inventory was being worked on. The recommendations were noted.

***251206AGM-Mot04:***
It was moved by Bob Russell and seconded by Chris Young to accept the 2024-2025 Auditor Report.
CARRIED unanimously.

**b. Treasurer Report**

Gregg Dill addressed the ***Comparative Income Statement*** as of September 30, 2025. This may be a bit more confusing than statements in the past. At the suggestion of the Auditor, the monies relating to the SCOPE Fund have been separated out. Operating revenue for the year exceeded 2024 operating revenue by $191.00. SCOPE fund donations of $19,320.00 raised the year-over-year increase to $19,511.00.

To be approved Dec. 5, 2026

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Halifax Centre
Comparative Income Statement
Years Ending September 30, 2024 and September 30, 2025

| | Years Ended September 30 | | Amount of Increase or (Decrease) during 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 2025 | 2024 | |
| **Revenue** | | | |
| Membership Fees | $3,241.41 | $3,463.88 | ($222.47) |
| Donations | $817.29 | $704.00 | $113.29 |
| Observatory Donations | $275.00 | $140.00 | $135.00 |
| Education & Outreach | $75.00 | $0.00 | $75.00 |
| Interest | $483.58 | $449.81 | $33.77 |
| Sales of Merchandise | $475.00 | $1,325.00 | ($850.00) |
| Nova East (Net) | $1,443.58 | $430.38 | $1,013.20 |
| National Processing Fees (Income) | $0.00 | ($12.87) | $12.87 |
| Miscellaneous | $2.40 | $122.00 | ($119.60) |
| **Total Operating Revenue** | $6,813.26 | $6,622.20 | $191.06 |
| SCOPE Fund donations | $19,320.00 | $0.00 | $19,320.00 |
| **Total Revenue** | $26,133.26 | $6,622.20 | $19,511.06 |
| **Expenses** | | | |
| Meetings | $266.98 | $411.51 | ($144.53) |
| Depreciation and write offs | $860.34 | $951.18 | ($90.84) |
| Equipment and Supplies | $0.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 |
| Purchase of merchandise | $321.79 | $675.73 | ($353.94) |
| Office Administration | $511.56 | $329.33 | $182.23 |
| Educational Activities | $36.52 | $0.00 | $36.52 |
| Insurance | $1,321.00 | $1,966.00 | ($645.00) |
| Awards and Donations | $200.00 | $120.00 | $80.00 |
| National Office Processing | $105.89 | $96.92 | $8.97 |
| Operating Expenses SCO | $126.69 | $30.15 | $96.54 |
| Miscellaneous | $62.30 | $70.00 | ($7.70) |
| **Total Expenses** | $3,813.07 | $4,650.82 | ($837.75) |

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Halifax Centre
Comparative Balance Sheet
Years Ending September 30, 2024 and September 30, 2025

| September 30, 2025 Activity to: September 30, 2025 | Years Ended September 30 | | Amount of Increase or (Decrease) during 2025 |
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| | 2025 | 2024 | |
| **Assets** | | | |
| Cash | $34,270.52 | $11,783.33 | $22,487.19 |
| Investments | $8,000.00 | $8,000.00 | $0.00 |
| Accounts Receivable | $361.69 | $485.97 | ($124.28) |
| Library Estimated | $1,113.18 | $1,147.61 | ($34.43) |
| Observatory Equipment | $7,435.19 | $8,263.10 | ($827.91) |
| Miscellaneous Estimated | $0.00 | $13.00 | ($13.00) |
| **Total Assets** | $51,180.58 | $29,693.01 | $21,487.57 |
| **Liabilities** | | | |
| Accounts Payable | $160.87 | $1,013.33 | ($852.46) |
| **Capital** | | | |
| Nova East Working Equity | $5,000.00 | $5,000.00 | $0.00 |
| Common Equity | $46,019.71 | $23,679.68 | $22,340.03 |
| **Total Capital** | $51,019.71 | $28,679.68 | $22,340.03 |
| **Total Liabilities and Capital** | $51,180.58 | $29,693.01 | $21,487.57 |

***Income:***

SCOPE Fund donations to year end were $19,320.00 and included donations from Michelle Lane and Tony Schellinck plus matching funds of just under $5000 contributing to this sum.

The balance of the SCOPE Fund as of this report is $19,320.00

Gregg also noted there was an operational surplus of $1028.81 this year compared to last year. Part of the surplus as due to a change in our insurance provider. Gregg suggested that the Cooperators did their homework and had a better sense of what our society is and does; consequently, there was a $645.00 reduction in insurance costs.

The ***Comparative Balance Statement*** as of September 30, 2024, was presented.

***251206AGM-Mot05:***
It was moved by Blair MacDonald and seconded by Chris Young to approve the Financial Report as presented. CARRIED unanimously.

**c. Written Pre-Circulated Reports**

Tony noted the reports are from the Executive and appointed committee Chairs. The reports would not be presented formally as they had been pre-circulated electronically to all members. Questions were welcomed. None were received.

***251206AGM-Mot06***

It was moved by Bob Russell and seconded by Mary Lou Whitehorne to approve the executive and appointed position reports as pre-circulated.
CARRIED unanimously.

## 3. Call for Nominations and Election of 2025 Board of Directors

Peter Hurley, reporting on behalf of the Board that acted as the Nominating Committee, presented the nominations for the Board of Directors. He noted there were nine members elected last year with one stepping down. There are now two new members who agreed to have their names stand for election – Gerry Brosky and Frank Logan – which means there is a full slate of 10 members. The slate of nominees for the 2026 Board of Directors was then presented as follows:

| Executive Committee | Directors |
|---|---|
| President – Tony McGrath | Gerry Brosky |
| Vice-President – Peter Hurley | Matthew Dyer |
| Secretary – Judy Black | David Hoskin |
| Treasurer – Gregg Dill | Peter Hurley |
| | Frank Logan |
| | Vincent Vallee |

Peter noted that according to our Centre's By-Law No. 1, there is a requirement for up to 10 directors. All positions have nominees. There were 3 calls for nominations from the floor and from the online members in attendance for the 2026 Board of Directors. There being no further nominations, the 2026 Board of Directors positions were elected by acclamation. Congratulations to the newly elected Board.

Members of the newly elected Board were identified for members to identify them at future events and meetings.

## 4. Call for Nominations for Appointed Positions

The Board had approved appointments at previous deliberations. There is one vacant position.

| | |
|---|---|
| Honorary President | Patrick Kelly |
| Governance Review Committee | Judy Black |
| Education & Public Outreach (EPO), Chair | David Hoskin |
| Observing Chair | David Hoskin |
| Nova Notes, Editors | Lisa Ann Fanning, John McPhee |
| Webmaster | Jerry Black |
| | |
| DSP Committee, Co-Chairs | Peter Hurley, Tony Schellinck |
| Communications Chair | vacant |
| Nova East Planning Committee | Chris Young, Gary Weber, Judy Black, David Chapman, Tony McGrath, Gregg Dill (Treasurer), Michael Gatto, Vincent Vallee |
| SCO Manager | Tony McGrath |

Peter Hurley asked that members contact him or any other Board member regarding any further nominations or for volunteering. He stated the appointments would be approved by the incoming Board at their January 11, 2026, meeting.

## 5. By-Law No. 1 (2024) Amendments

Tony McGrath noted there no bylaw amendments to consider this year,

## 6. Adjournment

Having concluded the business portion of the meeting, Tony McGrath called for a motion to adjourn.

***251206AGM-Mot07:***
Moved by Paul Gray and seconded by Mary Lou Whitehorne to adjourn.

To be approved Dec 5, 2026

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 PM AST.

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## 2025 Annual Report: President

### Membership

The membership in RASC Halifax has been stable throughout the year. Year over year membership has shown a slight decline from 146 members in October 2024 to 133 members in October 2025. It is difficult to understand exactly what is happening because of the way RASC national office categorizes membership. A member who does not renew their membership on time and renews late causes the statistics to show a decline in membership at one point and then an increase in membership when the renewal takes place when in reality nothing changed. Whether this decline in membership is real or just an artifact of the membership categories is impossible to tell.

### RASC Halifax Centre Plan

Two years ago, we surveyed the membership and developed a plan. Membership feedback on this plan was requested however none was received. Without membership feedback the Board of Directors is left guessing on what the priorities should be. One item which is clear is that our membership is not growing. Based on this reality the Board has prioritized attracting new members as the primary initiative for the upcoming year.

### RASC Halifax Laser Pointer Certificate Program

On behalf of all members of RASC Halifax Centre I would like to extend a big thank you to Peter Hurley and Dave Robertson for the work they have done on this program. It all culminated at Nova East this year where training was completed for all members who were interested. A total of 13 cards were issued at Nova East.

### SCO BBQ

With the lifting of the Woods Ban in Hants county on 18 September, we were fortunate to be able to hold our annual SCO BBQ on 26 September. Things came together on very short notice and the event was attended by a small but hardy group who enjoyed not only the output from BBQ chefs Chris Young and Peter Hurley and treats provided by Judy Black and Mary Lou Whitehorne but also some lovely dark skies. As is usually the case at SCO, there were both visual observers and imagers exploring dark skies with telescopes, cameras and binoculars. It was great to be back at SCO in the company of observers.

### Acknowledgements

Thank you to Pat Kelly for taking up the mantel of Honorary President of RASC Halifax Centre. Pat has a long and distinguished history with the RASC Halifax Centre as well as RASC's national organization. I am very happy to have Pat with us to offer guidance, perspective and counsel.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tony G. McGrath, President
RASC Halifax Centre

***Board of Directors***

- President: Tony McGrath
- Vice-President: Peter Hurley
- Secretary: Judy Black
- Treasurer: Gregg Dill
- Directors: Jeff Donaldson, Matthew Dyer, David Hoskin, David McMullin, Vincent Vallee

To be approved Dec. 5, 2026

| | |
|---|---|
| ***Appointed Positions***<br>• Honorary President: Mary Lou Whitehorne<br>• Editor, Nova Notes: Lisa Ann Fanning<br>• Copy Editor, Nova Notes: John McPhee<br>• Communications: not filled<br>• Governance Review Committee: Judy Black | • Editors, Nova Notes: Lisa Ann Fanning, John McPhee<br>• National Council Representative: Judy Black<br>• Observing Chair: David Hoskin<br>• Education & Public Outreach (EPO) Chair: David Hoskin<br>• SCO Manager: Tony McGrath<br>• Webmaster: Jerry Black |
| ***Auditor 2023-2024***<br>Dave Chapman (appointed Dec. 7, 2024) | ***Nominating Committee***<br>• Board of Directors served in this role |
| ***Governance Review Committee***<br>• Chair: Judy Black<br>• Members: Patrick Kelly, Gregg Dill | ***Nova East Planning Committee (NEPC)***<br>• Co-Leads: Chris Young, Judy Black<br>• Members: Gregg Dill (Treasurer), Dave Chapman, Lisa Ann Fanning, Tony McGrath (Registrar), Jerry Black (webmaster) |
| ***Halifax Centre Astroimaging Contest***<br>Adjudicators: Blair MacDonald | ***Website Maintenance & Updates***<br>SMU: Tiffany Fields<br>RASC & Nova East: Judy & Jerry Black |
| ***Education & Public Outreach (EPO) Committee***<br>• Chair: David Hoskin | ***Observing Committee***<br>• Chair: David Hoskin |
| ***Dark-Sky Preserve Committee***<br>• Co-Chairs: Peter Hurley, Tony Schellinck<br>• Assisting Members: Judy & Jerry Black, Gerry Brosky, Dave Chapman, Matt Dyer, Paul Gray, David Hoskin, Wayne Mansfield, Andrea Misner, Kevin Mogt, Daphne Thelemlis, Gary Wever, Chris Young | ***Nova Notes***<br>• Editor: Lisa Ann Fanning<br>• Copy Editor: John McPhee |

To be approved Dec. 5, 2026

## 2025 Annual Report: Vice-President

As Vice-President, my primary responsibility was to support the President and the Board, stepping in when necessary. I fulfilled this role by presenting Board updates at Members meetings during the President's absence. Our Board operates effectively, and my involvement was primarily focused on participating in Board and Centre activities.

I attended all Board and Members meetings and contributed to various committees, including serving as co-chair of the Dark-Sky Preserve Committee and participating in the Nominating Committee. Additionally, I collaborated with the Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Committee chair to plan and facilitate outreach events, such as those at the Halifax Discovery Centre, York Redoubt, and Harry Dewolf Park.

One ongoing objective is to revive the Centre Communication Committee and update the Centre Communication Plan, with the aim of improving member recruitment and retention.

I encourage members to become more engaged in Centre activities, share ideas, and participate in outreach events. Our observatory in St. Croix (SCO) offers excellent facilities and a welcoming community of observers. The site features a 16" Sky Watcher Dobsonian telescope and the Howard Celestron Edge HD 8" telescope for astroimaging.

The RASC Halifax Centre is a real gem; it shines because of its dedicated members.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Hurley, Vice-President
RASC Halifax Centre

## 2025 Annual Report: Secretary

The principal duty of the secretary is to provide minutes, agendas, and meeting announcements to the Board of Directors and members of the Centre. We were welcomed back at Saint Mary's University for another year and are grateful to SMU for their very significant support related to meetings and special speaker events held at their institution.

Meetings of the Board of Directors were held on the Tuesday evening preceding the Member / Public meeting. A total of 10 Board meetings were held in 2025 using the video conferencing application Zoom to conduct its meetings. No meetings were held in July or August. Board meeting minutes can be found on the Centre website.

Member's meetings were held on the first Saturday of the month from January to June and September to December. The Annual Centre BBQ at SCO was delayed to the end of September due to the extreme drought condition and the consequent province-wide woods ban. Meetings generally consisted of a welcome and introductions, a photo montage of astrophotography images posted by members during the preceding month presented by David Hoskin, a monthly installment of *Food for the Soul* by Paul Heath, *What's Up*? for the coming month presented by David Hoskin, *News from the Board,* a guest speaker, other news items and announcements, and discussion of upcoming Centre events. Presentations by our special guest speakers included:

- January: Charles Ennis, Sunshine Coast Centre (*World Asterism Project*)
- February: David Chapman (*Celestial Birds, their Lore and Wonder*)
- March: Robyn Foret, Calgary Centre, RASC Awards Chair (*RASC Awards*)
- April: Dr. David Turner (*The Indian Point Meteor Crater*)
- May: Blair MacDonald (*Black Holes*)
- June: Tony Schellinck (*Women in Astronomy*)
- September: David Hoskin (*All-in-one Smart Telescopes*)
- October: Dr. Sara Seager (From the Lab to Space)
- November: Patrick Kelly (*Telling Time in Scotland: from stones to sundials*)
- December: Paul Gray (*Starmus 2025*)

Members meetings were again "hybrid meetings" held in person in SMU AT101 and streamed simultaneously using the video conferencing application Zoom so that those choosing not to attend in-person or unable to travel from a remote location could participate.

Recordings of the Members meetings can be streamed from our RASC Halifax Centre YouTube channel and minutes can be found in *Nova Notes*. Thanks to Jerry Black, Bob Russell and Peter Hurley for applying their skills in computer and audio-visual technology to make these hybrid meetings happen. Thanks to Lisa Ann Fanning and John McPhee for the meeting minutes.

Motions were made with a quorum of the Board of Directors to provide direction on policy, activities, support of the observatory at St. Croix, our budget, and definition of any spending not covered in the budget. Motions made this past year included:

- Approval of annual meeting dates and the 2025 AGM agenda
- Adjustments to reinvestment of the Centre's GICs, regular budget preparations for the Centre and for the Nova East Star Party
- Increase the funds donated to the Clear Sky Chart (CSC) to $100.
- Increase the funds donated to the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) to $100.
- Approval of the following Halifax Centre appointments:
    - Honorary President: Patrick Kelly (January)
    - Vice-President: Peter Hurley (January)
    - NC Representative: Judy Black (January)
    - Auditor, 2024-2025: David Chapman (January)
    - EPO Chair: David Hoskin (January)
    - Governance Review Committee Chair: Judy Black (January)
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To be approved Dec. 5, 2026

    - Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) Committee: Co-Chairs Peter Hurley, Tony Schellinck (January)
    - *Nova Notes* Editors: Lisa Ann Fanning, John McPhee (January)
    - Webmaster: Jerry Black (January)
    - Communications Chair: Jeff Donaldson (February)
- Approval of the following newly developed Halifax Centre policies and recommendations:
    - G15: Policy Regarding Document Retention (April 29)
    - G16: Policy Regarding Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Events Personal Expense Reimbursement ding (September 30)
- Approval of modifications to policies and recommendations:
    - PD6: Position Description – National Council Representative (September 30)

No amendments to the RASC Halifax Centre By-Law No. 1 are recommended at this time. The By-Law and all related policies can be found on our website.

I had the honour of being Secretary previously in 2016-2019. This is the first year of my second term serving as Secretary of the Centre. I would like to thank the Board for being such a wonderful team to work with, and to thank them and Centre members for their support. It has been an honour working on your behalf as Secretary.

Stay safe. Stay curious. Starting at your feet, look up. The skies are open!

Respectively submitted,

Judy Black, Secretary
RASC Halifax Centre

## 2024 Annual Report: RASC Halifax Auditor's Report (FY October 2024 – October 2025)

**Preamble**

This is my third year as auditor. I reiterate that I have no training in accounting or auditing beyond balancing my personal cheque book. What follows is more of a "reality check" on the RASC Halifax Treasurer's report to be presented in December at the 2025 AGM. I trust this fits the need.

**Statement**

**I have reviewed the Treasurer's Report and find that it is a faithful account of the Centre's financial dealings in the time period.**

Luckily, I recalled enough of previous audits so that I was not starting "from scratch." There were no unusual circumstances to complicate the accounts. FY 24/25 was a "quieter" year. One new activity was the successful drive for donations to the SCOPE initiative to create an endowment to fund maintenance and improvements to the Centre's Saint Croix Observatory and associated inventory. I have encouraged the Treasurer to account for that independently of the usual Centre finances.

**Depreciation of Assets**

The annual depreciation of assets is acceptable, based on previous practice, but I continue to be disappointed that there has been little progress on reviewing and freshly revaluing the assets. This is particularly important now that we have a plan and fund to manage the maintenance and update of SCO. My recommendations:

• The current Capital Equipment Depreciation document should be discontinued and archived.

• In spring 2026, a subcommittee consisting of the SCO Manager, the Treasurer, and other members should perform a fresh inventory and valuation of the assets. This would be the starting point for the 2026 Financial Report with no depreciation in 2026; in following years the depreciation rate should be 10%.

• Systems or items no longer in use or not expected to be used should be liquidated.

Approved Dec. 5, 2026

• The various SCO eyepiece collections should be consolidated and inventoried. Surplus eyepieces should be liquidated; the remainder should be stored properly at SCO for the use of members on site. Perhaps individual eyepieces should be identified as RASC-owned to prevent accidental disappearance.

Respectfully Submitted,

DMF Chapman

David M F Chapman, FRASC
2025 November 30

## 2024 Annual Report: Treasurer

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Halifax Centre
Comparative Income Statement
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| **Operational Surplus (Deficit)** | $3,000.19 | $1,971.38 | $1,028.81 |
| **Total Surplus (Deficit)** | $22,320.19 | $1,971.38 | $20,348.81 |

To be a , 2026

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Halifax Centre
Comparative Balance Sheet
Years Ending September 30, 2024 and September 30, 2025

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## 2025 Annual Report: National Council

National Council met six times in 2025 – February 9, April 13, June 8, September 7, October 19, and the upcoming December 7. In June 2025, I was re-elected as Chair of the National Council (NC).

As Chair, I thank my fellow officers, Charles Ennis (Vice-Chair) of the Sunshine Coast and Adriana Stone (NC Recorder) of Calgary Centre, for their support and dedication to ensure the National Council business goes forward.

National Council no longer meets in person in conjunction with the General Assembly; both are now held independent of each other via Zoom. In collaboration with my fellow National Council Representatives, we have worked on the following projects in 2025.

- The draft revisions to the *RASC Policy C11: National Council Terms of Reference* were approved by the NC in 2024. The RASC Board approved them and Policy C11 was approved at the 2025 RASC AGM.

***Clarification of the National Council Role with the RASC***
The National Council and the RASC Board of Directors continue to work to improve the working relationship between them, and to continue strengthening the three pillars – communication, collaboration, and transparency. Financial updates, reports from national committees (especially the Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Committee) and concerns raised by Centre representatives have ensured a vibrant committee with positive decision making and outcomes.

***Work with the RASC Board of Directors***
The RASC President (Michael Watson followed by Brendon Roy), Treasurer (Stuart Heggie followed by Michael Watson), RASC Executive Director (Jenna Hinds) and other Board members have attended meetings to provide guidance when needed and to update on Board activities for which they requested input.

The Board has 40 to 60 minutes of every 2-hour meeting to present the RASC financial statements and other updates (such as the *RASC Observer's Handbook* and the *RASC Observer's Calendar* publication and mailout timelines and challenges). NC Representatives asked questions and provided suggestions at the meeting and, after presenting the information to their Council/Board, were invited to provide further comments. It should be noted that thanks to an NC suggestion made last year, the financial statements are reviewed by the Board every month at their meetings. It should also be noted there will be no fee increase in the coming year.

To be approved D .026

***Work with the RASC Committees & Task Forces***
Collaboration with Board committees and task teams continued into 2025. The need to reprint education/ outreach materials was identified. Task Forces are being formed to address office space, to investigate membership management programs and to simplify the *RASC Policy Manual*. NC input and participation are ensured.

***Centre Operations Manual (COM)***
The Centre Operations Manual (COM) was completed and published on the RASC website https://rasc.ca/centreopsmanual. It is a highly recommended read for all RASC Centre Council/Board members and serves as a guide for all Centres.

***Laser Pointer Training***
Laser Pointer training was developed through the work of NC member Dennis Lyons (Winnipeg Centre) and Jenna Hinds with much input from fellow NC members. A training program comprising a PowerPoint slide deck, complementary print materials, course completion cards, and multiple choice exams had input from the NC in the course of the program development. A RASC Board member, Dennis Lyons, arranged for an updated letter of authorization from Transport Canada that allows us to run our laser pointer program.

***2024/2025 Priorities***
Priorities for 2024/2025 were determined at the September meeting.

- Ongoing consultation with the RASC Board of Directors regarding the RASC financial position.
- Our three pillars are transparency, collaboration and communication. We want to make sure the mechanisms are in place for these to occur, especially communications with the Board. Improved communication mechanisms will be addressed and includes ongoing revision of the NC welcome package (when needed) and an improved communication strategy for the NC.
- RASC Committee consultation will continue.
- Other business would be prioritized as it arises.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Black
NC Representative, RASC Halifax Centre
Chair, RASC National Council

## 2025 Annual Report: Dark-Sky Preserve Committee

Tony Schellinck and Peter Hurley served as co-chairs of the RASC Halifax Centre Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) Committee in 2025. Activities involved interacting with Kejimkujik National Park staff, planning and delivery of the annual Kejimkujik Dark-Sky Weekend (DSW), reviewing activities within the Park that might impact the Park's Dark-Sky Preserve designation, preparing for and conducting a lighting audit of the Park, and corresponding with the RASC Light Pollution Abatement Committee and the RASC Dark-Sky Sites Program. Planning and scheduling of DSW events and other DSP activities were assisted by Judy Black, Jerry Black, Gerry Brosky, Dave Chapman, Matt Dyer, Paul Gray, David Hoskin, Wayne Mansfield, Andrea Misner, Kevin Mogk, Daphne Themelis, Gary Weber, and Chris Young. Not everyone was able to attend DSW this year but their assistance with planning was very much appreciated.

### Lighting Audit Activities
Tony and Peter conducted a lighting audit of the Park on October 1, 2025, and discussions of changes in lighting within the Park occurred in planning meetings and during the Dark-Sky Weekend. Some areas of concern were identified and will be discussed with Park staff. We concluded that lighting audits should be conducted earlier in the year; the Canteen at Merrymakedge, for example, was closed for the season and lighting that would normally be present had been turned off.

### Maintenance of Park Telescope
During DSW last year when we borrowed the Park's 10" Sky-Watcher Synscan Dobsonian telescope, it was discovered that there were a number of issues with the function of the telescope. Dave Chapman and Chris Young took the telescope back to Dartmouth with them and worked on the telescope over the winter to fix both physical and electrical problems with the telescope. In the spring, the telescope was delivered back to Park staff. Instructions were included outlining better maintenance and care of the telescope and about aligning the finder scope.
There was a call from the Park in early July for assistance with the Park telescope. Tony traveled to the Park to check out the telescope and to meet with the Park Interpreters who conduct the evening sky programs. The telescope was in good condition and

To be approved Dec 5, 2026

operating fine; Tony discussed with the interpreters how to plan evening programs and stayed to participate in the program that evening.

### Partnering Agreement with Kejimkujik Park

A Partnering Agreement was signed in 2019 between Kejimkujik National Park and RASC Halifax Centre that formalized the working arrangement between the Park and our Centre with respect to the Kejimkujik Dark-Sky Preserve. The Agreement expires this year and we are working with the Park to renew this Agreement by year-end.

### Laser Pointer Training for Park Interpreters

The Park Interpreters often use laser pointers for their stargazing activities. It was unclear whether the Authorization that RASC had obtained from Transport Canada to use laser pointers up to 5mW could include Park staff, so we worked with Park staff to obtain an Authorization from Transport Canada specifically for their staff.

### August 15 – 17, 2025: 16th Annual Dark Sky Weekend

This year presented us with a waning gibbous Moon that rose at 11:18pm on Friday evening and 11:57pm on Saturday. On Friday evening, the sky was clear and the seeing was exceptional and an SQM reading of 21.6 was measured in the Sky Circle field. The seeing wasn't as good Saturday evening but an SQM reading of 21.2 was measured. It began to cloud over on Sunday afternoon and the forecast was for 100% chance of rain starting early in the evening with a chance of thundershowers. As a result, the decision was made Sunday afternoon to cancel the evening program.

With the peak of the Perseid meteor shower on August 12, many meteors were spotted throughout the programs on Friday and Saturday evenings to thrill the audiences. Saturn rose shortly after 10pm and cleared the trees before we finished for the evening.

Because we were using laser pointers for the evening programs this year, we had spotters when a laser pointer was in use. There was a presentation by Chris Young at the beginning of the program each night about the regulation of laser pointers in Canada and the reasons for the regulations. He explained that we would be using laser pointers under an Authorization from Transport Canada and that we had been trained to use them safely. He also explained about our use of spotters.

- **Friday, August 15**

10:00 pm – 10:30 pm (Sky Circle): Park interpreters Alex Balkam and Jonathan Riley presented the *Muin and The Seven Bird Hunters* story in a new and truly imaginative and participatory performance that involved children from the audience carrying glow-in-the-dark painted cardboard props around the Sky Circle. The introduction was in English, French and Mi'kmaq and the narration of the story was in English and Mi'kmaq. The program was similar to last year and was an amazing experience.

Afterward Chris Young introduced the evening RASC program and explained to the audience that we would be using laser pointers under an Authorization from Transport Canada. He also explained about our use of spotters.

10:30 pm – midnight (Sky Circle field): Jerry Black, Judy Black, David Hoskin, Peter Hurley, Wayne Mansfield, Andrea Misner, Kevin Mogk, and John Read were in the field with a variety of telescopes. Tony Schellinck was at the binocular table and Chris Young was his laser pointer spotter. Tony's audience had listened to Chris' earlier introduction and helped Chris with his spotting duties, pointing out aircraft to him. Tony did two sessions and signed many *Ace Amateur Astronomer* certificates. There were a number of meteors spotted to the delight of our audience. It was a wonderful night, and we were all packed up by 12:30am.

- **Saturday, August 16**

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm (Merrymakedge Beach): The Park staff had set up our canopy for the Astronomy Drop-in closer to the Canteen this year and we all agreed that this location was better than the one used in previous years, providing more room for interaction with the public and closer to the telescopes on display. Wayne Mansfield, Jerry Black and Peter Hurley had set up telescopes for solar observing (Wayne's setup used projection method, Jerry and Peter used solar filters). Judy Black, David Hoskin, Andrea Misner, Kevin Mogk and Daphne Themelis staffed the Drop-in table. It was a great afternoon, and we interacted with approximately 100 people.

4:00 pm – 4:45 pm (Sky Circle field): *Walk the Solar System* with David Hoskin. David had a great turnout.

10:00 pm – 10:30 pm (Sky Circle): *Tour the Night Sky* with Chris Young who introduced the RASC to the audience and explained about the Park's Dark-Sky Preserve designation. He also explained about our use of laser pointers and spotters. Chris then conducted a tour of the night sky and provided sky lore associated with many of his targets. Peter Hurley spotted for Chris.

10:30 pm – midnight (Sky Circle field): Telescope & binocular observing. The same volunteers were involved as on Friday night. The seeing deteriorated over the evening and we were packed up by midnight.

- **Sunday, August 17**

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm (Merrymakedge Beach): *Astronomy Drop-in* table crewed by Judy, David, Andrea, Kevin and Daphne. Solar observing with Wayne, Jerry and Peter. Tony set up a second table and explained to visitors how to use binoculars. We agreed that this was a great addition to the Drop-in Table experience and a great complement to the Binocular table in the Sky Circle in the evening. There was further discussion about adding mini-workshops in the future.

To be approved Dec. 5, 2026

4pm – 4:45pm (Sky Circle field): *Walk the Solar System* with David Hoskin. Turn-out wasn't great but it had started to cloud over.

9:30 pm – 10:00 pm (Sky Circle): We cancelled the evening program because rain and thunderstorms were forecast. Last year, when it clouded over for the evening program, we changed the program to Plan B and we still set up telescopes and talked about our telescopes; those of us that had a means to display astroimages talked about images and how they were captured. We were prepared to do this again this year, but the forecast of rain and thunderstorms resulted in the program being cancelled. There has been discussion about a Plan C for a similar situation with rain in the future. Stay tuned.

Despite the clouds and rain on Sunday, it was a very successful Dark-Sky weekend with great attendance.

The final attendance numbers tabulated with assistance from the Parks staff are listed below.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Friday, August 15** | |
| Sky Circle | 330 |
| | |
| **Saturday, August 16** | |
| Astronomy Drop-in | 100 |
| Walk the Solar System | 40 |
| Sky Circle | 300 |
| | |
| **Sunday, August 17** | |
| Astronomy Drop-in | 70 |
| Walk the Solar System | 5 |
| Sky Circle | n/a |
| | |
| **Total** | 845 |

We want to recognize the amazing work put in by Parks staff, particularly Vanessa Bastarache, in organizing this event on behalf of Parks Canada and the RASC Halifax Centre. This involved months of preparation and planning, numerous meetings, and lots of emails to make this happen as smoothly as it did. Other Parks Canada staff including Colleen Anderson, Ashley Moffat, Alex Balkam, Malaika Joudrey, Marlene LeBel, Jonathan Oickle, Jonathan Riley, Sam Shepard, and Nick Whynot also assisted, and we thank them all for their efforts on our behalf.

Thank you to all the RASC volunteers who made this happen. Twelve volunteers participated in the weekend. Their names are mentioned above and we apologize if we have forgotten anyone. We hope you enjoyed this weekend event and will consider participating again next year. And we encourage anyone else interested in participating in the 2026 Kejimkujik Dark-Sky Weekend to let us know.

Photographs and a time-lapse video (see below) were taken by Jerry Black. Here is a link to a video produced by Jerry Black to highlight the 2025 Kejimkujik Dark-Sky weekend.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Hurley, DSP Committee Co-chair

Tony Schellinck, DSP Committee Co-chair

Link to time lapse video by Jerry Black:
https://vimeo.com/1111651113?fl=pl&fe=sh

Photo from 2025 Kejimkujik Dark-Sky Weekend by Jerry Black

## 2025 Annual Report: Education and Public Outreach (EPO)

2025 was an active year for education and public outreach by over 20 RASC Halifax Centre members.
Dark-Sky Weekend on August 15-17 at Kejimkujik National Park was a great success. Over 2 nights there were 630 registrants for Sky Circle events that included Night Sky Tour and Sky Lore presentations by Chris Young, guided binocular tours with Tony Schellinck, eyepiece observing, and electronically assisted astronomy that allowed registrants to view several celestial objects on a tablet screen. Sunday evening observing was cancelled due to poor weather. The Astronomy Drop-in sessions on Saturday and Sunday afternoon at Merrymakedge Beach engaged with a total of 175 interested individuals for each day. Unfortunately, *Walk the*

Approved Dec. 5, 2026

*Solar System* on Saturday and Sunday afternoon attracted a total of 40 campers. Program delivery was provided by 12 volunteers from RASC Halifax Centre.

February 12: David Hoskin provided 9 students and staff at Halifax Independent School with eyepiece views of the full Moon and crescent phase of Venus using a small Cassegrain telescope.

February 19: Ten members of the Halifax Centre set up telescopes at Atlantic Photo Supply's Dartmouth location for an urban star party that attracted 40-50 members of the public who enjoyed eyepiece views that included Jupiter, Mars, and the Orion Nebula.

February 28: Peter Hurley and David Hoskin led 40 enthusiastic members of the Young Naturalists of Canada (mostly family groups) in an exploration of the night sky at York Redoubt. Attendees viewed the double star Mizar and Alcor, Venus, Jupiter and its Galilean moons, Orion Nebula, and open star clusters M45 and M41 through a 102mm refractor and enjoyed a colorful image of the Orion Nebula obtained with Peter's SeeStar S50.

April 4: Dave Chapman gave a presentation on stars and constellations at Every One Every Day! There was a small but enthusiastic audience, about 12 all told.

April 9: Pat Kelly presented to a group of 12 Sweets Corner Beavers, as well as leaders and several parents. Topics included distance in space, constellations and the path solar system objects take through the sky. The session concluded with telescope eyepiece views of the Moon and Jupiter.

April 11: Jeff Donaldson talked about lunar and solar eclipses, as well as the planets, with about 60 grade-6 students in Milford.

April 23: David Hoskin hosted a stargazing session at York Redoubt for 4 members of the Association of Dalhousie Retirees and Pensioners. Mars and several brighter stars were viewed through binoculars and telescopes between breaks in the cloud cover.

May 1: David Hoskin, Peter Hurley and Jerry Black used solar telescopes and a SeeStar S50 to show white light and hydrogen-alpha views of the Sun to Discovery Centre visitors. Many were surprised by the presence and size of several active sunspots.

May 3: At the Discovery Centre as part of International Astronomy Day, Jerry and Judy Black, Michael Boschat, Matt Dyer, Wayne Harasimovitch, David Hoskin, and Peter Hurley engaged with more than 100 visitors, many in family groups. Many astronomy-related questions were answered and RASC starfinders and Moon Gazer Guides were distributed.

May 28: Dave Chapman and David Hoskin talked about the Sun, its features, the effect of space weather on the Earth, and how to safely observe the Sun to about 50 students and 3 teachers at Woodlawn High School. Students were treated to white light and hydrogen-alpha views of the Sun, followed by a Q and A session.

July 14, 15, and 17: David Hoskin was a presenter at Space Camp held at Halifax Independent School. Walk the Solar System, solar observing, eclipses and phases of the Moon, starfinder use and constellations were among the activities involving 14 campers and 4 staff members.

July 26: Paul Heath used his solar telescope at his local church to provide 36 adults and 9 youth with views of the Sun. Attendees showed a lot of interest in the Sun and observing in general.

August 10: At the Discovery Centre as part of Space Day, David Hoskin and Lauren Westhaver engaged with more than 100 visitors, many in family groups, answering space-related questions and promoting the Halifax Centre.

Weekend of August 22-24: Nova East, held at Smiley's Provincial Park, allowed numerous campers to experience talks on astronomy and telescopes, as well as a binocular sky tour and eyepiece views of deep sky objects.

September 8: David Hoskin led a stargazing session for a group of 5 from Halifax Independent School. He used his 200mm SCT to provide this enthusiastic group with eyepiece views of M8, M13, M22, M31, the Double Cluster and Saturn.

September 15: David Hoskin used his 200mm SCT to show M8, M22, M31, the Double Cluster, and Saturn to a group of 20 enthusiastic grade 10-11 students and 5 adults from Bridgewater Education Centre. Star finders were distributed to the students and used in conjunction with stories from Greek myth.

September 27: Members of RASC Halifax Centre (Jerry Black, Dave Chapman, David Hoskin, Peter Hurley, Jeff Leger, Frank Logan, and Blair MacDonald) set up several telescopes near the boardwalk at Harry DeWolf Park in Bedford for a free urban star party. Between 40 and 50 passersby were treated to eyepiece and tablet views of the setting Moon, Saturn, the Eagle Nebula, and Andromeda Galaxy.

October 3: Rob and Lisa Fanning celebrated International Observe the Moon Night (InOMN) early with 34 participants, including 14 children, at Bayshore Waterfront Park (Port Monmouth, New Jersey). All were treated to views of the waxing gibbous Moon through the eyepiece of a spotting scope. Those that stayed late were able to view Saturn.

To be approved Dec. 5, 2025

November: David Hoskin plans to host a solar observing session for Bridgewater Education Centre students and stargazing sessions for the Cobequid Young Naturalists of Canada and Bedford Beavers. No EPO events are planned for December at the time of submission.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Hoskin, EPO Chair
RASC Halifax Centre

## 2025 Annual Report: Governance Review Committee

I would like to thank my fellow members on the Governance Review Committee, Patrick Kelly and Gregg Dill, for the work accomplished in the past year, and for the interesting discussions we had during our deliberations.

*PD6: Position Description (appointed) - RASC National Council Representative* was reviewed by the Committee based on concerns raised by the Board. Minor changes regarding term limits were proposed and approved on September 30, 2025.

Two new policies were developed at the request of the Board.

- *G15: Policy Regarding Document Retention* was approved on April 29, 2025 This was a significant issue for some officers, especially the Treasurer, who had been given several large boxes with financial records, etc., extending back for many years. This policy relates to both current and future documents.

- *G16: Policy Regarding Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Events Personal Expense Reimbursement was approved on September 30, 2025.* It provides clarification regarding volunteer reimbursement.

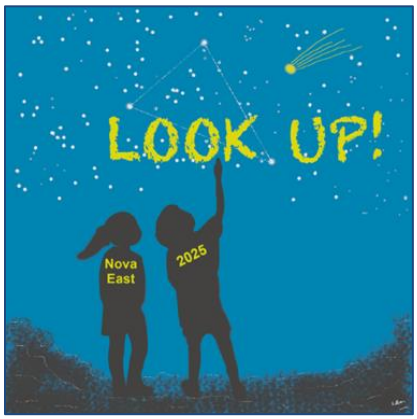
The Committee determined no changes were required to our Centre By-Law No.1 at this time. The Governance Committee will continue to review all Halifax Centre policies and position descriptions annually and when situations dictate a change.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Black, Chair
Governance Review Committee
RASC Halifax Centre

To be approved D 2026

# 2025 Annual Report: Nova East Star Party




***LOOK UP! - The Stars Belong to Everyone!***
was the theme for our star party held at Smileys Provincial Park during the weekend of August 22 to 24, 2025. This was the 37th Nova East Star Party (NE). The Theme *Look Up!* was chosen to capture the intent of our weekend to promote visual, binocular and telescope viewing.

Many thanks to Lisa Ann Fanning for the 2025 logo design for printing on the Nova East t-shirt, and to Gregg Dill for setting up the printing of the t-shirts at Pro Design Cresting Ltd. in Truro.

**2025 NE Planning Team (NEPT):**
Members included The Team Co-Leads were Judy Black, Gary Weber, & Chris Young Members were Tony McGrath (Registrar), Gregg Dill (Treasurer), Lisa Ann Fanning (logo designer), David Chapman, Patrick Kelly, Vincent Vallee with valuable support from Jerry Black (website) and Paul Gray. Meetings were on Zoom over several planning meetings held in the spring and early summer. A wrap-up meeting will be held in October. The success of Nova East 2025 was because of the dedication, imagination and work done by each of the members during the planning and implementation phases of this event. Like the 2024 NE, the Team planned this event as an observing weekend and a social event. All activities and decisions considered for previous NE's were reviewed and updated.

**Smileys Provincial Park**
Smileys was more than welcoming and permitted our use of the shelter even though it was an operating shop and storage area for the Park since the flood. They were very trusting giving us full access of the building and they parked their equipment outside for the duration of our stay. Many thanks to Mark Moore of Nova Scotia Parks and his staff who made us welcome and arranged access to the building. The building was well used each day for Registration, the Astronomers' Breakfast, presentations, the flea market and the "Red Light District" (aka astronomer lounge with red lights suspended to retain members' night vision).

**Task Chart:**
The NE Task Charts of earlier years acted as a detailed guide for the Nova East Planning Team and provided the timeline and checklist for planning the event. This document was used throughout the planning process and revised as required. Many thanks to Judy Black for making our planning easy with her schedules, minutes and task lists from NE gone by! Much of the preparation for Nova East 2026 is already drafted.

The Team was able to carry on using their earlier work for Blomidon by rebranding it to Smileys, with many thanks to Jerry Black and Dave Chapman for their work on this. Insurance from the national RASC was in effect for the event.

**Weather:**
The Friday was wonderfully clear and Saturday night started fair, got murky and then cleared after midnight. The *Look Up!* observing events occurred both nights although the southern sky was a challenge Saturday night until after midnight. Sunday night weather predicted cloudy skies and most members packed up Sunday with a few optimistic souls staying through to Monday. Overall the weather and seeing was considered good – especially if you stayed up late Saturday night!

**Speakers and Events:**
The weekend events all proceeded as planned indoors and outdoors:

**Friday evening** – *Beginner Mini-Talks: Telescopes and Observing* - David Hoskin described the various types of telescopes commonly available and their mountings. Gerry Brosky described how the eye works in astronomical observing. Dave Chapman explained exit pupil and how it pertains to the observer's eye and eyepiece selection infield.

**Friday Night -** *Public Observing* **-** Using the Centre's *Nova East 2025 Observing and Imaging List,* a coordinated series of presentations was given:

- Presenters Gary Weber & Chris Young provided a tour of the constellations and stories associated with them. Individual stars and stellar objects were pointed out.
- This was followed by the Binocular Event where Tony Schellinck and Judy Black showed how to find the same targets in greater detail through binoculars.

To be approved Dec. 5, 2026

- The Telescope Event (5 telescopes) showed those select items, seen previously at low power but now visible under high magnification. Telescope operators included Dave Chapman, Jerry Black, Kathy Walker, Karen Hamblin and Paul Gray.

**Dark Sky Observing / Imaging in the Field** took advantage of the excellent seeing conditions.

**Saturday Morning Family Activity:** *Walk the Solar System:* Presenter David Hoskin was prepared to provide a tour through a Solar System model to scale in the observing field; this was unfortunately cancelled.

**Saturday Morning Workshop**: *Laser Pointer Training* was provided by trainer Peter Hurley. This training included the regulations and procedures on the safe legal use of laser pointers as an instruction tool by RASC presenters during outreach events. Participants receive a Certificate of Laser Pointer Use that meets the Authorization that RASC has received from Transport Canada. Certificate holders are certified to use a laser pointer and to spot for another user.

**Saturday Noon** – Michelle Lane hosted *Lane's Book Mart: Books for sale from Dave Lane,* and at the same time the members had a *Nova East Swap: Equipment and Books*" took place.

**Saturday afternoon Workshop:** *Make your Own Sundial* **-** Dave Chapman explained how a sundial works and led a workshop where participants assembled their own sundial by cutting and folding a printed card.

**Saturday Night -** RASC Observing Certificates & Awards & Door Prizes**:** Judy Black announced this year's RASC Certificate and Award Winners. The draw for Door Prizes followed. Dave Chapman and Chris Young, supported by the Centre and other donors, had collected Door Prizes. Twenty-four prizes were given away plus a grand prize - a SkyWatcher Heritage 150P collapsible tabletop Dobsonian Telescope donated by Allen Sutherland at Atlantic Photo Supply (APS). John Read won the telescope and without hesitating gave his prize to a new observer – a 12 year old from New Glasgow who was at NE with her grandfather from the RASC Ottawa Centre. John capped this off by donating his book *110 Things to see with a Telescope* to get the new observer well started.

**Saturday Night Public Talk**: Keynote speaker John Read presented ***Stories in Space.*** These were stories behind the astounding fleet of telescopes current and planned that deliver the amazing science we come to expect from the frontier of astronomy. John gave us a very engaging presentation punctuated with chocolate bars delivered overhead to the audience for correct answers to his questions.

**Saturday Night - Public Observing** – was a repeat of the well-received Friday night guided observing using naked eye, binoculars and telescopes based on following the Centre's *Nova East 2025 Observing and Imaging List*.

**Dark Sky Observing / Imaging in the Field** took advantage of the available seeing conditions which became excellent after midnight.

**Sunday Morning** - **Sherman Williams Memorial Walk** – Pat Kelly led the walk sharing birding and natural plant lore with us as we walked along the wooded roads serving campsites as the Park trails were off limits due to the fire ban. The poison ivy patch was very notable.

**Sunday afternoon –** Most of the members packed up and headed home as the forecast was not promising for observing.

**Sunday night:** A small group of RASC members stayed the extra night, hoping to get a few more images, a few more views of the night sky. Smoke from the fires affected the early evening and then partial cloud made for interesting observing through sucker holes. This cool evening shut down just before midnight when cloud cover completely removed all hope of observing.

## Other Highlights:

An ***Astro Breakfast,*** always popular, was provided Saturday and Sunday mornings with coffee, tea, juice, muffins, donuts and fresh whole fruit.

The ***Astronomer's Lounge*** was back, with tea, coffee and hot chocolate, fruit and cookies always available in the shelter into the early morning hours.

## Date of 2026 Nova East:

As approved by the Board of Directors, Nova East 2026 will be held the on August 14-16, 2026. The date of the new moon is Wednesday, August 12, 2026.The expectation is that we will return to Smileys. This will be confirmed by the new Nova East Planning Team in the New Year.

To be approved Dec. 6, 2026

**Finances**
A profit of $1,443.58 was realized this year from Nova East. A summary of Nova East finances are as follows:

| | Revenue | Expense |
|---|---|---|
| Camping | $960.00 $263.40 | |
| Astro breakfast/snacks | | $398.86 |
| Registration | $1,240.00 | $100.30 |
| T-shirts | $525.00 $310.30 | |
| Prizes | | $171.00 (+$180.12 spent in 2024) |
| Miscellaneous (A/V) | | $37.56 |
| Total | $2,725.00 | $1,281.42 |

**Profit $1,443.58**

I would be pleased to discuss any part of this Report at the AGM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Young, Co-Lead
2025 Nova East Planning Team
RASC Halifax Centre

## 2025 Annual Report: Nova Notes

To date, four issues of *Nova Notes* have been published, with the fifth and final issue (Vol 56 No 5) for 2025 to be published at the end of December (content deadline is December 15, 2025.)

*Nova Notes'* editorial staff consists of Lisa Ann Fanning (Editor) and John McPhee (Copy Editor). Additional review is provided by Judy Black. Jerry Black assists with posting to the Halifax Centre website. Once posted, editions are promoted with a Member Announcement (via email), and announcements on the RASC Facebook page and Listserv.

Edition Sizes:
- Jan/Feb 2025 (Vol 56 No 1) issue was 41 pages total
- March/April 2025 (Vol 56 No 2) issue was 25 pages total
- May/June 2025 (Vol 56 No 3) issue was 22 pages total
- Sept/Oct 2025 (Vol 56 No 4) issue was 29 pages total
- Nov/Dec 2025 (Vol 56 No 5) is TBD

Regular features (appearing in three or more editions) include:
- *From the Editor* (Lisa Ann Fanning or John McPhee)
- Halifax centre Information page
- *From The President* (Tony McGrath)
- *Food for the Soul* (poetry by Paul Heath)
- *Puzzle Corner* (Lisa Ann Fanning)
- *Member News* (Members being featured in other media)
- *Members' Universe* (member news and submitted work)
- RASC Halifax Centre Meetings reports
- *Moonscapes* is a feature where David Hoskin highlights a region or feature on the Moon.
- *Asteroids with a Nova Scotia Connection*, by Dr. Roy Bishop and Judy Black (installments two through six)

Highlights:

January /February 2025 edition:
*Support the SCOPE Fund* by Blair MacDonald
2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) Reports
RASC Halifax Centre Auditor's Report FY October 2023 - 2024

March / April 2025 edition:
Theme: the Solar / Lunar Eclipse
Paul Gray – a Jolly Good Fellow!

May / June 2025 edition:
2025 Nova East Star Party
Support SCO with the SCOPE Fund by Michelle Lane and Judy Black

To be Approved Dec. 5, 2026

Featured: Halifax Centre Members Present at RASC GA

September / October 2025 edition:
2025 Nova East Start Party by Chris Young
SCO BBQ by Judy Black
Book Reviews:
- *50 Things to See with Binoculars (In Space)* by John A. Read (review by David Hoskin)
- *Black Hole: How an Idea Abandoned by Newtonians, Hated by Einstein, and Gambled On by Hawking Became Loved* by Marcia Bartusiak (review by Tony McGrath)

Main cover photos were provided by: Jerry Black (M81, Bodes Galaxy and M82, the Cigar Galaxy), David Hoskin (Lunar eclipse March 14, 2025), Mary Lou Whitehorne (Painting: "Summerville Moonrise"), Barry Burgess (Lupines and Milky Way).

In 2025, contributors of articles, features, photos and paintings include: Dr. Roy Bishop, Jerry Black, Judy Black, Michael Boschat, Barry Burgess, David Chapman, Jason Dain, Jeff Donaldson, Tim Doucette, Lisa Ann Fanning, Tiffany Fields, Paul Heath, David Hoskin, Jeremy Kuzub, Michelle Lane, Blair MacDonald, Tony McGrath, John McPhee, Bob Russell, Tony Schellinck, Gary Weber, Mary Lou Whitehorne and Chris Young.

Once again, we extend our sincerest thanks to the many folks who help make *Nova Notes* a success!

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Ann Fanning and John McPhee
Editors, *Nova Notes,* RASC Halifax Centre

## 2025 Annual Report: Observing Committee

The Chair of the Observing Committee is David Hoskin. Committee members consist of Dave Chapman (past Chair), Melody Hamilton, and Stephen Payne. Melody Hamilton and Dave Chapman are past members of the Society-wide RASC Observing Committee, which is involved in reviewing applications and guiding policy. Stephen Payne organizes Planetarium events at Dalhousie University.

RASC Halifax Centre was actively involved in several observing events over the past year. RASC Halifax Centre members who volunteered at the 16th Annual Kejimkujik Dark Sky Weekend on August 15-17 offered eyepiece views of diverse night sky wonders to over 600 campers on Friday and Saturday evening. Sky tours and binocular viewing were highlights of the evening sessions. Unfortunately, poor weather resulted in the cancellation of Sunday evening observing. The Astronomy Drop-In at Merrymakedge on Saturday and Sunday afternoon was well attended, with many astronomy-related questions being answered and star finders distributed. Solar observing at these Drop-In sessions was popular with campers. On September 27, an urban star party was held on the boardwalk at Harry DeWolf Park in Bedford. Over 40 passersby were treated to eyepiece and table views of the Moon, Saturn, and Andromeda Galaxy.

Nova East 2025 was held at Smiley's Provincial Park on the weekend of August 22-24 with a focus on Look Up! Friday evening saw a crystal-clear sky while the sky on Saturday evening started out fair due to wildfire smoke to the south but improved after midnight. Public observing sessions featured a sky tour by Gary Weber and Chris Young. Binocular observing sessions were hosted by Tony Schellinck and Judy Black. On Saturday evening binocular observing was paired with telescope observing of selected celestial targets.

Unfortunately, activity at the Halifax Centre's Saint Croix Observatory was temporarily halted at the start of August through the middle of September due to increased wildfire risk associated with drought conditions. However, before the woods ban and following lifting of the woods ban, SCO saw consistent use by Centre members for observing and imaging. The annual Fall SCO BBQ was held on September 26. Clear skies after sunset allowed for eyepiece observing of Saturn and several show-piece deep sky objects, as well as astrophotography. Fewer than normal members attended the event, which was unfortunate considering the delicious food and wonderful weather.

David Hoskin prepared and presented *What's Up?* at monthly members' meetings to showcase observing opportunities for the coming month. *What's Up?* presentations for 2025 are available on the Halifax Centre's You-Tube Channel and the Halifax Centre's website.

Observing Certificates were awarded to David Chapman and Michael Gatto, both of whom completed the Explore the Moon Program.

Respectfully submitted,

To be approved Dec. 5, 2026

David Hoskin
Observing Committee Chair
RASC, Halifax Centre

## 2025 Annual Report: SCO Manager

### Observing Nights

There were several successful observing nights hosted at SCO this past year. Unfortunately, several had to be cancelled due the restriction on travel and activities in wooded areas which was in effect for Hants County from August 5 to September 18. The observing nights that did occur were well attended and by members and guests.

### Repairs and Maintenance

405mm Telescope - This telescope has been in operation at SCO since 2014. In October the telescope was given a thorough going over by Dave Chapman. The primary mirror was found to be clean and in good shape. The secondary mirror required cleaning. Dave fabricated and installed a new cover for it. Some minor corrosion was removed and the telescope collimated and tested.

### Building Scrape & Paint

The building fascia boards and doorways were scraped and painted.

### Electrical Upgrades

Storage Building: 120 Volt AC Electrical Power was extended to the storage building and the installation of 120 Volt receptacles and lighting was completed.

Install Panel Mounted GFCI breakers: We have been experiencing problems with the GFCI receptacles installed in the Roll Off Observatory. These problems were traced to ants and insects making nests inside the receptacle boxes. In October I removed all the GFCI receptacles and replaced them with standard receptacles. New GFCI breakers were installed in the electrical panel in the Warm Room to feed these receptacles.

### SCO Maintenance & Development Plan

A start was made on a Maintenance and Development Plan for SCO. The intention of this document is twofold: first to provide guidance as to the maintenance activities required to maintain the facilities and equipment, and secondly to provide a place to catch ideas from SCO users as to potential projects and upgrades which would enhance the facility and ensure its relevance to users. When completed, this document will be available to all members.

### Inventory

A new inventory was taken of the buildings and equipment at SCO. This inventory is being evaluated so that the insurance coverage for the facilities and equipment can be reviewed to ensure that the proper coverage is in place.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tony G. McGrath, SCO Manager
RASC Halifax Centre

## 2025 Annual Report: Webmaster

Our websites (Halifax RASC and Nova East) hosted by St. Mary's University have been based on the Joomla content management system for some time.

Since the last report, Joomla4 has been updated version 4.4.13. Although Joomla5 has been released, neither website has been migrated to Joomla5. This would provide additional features and security. **Support for Joomla4 ends/ended 16 October 2025**. Upgrading requires SMU staff to perform the update, for which time constraints have made this difficult.

To be approved Dec. 5, 2026

PDF Indexer was installed on the Halifax RASC site and has enabled indexing of the pdf documents on the site, e.g. Policy documents.

The website is generally not updated as frequently as might be beneficial. Meeting notices and *What's Up?* and *Nova Notes* are updated when available.

**Recommendations:**

1. Upgrade to Joomla5 for both websites when time permits; Tiffany Fields is the person able to do this.

2. Review the content informally and update web content where appropriate. Anyone noticing errors or omissions in the content is encouraged to contact the Webmaster with the details.

Respectively submitted,

Jerry Black, Webmaster
RASC Halifax Centre

## 2025 Annual Report: Nominations

The Board of Directors comprised the Nominating Committee this year. The following is the list of nominations being put forward to all members as of November 7, 2025, through the Announce List. The call for further nominations will be made at the AGM on December 6, 2025.

| | |
|---|---|
| President | Tony McGrath |
| Vice-President | Peter Hurley |
| Secretary | Judy Black |
| Treasurer | Gregg Dill |
| Director | Gerry Brosky |
| Director | Matthew Dyer |
| Director | David Hoskin |
| Director | Frank Logan |
| Director | David McMullin |
| Director | Vincent Vallee |

The following appointments will be made by the newly elected Board at their meeting in January 2025. The call for further nominations to the appointed positions will be made at the AGM on December 7, 2024.

| | |
|---|---|
| Honorary President | Patrick Kelly |
| National Council (NC) Representative | Judy Black |
| Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP), Co-Chairs | Peter Hurley, Tony Schellinck |
| Education & Public Outreach (EPO), Chair | David Hoskin |
| Governance Review Committee, Chair | Judy Black |
| Nova East Planning Committee/Team | Chris Young, Judy Black, Gary Weber, Dave Chapman, Gregg Dill, Tony McGrath, Michael Gatto |
| *Nova Notes*, Co-Editors | Lisa Ann Fanning, John McPhee |
| Observing, Chair | David Hoskin |
| St. Croix Observatory (SCO) Manager | Tony McGrath |
| Webmaster | Jerry Black |
| Auditor 2025-2026 | **TBD** |

To be approved Dec. 5, 2025

| | |
|---|---|
| Communications Committee | **VACANT** |
| Nominating Committee | **VACANT** |

***Policy G6: Procedures regarding Nominations, Elections and Appointments*** can be found on the RASC Halifax centre website (https://halifax.rasc.ca/images/documents/G6_Nominations_Elections.pdf).

To be approved Dec. 5, 2026