RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, September 8, 2026: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Via Zoom - Meeting ID 894 5620 8808, Passcode 939460

Agenda Items				
Time	**Item**	**Purpose**	**Responsibility**	**Support Documents / Notes**
7:00 PM	1. Welcome & Introductions • Approval of Agenda • Review Action List • Approval of Previous Minutes of Meeting	Information Approval	Tony McGrath	Pre-circulated: Agenda: September 8, 2026 ***Refer to Agenda Notes #1: Open Action List*** Previous Minutes: June 2, 2026
ONGOING ITEMS				
	2. Upcoming Meeting Dates & Guest Speakers a. Approved 2026 Public Meeting dates and speakers b. Confirm Public Meeting agenda c. Zoom/SMU Bookings d. Guest Speakers & Ideas for Future Presentations	Ongoing Discussion Approval	Tony McGrath	***Refer to Agenda Notes #2: 2026 Speakers & Approved Public Meeting Dates*** ***Refer to Agenda Notes #3: Approved 2026 Board Meeting Dates***
	3. Report from National Council Representative	Information Discussion	Judy Black	**Next Meeting***: June 14, 2026* *(Election of Officers 2026-2027)*
	4. RASC Halifax Centre Website & YouTube	Discussion	Judy Black	***Refer to Agenda Notes #4: Website Update***
	5. Financial Update • Financial Status • SCOPE Fund • Astro-Image Sales • Signing Authority (Change Needed – Gregg, Judy, Dave Lane)	Discussion Decision	Gregg Dill	*n/a*
	6. EPO / Observing Report	Information Discussion	David Hoskin	*n/a*
UPDATES / REPORTS				
	7. SCO • Fall Cleanup date • Date of Member BBQ • Maintenance Crew needed	Discussion Decision	Tony McGrath	*n/a*
	8. Nova East	Discussion	Judy Black	General discussion / overview; report to follow at one of next two Board meetings.
	9. DSW	Discussion	Peter Hurley	General discussion / overview; report to follow at one of next two Board meetings.
	10. Parks Canada Agreement	Information Discussion	Peter Hurley	
NEW BUSINESS				
	11. 2026 Board Election & Appointments	Information Discussion Decision	Judy Black	• Formation of Nomination Committee • Urgent discussion regarding finding replacement for President and Secretary • Members need to determine if they are allowing their name to stand for re-election and for what position. •

	12. RASC Halifax Centre Discussion & Announce Lists	Information Discussion Decision	Tony McGrath	All members are to provide potential solutions to moving our discussion list from the SMU server. ***Refer to Agenda Notes #5: Discussion Lists***
Adjournment				
9:00 PM	Adjournment			**(Next Board meeting: Tuesday, September 29, 2026)**

Saturday, September 12, 2026: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Via Zoom - Meeting ID 885 0266 8138, Passcode 829737
https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/P2ciGF4MSmazvjFSNO9RHg

Time	***Member & Public Meeting***		
1:00 PM	Item		
	1- Welcome & Introductions • Photo Montage	Information	David Hoskin
	2- Food for the Soul: *Unseen Shadow*	Information	Paul Heath
	3- Special Presentations: *i.* **Mary Lou Whitehorne:** SCO: Crap-tastic Toilet Training. If astronauts can do it, so can astronomers. *ii.* **Paul Gray:** *Perseid Showers – Report of NE Citizen Science Project* *iii.* **Judy Black:** An Eclipse! A beached telescope… and a Wedding. *iv.* **Jerry Black:** My Summer Vacation ***v. Summer Nebula***		Mary Lou Whitehorne Paul Gray Judy Black Jerry Black David Hoskin
2:30 PM	Adjournment **Next meeting: Saturday, October 3, 2026** Guest speaker– **Matt Paine** (*Radio Astronomy for Beginners - Meteor Scatter and Skip)*		
2:30 – 4:00 PM	**MEET & GREET** Informal gathering for members, guests and visitors. Beverages and nut-free snacks supplied.		

Halifax Centre Board of Directors - Minutes of Meeting
September 8, 2026 - 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
held via Zoom - Meeting ID #894 5620 8808

Present: Tony McGrath (President), Peter Hurley (Vice-President), Judy Black (Secretary), Gerry Brosky, Matt Dyer, David Hoskin, Frank Logan, Pat Kelly.
Regrets: Gregg Dill (Treasurer), David McMullin.

1. Welcome & Introductions
With quorum met, Tony McGrath called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

a) Approval of Agenda
No new items were added to the agenda.

> **20260908MN-Mot01**
> It was moved by Pat Kelly and seconded by David Hoskin to approve the September 8, 2026 RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors meeting agenda as circulated.
> CARRIED.

b) Review of Action Lists
From September 2, 2025
Action 11: Open.

From April 7, 2026
Action 8: Open.

Gerry offered to precis the video they saw and present it a meeting. He also wants to go to Ottawa to determine how convinced the City to turn down their light and shield them appropriately. It would also be valuable to see how other groups, nationally and internationally have dealt with this and include the information gleaned in the presentation to the City and Province. Peter noted that Tucson and Flagstaff AZ has light restrictions and we may want to access how they achieved it. Gerry noted Adam Chaffey who is in charge of adaptive lighting can also be a good resource. There are many threads that can be pulled together to make arguments to normalize this movement, and to help them realize this is the obvious choice. It was suggested we reach out to John Read and Tim Doucette to be part of the strategy development. Peter noted that member Paul Evans put together a proposal that we should investigate.

> **20260908Act-01:** Gerry Brosky, Tony McGrath, peter Hurley and Frank Logan to discuss ideas and the direction to take regarding light pollution abatement.

From May 5, 2026
Action 4: Closed. National Parks is operating off the RASC-Transport Canda authorization and the RASC insurance. Nova Scotia staff will be reporting to Peter and Dave Roberston who in turn will report their activities to national RASC.
Action 5: Closed. All staff are trained.

From June 2, 2026
Action 1: Closed. No response was received. Matt Paine has agreed to be our speaker to address radio astronomy.
Action 2: Closed.
Action 3: Closed. Table has been confirmed.
Action 4: Closed. Gregg Dill has received the invoice for materials from Mary Lou Whitehorne.
Action 5: Closed. It will be a challenge next year because of NB star parties being held every weekend. Our challenge is to acquire volunteers to go conduct an informal joint event somewhere on PEI. Frank suggested they only need one volunteer from each of NB and Halifax Centres to make this a go.

> **20260908Act-02:** Judy Black will ask Kerry Zentner (RASC Member & Publications Coordinator) if he could provide the number of RASC members residing in PEI whether they are NB or Halifax Centre members or a National member.

Action 6: Closed. This was done during the Board meeting.
Action 7: Closed. Item was added to the agenda.

c) Approval of Previous Minutes
No errors were noted in the minutes.

> **20260908MN-Mot02**
> It was moved by Judy Black and seconded by Gerry Brosky to approve the May 5, 2026 RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors meeting minutes as circulated.
> CARRIED.

ONGOING ITEMS

2. Upcoming Meeting Dates & Guest Speakers

a) Approved 2026 Public Meeting Dates & Speakers
- September 12 – Confirmed speakers are Mary Lou Whitehorne, Judy & Jerry Black, David Hoskin.
- October 3 – Matt Paine *Radio Astronomy*
- November 7 – Blair MacDonald *Finding Exoplanets*
- December 5 – John Badowski *Fermi Paradox*

Members reviewed the public meeting agenda. Speakers were confirmed but others will be invited to come forward at the meeting. It was agreed that although this wasn't a formal meeting, Paul Heath would present his poem and David would present *What's Up*. Judy will be bringing cupcakes (using apples leftover from Nova East) and beverages with cups for the "meet" part of the meeting.

3. National Council (NC) Report (refer to Agenda Notes #5)
Judy will have a written report for both the June and September NC meeting at the next Board meeting. She noted that she was re-elected as NC Chair, Charles Ennis (Sunshine Coast) as NC Vice-Chair and John Hurley (Kingston) as NC Recorder. The big news is for members to mark their calendars for the first weekend in June when the in-person 2027 RASC General Assembly would be held in Kingston ON. More to come!

4. RASC Halifax Centre Website and YouTube
The information regarding updates to the website an our YouTube channel is in Agenda Notes 4.

5. Financial Update

With Gregg Dill's absence, the financial status report, SCOPE Fund and Astro-image sales were deferred to next meeting.

Judy Black noted the needed change to the Centre's signing authority could be addressed offline. Currently, Judy, Gregg and Dave Lane are the three with signing authority for cheques and any other documents requiring two signatures. Given Dave Lane is deceased and given Judy will no longer be on the Board as of December 31, two of the three will need to be replaced.

> **20260908Act-03:** Tony McGrath, Gregg Dill and Judy Black will discuss a strategy to change the Centre's signing authority.

6. Update: EPO Update
October 16 is the tentative date for 14-15 students from Avon High School to visit SCO. He will need some support; Peter volunteered. David will be chatting with the Acadia Astronomy Club about an event on Friday; it was suggested they might be interested in Paul Gray's revival of the Minas Astronomy Group (MAG).

7. Update: SCO
a) Annual BBQ: The First Quarter Moon is on Friday, September 18. It was decided:

- 1st choice: Friday, September 18
- Rain Date: Saturday, September 19
- 2nd Rain Date: September 25

b) SCO Spring Clean-up:
It was determined the cleanup would be Friday, September 11, 2026 with arrival at 10am; members would be asked to bring equipment. It was noted that ticks are bad at SCO. Judy emphasized the importance of removing weeds from all walking areas: the pads to the Storeroom, parking to the Storeroom, and in the driveway (especially near the rocks adjacent to the Warm Room and Observatory). Given the communications challenges we are having, members will be apprised via the Announce and Discussion lists.

8. Nova East
Judy stated it went well and most felt it was a relaxing weekend with 2 clear nights of observing. Our guest speaker, Dr. Catherine Lovekin, was phenomenal! With Tony McGrath retiring as Registrar Mark Mander has agreed to step into the role for 2027. A list of recommendations will be brought to the Board for their consideration. Positive feedback had been received. An official report will be presented at the November Board meeting.

A letter of appreciation should be sent from the Board to our sponsors APS and Telescopes Canada as our sponsors.

> **20260908Act-04:** Judy Black will draft a letter of thank you to APS and to Telescopes Canada for signature by the President and Nova East Chair.

9. Dark-Sky Weekend (DSW)
Peter Hurley stated it was a great success with 14 volunteers and approximately 800+ contacts over the weekend. Not as high as a couple of years ago. There were plans in pace should the clouds cover the skies. There will be a formal report forthcoming. Peter will be contacting volunteers to determine what can be changed to improve the program. Big thanks to everyone involved.

> **20260908Act-05:** Peter Hurley will provide a Dark-Sky Weekend report at a subsequent meeting.

10. Parks Canada Agreement
Peter reported it is in progress. He and Tony Schellinck have a meeting with park staff about the agreement. He questioned who signs the agreement. The DSP representatives (Peter and Tony) should be the ones to sign the agreement after Board approval. This is covered in the Centre's Bylaw No. 1 in 11.1.2 in which it states, "the Board may from time to time define the manner in which a particular document or type of document shall be executed by a person or persons charged to do so." The President cannot sign as they are the person who is contacted when there are disagreements. Peter noted that Kejimkujik National Park is quite good except for a couple of issues regarding lighting. There are some challenges regarding safety when suggesting dimmer lights. The audit has to be done earlier in the season when the Park still has its light on. The Park should be reminded they are responsible to educate their visitors regarding responsible lighting. Peter will have a report at the next meeting.

> **20260908Act-06:** Peter Hurley will provide a report on the outcome of discussions with Parks Canada regarding the Parks Canada Agreement at the September 29, 2026 meeting.

<u>New Business</u>

11. 2026 Board Election and Appointments – Arm Twisting Season
Judy noted the President and Secretary positions will be vacated at the end of this calendar year due to position descriptions defining term limits. It was also noted we require 2 additional Board members. A plan is needed. Formation of a committee is required. Peter Hurley, Pat Kelly and Tony McGrath volunteered; Judy Black was

voluntold. Because all Board meetings are held via Zoom and not in-person, Board members can reside anywhere in the province.

Mark Mander should be approached about being on the Board, perhaps as Secretary. Frank Logan will broach the question with Mark. It should be noted that prior participation on the Board should be considered when looking for President. Chris Young could be approached about being on the Board, not necessarily as Secretary. Because of his involvement with the Centre discussion lists, Pat Kelly agreed to assist with this task.

> **20260908Act-07:** The **Nominating Committee (Peter Hurley, Pat Kelly, Tony McGrath** and **Judy Black**) will provide a report at the next Bord meeting regarding the strategy for Board recruitment.

We also need to hear from the current Board members as to whether or not they are willing to let their name stand in their elected and appointed positions.

> **20260908Act-08: All Board members** are to inform a member of the nominating committee of they intend to have their name stand in their elected and/or nominated positions.

12. RASC Halifax Centre Discussion & Announce List
Tony McGrath noted this item is significant. He noted that many members expressed frustration at the challenges presented by our discussion and announce lists; it's almost as if they don't exist for some members. Tony sent out a request through the RASC Presidents Forum to determine what platforms they were using. If we are going to continue being a community of people interested in astronomy, we need to have effective ways to communicate; otherwise, people will just disappear.

Pat investigated the discussion and announce lists to compare the settings and they were the same for both. As an example, Pat and Dave Chapman both have it set to receive a copy of what they posted; Pat gets his copy but Dave does not. Dave isn't alone. The question was what needs to be done.

Some of the responses Tony received quoted prices per month. Given Tiffany goes on maternity leave as of November 1 and something should be done before that as our communications through SMU may not be a priority of the new person nor would they necessarily know how to fix it. Frank suggested it should be done by the national group, and every centre treated as a franchise of the main group. The national system allowed for a centre discussion group but didn't allow for a special Board list. Judy suggested we go to a Canadian site versus American, such as IO. There is a website (unplugged.toddmaffin.com) that provides suggested Canadian alternatives that would reduce access to our data; this may be one source of looking.

A couple of people should take it on to investigate what to do. Frank Logan, Matt Dyer and Tony McGrath volunteered to discuss it.

> **20260908Act-09: Frank Logan, Matt Dyer** and **Tony McGrath** are to provide a recommendation for going forward in changing our Centre's communications.

Adjournment
No further business to conduct.

> **260203MN-Mot03**
> It was moved by Pat Kelly and seconded by David Hoskin to adjourn.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Our next Board meeting is September 29, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Black, Secretary

AGENDA NOTES

Agenda Item, Proposed By, & Date Proposed	Description Received (& Proposed Motion, if Applicable)
Agenda Note #1 re: Open Action List (as of June 2, 2026)	**September 2, 2025** **250902MN-Act11**: **Judy Black** to send RASC Halifax Centre documentation to the NS Archives. **April 7, 2026**

	260407MN-Act08: Tony McGrath, Peter Hurley, Frank Logan and **Gerry Brosky** will contact Tony Mancini and Claudia Chender to discuss lighting after the Centre has done some background research. **May 5, 2026** **2600505MN-Act04: Peter Hurley** will ask Dennis Lyons if the National Parks staff would be covered under the RASC insurance. **2600505MN-Act05: Peter Hurley** will inform Kejimkujik National Park staff of the start to LP training for national park staff. **June 2, 2026** **260602MN-Act-01: Judy Black** will contact Wayne Haraimovitch to inquire if he would be available for either September 12 or October 3 to address Artemis. **260602MN-Act-02: Judy Black** will contact Matt Payne to inquire if he would be available for either September 12 or October 3 to address radio astronomy. **260602MN-Act-03: David Hoskin** will contact Stacey Smith-Campbell to confirm a table at the September 26, 2026, Sci-Fi themed book fair. **260602MN-Act-04: Judy Black** will investigate replacement material for the SCO compost toilet, its cost and replacement method. **260602MN-Act-05: Judy Black** will contact Paul Gray then Curt Nason to determine potential to go forward with the Confederation Star Party concept. **260602MN-Act-06: Judy Black** will forward the Centre's Executive list 1955-2026 to Peter Hurley. **DONE** during the Board meeting. **260602MN-Act-07: Judy Black** will add "Announce List" to the September 2026 Board agenda

Agenda Note #2 re: 2026 Speakers & Public Meeting Dates	***2026 Approved Members Meeting Dates and Events***
	Members' Meeting dates and known speakers are posted on the RASC(HC) website. All are scheduled in our Zoom account.
	
	Approved 2026 Speakers and Public Meeting dates *(held 1st Saturday of the month unless a holiday weekend)*
	
	• September 12 (Labour day: September 7)
	  ○ confirmed Mary Lou Whitehorne: *SCO: Crap-tastic Toilet Training. If astronauts can do it, so can astronomers.*
	  ○ Paul Gray: *Perseid Showers – Report of NE Citizen Science Project*
	• October 3
	• confirmed November 7 – Blair MacDonald (*Finding Exoplanets)*
	• confirmed December 5 (Public Meeting + AGM) – John Badowski (*Fermi Paradox)*
	
	Suggested Speakers / Special Presentations:
	• Dan Falk (Edmond Halley)
	• John Badowski
	• Dalhousie Astronomy
	• SMU Astronomy and Physics
	  • Tiffany Fields
	• https://rasc.ca/find-speaker

Agenda Notes #3: Approved Board Meeting Dates	***Approved 2026 Board Meeting dates*** All are scheduled in our Zoom account. February to December dates to be approved by the newly elected Board. • *September 29* • *November 3* • *December 1 (December 5: AGM)*
Agenda Notes #4: Website Updates	***Updates to the Halifax Website & YouTube channel***: **Nova East**

	• Home Page
	  ○ Included 2027 NE date in header
	  ○ Added 2026 group photo to home page
	  ○ Included the following statement in red font: The information below this and subsequent pages (except for 2026 photos) have not yet been updated for 2027.
	• Photos:
	  ○ Jerry added photos to 2026 NE photo page (from Jerry/Judy Black, Frank Logan)
	• Registration page
	  ○ Jerry deactivated the Registration Form PDF
	
	August
	• Uploaded *What's Up?* for July, August, September
	• Uploaded June Public meeting video to Centre's YouTube channel
	• Updated September meeting info on *Home* and *Upcoming RASC Events* pages; deleted NE notification
	• Uploaded Blair MacDonald's Astroimage Processing Session to Centre YouTube channel
	• Links & Data page, Astronomy Resources: Changed name of observatory owned by Kathy Walker to *Helena Observatory*

Agenda Notes #5: Discussion Lists	*From Tony McGrath to his fellow Presidents:* We are considering perhaps a third-party mailing-list service, but before we go too far down that road, I thought I'd ask what other Centres are doing. • Does your Centre use a third-party service for its discussion list? If so, what are you using, and are you happy with it? • We're looking for something that is reasonably inexpensive, easy for volunteers to administer, reliable, and allows members to carry on a two-way discussion by email. • And if you've tried something that **didn't** work well, I'd be just as interested in hearing about that! Any advice, recommendations, or experiences you can share would be very much appreciated. <u>Responses received:</u> • St. John's uses Groups.io. I think that it is about $20 per month. Lots of discussion. Users can receive emails or access the discussion through an app. Seems to work well. (Michael Morrow) • Calgary Centre also uses groups.io; no issues! (Heather Laird) • Mississauga RASC also uses Groups.io. No major issues but it can sometimes be a little cumbersome. If one replies to an email, it will go to EVERYONE unless they specifically click on "reply to sender only" at the bottom of the email. It is not a big deal but does cause some email proliferation to the whole list. (Heather Laird responded: There's settings on your account to turn that off! I have emails turned off and specifically use the groups.io app to access, there's lots of options to tone down what hits the inbox. :) (Kirby Alguire) • Kingston uses Google Groups. (Malcolm Park) • Winnipeg use Groups.io for our general lists and interest groups, and siteground.us for email server for Centre addresses for the executive. Groups.io is about $26 or $27 CDN / month, charged to our account in US annually. The siteground email server is about $20/ month again billed in USD. Both have worked well for us, we moved from a legacy service at the University of Manitoba a number of years ago. Nothing is cheap anymore and the exchange isn't great, but the service has been reasonably consistent and reliable. If you find other alternatives, particularly domestic, please keep Winnipeg Centre in the loop. (Mark Irvine) • Vancouver Centre is concerned about and trying to focus on member engagement and communication. We feel that it will help stop the slide in membership that has been happening. For one way blasts from council to membership we have mailchimp and have to manually maintain the list with each months membership changes. For a forum / discussion, we experimented with Discord but for many it was too much of a barrier for most and extra administration managing members vs non-members. Just last night we agreed to experiment with Whatsapp for a members only and non-members group discussions. For our imaging sub group a Whatsapp group was created which has been well received and running for about a year. This group along has brought in many of the new memberships this year. (Nolan Smith) • We use a groups.io mailing list for arranging star parties and general discussion, but send a bulk email to every member from gmail to confirm the time and place of our monthly stargazers meetings which are held both in person and on zoom. (Gary Cameron) • Belleville Centre has its own website that includes a members only discussion page (it automatically archives every month).

	The complete website was written by a former member (over 15 years ago), is hosted by a local IT company (Quinte Computers), and we are supported by one of our members who retired from the company. An email notification is sent to all members whenever a new message is posted (no content description, just a "new message" or "new picture" flag). To read the message, any interested member has to sign into the secure website. Private conversations between members are through the individual's email accounts (we have a membership directory in the secure area). Every so often, it does break down, especially when the hosting software gets "updated & improved". We have had some outages caused by service attacks, but so far, no loss of integrity or data. Some time ago, we tried to get a National approach to website hosting and software support that could be tailored to each Centre, but a lot of Centres said "we are happy with what we are using", so the initiative lost traction. Like you, we are interested in a web site that has a public facing side, a members only discussion forum and picture gallery, is easy to maintain & update, is inexpensive... I don't know if it is worth the effort to see if enough interest if a National approach is warranted, especially since there appears to be little progress on the current RASC system update (yes, I know we have had a change in Exec Directors, and our committee system of getting work complete seems "inadequate"). Keep us in the loop with your findings - our centre website is being held together with bailing wire and bubble-gum. (Donald Town) ***Tony's response t the replies received:*** Hi everyone - Thanks very much to those who took the time to respond to my question about discussion lists and email systems. I really appreciate you sharing your experiences and suggestions. This has also reinforced something that I think is easy to overlook...good communication is really important to building and maintaining the community that is at the heart of a Centre. Our Centres are much more than organizations that put on meetings and observing events. They are communities of people who share an interest in astronomy. The discussion list, newsletters, emails, meetings and informal conversations are all part of what keeps people connected and helps them feel that they belong. If our communications are unreliable, difficult to use, or don't encourage people to participate, we lose some of those opportunities to build that sense of community. Conversely, when communication works well, it makes it easier for members to share ideas, ask questions, organize observing sessions, welcome new members and simply stay connected with one another. So, while finding a better email system may seem like a fairly mundane technical issue, I think there is a bigger reason for us to get it right. Thanks again for your help. The information you've provided will be very useful as we look at our options.

Invitation & Link to Board Meeting

If unable to attend, please advise the Secretary (Judy Black) – jblackns@icloud.com

Date: Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2026
Time: 07:00 – 09:00 PM Halifax
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89456208808?pwd=NPXJXDi4H6sqAEbxzYTZVVVjSStan9.1

Meeting chat link
https://us06web.zoom.us/launch/jc/89456208808

Meeting ID: 894 5620 8808
Passcode: 939460

Invitation & Link to Member & Public Meeting

If unable to attend in person, you are invited to a **Zoom meeting**. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

When: Saturday, September 12, 2026
Time: 01:00 PM Halifax

Register in advance for this meeting. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.
https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/P2ciGF4MSmazvjFSNO9RHg