

the niagara whirlpool  
January/February 2007

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Volume 26 Issue 1

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Stan Sammy

It's now 2007, and Christmas has passed by once again. I hope that everyone has received at least one gift of astronomical interest. The weather, even though not the best, has allowed us a few hours of stargazing during December.

Our guest speaker for the General Meeting on January 18 will be Richard West, a member of the Niagara Centre. He will be speaking on extrasolar planets.

Our next Members' observing night is January 20 at the CCCA, and the next Public Starnight is January 27 at Firemen's Park. It would be great to see these events well attended by the membership.

During the first half of this year there will be many planned events. Please visit the website for all updates on these events.

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year.

## FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

### Michael Panucci

Hello fellow members. I would like to begin my report by wishing you happy holidays. I hope Christmas provided new astronomy gear and that 2007 brings clear skies.

The weather has been very mixed lately. We have experienced a lot of precipitation in the form of rain. I hope the trend changes.

The last public night at Firemen's Park was well attended by members and the public. I met a few members that have not been out to public nights for quite some time. I send a thank you to those members for sharing astronomy with the public.

I am working on an illuminated sign to direct the public to our public night observing location. Although we know our way in the dark quite

well, the public may only see darkness upon approaching our location.

I am planning the 2007 Public Night schedule at Firemen's Park. I just received the RASC insurance certificate, so I can now apply for the park permit. January 27 and February 24 are the next dates. Please watch the website for confirmation. I will also send out an email notice.

I would like to add a reminder to members for their winter observing agenda. Make sure you get out and observe Messier 42 in the constellation of Orion this winter. This time of year is a great time for binocular or wide field telescope observing. Dress well and enjoy the winter night sky.

Happy New Year and clear skies!

**On the cover:** Glenn Sloggett (top) and Brian Pihack (bottom) caught the strong aurora borealis of December 14. Green and purple aurora were visible in the early evening, until clouds came in at 10 p.m.

## FROM THE SECRETARY

**Andrew Beaton**

Good day to all. As Secretary, I only have a short report this month. We now have a total of 112 members. I would like to welcome new members John Gandza and Ken Smith to the Niagara Centre.

## MEMBERS' OBSERVING

**Mark Roberts**

I hope that the holidays were happy and safe for all, and that Santa brought you all that you wished for. He was good to me and brought me a pair of 20×80 binoculars. Although Santa was kind, the weatherman has not been, and I have yet to get a chance to try them under a starry sky.

December's Members' Night was a moderate success. The day started out cloudy and then cleared by 6 p.m. Good skies mixed with patchy clouds lasted until 10 p.m. and then it finally got socked in completely. Even though conditions were not the best it was still great to get out and

get in some time behind an eyepiece. Thanks to Stan, Mike, Phil and Ed for the good company.

There are Members' Nights scheduled for January 20 and February 17. Observing starts at dusk and goes late. Everyone is welcome. If you are coming out, please arrive a bit early to set up, and dress accordingly. There is heat in the shed so that members can warm up and chat.

Let's all hope the weather cooperates and we get to kick off the 2007 observing season under the great dark skies of the CCA.

## RASC NIAGARA CENTRE NEEDS YOU!

**JOE OTONICAR**

This is an opportunity for everyone to do something for yourselves and our Centre and it's not difficult at all.

This is a list of companies that have contributed goods for prizes, workshops and other events to the Niagara Centre in the past year. They gave us these goods in the hope that in return they get exposure and potential new customers.

I ask each and every member to consider them first when you go shopping.

The next time you're in their area stop by and see what they have to offer. Or if they have a website take the time to check it out.

Then if you like what you see, email them and tell them you saw them mentioned in our newsletter and try to say something positive about their website or that you will drop by the next time you're in the area.

By doing this you will help ensure their continuing support in the year to come.

### **Canadian Tire**

431 Louth, St. Catharines, ON  
(905) 682-9275

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60 Pearce Ave., Tonawanda, NY  
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### **Kendrick Astro Instruments**

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### **Khan Scope Centre**

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## BAD BOB'S PERSPECTIVE

## Bad Bob Winder

I am writing a brief article to report that the construction of my new 19.4 inch Gregorian reflecting telescope seems to be going very well. The main problem I had in the final assembly

was the 15 foot long tube seemed to be flexing too much. I have devoted a considerable amount of time and energy reinforcing the tube with a web-like structure, similar in design to the tower for a home TV antenna. It is now glued together and I am currently reinforcing the glued joints with

wood screws (Two joints actually broke apart before I could add the screws!). I have included a photo that gives some idea of the structure.

I hope to have the telescope operational in February or March, if I get enough reasonably warm weather to work outdoors consistently.



Members of the Niagara Centre are welcome to look through it, assuming that it actually works OK when completed. This is still not a sure thing, given my propensity for making mistakes!

A few months ago I wrote a Whirlpool article describing my enthusiasm for my right-angle binoculars. I should add that ordinary straight-through binoculars are still very useful, especially for viewing objects within 45 degrees of the horizon, which does not usually involve severe neck strain. Reclining

chairs can be used to view objects overhead. Binoculars mounted on a camera tripod will give steady, shake-free views. Some companies, such as Orion Optics, sell low-cost binoculars of surprisingly high quality.

## For Sale

### *Telescope For Sale*

Celestron Refractor. C102-HD Refractor (Model #21016) telescope with CG-4 German Equatorial Mount; Adjustable Aluminum Tripod; 6 x 30 Finderscope; 20 mm & 7.5 mm Eyepiece.

For more info, visit: <http://www.celestron.com/c2/product.php?CatID=10&ProdID=40>

Absolute Mint Condition. \$299

Call Doug Shelton at 905 354.0180, or email [sandpits@cogeco.ca](mailto:sandpits@cogeco.ca)

### *Baader Solar Viewing Filter Material Still Available*

3"X3" square only \$2.25

5"X5" square only \$6.25

4"X4" square only \$4.00

6"X6" square only \$9.00

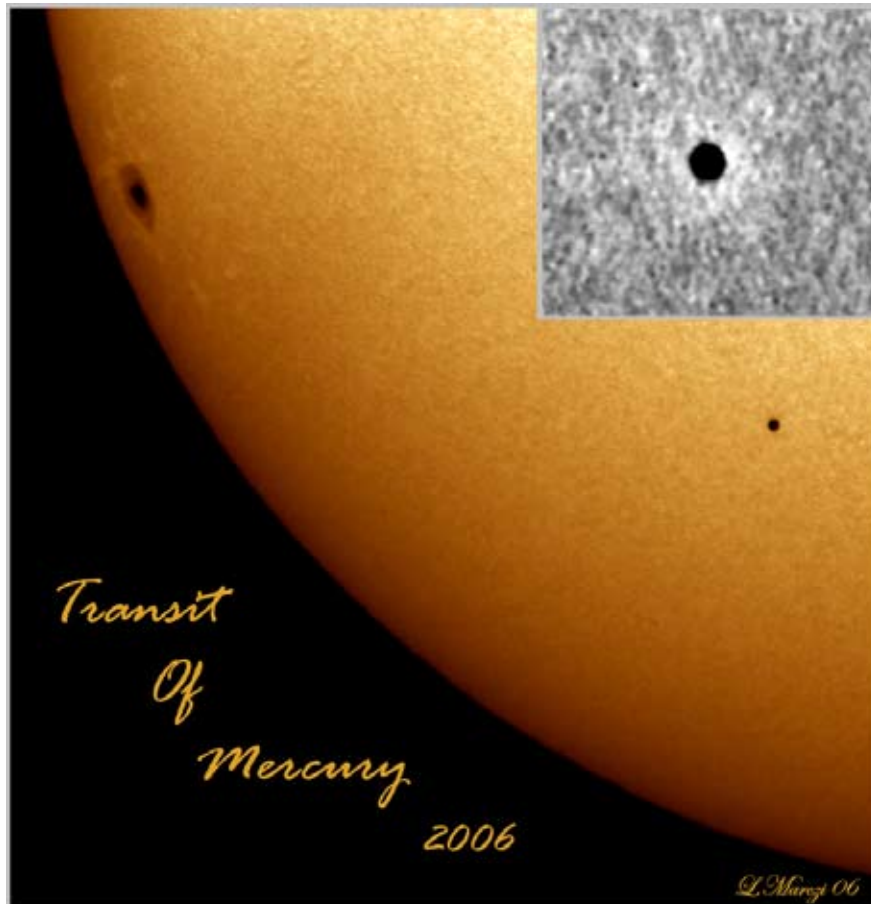
An Instruction sheet for making a safe solar filter for your binoculars or telescope is included. Contact Joe Otonicar at 905 935-2526 or [jotonicar@look.ca](mailto:jotonicar@look.ca)

## PHOTO GALLERY



Jim Thibert and his partners from the [Starshadow Remote Observatory Team](#) took this image of NGC 1333, a nebula in Perseus, with their remote observatory in New Mexico. The star-forming region contains many young stars, the youngest being the red Herbig-Haro objects on the left.

Les Marczy and friends drove all the way to Point Pelée, Ontario, the southern-most point in Canada, to be under clear skies for the transit of Mercury on November 8. From there he was able to take this picture of Mercury passing in front of the sun.



## EVENT HORIZON

- January 18 General meeting, Niagara Falls Public Library, 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker Richard West.  
Beginners class at 6:45 p.m.
- January 20 Members' night, CCCA Observatory. Venus close to Moon.
- January 21 Uranus close to Moon.
- January 27 Public Starnight at Firemen's Park. Moon close to Pleiades.
- February 1 Beginners class at A.N. Myer, 7 p.m.
- February 2 Saturn close to Moon.
- February 15 General meeting, Niagara Falls Public Library, 7:30 p.m. Beginners class at 6:45 p.m.
- February 17 Members' night, CCCA Observatory.
- February 19 Venus close to Moon.
- February 23 Moon close to Pleiades.
- February 24 Public Starnight at Firemen's Park
- March 1 Beginners class at A.N. Myer, 7 p.m. Saturn close to Moon.
- March 3 Total eclipse of the moon. Moon rises in middle of eclipse.
- March 15 General meeting, Niagara Falls Public Library, 7:30 p.m. Beginners class at 6:45 p.m.
- March 16 Mercury close to Moon
- March 17 Members' night, CCCA Observatory. Messier Marathon weekend.
- April 14 Members' night, CCCA Observatory.
- April 21 International Astronomy Day.

### 2009 International Year of Astronomy

#### **NIAGARA CENTRE WEB SITE: E-MAIL DISCUSSION LIST & MEMBERS ONLY AREA**

The Niagara Centre has an email discussion list and a member's area on the website. By subscribing to the e-mail list you will be able to post messages and carry on discussions about astronomy and activities with other Niagara Centre members. This is a great way to interact and get to know other members, or enhance your knowledge of astronomy. Please note that a log-in procedure is required to initially join the Discussion List. Complete instructions are available on the discussion list page on the website. A member's only area of the website is also available. This area contains Niagara Centre information for the use of its members only. The member's area contains astrophotography by Niagara members, the Niagara library book list and lots of other Centre-related information. To receive the log-ins and passwords for the e-mail discussion list and member's area, contact Jim Holiko and he will send you the needed information by e-mail.

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