

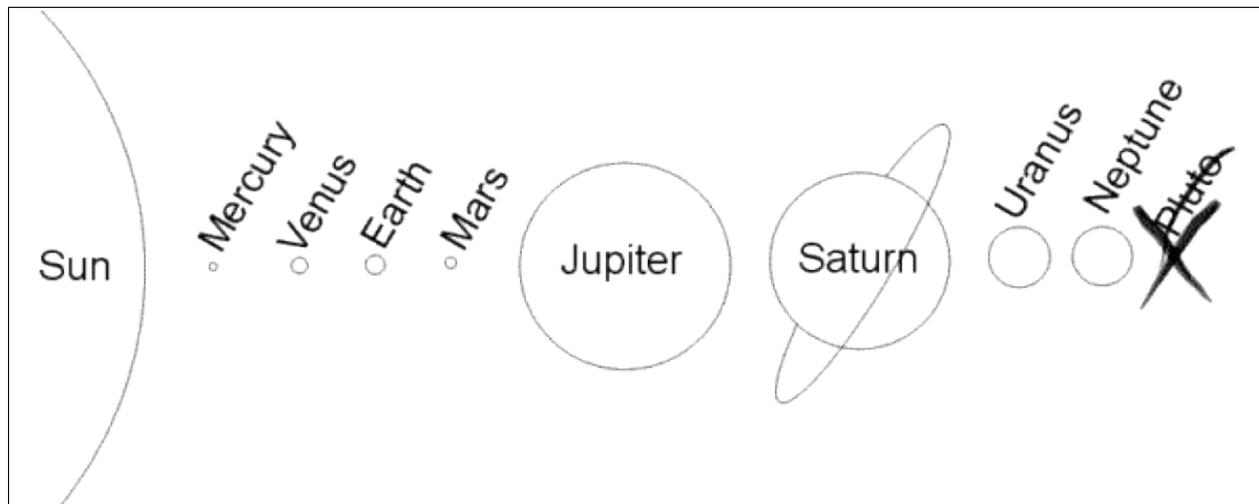
# STARDUST

Newsletter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada  
Edmonton Centre



September 2006

Volume 52 Issue 1



*The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has formulated a definition of the word “planet”.  
Pluto no longer qualifies. Illustration by Michael Ward © 2006.*

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## Centre Contact Information

If you do not want your email and/or phone listed here, please contact the editor.

Council Positions			
<b>President</b>	<b>Orla Aaquist</b>		
<b>Past-president</b>	<b>David Cleary</b>		
<b>Vice-president</b>	<b>Krista Stefan</b>		
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Luca Vanzella</b>		
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Cheryl Salava</b>		
Co-Nat'l Council Rep	Bruce McCurdy		
Co-Nat'l Council Rep	Roy Ramdeen		
Councillor	Sharon Tansey		
Councillor	Alicja Borowski		
Councillor	Sheldon Helbert		
Councillor	Andrew Soon		
Councillor	<b>VACANT</b>		
Observing Group Chair	Larry Wood		
Stardust Editor	Michael Ward		
Portfolio Positions			
Archive Liaison	<b>VACANT</b>		
Astronomy Days Coordinator	<b>VACANT</b>		
Casino Manager	Franklin Loehde		
Equipment Director	Bob Jahrig		
George Moores Workshop Coord	Sherry Campbell		
Librarian	Shannon Austman		
Librarian (backup)	Vicki Huntsman		
Light Pollution Abatement Committee Chair	John Cliff		
Membership Secretary	Mark MacDonald		
New Member Advisor	Pat Abbott		
Outreach Coordinator	Dave Robinson		
Public Education Director	<b>VACANT</b>		
Public Relations/Promotion Officer	Shelly Sodergren		
Scope Rentals	Larry Wood		
Scope Rentals - backup	Roy Ramdeen		
Social Director	David Cleary		
Speaker Coordinator	Orla Aaquist		
Stardust Distribution	Mark MacDonald		
Web-site Administrator	Howard Gibbins		

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Edmonton, AB, Canada, TM5 4A1

**Centre Website** <http://www.edmontonrasc.com>

**Observing Deck** 452-9100 ext 2249

**Stardust** Articles to Stardust may be submitted by email to [mward@interbaun.com](mailto:mward@interbaun.com) or [aaquisto@macewan.ca](mailto:aaquisto@macewan.ca) or [edmpresident@edmontonrasc.com](mailto:edmpresident@edmontonrasc.com). Submission deadline is the last day of the previous month (e.g. for the May issue submit by 30 Apr). Submit as MSOffice OR OpenOffice OR AbiWord OR plain text. Avoid use of fancy formatting or spacing, and strange fonts, but bold, italics, underline, and bullets are fine.

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION**  
**to be voted on. See by-laws attached to this issue:**  
*Special Resolution: The existing by-laws are repealed. They are replaced by the attached by-laws.*

**Meetings**

Sep 11	7:30	General Meeting	
Sep 26	7:15	Council Meeting	
Oct 16	7:30	General Meeting	<i>third Monday because of Thanksgiving</i>
Oct 24	7:15	Council Meeting	
Oct 30	7:15	Council Meeting	<i>expenditure proposals</i>
Nov 13	7:30	General Meeting	
Nov 28	7:15	Council Meeting	
Dec 11	7:30	General Meeting	

**Observing schedule**

September	22 & 23	October	20 & 21
November	17 & 18	December	15 & 16

**Star Parties**

Sep 26 – Oct 1 Northern Prairie Starfest

**Contests - Launch your future with reading!** Are you 9 to 14 years old? Here are two contests just for you!

**Contest 1**

Write a story in which a magical book transports you on board the space shuttle with Steve MacLean. You have until September 30 to send in your story of 250 to 600 words to the Canadian Library Association at: **info@cla.ca**. The winning entries will be the most creative and well-written stories, in French and in English, in two age categories: 9 to 11 years old, and 12 to 14 years old.

**Contest 2**

Send a question to astronaut Steve MacLean, and he will answer the five best questions after Mission STS-115. You have until September 30 to send your question to the Canadian Library Association at: **info@cla.ca**.

**Remember** when you send your e-mail to include your name, complete mailing address, and the age you will be on September 1, 2006.

**The Prizes**

Winners will receive a Steve MacLean Mission Kit from the Canadian Space Agency as well as a gift certificate for a local book store. Winners will also see their names and contributions posted on the Websites of the Canadian Library Association and the Canadian Space Agency. See <http://www.space.gc.ca/asc/eng/missions/sts-115/default.asp>

**Take part in the adventure!**

I am not a suspicious man except every time I accidentally walk under a ladder, cross the path of a black cat, and create a list with thirteen items. Nothing bad has ever happened to me as a result of these, yet for some reason I get edgy. I have before me a list of 13 things related to RASC activities with which I was involved over the summer. Perhaps this is a sign that my stint as President of the Edmonton Centre is nearing an end. Even worse, perhaps it is not!

This issue of Stardust is huge because it contains a copy of our proposed updated bylaws. Somewhere in this issue of Stardust you should find a motion to adopt this document as our new Centre By-Laws. Some of you may ask, why the \$#^ is Council wasting money mailing out this document to every single member! Well, we have to make sure that every member has an opportunity to view the bylaws ... it says so in our bylaws. Now, if all of you had email, we could email it to you; or if all of you had a computer with access to the internet, then we would post it on our Website (in fact it is there somewhere), but about 60 members have not supplied us with email addresses; and of the ones who have, there are about 25 addresses that reject the mail as undeliverable. We could, of course, email it to those with email, check for validation by waiting for a reply from the recipient and then 'snail mail' it to the rest. However, instead I opted for mowing my lawn, putting new flooring in my bedrooms, and helping to roof my friend's house.

We may finally have a sub-lease for an observing area at Black Nugget Lake. David Robinson and Roman Unyk have been busy communicating with Beaver County to finalize the agreement. The signed sub-lease has been mailed back to the 'County, and we now await approval from the County council. Once approved, work can begin on the site.

The results of our gaming proceeds from the gambling tables from our last Casino were announced in mid-July to be \$30,452.13. After some concern that our remaining share from the Slots did not arrive, I decided to check our mailbox at TWOS, and behold there was a cheque for \$54,220.85. So, the grand total of monies received for our 2006 Casino, thanks to our volunteers, is \$84,672.98. The call for expenditure proposals will be made (was) at the September 11 meeting, and you have until the October meeting to get the proposals to Council.

Bruce brought the Simon Newcomb Award Trophy back from National. Since it was in a sad state, I took it in for repair to House of Trophies, who fixed it as best they could. Warren Finlay will have possession of this magnificent bronze icon until next year's AGM in Calgary.

Over the summer I made a couple of modifications to the 10-inch Dobsonian donated to the Centre by Chantal and Perry

Richard. I fastened the tube to the box so that it no longer slides around, and I reduced the size of the base to make it more manageable. The optics is quite good and it will make an excellent loaner scope for those who want a little more aperture.

Bruce and Cornelia updated our four-fold brochure to include our DSP efforts. To Bruce's dismay, he noticed at the last minute that the Sunday evening Observatory session had been deleted from the brochure. I could hear Bruce scream clear across town and there were several reports of a fireball closely correlated with his outcry. Michael's psychic powers detected Bruce's anguish, and fixed the error before the brochure went to print. Bruce is still with us.

Council has updated the old 1992 formal agreement with TWOSE, and I was supposed to make some final changes and forward it to George Smith for consideration. I was distracted by the Winnipeg Folk Festival from which I never recovered, and George has not yet seen our proposal.

On July 1, Paul and I took solar telescopes to Sherwood Park to participate in the Canada Day event. This is a long time ago and I do not remember much about it except that a wonderful lady came to my rescue with a tuna salad sandwich.

George Smith from TWOSE has formed a joint committee with the RASC to examine the city lighting surrounding the TWOSE. By the time that you read this, this group will have met to discuss strategy for to get the City to install responsible lighting at TWOSE and the surrounding area.

I have been in communication with Dixie Colter from the Lakeland area who has invited someone from the RASC to be a guest speaker at their 2006 Provincial Parks Volunteer Conference in Lac La Biche. They would like us to talk to their volunteers about the Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve and provide an evening of star gazing. They write on their website that they are looking forward to having a group of enthusiastic astrologers present at their volunteer conference. I am still searching for one or two members to drive with me to Lac La Biche on September 15.

Late in the summer, Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC) agreed to support our DSP effort by allocating space at their store for us to display an information board on light pollution and responsible lighting practices. Bruce, Cornelia and Shelly put together nice display, which, according to MEC, was very popular with patrons. Bruce had to re-supply the display with brochures several times.

Harris Christian reports that he had a great night of sidewalk astronomy on September 2 at the 50th anniversary of Camp Maskepetoon, located on the edge of Pigeon Lake. He writes that "About 100 campers were coming & going at the telescopes with

many individuals coming back for the 4th and 5th time per telescope. We received a warm thank you from the camp management. An extreme tip of the wool toque to Dave Boyle, Mike Noble, and Ross Sinclair (new RASC member in progress) for all being partners in this successful night.”

Lastly, over the summer the DSP Declaration committee met several times with Parks to plan the September 3 declaration of the Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve. I am happy to report that we pulled it off, and I am extremely proud to have played a small

part organizing and participating in the event. I am sure that you will hear a lot more about this event over the next little while. Moreover, this is not the end of the DSP initiative. It is just the first step; perhaps the first giant step for RASC, Edmonton Centre kind.

Now I am out of time, because I have to submit this to Michael, mistakes and all. I see that my list is 14 items long. How fortuitous. Of course, I am counting this last paragraph.

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### **New Members Report** by *Patrick Abbott*

The following members joined over the summer:

**Chris Meerveld** has a small Celestron go-to refractor. He is happy with it but stresses the importance of accurate set-up for a go-to. As he lives near West Edmonton Mall the light pollution is bad. He plans on sticking with his small telescope until his area of interest becomes apparent.

**Jack Fulks** also is the proud possessor of a small Celestron go-to. He is having a bit of a problem setting it up. He is interested in the dark sites and seems to have some interest in variable stars. I have warned him that if he is like most amateur

astronomers he will find them boring ,but if he has the necessary obsessive-compulsive personality he will quickly become addicted! He also intends to stick with binoculars and his small telescope until he sees in which direction he is heading.

**Na Fok Chan** has been reading a lot about astronomy and decided this Summer that he should get more involved in astronomy and joined the RASC Edmonton Centre. Na has a pair of binoculars but no telescope yet Na will try out the ones at the deck.

To all our new members: Cead mile failte (a hundred thousand welcomes)!

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### **Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve Declared** by *Bruce McCurdy*

Two years of negotiating, planning, and preparation came to fruition on Sunday September 3 when the Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve was formally declared in a public ceremony at Elk Island Park. Canada’s newest DSP encompasses some 300 km<sup>2</sup> including Elk Island National Park and Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area. This partnership includes Parks Canada Agency, Alberta Community Development (specifically Alberta Parks & Protected Areas), and the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

RASC Edmonton Centre’s Honorary President Doug Hube was a superb MC of the declaration ceremony, which was attended by a variety of politicians including MP Leon Benoit, MLA Ray Danyluk, and a variety of mayors, reeves, and councilors from Strathcona, beaver and Leduc counties. The actual declaration was read by aspiring poet Skye (!) Hyndman, who at 11 years old represented the vision of the future which is central to this conservation effort.

The ceremony itself was merely the centerpiece of a day full of activities, attended by an estimated 2,500 visitors under beautiful weather conditions. The official theme of the day’s events, coined by Elk Island Park Superintendent Marilyn Peckett, was “Many Cultures, One Sky”, highlighting humanity’s multifarious connections with the dark night sky, be they

scientific, cultural, artistic, or simply experiential. Helen Sawyer Hogg’s famous quote, “The stars belong to everyone”, was put into practice like never before.

An outstanding line-up of astronomy speakers was headed by special guest Alan Dyer who gave two presentations of his “Amazing Sky” show. National President Scott Young gave a timely talk about “Pluto vs. the Ice Dwarves”, David Roles gave a “Grand Tour” of recent solar system exploration, Doug Hube packed the house with his presentation “Painted Sky: The Northern Lights”, Rick Huziak gave a passionate talk on “The Importance of Dark Sky Preserves”, and Warren Finlay presented his outstanding “Sounds of the Night”, which was followed by a live nature walk co-hosted by Warren and Parks Canada’s Matt Davis. A constellation tour was hosted by Bruce McCurdy in conjunction with “Goodnight Moon” storytelling by Cecilia Goncalves of Alberta Parks.

On the cultural side, an early highlight was Duane Goodstriker’s storytelling session. Duane erected an eye-catching tipi, where a crowd gathered inside to hear the creation myths which are painted on every Blackfoot tipi, prominently featuring the Big Dipper, the Pleiades, and the Morning Star. Our own Harris Christian organized a Heritage Games session which was a popular spot for kids throughout the afternoon. During the

declaration ceremony there were starry poetry readings by Edmonton's Poet Laureate Alice Major and Skye Hyndman. Internationally-renowned artist Lewis Lavoie painted a spectacular vista informally titled "Bison and Stars". The evening's entertainment included singing with Wendy Walker and dancing by her daughter Cheyenne, followed by an outstanding concert of sky and nature songs by Edmonton Centre's own Bob Jahrig along with Marc Ladouceur, Don Marcotte, and Dwayne Hrynkiw.

A central hub of activity was the telescope field, featuring solar observing during the afternoon. By late evening the contingent had swelled to over 30 telescopes, as Edmonton Centre members responded to the appeal for volunteers in their typical admirable fashion. The field was abuzz with the sounds of happy astronomers and delighted guests. Smoke from the Washington forest fires bronzed the waxing gibbous Moon, while unfortunately diminishing views of the Milky Way. Those who stayed into the wee hours were treated to a fabulous display of aurora which painted the sky and danced the night away.

This account of the events of DSP-Day is necessarily rushed

due to Stardust deadline. Watch for a photo essay in the near future courtesy of Wayne Malkin.

Sponsors of the day's activities included Telus World of Science – Edmonton, The Science Shop, Mountain Equipment Co-op, The Second Cup, and Perpetual Notion Graphic Design.

It is impossible to adequately recognize and thank the many RASC volunteers who made this event an enormous success, however acknowledgement must be given to a few key people. John Cliff, Warren Finlay, and Sherrilyn Jahrig spearheaded the initial outreach, lobbying and negotiating with the various levels of government. Bob Jahrig was performance director for the evening concert, while Orla Aaquist provided invaluable support on a number of fronts down the homestretch of preparations. Cornelia Blunck did a fantastic job coordinating the 55+ volunteers, and kept us extremely well-fed in the process.

The multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary outreach of DSP Day was the vision of Sherrilyn Jahrig, who put in countless hours and immeasurable effort as the event's producer to make it all happen.

Congratulations to one and all, we did ourselves proud.



*Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve declarations are signed by Roger Reilander of Alberta Parks and Protected Areas, Marilyn Peckett of Elk Island National Park, and Scott Young, National President of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.*



*Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve was celebrated in part with this fabulous cake, prepared by Donna-Lee May.*

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### **The RASC 2006 General Assembly, Ottawa** by Roy Ramdeen

The 2006 GA was held in Ottawa on May 19 -21 at Carleton University. If you have never attended one of these get togethers, it's a blast from outer space. These people really know how to have fun when it come to things astronomical. This year the event was hosted by the Ottawa Centre. Congratulations to Debra Ceravolo and all the volunteers associated with the Centre. Hosting an event of this size is a massive undertaking.

This was my first GA and my first experience behind closed doors with a host of other representatives, who oddly enough

seem to have the same goals when it came to our own Centres and its membership. I think our new president Scott Young summed it up well:

*The RASC is at a key point in our history. We face continued financial pressures, we experience volunteer fatigue at the Centres and National levels, and we continually have to work to preserve our Society. At the same time, there is renewed interest in astronomy and*

space exploration, and technology once restricted to the realm of professionals can be had from the backyard. It's a great time to be an amateur astronomer.

*The RASC needs to deal with its overly-restrictive By-Laws, with its slow-moving governance, with its business model, and with escalating costs in order to survive as a business. This has been front and centre recently and will probably need to continue that way for a little while longer until we get things in order. To survive as a national astronomy organization, though, we need to deal with a completely different set of issues - things that can make a difference for our members, the lifeblood of the RASC.*

At our Centre it's hopeful that we will keep growing and also attract once again our mature membership as well as new blood to carry out future goals of the Edmonton Centre. We were the talk of the town at the GA, most commendable were our work in projects such as Light Pollution, DSP and Black Nugget Lake. Many thanks to our volunteers associated in these directives. We would also like welcome Mississauga as our 28<sup>th</sup> Centre. Yes! We are now 28 strong. Here are a few highlights from the National Council Meeting:

Life membership fee of the Society be increased from \$1100 to \$2100 effective immediately and that this amount be interpreted as Canadian dollars for members with addresses in Canada or as US dollars for members with addresses outside of Canada.

Authority was granted by the membership for a fee increase to be instituted at Council's discretion, but no earlier than Jan. 1, 2007. This pre-approval will enable National Council to respond quickly to next year's budget as necessary, without the need for a pre-emptive fee increase. The increase is as follows: Regular membership increased from \$55 to \$59 with the Society portion equal to \$37 and the Centre portion equal to \$22. Youth members increased from \$34.25 to \$36.75 with the Society portion equal to \$23.05 and the Centre portion equal to \$13.70.

It was Moved by Stan Runge, and seconded by John Hurley, that the list of ten new unattached members be accepted. Denis Grey, seconded by Lee Beck, moved that the Finance Committee officially set up the terms of reference for the Feibelman fund, the Life Membership fund, and the Centre Projects fund. It was also moved by the Publications Committee that the single copy price for the 2007 Observer's Calendar be set at \$16.95 + \$4.00 S&H. The Constitution Committee also accepted the modified By-Laws from Kingston and Edmonton Centres. Lastly, Dr. Bob

Garrison was appointed as the Librarian for yet another three-year term.

The bulk of the GA minutes and its resolutions are available on the National Website, and will also be available in full detail in the upcoming Journal.

The date for the **Fall National Council Meeting** (NC064) is scheduled for November 4, 2006 and it will be held at a location "still to be determined." I say we hold it on the summit of Mauna Kea in Hawaii at the Keck Observatory - wishful thinking.

Here is a short line up of our standing committees:

#### ***Executive Committee***

Chair: President Scott Young

Members: 1<sup>st</sup> VP Dave Lane, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Mary Lou Whitehorne, Secretary Stan Runge, Treasurer Dave Clark

#### ***Awards Committee***

Chair: Peter Jedicke

Members: Jay Anderson, Roland Dechesne

#### ***Constitution Committee***

Chair: Randy Attwood

Members: Dave Lane, Denis Grey

#### ***Property Committee***

Chair: Treasurer Dave Clark

Members: Bob May, John Hurley

#### ***Finance Committee***

Chair: Treasurer Dave Clark

Members: Mary Lou Whitehorne, Bryan Kelso, John Hurley

#### ***Historical Committee***

Chair: Barry Matthews

Members: Roy Bishop, David Orenstein, Peter Broughton

#### ***Library Committee***

Chair: Bob Garrison

Members: Peter Broughton, Robert Duff

#### ***Membership and Promotion Committee***

Chair: Denis Grey

Members: James Edgar, Roland Dechesne, John Hrycak, Joe Otonicar

#### ***Nominating Committee***

Chair: Peter Jedicke

Members: Randy Attwood, Bob Garrison

#### ***Publications Committee***

Chair: Dave Lane

Members: Pat Kelly, Jay Anderson, Patrice Scattolin, Leo Enright, James Edgar, Paul Gray

**Education Committee**

Chair: To be determined

Members: Bruce McCurdy, Garry Dymond, Brian Battersbey, Ron McNaughton, Jennifer West

**Observing Committee**

Chair: Chris Fleming

Members: Geoff Gaherty, Stan Runge, Leo Enright, Alan Whitman

**Information Technology Committee**

Chair: Dave Lane

Members: Mark Kaye, Colin Haig, Patrice Scattolin, David Lee

**Light-Pollution Abatement Committee**

Chair: Robert Dick

Members: Bob King, Bill Broderick, Gary Boyle, Dan Taylor

The following RASC members were honored at the 2006 General Assembly Banquet. Full details of their award citations will be published in an upcoming edition of *The Journal*.

- **C.A. Chant Medal for Astronomical Achievement** - Presented to *Ed Majden* of the Victoria Centre for his

on-going work on the collection and dissemination of meteor spectra.

- **Simon Newcomb Award for Astronomical Writing** - Presented to *Dr. Warren Finlay* of the Edmonton Centre for his recent book the *Concise Catalog of Deep-sky Objects* published by Springer.
- **Plaskett Award (jointly with CASCA)** - Presented to *Dr. Lauren A. McArthur* graduate of the **UBC Department of Physics and Astronomy**. Her Ph.D. thesis was displayed at the Ottawa GA as a poster.
- **RASC Service Awards** - Three long-serving members of the RASC received the RASC Service Award for services rendered to the National Society and to local centres. Congratulations go out to **Ted Bronson** of the Thunder Bay Centre, **Mark Kaye** of the Hamilton Centre, and **Kevin Kell** of the Kingston Centre.

We are all looking forward to the 2007 GA to be held in



Calgary. Yes folks, it's in Calgary. Put it on your calendar for next year. Hope all of you can attend.

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**Amateur astronomer seeks company** (male or female) to see the southern skies in November, 2006 in New Zealand. Have found a great site: <http://homepages.igrin.co.nz/astronomy/> . I am a retired teacher living in Victoria BC.

**Contact: 250-592-2708 or mlavallee@pacificcoast.net**

**Meade 127ED APO Refractor For Sale**

\$3,500, shipping outside Edmonton extra

- LXD 650 German Equatorial mount
- Eyepieces: Meade 4000 - 26 mm Super Plossl
- Omcon Plossls: 15, 10, 7.5 mm
- Celestron 12.5mm wired illuminated reticule
- Meade 2" diagonal with 1.25" adapter
- 1.25" poro prism image erector
- Meade 8x50 finder
- Thousand Oaks full aperture type 2+ solar filter

See Full Specs:

<http://www.meade.com/catalog/apo/index.html>

**Contact: Owen Salava, [osalava@gmail.com](mailto:osalava@gmail.com) or 780-424-5214**



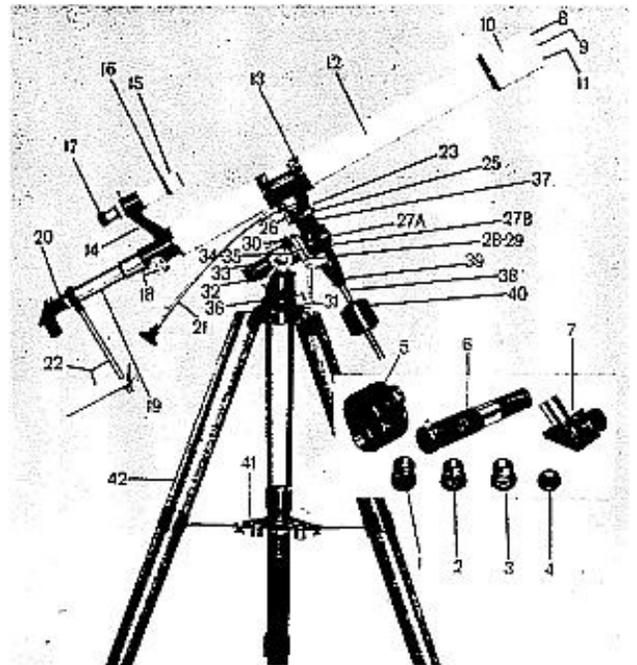
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**Tasco 7TE-5 Refractor with tripod for sale.** Gently used by original owner, securely stored indoors, in excellent condition.

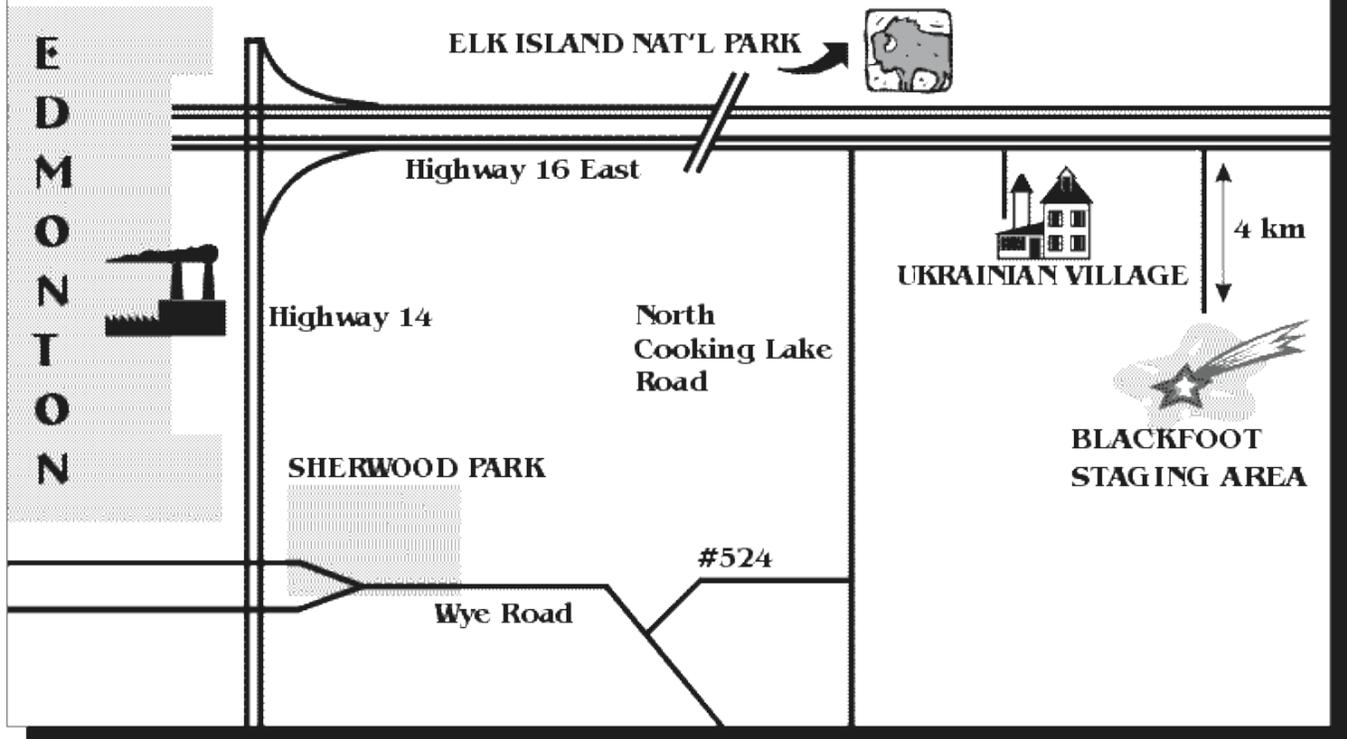
\$176.00 or best offer

- 60 mm aperture, 1000 mm focal length
- 4 eyepieces with padded leather case: AH 40mm (25x), H 20mm (50x), HM 12.5mm (80x), H 6mm (167x)
- 3x Barlow
- Sun Filter, Moon Filter
- Erecting Prism, Diagonal Prism
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**Contact Jenny Rusch 780-489-3635**



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