

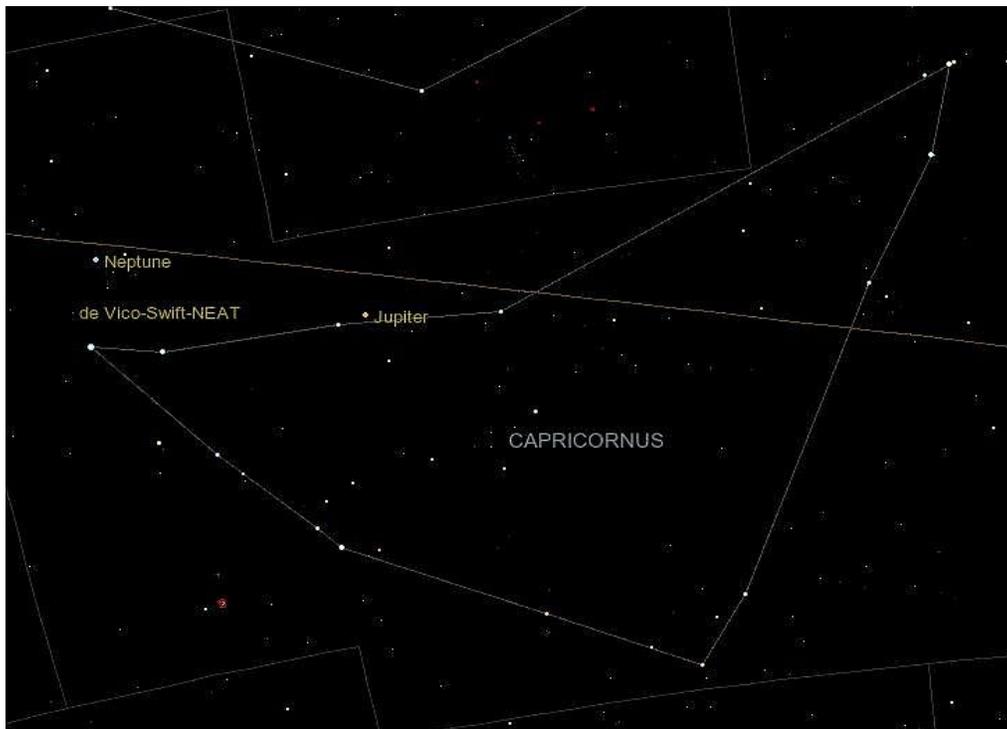
STARDUST

Newsletter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
Edmonton Centre



October 2009

Volume 56 Issue 2



Jupiter is a fine target right now. Under dark skies, Neptune is only a hop away. Your editor has been unable to spot it in the city. Screen capture courtesy of KStars and KSnapshot. KNow of them?

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Council Positions			
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Centre Website	http://www.edmontonrasc.com
Observing Deck	452-9100 ext 2249
Stardust	Articles for Stardust may be submitted by email to mward@interbaun.com . Submission deadline is the last day of the previous month (e.g. for the May issue submit by 30 Apr). Submit in any standard document format (MSOffice, OpenOffice, AbiWord, plain text). TimesNewRoman 10pt single-spaced is preferred. Don't bother with fancy formatting, odd spacing, strange fonts, etc.; it will only be discarded. Graphics (GIF or JPG please) may be submitted as separate files, and clearly identified.

Edmonton Area Astronomy Discussions

astro@mailman.srv.ualberta.ca

**To subscribe send a blank email to:
with the subject line:**

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Upcoming Events, Meetings, Deadlines, Announcements

MEETINGS 2009

	General	Council	Observers	NewMoon	FullMoon
Sep	14	28	2	18	4
Oct	19	26	5	18	4
Nov	9	23	2	16	2
Dec	14		7	16	2

MEETING LOCATIONS 2009

Regular General Meetings are at 7:30pm in Telus World of Science, 11211 – 142 St. *follow the signs, from the main entrance*

Council Meetings are at 7:15 pm in the ATA Building, 142 St & 111 Ave. *follow the signs, from the main entrance*

Observers Meetings: *location varies*

General Assembly for 2012

Our club is looking at hosting a General Assembly of the RASC for summer of 2012, but we need your help! This is a huge undertaking for our club and we need to know if there is interest from the club in hosting this before we commit to it. Please post your thoughts to the Astro forum or contact Sherry Campbell at etagem@telus.net or 780-433-1516.

Guest Speaker for November

At our November meeting, our guest speaker will be **Tony Whyte**, a member from our club. Tony will be speaking on his new book, *Meteorites of Alberta*. There will be reception

following the meeting, where Tony will be available to autograph copies of his new book.

Nominations for Council

Starting in November, the Nominating Committee will be calling. We are looking to fill the vacant positions on Council for the 2010 slate. Several positions are available, including **Vice-President, Co-National Council Rep, Public Education Director, Observers' Group Director**, to name a few. If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Sherry Campbell at etagem@telus.net or 780-433-1516.

President's Report by Sherry Campbell

Fall is fast approaching and another summer has come and gone. I hope everyone had a chance to do some observing in the warm weather and maybe catch a star party or two. I was unable to make it to any star parties this summer due to work, but I hear I didn't miss any clear skies at the Saskatchewan Summer Star Party. Hopefully next year, the weather will co-operate and the skies will be brilliant.

Due to a conflict with the North York Astronomical Association, we have re-named our Northern Prairie Starfest to the Northern Prairie Star Party. North York has trademarked the word Starfest in conjunction with an event they put on every year, so they have asked us to rename our event. Our website has been updated to reflect this change.

The George Moores' Astronomy Workshop was a huge success. Stephen James O'Meara was very engaging as a speaker and very interesting to talk to one on one. Everyone had a great time, the food was amazing and the skies were crystal clear. At least, I hope that is what happened. As I write this, there is still 2 weeks to go for the Workshop. If you were unable to attend the Workshop this time around, plan on going to the next one. I am sure you will enjoy yourself. There is something for everyone at these Workshops, beginners and experienced astronomers alike.

Our club is considering holding a General Assembly of the RASC in 2012, but we need your support! After a much-

deserved break from IYA, I think we can be ready to host the GA in 3 years. 2012 marks the 80th anniversary of our club, so what better way to celebrate it. For those that are unfamiliar with the General Assembly, here is a brief run down of what it is. A GA is the yearly national meeting for conducting the business of the RASC on a national level. Many representatives from all centres across Canada come to the GA to hear and discuss the business as well as individual projects they have on the go. It is very labour intensive, as we have to arrange accommodation, meeting spaces, meals, transportation, etc. for all the delegates, but it is also very rewarding. Here is the opportunity to meet with other people from across Canada that you may have contact with through e-mail or on the list servers. I am asking people to contact myself or have a discussion on the Astro list server about the possibility of hosting the GA. If there is enough interest, I will inform National that we would be willing to host the GA for 2012.

With the changing of the seasons, comes a change to the skies as well. Fall is a great time to go back to galaxy watching before the temperatures outside make it too uncomfortable to observe. The Sun sets earlier, so there is more time to go to Blackfoot and still come home at a reasonable hour. I hope to make it out to Blackfoot this fall, and if you see me there, come over and introduce yourself. I would love to have a look through your scope. Clear skies!

Greek Mythology: Corona Borealis by Michael Ward

Names of deities are Greek, with the Roman (Latin) equivalent in brackets, unless otherwise noted.

Corona Borealis is one of the smaller constellations, sandwiched between Hercules and Boötes. The name means *northern crown*.^[1] As usual, there are several versions, or should I say owners, of this crown. It was placed among the stars because it was important, although for slightly different reasons in different stories.

In one story it was Ariadne's, daughter of king Minos of Crete, a gift from Dionysus, who offered it in return for certain favours. It was said to be a magnificent piece of work, made of gold and Indian gems. The favours involved disrobing. She accepted the crown. Alternatively, it was a gift from Aphrodite (Venus) because of Ariadne's upcoming wedding – to Dionysus. She was supposed to marry Dionysus, but she ran off with Theseus after he slew the Minotaur^[2], and in fact she helped him do it, but that's another story. He turned out to have a bad memory and forgot her on Naxos where they had stopped to resupply on the way from Crete to Athens, and that's where Dionysus found her. Artemis (Diana) killed Ariadne because she (Ariadne) had run off with Theseus when she was already betrothed to Dionysus.

An alternative is that the crown was given to Theseus by Ariadne. Theseus was the son of Aegeus, king of Athens. At the time, Athens was paying a regular tribute to Crete, being a sort of colony or dependency. The tribute was seven young girls and seven young boys.^[3] They were fed to the Minotaur, or used for other things.^[4] Theseus decided to go along one year, and put an end to the tribute, if he could. Ariadne fell for him at first sight,

and so she helped him accomplish his goal. The crown shone in the dark, and thus helped him find his way about in the labyrinth, the maze wherein dwelt the Minotaur. Along with a sword and ball of thread or string, gifts from Ariadne, the crown helped Theseus find and kill the Minotaur. It didn't hurt that Theseus found the monster sleeping.^[5]

The position of Corona Borealis beside Hercules is no accident. The constellation we know as Hercules, was known to ancients as either Hercules or (just as often) Theseus. Indeed, after Hercules, Theseus was probably the most popular hero.

^[1] Both words are found elsewhere in English: the boreal forest, *aurora borealis* (northern dawn), and Toyota has made car models called the *Crown*, the *Corona* (also meaning crown), and the *Corolla* (little crown).

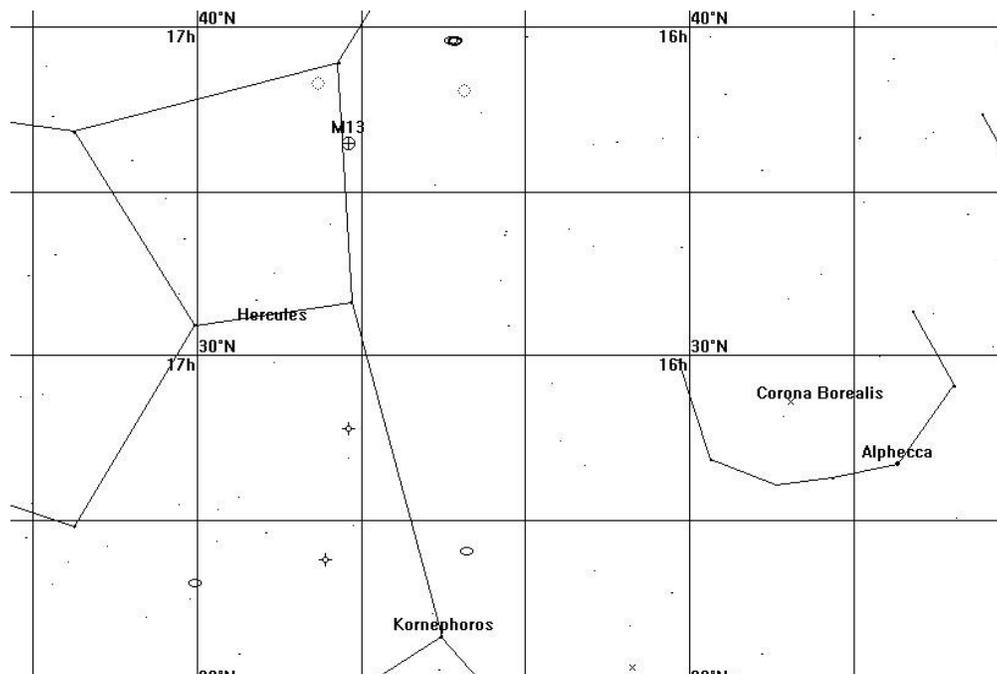
^[2] The monster is inappropriately named. It was half bull, half human. Minos made the mistake of insulting Poseidon (Neptune), and as punishment, Poseidon made Minos's wife Pasiphaë fall in love with a bull. The Minotaur was the result.

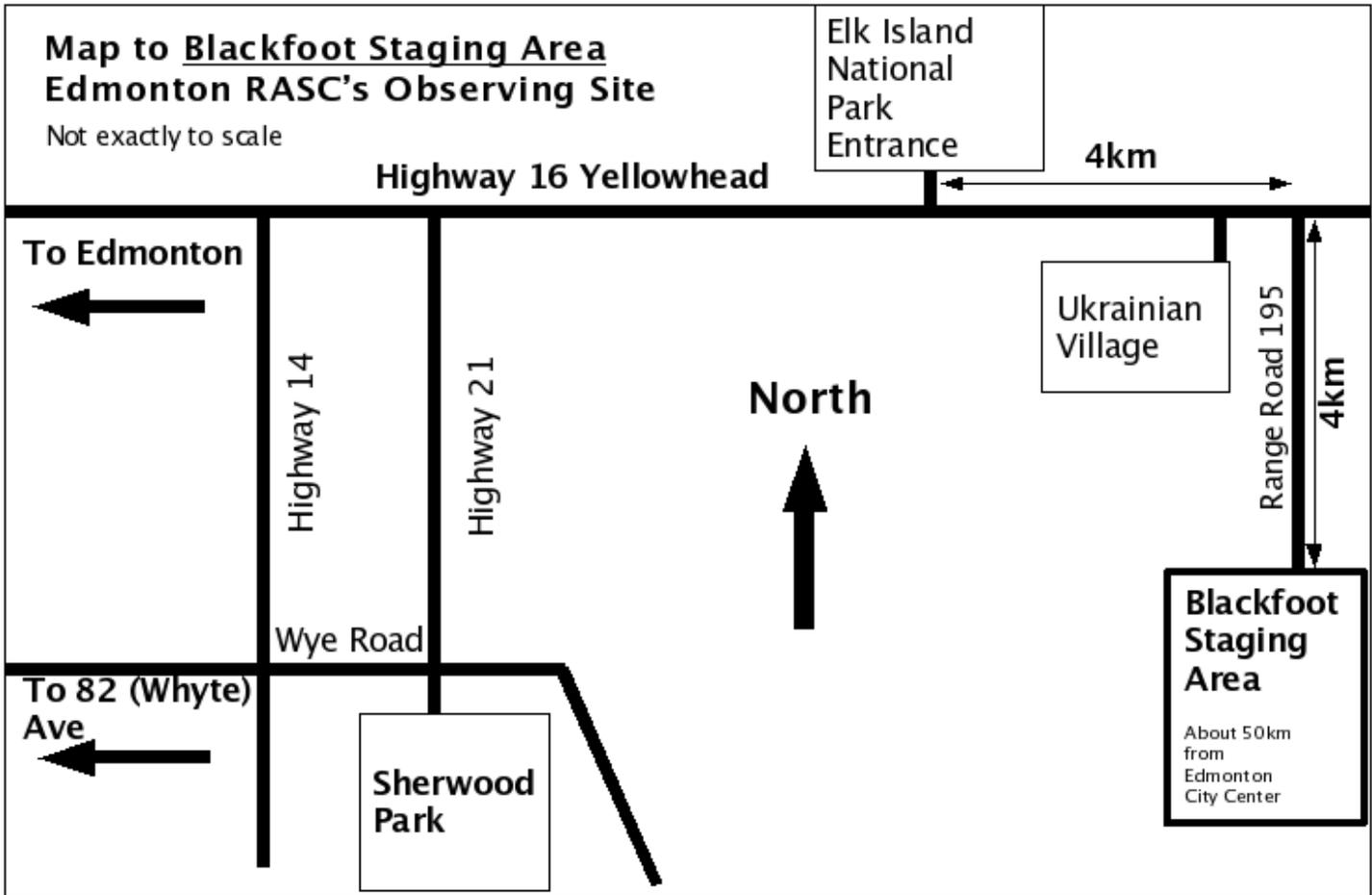
^[3] How often this tribute was paid varies in the stories; anywhere up to nine years.

^[4] Use your imagination.

^[5] The story of Athens paying tribute to a ruler of Crete *may* be all that is remembered of a real historical situation. Archaeology has established that between about 2000 and 1400 B.C., long before the height of mainland Greek civilization, Crete was a wealthy and powerful state, while the mainlanders were still swinging from the trees, so to speak.

Sources: Apollodorus 3.1.1f.; Hesiod Theogony 947f.; Hyginus II.5; Ovid Ars Amatoria book 1, Metamorphoses 8





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