



January 2017

## The Big White Astro Mountains *by Guy Mackie*

One evening as the sun went down  
And the jungle fires were burning,  
Down the track came an astronomer hiking,  
And he said, "Boys, I'm not turning;

I'm headed for a land that's far away  
Beside the crystal fountains  
So come with me, we'll go and see  
The Big White Astro Mountains.

In the Big White Astro Mountains,  
There's a land that's fair and bright,  
Where the handouts grow on bushes  
And you stay up every night.

Where the headlights all are dead  
And the star-light shines  
On the moons and the planets  
And the hydrogen clouds  
The hot chocolate springs  
Where the night owl sings  
In the Big White Astro Mountains.

In the Big White Astro Mountains  
All the bears have wooden legs  
And the cougars all have rubber teeth  
And the crows lay soft-boiled eggs  
The star maps are full of targets  
And the condensation never forms

Oh I'm bound to go  
Where there ain't no snow  
Where the rain don't fall  
The winds don't blow  
In the Big White Astro Mountains.

In the Big White Astro Mountains  
You never change your socks  
And the little streams of alcohol  
Come trickling down the rocks

The planetary nebula have to tip their spectral lines  
And the binaries are all separated  
There's a lake of methane  
And of whiskey too  
You can paddle all around them  
In a big canoe  
In the Big White Astro Mountains.

In the Big White Astro Mountains,  
The star hops are made of luminous tape.  
And all the galaxies are disk shaped,  
all in focus and served with pinot grape.

There ain't no short-handled shovels,  
No axes, saws nor picks,  
I'm bound to stay  
Where you sleep all day,  
Where they hung the jerk  
That invented work  
In the Big White Astro Mountains ...

**I'll see you sing this coming Spring  
In the Big White Astro Mountains.**

*(ed. note: Guy will talk about the Okanagan  
Observatory on Big White Mountain, as the main  
presentation at the next Kelowna meeting: Tuesday,  
January 17)*

## Observing Reports

**Okanagan Observatory:** is still available for member use, even though the Public Outreach program has ended for the season.

**BUT!**

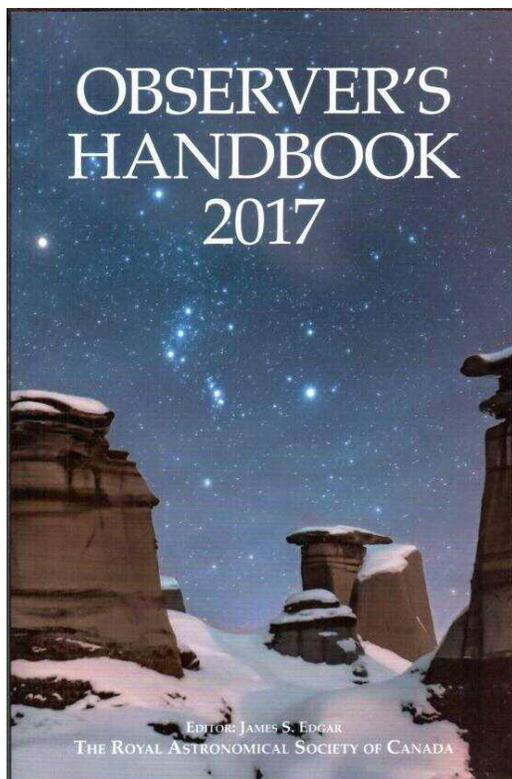
**Please advise one of the security team** (Guy Mackie [guy.m@shaw.ca](mailto:guy.m@shaw.ca) , Grant Rice ([grant.rice@outlook.com](mailto:grant.rice@outlook.com)), Hugh Pett , [hughirenep@gmail.com](mailto:hughirenep@gmail.com), Allen Royston ([allen@royston.ca](mailto:allen@royston.ca))) before proceeding to the Observatory so alarms can be turned off/on in advance, and so that you know the emergency procedures.

**Please consider taking on the task of “Telescope Equipment Manager”.**

See the President's Message November 2016.

MORE INFORMATION? Contact: Guy Mackie [guy.m@shaw.ca](mailto:guy.m@shaw.ca)

**What is this book that you get each year?** *by Dave Hawkins*



For those who have not investigated the contents, it is time that you do. It is packed full of information for astronomers.

It is published annually to keep it up to date, and the editor and contributors work diligently all year to maintain the high quality of content.

This year's Handbook was edited by James Edgar. As you may remember he was a guest speaker (then RASC National President) at a Kelowna RASC Okanagan Centre meeting on April 26, 2016. I recall how proud he was of the Handbook and the effort his team made in making this coming years Handbook the best one to date.

Local members have written articles for the 2017 Handbook. Ken Tapping and Hugh Pett contributed "Radio Astronomy and Radio Sources" (page 338) and Alan Whitman wrote "Southern Hemisphere Splendors" (page 330).

There are sections on Time, Optics, The Sun, The Deep Sky, location of planets, dwarf planets and minor planets and many more. A 24-page section "The Sky Month by Month" gives a listing of events for each month of 2017.

Last night I picked up my book and read Ken Tapping's "Solar Activity" (page 189). Why are some aurorae red and others green? Find out on page 191.

If you don't already refer to this book, then grab your copy and flip through it. I am sure you will find many things of interest.

Please send your Observing Reports to Hugh Pett, Editor, Focus Newsletter, [hughirenep@gmail.com](mailto:hughirenep@gmail.com)

For the March and September issues of the *Focus* newsletter, please send your totals for the various Observing Challenges detailed in those issues.

## **Outreach**

### **Upcoming Outreach in Kelowna**

The **2nd Tuesday of each month**, 6:30, Cancer Rotary Lodge, presentation and telescope viewing

NEXT VISIT: Tuesday, February 14, 6:30 pm

Tuesday, January 3, 5:30 pm, Peachland Brownies, Peachland Community Hall, 4450 6th Street, presentation and telescope viewing

**Volunteers Wanted!** Contact Colleen: [chohare@shaw.ca](mailto:chohare@shaw.ca)

**Kids Astronomy Club:** I have started a Kids Astronomy Club. Right now it consists of a monthly email with upcoming events, What's Up for the month, sky map, constellations, The 10, activities etc. We have 25 members already!

### **A look back at 2016 Kelowna Outreach by the numbers:**

Events; 82

Guests; 3680

No Gos; 22

Volunteers; 23

Volunteer hours; 800

**A great big THANK-YOU to all the members who gave their time to make these events such a success!**

### **Criminal Record Check requirement**

**All people involved in Outreach must be members in good standing and have a Criminal Check done! If you would like to start doing outreach and haven't had the Criminal Check done yet, please let me know.**

**EVERYONE THAT CURRENTLY PARTICIPATES IN OUR PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM** should check with Colleen that they have a valid Criminal Record Check on file.

**Our liability insurance only covers participation by members in good standing.**

**NOTE: for a history of this program in Okanagan Centre, and for more details, download Colleen's article by clicking this Web reference, or copying/pasting into your browser:**

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/wd0jr04q633dka3/History-Criminal-Record-Checks-Okanagan\\_Centre.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/wd0jr04q633dka3/History-Criminal-Record-Checks-Okanagan_Centre.pdf?dl=0)

### **Library List**

There are hundreds of astronomy-related books and materials in our Centre's Library. Use this click-link to get to a downloadable list of them:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/gxx6flvd44zrbqr/Okanagan\\_Centre-Library\\_List-201607.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/gxx6flvd44zrbqr/Okanagan_Centre-Library_List-201607.pdf?dl=0)

You may have to wait several seconds for the small click-box under the name to get ready to use.

## Meetings

### Penticton Meeting

Thursday, January 19th 2017, 7.15pm at Penticton Okanagan College, SunOka Building Room C02

Tony Willis from DRAO will be speaking about Gravitational Waves, the 'ripples' in the fabric of space-time caused by some of the most violent and energetic processes in the Universe. Albert Einstein predicted the existence of gravitational waves in 1916 in his general theory of relativity.

### Kelowna Meeting

Tuesday, January 17 at 7:30pm, in **ROOM C-368**

Constellation of the Month: Claude Lapointe will talk about The Great Moon Hoax of 1835 - a series of articles in a New York newspaper about the discovery of life and even civilization on the Moon.

Main Presentation: Guy Mackie will talk about The Okanagan Observatory. Guy will describe the past, the present and the possible futures of the Observatory.

### Vernon Meeting

Wednesday January 25, 2017

6:30pm. Novice Pre-Meeting: James Kanester: "Observing Features of our Moon"

7:15pm. Meeting. Okanagan Science Centre, Vernon (Heritage Hall)

Speaker: artist Destanne Norris "Experiences as a Guest Artist at the 2016 Jasper Dark Sky Festival"

## Light Pollution Abatement Work in Progress

This important work is encouraging most of the Okanagan Valley to adopt LED lighting for public spaces. Good results have already been earned by our team of Jim Tisdale and John Kerr. They have been talking to municipal officials and others, to encourage dark-sky-friendly LED lighting: lower temperature (3000C instead of 4000C), full cutoff to limit lighting the sky, and wattage sizing to suit the need, not one-size-fits-all.

**If you would like to work on this effort, do email Jim ([jimbit04@gmail.com](mailto:jimbit04@gmail.com)) or John ([kerrj@shaw.ca](mailto:kerrj@shaw.ca)) for more information.**

### South Okanagan: Penticton/Oliver/Osoyoos

There are currently two volunteers from each of Vernon and Kelowna. We need a second representative for the Light Pollution Abatement Committee from the South Okanagan (see President's Message October 2016).

Contact: John Kerr ([kerrj@shaw.ca](mailto:kerrj@shaw.ca))

### **Meetings held in Penticton on Thursdays (Third Thursday of the month in 2016/17)**

Okanagan College – Penticton Campus, Sunoka building, Room C02. [See map.](#)

January 19, 2017           7:15 at OC  
February 16, 2017       7:15 at OC  
March 16, 2017           7:15 at OC  
April 20, 2017           7:15 at OC  
May 18, 2017            7:15 at OC  
\*\*June 3, 2017           Gala Dinner (Kelowna 5PM)

### **Meetings held in Vernon on Wednesdays (Last Wednesday of the month)**

OSC - Okanagan Science Centre , 2704 Hwy 6, Vernon [See map.](#)

January 25, 2017        7:15 at OSC  
February 22, 2017      7:15 at OSC  
March 29, 2017         7:15 at OSC  
April 26, 2017         7:15 at OSC  
\*\*June 3, 2017         Gala Dinner (Kelowna 5PM)  
June 14, 2017         7:15 at OSC

### **Meetings held in Kelowna on Tuesdays (Third Tuesday of the month in 2016 /17)**

Okanagan College Science building at Okanagan College KLO Road, Kelowna. [See map.](#)

January 17, 2017        7:30 at OC  
February 21, 2017      7:30 at OC  
March 21, 2017         7:30 at OC  
April 18, 2017         7:30 at OC     to  
May 16, 2017           7:30 at OC  
\*\*June 3, 2017         Gala Dinner (Kelowna 5PM)

*\*\* denotes a combined meeting between the Kelowna, Penticton and Vernon Chapters*

## **Astro Okanagan E-mail Discussion Group**

### **Another great reason to join in!**

The Google Discussion Group is a real-time link between members of our OC RASC meeting groups. A message might give you a heads-up on a new celestial phenomenon, an alert about an Outreach event you could take part in or other timely news.

Contact: Guy Mackie [guy.m@shaw.ca](mailto:guy.m@shaw.ca)

### **Things to Buy; CONTACT Scott Thomson: [scott\\_thomson@shaw.ca](mailto:scott_thomson@shaw.ca)**

- RASC full-colour stickers, \$2.50 each.
- Welders glass, 2 ¼” by 4”, ideal for solar viewing.
- White RASC tee-shirts, with logos. Available in medium, large, and extra-large. A perfect companion for your black Okanagan Observatory tee-shirt. \$15.
- Beginners Observers Handbooks, \$15.
- Planispheres, an invaluable item for charting the heavens, \$15.
- RASC key chains (everyone can use one), \$3.
- RASC Baseball caps, in white/blue or all navy, \$14 each.

Also available are some miscellaneous items, including cloth crests, lapel pins, and mugs.

## **Elected Officers**

President David Hawkins	<a href="mailto:david-hawkins@shaw.ca">david-hawkins@shaw.ca</a>	250-862-3468
VP Vernon Jerry Thompson	<a href="mailto:jerryandjoyce@gmail.com">jerryandjoyce@gmail.com</a>	250-542-8603
VP Penticton Angela Squires	<a href="mailto:eclecticsquire@yahoo.ca">eclecticsquire@yahoo.ca</a>	778-322-8778 'text please'
VP Kelowna Claude Lapointe	<a href="mailto:claudelapointe@shaw.ca">claudelapointe@shaw.ca</a>	236-420-2448
Treasurer Dennis Krause	<a href="mailto:dennis_krause@telus.net">dennis_krause@telus.net</a>	250-763-2677
Secretary Olaf Lutz	<a href="mailto:olafnitz@gmail.com">olafnitz@gmail.com</a>	250-863-0187
Observatory Director Guy Mackie	<a href="mailto:guy.m@shaw.ca">guy.m@shaw.ca</a>	250-469-3112
Librarian Colleen O'Hare	<a href="mailto:chohare@shaw.ca">chohare@shaw.ca</a>	250-763-3573
National Representative Richard Christie	<a href="mailto:rchristie@okanagan.bc.ca">rchristie@okanagan.bc.ca</a>	250-762-5445 x 2228
Directors		
1 Jim Failes	<a href="mailto:eij@shaw.ca">eij@shaw.ca</a>	
2 Jim Kanester	<a href="mailto:amkanester@shaw.ca">amkanester@shaw.ca</a>	250-558-0845
3 Zoli Boda	<a href="mailto:zoltan01@shaw.ca">zoltan01@shaw.ca</a>	778-484-5451
4 Alan Whitman	<a href="mailto:agwhitman@vip.net">agwhitman@vip.net</a>	250-497-6759
5 Rob Nichols	<a href="mailto:nicholsrs@shaw.ca">nicholsrs@shaw.ca</a>	250-260-3208
6 Wendell Shuster	<a href="mailto:wendell.shuster@gmail.com">wendell.shuster@gmail.com</a>	250-493-5289
Past President Colleen O'Hare	<a href="mailto:chohare@shaw.ca">chohare@shaw.ca</a>	250-763-3573

## **Appointed Positions**

Focus Editor Hugh Pett	<a href="mailto:hughirenep@gmail.com">hughirenep@gmail.com</a>	250-762-3858
Webmasters		
Andrew Bennett	<a href="mailto:sunnyokanagan@telus.net">sunnyokanagan@telus.net</a>	250-768-2893
Dave Gamble	<a href="mailto:trailspublishing@telus.net">trailspublishing@telus.net</a>	250-494-8615
Membership Secretary David Hawkins	<a href="mailto:david-hawkins@shaw.ca">david-hawkins@shaw.ca</a>	
RASC merchandise Scott Thomson	<a href="mailto:scott_thomson@shaw.ca">scott_thomson@shaw.ca</a>	778-214-2732
Outreach Coordinators		
Vernon John Turner	<a href="mailto:outreachvernon@gmail.com">outreachvernon@gmail.com</a>	250-308-8070
Kelowna Colleen O'Hare	<a href="mailto:chohare@shaw.ca">chohare@shaw.ca</a>	250-763-3573
Penticton Al Fishler	<a href="mailto:outreachpenticton@gmail.com">outreachpenticton@gmail.com</a>	250-492-2572
Picture of the Month		
Mark Force	<a href="mailto:dirtbagpook@hotmail.com">dirtbagpook@hotmail.com</a>	250-767-6132
Sharon Carter	<a href="mailto:slcarter09@telus.net">slcarter09@telus.net</a>	250-860-5993
Zenfolio Manager Dave Gamble	<a href="mailto:trailspublishing@telus.net">trailspublishing@telus.net</a>	250-494-8615
What's Up Contributor Dave Gamble	<a href="mailto:trailspublishing@telus.net">trailspublishing@telus.net</a>	250-494-8615

**The *Focus* newsletter of the RASC Okanagan Centre is published on the 15th of each month, September to June.**

**Deadline for submitting material to the Editor, Hugh Pett ([hughirenep@gmail.com](mailto:hughirenep@gmail.com)), is the 8th of the month.**