



February 2021 Bulletin
Image Credit: Khoa Tran, Montreal Centre



Letter from Executive Director Dr. Philip Groff

Hello everyone,

Even though it's now February, with lockdowns and international issues, it hardly seems like 2021 has begun. With that in mind, I'm going to go ahead and wish everyone in RASC a Happy New Year, despite the fact that it's already Groundhog Day.

Reflecting back on 2020, we all experienced a difficult year, with a variety of challenges, many stemming from the global pandemic in which we are still mired. However, not only has RASC survived, in many ways we've actually thrived. As I write this, we have more than 5,200 members in 30 Centres, close to an all-time high. The number of observing and imaging certificates completed last year, registrations for online offerings, and media requests for astronomy information, all suggest that public interest in looking at the night sky has been growing.

Looking ahead to 2021, I think our Society can anticipate an even better year. With the promise of vaccines being available to most Canadians by the end of the summer, we should all be able to share our passion with some in-person outreach events before the year is over. Even before that, there are a number of exciting developments ahead. This April will see the launch of our next online course offering, helping folks complete the Explore the Moon observing program. We have numerous special speakers booked for the coming year, and are already hard at work planning an exciting, virtual GA and AGM for late June.

The success of RASC, even in difficult times, is testament to the strength of its membership. Volunteers give tirelessly, and at times thanklessly, to make all of our programs, publications, and other offerings, possible. I'd like to personally thank everyone who gives of their time, treasure, and talents to the Society. I'd also like to take this time to invite those of you who haven't yet volunteered, to consider making this the year you do. Take a look at our various committees, either national or at your local Centre, and see if one of them appeals to your interests and talents.

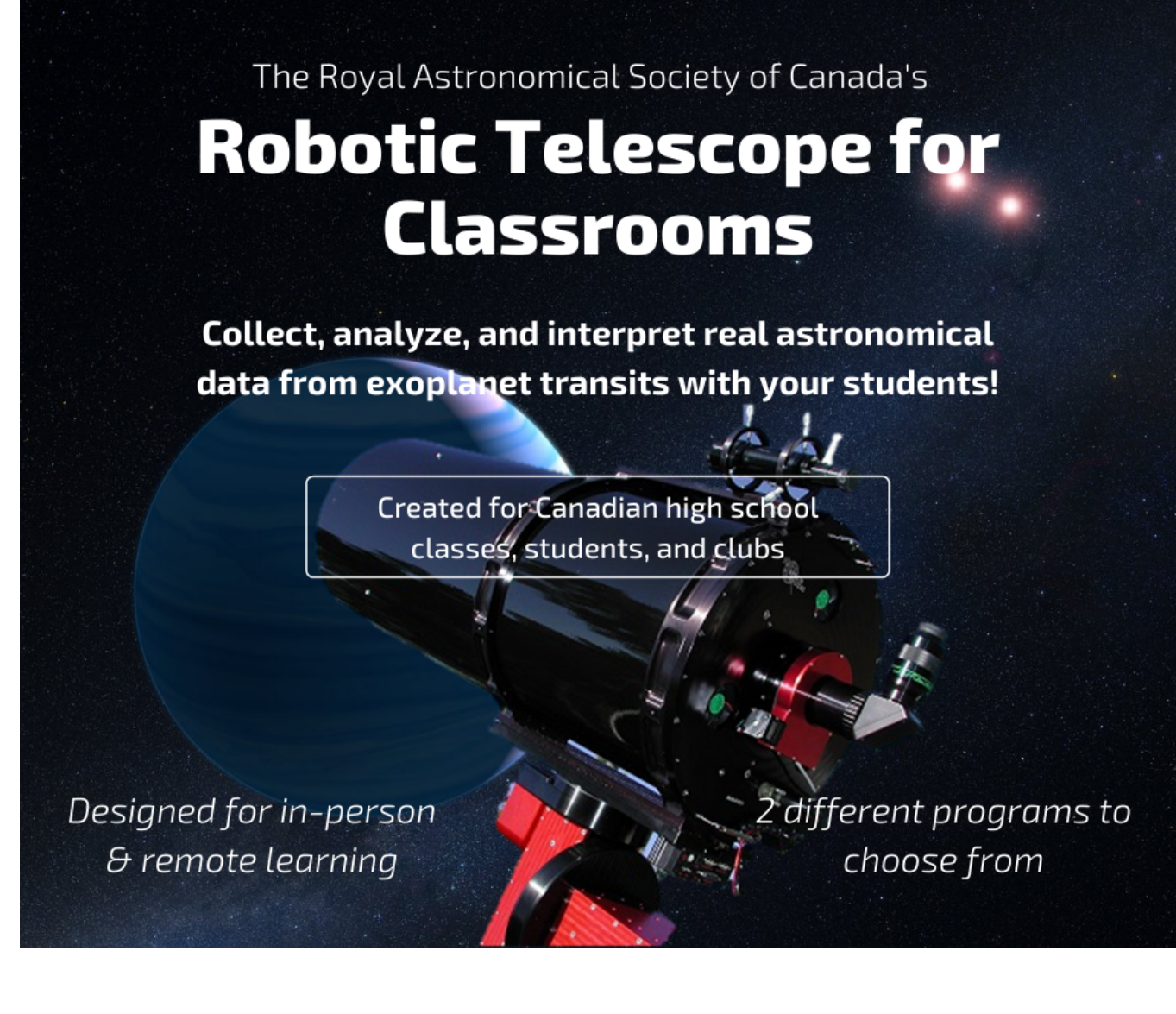
Working together, we'll make 2021 the best year yet, for the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

Clear Skies,
Phil Groff

Dark-Sky Site material submission

Message to all members: Do you have photos or video from any of the RASC's designated dark-sky sites? Then we'd like to hear from you! We'd like to collect photos and video of the sites to use for new content on our website, and as part of a campaign on social media centred around International Dark-Sky Week in April! If you would like your content to be featured by the RASC on our website and on social media, with credit to you, then please contact Reem Khalifeh at communications@rasc.ca

RASC's Robotic Telescope for Classrooms (New Outreach Program!)



We are pleased to announce that RASC is launching a new outreach program for high school students! If you are a high school science student or educator interested in gaining hands-on astronomy experience for yourself or your class, then this program is for you.

Students will have the opportunity to work with real exoplanet transit data collected by RASC's robotic telescope. There are two different programs available. The Basic Program is designed for Gr 9-12 science classrooms and is everything you need to learn about and analyze an exoplanet transit using pre-calibrated data.

The Advanced Program is aimed at small student groups, individual studies, and projects with a teacher supervisor. Students have control! They choose their exoplanet, collect the data using the robotic telescope, and finally calibrate and analyze it.

If you know a student or educator, spread the word! If you are an interested student or educator, check out eduscope.rasc.ca for more information and to apply.

Observer's Calendar Editor Wanted!

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada is seeking an interested astronomer to become editor of our Observer's Calendar beginning as Assistant Editor with the 2022 edition and becoming Editor with the 2023 edition.

The Observer's Calendar is currently the RASC's third longest running print publication having begun in 1992. Designed with the observer in mind, the calendar contains comprehensive astronomical data such as daily Moon rise and set times, significant lunar and planetary conjunctions, eclipses, and meteor showers. It features spectacular astro-images taken by amateur astronomers and an informative caption accompanies every photograph.

Requirements of an editor would be access to high speed internet for data transfer of images and files, access to Microsoft Office software (mainly Excel and Word), and access to a current planetarium software. Good communication skills and ability to work as a lead of a small team would also be of value.

Task includes but is not limited to:

- Reports to the Publication Board.
- Gathering and sorting of data for calendar astronomical events from various sources.
- Verifying data for accuracy of astronomical events, dates, times and locations visible from.
- Writing descriptive captions for images.
- Writing Planets by Month descriptions.
- Proofreading for grammar, spelling and accuracy of event descriptions.
- Selection of images for calendar with an eye for both quality of the images and for awe factor of images both visually and rarity.

The term of Calendar Editor currently runs for 5 years and is rewarded with an honorarium and perks of being first to have a copy in hand (print proof) and select the 12 monthly images.

Members with Light-Pollution Abatement or Dark-Sky Preserve experience wanted!

RASC's National Office and the Light-Pollution Abatement Committee wish to hear from members with experience in Light-Pollution Abatement activities. If you've worked in the field on behalf of your Centre and can share information, correspondence, local light-pollution bylaws, or success stories, please contact me at phammar@rasc.ca. We also wish to connect with members who have had a role in certifying RASC Dark-Sky Preserves or have had relationships with local preserve operators.

The goal is to establish a national library of resources and materials to support ongoing efforts to reduce light-pollution.

Thank you,
Nick Hammar
RASC Environmental Outreach Intern

February 2021: Planets at a glance on SkyNews



While some planets spend time basking in sunlight, look for Mars' visit with the Moon February 18.

[View Planets at a Glance on Skynews](#)