

Education and Public Outreach Committee Report – for the CASCA Board at CASCA 2012

Submitted by Dennis Crabtree (Chair).

CURRENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair:	Dennis Crabtree	(2005-13) NRC-HIA
Vice-Chair:	Joanne Rosvick	(2005-11) Thompson Rivers University
Members:	Julie Bolduc-Duval	(2010-13)
	Jan Cami	(2008-11) University of Western Ontario
	Eric Chisholm	(2010-13) NRC-HIA
	Yvan Dutil	(2008-11) T3E
	Louise Edwards	(2008-11) Caltech/IPAC
	Nathalie Martimbeau	(2001-12) Montréal Planetarium
	Peter Newbury	(2009 – 2012) University of British Columbia
	Gordon Sarty	(2008-11) University of Saskatchewan
	Ian Short	(2009-13) St. Mary's University
Emeritus Member	John Percy	University of Toronto
Board Representative:	Marcin Sawicki	St. Mary's University

Membership:

Two members whose terms have expired stepped down from the EPO Committee. Nathalie Martimbeau completed 12 years (!) on the committee and provided value input during her extended tenure. Peter Newbury is taking up a new position at UCSD and decided to leave the committee after one term as he will not have time to contribute. Replacements have not yet been identified.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

CASCA EPO Reporting Form

The EPO reporting form is being used more frequently by CASCA members to record their outreach activities. Breakdown of the data for 2011 is as follows:

Activity	# of participants
Astronomy course for non-science majors	5609
Day-time observing	10
Night-time observing	6117
Public Exhibition	260
Public talk	1344
School visit (K-3)	100
School visit (4-8)	347
School visit (9-12)	25
Other	187
Total	13999

For 2012, people were able to indicate more than activity per event. Since the data is recorded in a simple spreadsheet, the summary is more complicated. The numbers thus far in 2012 breakdown as follows:

Activity	# of Participants
Astronomy course for non-science majors	4386
Day-time observing	560
Day-time observing, School visit (9-12)	85
Night-time observing	1246
Night-time observing, Other	50
Night-time observing, Public Exhibition	550
Night-time observing, Public talk	347
Night-time observing, School visit (4-8)	127
Night-time observing, School visit (9-12)	166
Public Exhibition	375
Public talk	6470
Public talk, Other	7
Public talk, Public Exhibition	95
School visit (4-8)	250
School visit (4-8), Public talk	6
School visit (4-8), School visit (9-12)	8
School visit (9-12)	80
School visit (9-12), Public talk	50

School visit (K-3)	132
School visit (K-3), School visit (4-8)	182
School visit (K-3), School visit (4-8), Public talk, Public Exhibition	375
Other	1980
Total	17527

It is very promising to see that the numbers recorded thus far in 2012 greatly exceed the 2011 numbers as members are recording more of their outreach events. The transit of Venus should provide for some very spectacular numbers for the month of June!

Qilak Award for Astronomy Outreach and Communication

Last year CASCA, the FAAQ and the RASC came to an agreement on the establishment of the Qilak award to be presented by each society. The inaugural winners are:

- CASCA – Dr. John Percy
- FAAQ – Dominic Marier
- RASC – Colleen O’Hare

The FAAQ presented their award in March at their annual General Assembly, while CASCA and the RASC will present their awards at their respective AGMs in June and July. A press release is being prepared for release in conjunction with the CASCA meeting.

PromoScience Grant - À la Découverte de l'Univers / Discover the Universe

Under the auspices of the PromoScience grant held jointly with the FAAQ and the RASC, an on-line pilot program to train outdoor interpreters (such as in the parks) was developed and delivered in June 2011.

The success of the *À la Découverte de l'Univers / Discover the Universe* pilot, led to the development of new PromoScience grant (with the FAAQ and the RASC) to run the program for three years (2012-2014). The proposal was successful and we received funding for three years. The NSERC award has been supplemented by CASCA and we plan on raising additional funds to increase the number of workshops offered over the three years.

Committee members’ EPO reports/ IYA 2009 activities:

Jan Cami:

- Acting PI on the Promoscience grant.
- As coordinator for the Cronyn observatory, organized public nights over the summer each Saturday May through August. These public nights involve a presentation by a professional astronomer, and stargazing through the main 10 inch refractor, as well as through additional telescopes set up and operated by the local RASC chapter. In spite of poor weather conditions on many public nights, we greeted about 500 visitors over the summer. We managed to obtain a new 8 inch Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope for the department, as

well as a 90mm Coronado solar telescope. All is in working condition now, and a CCD camera will be tested in the next weeks.

- Coordinator for the Exploring the Stars program, our outreach program for youth groups and schools. This year, we reached about 2,000 youth with this highly successful program.
- We also used the Cronyn observatory to have non-science students carry out about 1100 astronomy observation projects.
- Virtual Researcher on CALL -- session on "Molecules in Space".
- Various interviews about astronomical events with local press; and with Popular Mechanics about buckyballs.
- Organizing activities around the Venus transit. We will have two observation stations where we will use eclipse glasses, solar projection, telescopes with solar filters and a brand new solar telescope (with Halpha filter) to offer the public the best viewing possibilities. A planet path will lead people from one place to the other, and we will have a small exhibit on Venus in our observatory.

Eric Chisholm:

Eric was heavily involved with the astronomy demonstration exhibit at the AAAS in Vancouver (mid-February) which was attended by 6500 people. Eric also hosted an astronomy art display with works from Canada, Ireland, South Africa and Portugal (supported by UNAWE).

Canada is now part of the UNAWE network and this effort is led by Eric. While visiting UNAWE in the Netherlands he launched a new global project, "Painting by Countries: A Global UNAWE Art Project". You can read about the project at <http://www.unawe.org/updates/unawe-update-1234/>

Dennis Crabtree:

Dennis is President of IAU Commission 55 – Communicating Astronomy with the Public (2009-2012). He is also Chair of Commission 55's Working Group on the Washington Charter.

Dennis attended the CAP2011 (Communicating Astronomy with the Public) conference in Beijing.

Dennis was an invited participant at the IAU Office of Astronomy for Development workshop held in Cape Town in December.

He is Chair of the SOC for a Special Session (Communicating Astronomy with the Public for Scientists) at the IAU GA in Beijing. The SpS will be run as a workshop and is intended to provide training, by communication professionals, to astronomers on many aspects of communicating astronomy to the public.

Yvan Dutil

Yvan gave two interview for the magazine Imagine (official magazine of the Quebec Engineer Network). One was about SETI and the other on asteroid exploitation. The article can be found online:

- [SETI article](#)
- [Asteroid Exploitation](#)

Yvan also gave a conference at the Musée de la Civilisation in Québec City on “Sept énigmes en astrophysique”.

- **Louise Edwards**
- 9 observatory tours at Campus telescope. Total of ~390 people (schools, seniors, and public at large) + an additional 180 Intro-Astro students.
- 9 community astronomy talks throughout New Brunswick. Total of ~350 people. Also, was part of a community speakers series where I discussed my life 'as an astronomer' ~300ppl.
- 3 visits with elementary and public schools (2 in NB, 1 in Pasadena, California). ~100ppl
- 10 interviews (7 newspapers, 2 radio, 1TV)
- Part of hosting Jocelyn Bell at Mount Allison. This included a public talk (~500ppl) and a talk for 1yr undergrads (~100ppl).
- Supervise a high school student from NFLD for her science fair project (she is currently at Nationals!)
- Ordered solar viewing and Halpha filters for campus observatory in anticipation of venus transit Public event ~50ppl.

John Percy:

- Organized three courses for later-life learners: (1) Astrobiology; Knox College, U of T; 5 lectures, I gave 3; 59 students. (2) The Universe; Glendon College, York University; 12 lectures. I gave 3; 90 students. (3) Discovering Astronomy; Ryerson University; 6 lectures, which I gave; 39 students.
- 14 public lectures, to various age groups, from kids to seniors, in libraries, seniors groups, the DDO, an RASC Centre.
- Gave 4 workshops to pre-service and in-service teachers.
- Co-organized a one-day, interdisciplinary symposium on "Transits of Venus" for an audience of 94 including many RASC members.
- Participated in Science Rendezvous 2012 at the University of Toronto.
- Convened a STEM EPO group at U of T which, among other things, developed an undergraduate course on STEM EPO, and organized a session on Outreach at the U of T's annual teaching-learning symposium.
- Served on the U of T DAA/DI/CITA EPO Committee, which organized a variety of EPO activities.
- Very active in pro-am activities through the AAVSO. As Editor of the AAVSO Journal, I am presently editing two special issues -- a Centennial Issue, and an issue based on the Citizen Sky project.

Joanne Rosvick:

Joanne Rosvick was on sabbatical for most of the year and her only EPO activity was an observatory tour and image processing exercise for Grade 11 students

Gordon Sarty:

Gordon's recent outreach activities included promoting an Alan Dyer talk and the transit of Venus on the CTV 6 o'clock news, providing H-alpha solar views to patrons of Saskatoon's farmer's market for Astronomy Day. He will be giving more H-alpha views of the Sun at the partial eclipse and at the transit of Venus, and is scheduled to teach basic astronomy to Air Cadets on a survival weekend.

Ian Short:

Ian Short was on leave from Saint Mary's in Academic 2011-12. However, he served a guide in the public observing program at the Burke-Gaffney Observatory at Saint Mary's.