

From Back Yard to Black Holes.. a picturesque view of the universe

Being aware of the unimaginably cold, dark vastness of space can help us value the beauty of our fragile Earth and our role on it. In this presentation you will be introduced to the basic concepts when we talk and think about "space". Much of this presentation will be accompanied by stunning high-resolution photographs and videos projected on a big screen.

We'll start with our planet Earth, how we got here and where it fits into the universe. Then our Moon, where it comes from and why it is so important to us. Moving further out, we'll look at our solar system, the scale of the planets and orbital distances, a look at the planets. We'll peer even further into our Galaxy, and take a tour of interesting objects in our Milky way.

Lastly, we'll explore the visible universe, what we can see and what we know, and discuss some theories about its origin and its future.

For the last part of the session we'll venture outside and look at the expanse over our heads and get familiar with some of its sights (weather permitting). Please bring binoculars if you have them.

Co-ordinator: Randy McAllister

Sure Randy McAllister has a day job; but it's during the dark hours that he gets really active as his alter ego **Astorandy**: Owner Operator of the Thunder Bay Observatory, a local facility he almost single-handedly designed and built. The observatory aims to educate, entertain and do research in the field of astronomy, with a special interest in photographing "deep sky" stellar objects. There are tens of thousands of these, from planets and moons to stellar clusters and super novae – and anything in between.

Born and raised right here Randy soon found out that Thunder Bay is also a great place to be for an astronomer: this area is one of the very few that has virtually no light pollution from big urban centres. In other words: up here we can still see the stars, and lots of them, too. In order to keep it that way, Randy is an environmental advocate primarily by campaigning to reduce the carbon-dioxide (CO₂) gasses in our atmosphere so we can keep seeing things clearly.

Randy is has been an amateur astronomer for about 21 years now, and is currently president of the Local Royal Astronomical Society of Canada astronomy club. He likes his nights crisp and clear.

URL: www.ThunderBayObservatory.com