



## Royal Astronomical Society of Canada – Victoria Centre

### NEWS RELEASE

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# Mars as Big as the Moon – Definitely Not!

Check it out for yourself at the RASCals 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Star Party

VICTORIA, BC – Hosted by the Victoria chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society (the RASCals) the star party attracts astronomy enthusiasts from all over the south coast who bring their telescopes and camp under the dark Malahat skies to celebrate all things astronomical.

This year the event takes place from September 2 – 4 at the Victoria Fish and Game Association. The moonless night promises spectacular viewing of the night sky: galaxies, star clusters and supernova remnants, planetary nebulae and of course, Mars – and during the day sunspot and solar flare viewing.

Contrary to popular reports on the internet, Mars will not be as big as the moon, and it won't even be at its closest point to the Earth until October 30, when it will look similar to the excellent viewing we enjoyed in the summer of 2003. Regardless, it will still be a spectacular site worth pointing your telescope at.

Gates will open at noon on Friday, September 2. The cost is \$15 single and \$20 couple/family and includes camping on-site, daily door prizes, draw for a Celestron 6" Dobsonian telescope, lectures, astrophotography workshop and power for telescope related equipment. Stay an hour or two days – same amazing low price.

You don't need a telescope to participate. "We like to have other people share our addiction", says Scott Mair, President of the Victoria Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, "So most amateur astronomers are happy to share their knowledge, enthusiasm and telescopes with the public. Just remember always ask permission of telescope owner first. You can also demonstrate that you're an expert telescope viewer, by not touching the telescope – not some much because the telescopes are delicate, but more because it improves your view. Your hand has little vibrations that are transferred to the telescope when you touch it. This vibrates the image and makes it harder to see. You actually get a better view by not touching the telescope."

To get to the Victoria Fish and Game Association from Victoria turn on to Holker Place at the Spectacle Lake intersection just past the (South) Shawnigan Lake Road turn-off on Hwy 1.

Remember; help preserve the night vision of all the participants, only red lights on-site after dark. If arriving after dark please park in the lower parking lot.

For more information on The RASCals Star Party visit the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's website at <http://victoria.rasc.ca/events/StarParty/>

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