

Astronomy Education and Outreach in a Large Urban University

by

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Science Librarian

Steacie Science and Engineering Library,
York University, Canada

LISA VI Conference, Pune, India, February 17, 2010

York University

- Third largest university in Canada
- Located in Toronto, Ontario
- Interdisciplinary focus
- 2 campuses
- 11 faculties
- Over 50,000 students

Faculty of Science and Engineering

- 5000 students
- Schools and Depts. offer undergraduate and graduate programs in biology, chemistry, physics & astronomy, mathematics & statistics, computer science & engineering, earth and space science & engineering, natural science and science & technology studies

Astronomy Education and Outreach at York

- IYA 2009 provides opportunity for local campus outreach in astronomy education
- York Observatory gets visibility for its public viewing program
- University promotion of science education through science rendezvous and star symposium events
- Library participation - astronomy exhibits and by engaging both in-library and virtual users

York University Observatory

- Started in 1968
- Two telescopes – 60 cm Cassegrain and 40 cm LX200 Meade
- Latter used for public viewing
- Responsibility of York faculty member – Prof. Paul Delaney who is very active in public outreach

Online Public Viewing at York Observatory

- Started in February 2009 to mark IYA and York's 50th birthday. Run by Student volunteers every Monday night
- Chat program with online viewing of night sky adapted from similar program at University of Valencia. Uses Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro Meeting software.
- Archived images posted in bad weather
- Linked to astronomy.fm

Benefits

- Viewing possible at remote locations – because of time difference viewers mostly from North America but occasionally from Europe and Australia
- Viewers may be newcomers to astronomy or amateur astronomers
- Chat is interactive, responds to questions
- Provides opportunity for personal development of students
- Links to internet resources possible
- Commentary from astronomy.fm

Online Public Viewing

The screenshot displays a web-based interface for an online public viewing event. It features a top navigation bar with 'Meeting' and 'Help' links. The main interface is divided into several sections:

- Attendee List (15):** A sidebar on the left lists participants, including 'My Status: Active', 'Fireball (computer)', 'James (Staff)', 'Other Ted may no', 'Paul Delaney 2', 'Ted (staff)', 'Anca Contoguris', 'john', 'kk', 'Mac', 'Marty', 'mia', 'Michael - Astronor', 'Paul D', 'sam', and 'thePrince'.
- Chat 17:** A central chat window showing a conversation. The chat history includes messages from Michael, Ted (staff), Paul Delaney 2, and Anca Contoguris, discussing the event and the spaceweather.com website.
- Image Thumbnails:** Three image thumbnails are displayed on the right side of the chat window:
 - M-42-best-by-ian.jpg:** A large, colorful image of the Orion Nebula (M42).
 - mars-1st.jpg:** A small image of Mars with a blue spot on the right side.
 - m104-neb.jpg:** A small image of the Whirlpool Galaxy (M104).
- Note 4:** A note at the bottom right provides information about the live broadcast, including the URL <http://astronomy.fm/radio/> and details about the images shown.

Uncertain about the weather, check <http://cleardarksky.com/csk/>

[Sponsor this Chart](#)

York University Observatory Clear Sky Chart

[legend page](#)

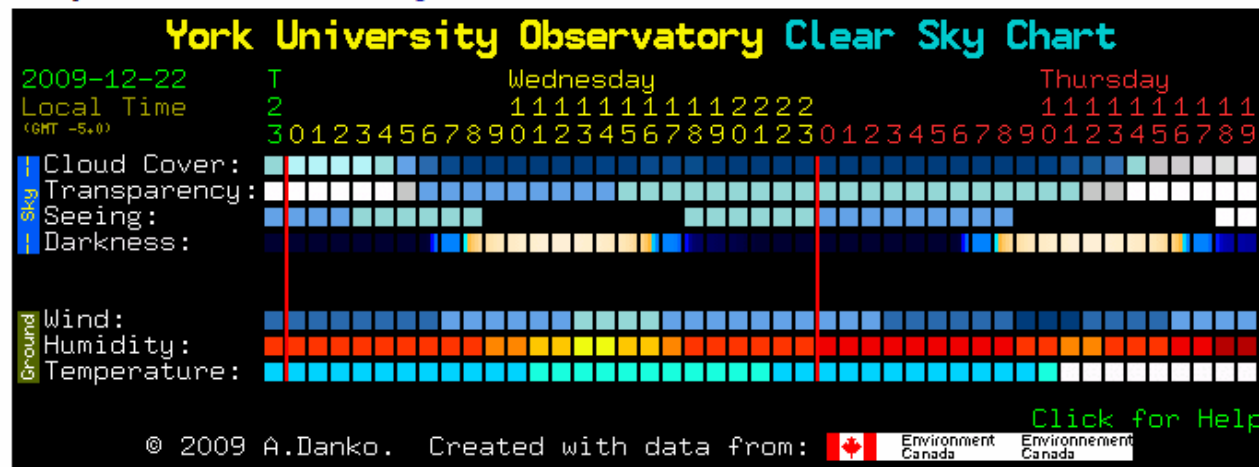
Image Control

1. Explain color and details when you mouse-over: ☐

2. Click on a block to show full forecast map

3. Display color legend: ☐

Last updated 2009-12-22 23:52:46. No Image below? Read [this](#).



[Observatory](#), of [York University](#), with [public observing](#).

Other Charts

[All](#)

Ontario: [List](#) [Ma](#)

Within 100 [List](#) [Ma](#)

Km: [List](#) [Ma](#)

Within 200 [List](#) [Ma](#)

Km: [List](#) [Ma](#)

[Astronomy Telescope](#)

Search Thousands of
Catalogs for Astronom
Telescope
www.globalspec.com



Ads by Google

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Nifty Links:

[Sun & Moon Data](#)

[Road Map](#)

[Sat Image](#)

[Satellite Predictions](#)

[Star Map](#)

[CalSky](#)

[Light Pollution map](#)

Promoting OPV at the York Observatory on Steacie Facebook

facebook

Home

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Friends

Inbox

Inbox

Sent Messages

Notifications

Updates



Updates from Steacie Science & Engineering Library

[Back to Updates](#) | [View Steacie Science & Engineering Library's Page](#) | [View All Sent Updates](#)

Displaying 1-5 of 28 updates.

[1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [Next](#)

• Astronomy Public Viewing Online

Today at 10:30am

2009 is the International Year of Astronomy. On Monday evenings, you can access real-time views through telescopes at the York University Observatory by visiting its web site. It's out of this world!

See also the YFile story here: <http://bit.ly/9Qd5K>

www.physics.yorku.ca

Source: www.physics.yorku.ca

In celebration of York University's 50th Birthday as well as the world wide celebrations for the International Year of Astronomy, the Observatory is pleased to offer an online viewing experience.



Share 

Steacie Science and Engineering Library





Subject Collections

- General Science,
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Earth and Space Sciences
- Physics & Astronomy
- Chemistry
- Nursing
- Biology
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Kinesiology and Neuroscience

Library Staff

- 4 science librarians
- 2 reference assistants
- 1 Circulation supervisor
- 3 circulation assistants
- 1 records assistant

Steacie Science Library Initiatives to promote astronomy education

- Astronomy Exhibits Display
- Promotion on Facebook and Yfile/Ylife online community news bulletin
- Hawaiian Starlight (CFHT) video projection
- Library Instruction for astronomy courses
- New books blog

Galileo Display at Steacie Library

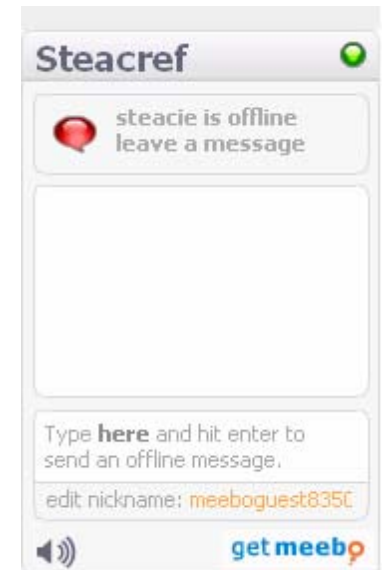


Telescopes of the World Exhibit



Librarians' use of Web 2.0 tools

- Facebook as a promotional tool for astronomy topics
- Meebo chat for answering online enquiries from large astronomy classes
- New books blog for promoting popular titles in astronomy



Promoting the event on Daily Campus Newsletter YFile

- [Today@York](#)

York University Events Calendar

International Year of Astronomy Exhibits

Aug 13, 2009 to Oct 26, 2009, 8-11PM

Continuing its celebration of the International Year of Astronomy, Steacie Science & Engineering Library is spotlighting various resources related to Galileo and astronomy.

Location: Steacie Science & Engineering Library, 8am to 11pm

Sponsor: York University Libraries

Posted by: [Ricardo Laskaris](#)

Web Site: <http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=147662&id=9040772036&l=9ea22f9929>

- **International Year of Astronomy Exhibits**
In celebration of the International Year of Astronomy, the Steacie Science & Engineering Library is spotlighting resources related to Galileo and astronomy...

Library Instruction for Astronomy Courses using web 2.0 tools

- Natural Science students – 1500 students taking natural science as a general education requirement. Science librarian uses Meebo chat for reference enquiries
- Bethune seminar for science students – non-astronomy majors. Essay assignment was based on IYA podcast “365 days of astronomy”.

New books blog by subject - [Astronomy](#)

Astronomy Oct. 1-10

David Levy's guide to observing meteor showers
QB 743 L48 2008

Innovation in astronomy education
QB 61 I54 2008

**Stephen James O'Meara's Observing the night sky with
binoculars: a simple guide to the heavens**
QB 63 O64 2008

**Stargazing basics: getting started in recreational
astronomy**
QB 63 K466 2008

Facts and speculations in cosmology
QB 981 N29 2008

A

Astronomy (58)

ARCHIVES

December 2009

November 2009

October 2009

September 2009

July 2009

June 2009

May 2009

April 2009

March 2009

February 2009

January 2009

December 2008

IYA Canada Website



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
ASTRONOMY 2009



THE UNIVERSE : YOURS TO DISCOVER

Français A+ A- AO

[Home](#) [News](#) [Student Blogs](#) [Activities](#) [Events](#) [Resources](#) [About IYA2009](#) [Contacts](#)

Galileo Moment Counter

To this date

01063113

Canadians have experienced a Galileo moment in 2009. Our goal: 1 million. Are **you** part of the number?

IYA Events & Activities

[Search for Local Events](#)
[How to Register Your Event](#)

Login Form

Home

- Student Blog – English
- Student Blog – French

The International Year of Astronomy

The International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009) is a global celebration of astronomy and its contributions to society and culture, stimulating worldwide interest not only in astronomy, but in science in general, with a particular slant towards young people. IYA2009 is an activity for the citizens of Planet Earth. It conveys the excitement of personal discovery, the pleasure of sharing fundamental knowledge about the Universe and our place in it, and the value of scientific culture.

So get involved! Participate in your town's activities! Plan activities of your own! [Volunteer!](#) Make IYA a year to remember for you – and for Canada!

Celebrate the IYA 2009 with Canadian Space Agency Astronaut Robert Thirsk



Traditional Inuit Night Sky Story

Aboriginal Program ▾

Muin – Mi'kmaq Night
Sky Story

Galileo Moment

Astronomy Kit

Planetarium and Science
Centre Productions ▸

Heavenly Arts

Galileo Lecture Series

Astronomy Student Blogs

100 Hours of Astronomy

Canadian Astronomy

Images

Dark Sky Preserves

Commemorative Stamps

International Activities

Galileo Moment Counter

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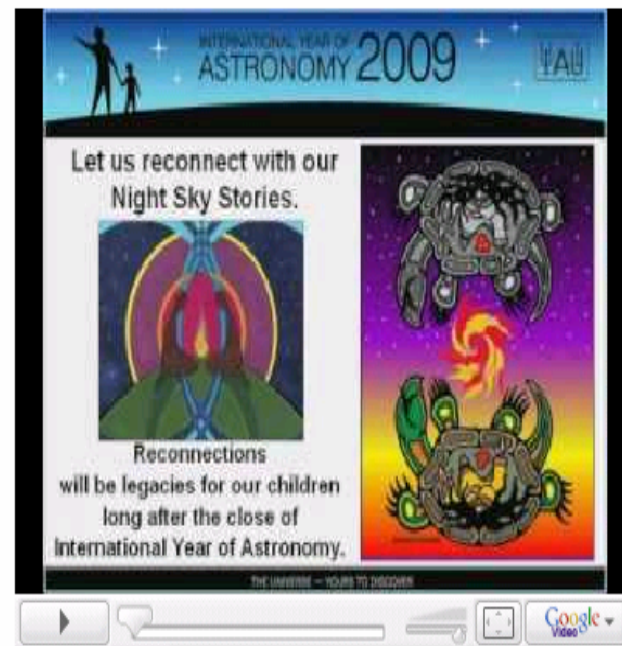
IYA Events & Activities

Traditional Mi'kmaq Sky Story Brought to Life for Year of Astronomy



Written by Andy Woodsworth

January 27th, 2009 (Sydney, NS): A traditional Mi'kmaq sky story has been brought to life in a celebration of the International Year of Astronomy 2009, blending modern technology with the oral teachings of First Nations Elders.



An animated version of the Mi'kmaq sky story, Muin and the Seven Bird Hunters, is now available in English, French and Mi'kmaq to people around the world in celebration of the International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009). The Mi'kmaq version, with an English introduction, can be viewed [here](#).