

E-Cass Report to CASCA Board

The publication of the Autumnal Equinox issue of E-Cass (no. 126) marked the 20th issue for the current editor. Coming after the Summer Solstice issue (which seems to rest on a generally agreed upon astronomical fact), this issue was remarkable in its paucity of articles! While the June issue was one of the busiest in recent years, I had to plead and even canvass for articles for the Autumnal Equinox issue. Hence E-Cass was very late in coming out which negated at least one time-sensitive article. I mention this as a preamble to a concern that I have had for several years concerning the viability of E-Cass. Let me elaborate.

Most of the articles for E-Cass (including reports, news updates etc) are originated by the same, faithful group of people. This is a reflection, of course, of committee and other involvements of these individuals. The number of articles submitted as feature articles is perennially low but has grown worse over the past two years with the exception of the June 2005 issue. Even more of a concern, however, is the lack of contributions by younger members of the community. Perhaps this is understandable in the case of young faculty for whom "publication" in E-Cass would represent little "value-to-career". This begs the question - is E-Cass still needed by the Canadian Astronomical community? In the age of rapid, web-deployed information and specialized web sites, is there enough value in E-Cass to warrant its continued publication?

By raising this question I am not in any way suggesting a waning enthusiasm for the task of editing E-Cass but I think the board should consider the following:

- Is E-Cass still needed?
- If so - is the present format effective or are there structural changes that would improve E-Cass? Could, for example, E-Cass develop an editorial board and assume a web-publishing role so that, especially younger astronomers and graduate students could receive a tangible benefit for "publishing" in E-Cass?
- Is it time for a new editor with new ideas?

Wishing you all the very best in your, at times thankless task as board for CASCA...

Brian Martin