

## Heritage Committee: Report to the Board, November 2018

Member	Term	Affiliation
Elizabeth Griffin <i>Chair</i>	2018–20	DAO/NRC
William McCutcheon	2016–19	University of British Columbia
Eugene Milone	2018–21	University of Calgary
David Pantalony	2018–21	Science Curator, CSTM, Ottawa
John Percy	2017–20	University of Toronto
Tim Robishaw	2018–21	DRAO/NRC
Randall Rosenfeld	2018–21	University of Toronto
Ian Shelton	2017–20	(University of Toronto)
David Turner	2017–20	Saint Mary's University
Gordon Walker	2017–20	UBC and UVic
Jasper Wall	2018–21	University of British Columbia 9

### Committee activities

(1) Book (update): *The History of Canadian Radio Astronomy*. As reported previously, our commitment to assist with developing a book on *The History of Canadian Radio Astronomy*, originally planned and commenced by the late Richard Jarrell (former long-serving member and Chair of this Committee) continues to be a major goal. The editors are J. Wall and E. Griffin; Wall is the prime contact and organizer. Some contributions already to hand; others are being prepared. Five of the 11 Committee members are chapter authors (McCutcheon, Robishaw, Rosenfeld, Wall and Griffin). At the IAU GA in Vienna Griffin met representatives from Springer, and accepted their invitation to publish the book in the Springer *History of Astronomy* series. The formal Book Form has been submitted to Springer.

(ii) The international workshop (mentioned in previous reports) which would establish a formal Plan for preserving and digitizing Astronomy's heritage data has now been upgraded to an IAU Symposium; Griffin is a co-Chair. A Letter of Intent was posted on the IAU Website, and the full Application is about to be submitted. Although not directly involved in the organization of the meeting (which will be held at Harvard), the Committee will follow its fortunes closely because the Symposium's output (a Digitizing Plan) will be binding upon all of Canada's archives.

### Members' Activities in Brief

Percy led two well-attended walking tours on "Toronto's Astronomical Heritage" for Heritage Toronto, published a short article on *Happy Birthday, RASC* in *The Reflector* (the journal of the USA Astronomical League), attended the re-opening of the David Dunlap Observatory, and spoke at the unveiling of the Royal Canadian Mint's coin commemorating the 150th birthday of the RASC. Currently he is preparing a short editorial for the December 2018 Journal of the AAVSO describing highlights of variable-star astronomy in Canada, to herald the joint meeting of the RASC and AAVSO in Toronto in 2019.

At the CASCA 2018 meeting in Victoria, Robishaw gave an invited talk entitled, *DRAO and ARO – The Foundations of Canadian Radio Astronomy*.

Rosenfeld organized the RASC Sesquicentennial Symposium, *A Shared Sky: the RASC at 150*, at the RASC GA, University of Calgary, 2018 June 29–July 1. His podcast, *The RASC 150 History Podcast* (<https://soundcloud.com/raschistorypodcast>) is continuing.

Griffin gave a talk at a Focus Meeting during the IAU GA on the use of heritage observations for time-domain astronomy, and gave a similar talk at the Wide-Field Astronomy Workshop (Perimeter Institute, ON) in October. She was a co-author of a new IAU Resolution (2018–B3) that expresses dismay at the lack of comprehensive efforts to preserve and digitize astronomy’s estimated 4–7 million historical observations, and encourages (more strongly than before) efforts to rescue that heritage *before it is too late*. Plates are vulnerable to natural hazards (flood, fire and earthquake), all of which have damaged collections in recent memory, while paper records (especially the log-books containing vital meta-data for each observation) are also fading or getting attacked by fungus or vermin. Human ignorance of the unique potential of historical observations for the burgeoning field of time-domain astronomy has also caused whole collections to be tossed.

## **Publications**

R.A. Rosenfeld, *The RASCs National Sesquicentennial Celebrations*, *JRASC*, 112, 105–111

R.A. Rosenfeld, *Viewing the Moon Across Time: RASC Sesquicentennial Observing Program*, *JRASC*, 112, 151–156

R.A. Rosenfeld, *Out of This World: Art inspired by all things Astronomical*, *JRASC*, 112, 236–242

R.A. Rosenfeld, *In Photos: Celebrating the Early Years of the RASC*, *JRASC*, 112, 246–249, 2018