

Stratford Astronomy Group (SAG)

November 4, 2025 Meeting Minutes



UPCOMING MEETINGS

- ▶ Tuesday September 16, 2025
- ▶ Tuesday October 7, 2025
- ▶ Tuesday November 4, 2025
- ▶ Tuesday December 2, 2025
- ▶ Tuesday January 6, 2026
- ▶ Tuesday February 3, 2026
- ▶ Tuesday March 3, 2026
- ▶ Tuesday April 7, 2026
- ▶ Tuesday May 5, 2026
- ▶ Tuesday June 2, 2026

SAG Website

- ▶ Just a reminder that the group has a website with lots of interesting links, presentations and general information. Check it out!!!
- ▶ Address is stratfordastronomy.com
- ▶ Tim Pauli - Owner/Administrator
- ▶ Ken Roberts - technical contact
- ▶ Tom Kimber - Administrator/Editor
- ▶ Doug Fyfe - Administrator
- ▶ Michael Burns- Administrator
- ▶ Tom will build it on WordPress

Club Equipment

- ▶ Club Equipment Locations:
- ▶ Paul Bartlett is now storing the bulk of the club's equipment. If you want to borrow anything, contact him by e-mail at 1948paul.bartlett@gmail.com or by phone at [519-274-2010](tel:519-274-2010)
- ▶ Patrick Hayes is currently storing the Seestar S50 and the Celestron CPC 800 telescopes. He also has the club laptop. If you want to borrow any of these items, contact him by email at hayesp42@rogers.com or by phone at [519-305-1268](tel:519-305-1268) (after 10 AM and before 9 PM). You can learn how to use the Seestar at an SOG observation event. The Celestron scope is still being debugged re ease of setup.

Meet and Greet

Attendees at November meeting were:

- ▶ 13 members and 3 new members

We neglected to have the new members introduce themselves. For next meeting we thought it might be worthwhile to have all members reintroduce themselves to the group.

There was a question from one of the new members about donating cash at the beginning of the meeting (at sign in time). This is a freewill offering to help support club finances. Feel free to contribute a loonie, twonie or whatever you wish.

SAG Finances

- ▶ Fee for use of our school meeting room has gone from about \$25 per year to \$248.88 (\$108.88 for room insurance and \$140.00 for room rental). The new fees have already been paid until Sept 1, 2026.
- ▶ Our finances are on solid ground despite extra room charges. We spent \$124.06 on software and hardware upgrades for the Celestron telescope over the summer.
- ▶ We do get a stipend from the museum, each time we jointly put on a Star Party.
- ▶ Including cash collected at Sept, Oct and Nov meetings, we currently have a bank balance of \$1,035.56
- ▶ If you want to contribute, e-transfer Tim at:
 - ▶ TimAnneMariePauli@gmail.com
 - ▶ Or by cheque to: Tim Pauli, 96 Front St., Stratford, ON, N5A 4H2
- ▶ **Let's discuss at December meeting re any expenditures the group would like to make.**

Stratford Observation Group (SOG)

- ▶ SOG is a subset of the SAG. It consists of members that are interested in participating in telescope observation sessions. Patrick and Ken are leading this effort. Many hours spent this summer trying to make Celestron scope functional. If you would like to be added to the list of SOG members, let Ken Roberts know.
- ▶ We also have Star Parties with the Stratford Perth museum. These are open to the general public and club members. A nominal fee is charged. This entails three, 30 minute presentations by SAG members plus outdoor sky observation with club telescopes. In a few cases, the skies did not cooperate.
- ▶ Patrick and Ken will monitor Nov. weather forecasts to see if we can have an SOG observation session soon. Likely would use the museum's grounds (power outlet and picnic table available). This session would be restricted to SOG members, who would be notified by Patrick (via e-mail) within 72 hours of a potential date, with final go/no go e-mail at 4:00 PM on scheduled date.
- ▶ Patrick and Ken have some ideas re enhancing the viewing experience. Once session logistics are refined, we will invite some members of the public to join us at future viewing sessions.
- ▶ Consensus at Nov meeting was that we defer any Star Party meetings until the Spring.

Q & A

- ▶ Michael was asked for more info on the “Beaver” moon. This is a slightly larger and brighter full moon which occurs this time of year (peak was November 5). See following slide for complete explanation
- ▶ November’s full moon is thought to be called the beaver moon because of the animal’s retreating behavior ahead of winter, though others believe it comes from Native American traditions. “This was historically the time for setting beaver traps before the swamps froze, to ensure a supply of warm winter furs.”
- ▶ Next “Super” moon will occur on Dec 4 and is called the “cold” moon.

What Is a Supermoon?

The path the Moon takes as it orbits our planet is not quite a perfect circle. Sometimes the Moon is a little closer to Earth, and appears slightly larger, than average. Sometimes it's a little farther away, and appears slightly smaller.

A “supermoon” occurs when a full Moon coincides with the Moon’s closest approach to Earth in its elliptical orbit, a point known as **perigee**. During every 27-day orbit around Earth, the Moon reaches both its perigee, about 226,000 miles (363,300 km) from Earth, and its farthest point, or apogee, about 251,000 miles (405,500 km) from Earth.



Q & A

- ▶ Michael was asked about the 3iAtlas object. 3i means third known interstellar object detected by humans that has entered our solar system. Atlas refers to the “Asteroid Terrestrial-impact Last Alert System” which first detected it.
- ▶ Initially a Harvard theoretical physicist, Dr. Avi Loeb, speculated that it might be an alien spacecraft but as it came closer, Nasa has confirmed that it is a comet like object.
- ▶ Nasa will release new images and further data as early as the week of Nov 17
- ▶ Michael stressed that it may have a different composition than a typical comet, as it came from a different solar system. He emphasized the need to rely on data collection to define our theories.

Michael's Cosmology Presentation

- ▶ Celestial bodies (stars, galaxies, etc...) may actually be much farther away than the distance we would expect. For example, an object that appears 10 billion light years away is actually 16 billion light years away.
- ▶ This phenomenon is a result of the rapid expansion of the fabric of the universe caused by dark energy. In effect, objects can be moving away from earth faster than the speed of light due to the expansion of the fabric of the universe. The total distance a galaxy has receded from us over billions of years due to this expansion, is greater than the distance light has traveled.
- ▶ Michael showed us different mathematical models that make it easier to understand/measure this phenomenon
- ▶ The concept of the "Observable Universe" was discussed.

Next Meeting

- ▶ Scheduled for Tuesday December 2nd at 7:00 PM
- ▶ Michael Burns is off to the South Pole to be involved in a NASA project and is likely away for 6 months starting in December.
- ▶ For the foreseeable future, Patrick Hayes will lead the meetings. Doug Fyfe and Tim Pauli will be Patrick's backups. With Michael's departure we will need more involvement from the group, to compensate for Michael's comprehensive technical knowledge.
- ▶ An agenda for the December meeting will be sent out soon. If you would like to suggest a subject to be added to the agenda for the upcoming meeting, contact Patrick at hayesp42@rogers.com