

RASC Ottawa Centre, Rolf Meier

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ROLF MEIER 1953-2016

Rolf Meier — obituary June 27, 2016



Age 62, of Ottawa, Ontario passed away Sunday, June 26th, 2016 after a short battle with cancer. Rolf was born in Goslar, Germany on July 24th, 1953 immigrating to Canada at the age of 5 and already showing a fascination with the stars. His interests matured into a well-rounded understanding of the natural world, with a formal education in electrical engineering from Carleton University (1977) and wide success as a prolific amateur astronomer. He went on to discover four comets which bear his name (Meier 1978, 1979, 1980, 1984). He received the RASC's Chant Medal in 1979 for his contributions. The brilliant accomplishments in his work and hobbies gained him a great deal of respect from his peers and earned him many awards throughout his working life, including numerous US patents. At home he spent most of his time outdoors, meticulously crafting and maintaining a beautiful property. His remarkable expertise extended to countless subjects, with a knack for capturing amazing photos, constructing precise woodworking and carpentry, and building or fixing anything mechanical. He is survived by his wife Linda, son Matt and his wife Melissa, brother Oliver (Kim), and parents Inge and Rolf Sr. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the Canadian Cancer Society (cancer.ca) or the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. A visitation will take place at C.R. Gamble Funeral Home & Chapel Inc. (127 Church St., Almonte) from 1-3 p.m. on Monday, July 4th followed by a Celebration of Life at 3 p.m.

Condolences & Tributes: www.crgamble.com

ROLF MEIER - a collection of his video presentations

- Mars Opposition** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1upUVc5xX4I&feature=youtu.be>) - April 2008 - 1:36:45
- Lunar and Planetary Imaging Workshop** (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_S0-QHld9yY&feature=youtu.be) - July 2008 - 1:13:30
- Collection of images** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cUdLjXQsA>) - September 2008 - 29:45
- A New Spot on Jupiter** (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xo85_a8hl3g&feature=youtu.be) - August 2009 - 1:08:55
- Carp StarParty Location (Linda)** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-h1nTCjm6M&feature=youtu.be>) - September 2009 - 42:30
- Arizona Public Outreach** (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0a241_OI1LU) - April 2011 - 7:08
- Arizona Sky Village** (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36Y14RhH_nk) - May 2011 - 46:15
- VLA Visit** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZ7wVd7i5ig>) - June 2011 - 1:22:44
- Interesting Observatories of the South West** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJvfr44Bv3o>) - July 2011 - 1:11:30
- Observation Report** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBuBlauqNBA&feature=youtu.be>) - May 2012
- New Mexico Space and Astronomy** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsRvHk96Rvs>) - May 2013 - 46:30

ROLF MEIER - a collection of his images

- Image of Saturn Taken Near 2002 Opposition Date** (http://ottawa-rasc.ca/articles/meier_rolf/rmeier_saturn/index.html)
- My Observatory** (http://ottawa-rasc.ca/articles/meier_rolf/rmeier_obs/observatory.html)

ASTRO-IMAGES

A dedication to ROLF MEIER by David H. Levy, published in Sky & Telescope - June 29, 2016
 (<http://www.skyandtelescope.com/astronomy-news/rolf-g-meier-1953-2016/>)

ROLF MEIER (1953-) grew up in Ottawa and received his Bachelor of Engineering degree in Electronics from Carleton University in 1977. Even at age 25, when he was nominated for the Chant medal, he had been a skillful telescope maker and observer for a long time. On nearly every clear night he could be found at Ottawa Centre's Indian River Observatory, coming early and staying late. His astrophotos were greatly admired by all who saw them but his discovery of a comet on April 26, 1978, really made headlines as it was the first telescopic discovery of a comet from a Canadian location. He discovered further comets in 1979, '80, and with the discovery of his fourth comet in '84, he became North America's greatest living comet hunter, a distinction he held until surpassed by David Levy in 1989.

In 1984, he married Linda McCrae, herself an outstanding Ottawa member. That year she won three Centre awards - for variable star observations, for the best article in *Astronomes* and as Observer of the Year. She has since served the Centre as Treasurer. Rolf has held a number of Centre Offices, including Chairman of the Observers' Group, Editor of *Astronomes* (for 12 years), National Council Rep and President. His 25 cm Newtonian reflector was installed at the Indian River Observatory in 1983 for use of members. A number of articles, displaying his wide-ranging interests, have included "Identifying a Meteorite", "Recent Aurora Activity", and "Solid State Photometer."



Rolf Meier with the 40 cm
Ottawa Centre telescope.

comet observations in 1962, mainly of Comets Seki-Lines and Humason, as well as nearly 2,000 searches of sixty-seven areas of the sky, each ten degrees square. None of these searches was productive, however. Success came in a big way in 1978, when Rolf Meier of Ottawa made the first of a series of remarkable comet discoveries with the Ottawa Centre's 41-cm telescope. Normally, an experienced observer might hunt for hundreds of hours before making a discovery. Meier searched for only fifty hours before spotting his first comet. He went on to discover three more comets in the next six years, and his fellow member, Doug George, found one of his own in 1989 using the same telescope. David Levy, after years of fruitless searching while still living in Canada, found seven comets in the dark skies of Arizona between 1984 and 1991. Canadian professional astronomers, Sidney van den Bergh (in 1974) and Christine Wilson (in 1986) have also added to the list of comet discoveries, and Levy himself, working as a professional observer at Palomar Observatory, found several more comets photographically.

Asteroids, those city-sized chunks of rock sometimes glorified with the name of minor planets, were also slow to interest Canadian observers. Doug Welch, while still a young member in Ottawa, took an interest in finding asteroid positions by reducing his own observations in the mid 1970s. Quebec Centre members watched Eros occult Kappa Geminorum on January 23, 1975. Some Edmonton and Calgary Centre members observed the asteroids Kleopatra and Wratislava occult faint stars in 1980 and 1983. Kitchener member, Clifford Cunningham, did a considerable amount of photometric work, and Chris Spratt of Victoria wrote a series of interesting papers on asteroids for the *Journal*. Thanks to his initiative, Asteroid 4113 was named RASCANA by the IAU in honour of the Society's centenary.

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

Supplement to the *Journal*

Vol. 81, No. 4 August 1987



The Society's prestigious Chant Medal was presented to Damien Lemay of the Quebec Centre at the Society's General Assembly in Toronto. Damien is shown with three other Chant Medal winners. From left to right: Damien Lemay, Warren Morrison (1986), David Levy (1980), and Rolf Meier (1979).
Photo by Ian McGregor.

First comet discovered in Canada

A 24-year-old Ottawa amateur astronomer has spotted what is believed to be the first comet ever discovered in Canada.

Rolf Meier, an electronics engineer who has been studying the skies for a decade, observed the body Wednesday through a 16-inch telescope at an observatory near Almonte.

Meier said the comet is star-like in color at the centre and is surrounded by a hazy patch.

It is visible only through a telescope in the north-western sky just after sunset.

Meier followed up his observation Thursday night, checked several detailed atlases, and then had his find confirmed by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Boston.

...owed St. John's Legislatu

Justice Minister T. Alex Hickman announced Thursday the RCMP had been ordered to investigate the allegations contained in a document tabled Tuesday night by Mr. Neary. The document contained an affidavit signed by Andrew Davidson, former

Ottawa man finds comet

OTTAWA (CP) — Rolf Meier, an Ottawa amateur astronomer, has discovered a comet. Mr. Meier, an electronics engineer who says he has 10 years of experience as a stargazer, said yesterday he discovered the object now known as Comet Meier 1978F on Wednesday while using the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's 16-inch telescope at the Indian River observatory at nearby Almonte.

Toronto Globe
April 29/78 WYLD

FIRST CANADIAN FINDS A COMET

OTTAWA (CP) — Rolf Meier, an amateur astronomer, has become the first Canadian to discover a comet.

Meier, an electronics engineer with 10 years of experience as a star gazer, said yesterday, he discovered the object now known as Comet Meier 1978F while using the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's 16-inch telescope at the Indian River observatory at Almonte.

Other observers in the Western United States have confirmed his find.

Rolf is a star of the skies

An Ottawa amateur astronomer has been credited with being the first Canadian to discover a comet.

Rolf Meier, an electronics engineer, discovered the comet, now known as Comet Meier 1978F, Wednesday night while sweeping the northwest sky through the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's 16-inch telescope at the Indian River observatory near Almonte.

An amateur astronomer for about 10 years, Meier said he "came across a small fuzzy object" which he couldn't identify among the hundreds of thousands of celestial bodies already charted.

He checked out the find with the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Boston and it was confirmed by other observers in the western U.S.

First comet discovered in Canada

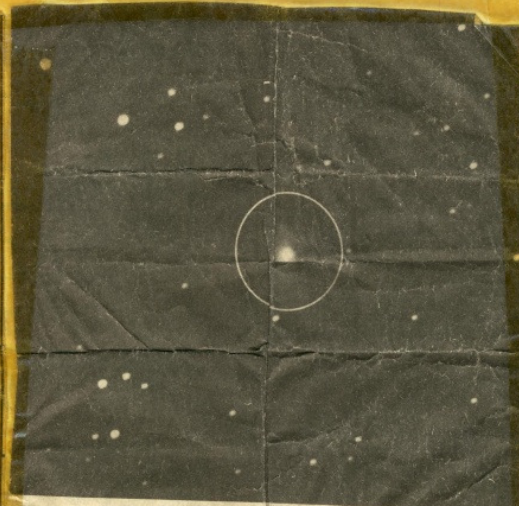
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Ten-year quest

This heavenly brightspot is the first comet to be "discovered" by a Canadian over Canadian soil. Rolf Meier, an Ottawa amateur astronomer who has been scanning the skies for 10 years, spotted the comet Wednesday night in the Lynx constellation in the northern sky. The comet, now officially named Comet Meier 1978, is more than 100 million kilometres from earth and can only be seen through strong binoculars or a telescope.