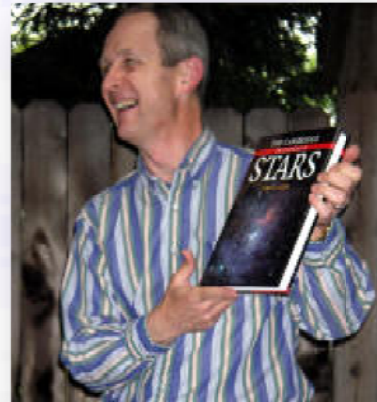


## CHRISTMAS 2007

As planned, I retired from the BC Government, Ministry of Environment on June 21<sup>st</sup> this year. I was actually on salary until Oct 31<sup>st</sup> since I qualified for three months of pre-retirement leave. Looking back on the last few months, I have enjoyed my retirement so far. It is a pleasure to be able to sleep in for that extra hour or so in the morning, then get up and leisurely sip my cappuccino while reclining in my easy chair. This is a much more civilized way to ease into the morning than rushing around getting ready for work. I never was a morning person.

I really enjoyed my [retirement party](#). The speeches were short and fun, and my guests and I spent most of the time nibbling on appetizers, enjoying a beverage or two, and socializing. I received some terrific gifts, and several people told me they liked the informal format (prepaid appetizers instead of a sit down meal). For the first time in many years, I was not working through the summer months, so I was able to take advantage of the good weather by staying up to all hours of the night observing with my telescopes. Several of my observing buddies also took advantage of the summer, so there was a nice social aspect to our observing. I have taken some quite good [images of celestial objects](#) over the last few months.



I also went on a little driving vacation this summer with my cousin. We travelled through western Washington State and down the Oregon coast. We both enjoyed ourselves, and visited with some friends who live near Portland before returning home. My next vacation will be a trip to Costa Rica next February. Unlike my last trip to Costa Rica in 1995, this will be *astronomy travel*. We will be staying at a resort on the Nicoya Peninsula, which is an area on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica I did not see last time. Our resort will be catering to the crazy astronomers, who will be mainly active at night and sleeping through the early part of the day, so this should be interesting! [Tour details](#)

As I write this on Dec 6<sup>th</sup>, it is my mother's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. I went over to Aberdeen Hospital today to visit with her, take over a little present, a card and some flowers. She is only a few blocks away from where I live, so it is a real treat for her (and me) that I can visit with her so easily (and so often). She is doing very well at Aberdeen. As I expected, she is thriving on the routine, gets great care, and appears to be quite happy. Her dementia limits her comprehension some days, but she is otherwise very healthy.

My partner has had a very challenging year, and unfortunately his problems become mine to some degree. I thank my lucky stars for a few close friends who were there for me, offering support without judgment. I came to the point earlier this year where I was ready to admit defeat with our relationship; however both of us realized there was still some room to move forward. A big part of my partner's *challenges* this year was the death of his oldest brother (lung cancer), and then his mother died (complications from Alzheimer's).

I suppose I should also get the other *bad news* out of the way. My cousin [Bill Glanfield](#) died this year of congestive heart failure. He was struggling with both health and personal problems, as his daughter will attest. She was flying back and forth between Ontario and Victoria on a regular basis, despite my best efforts to help Bill. The Navy buried Bill at sea, since he was a veteran. So as you can see, 2007 has been a challenging year. All I can hope for is that 2008 will be a bit more peaceful.

[My interests](#) in astronomy, photography, web sites, personal computers, observing nature, and travel keep me occupied and engaged with life. I'm meeting lots of interesting people who share my interests, and some are turning out to be quite good friends and acquaintances. I'm looking forward to pursuing these interests further in 2008.



Since retirement, I've also rediscovered music. Not that I'm a musician, but I appreciate good music, especially smooth jazz, R&B, and some pop, classical, and new age/ambient. As you have no doubt noticed, music stores selling CDs have either gone out of business or have drastically scaled back. The reason is online music – downloaded music, CDs purchased through online stores, and commercial free music from cable and satellite. I download and listen

to all the music I want using my computer's new audio system, and I can transfer music to my PDA and listen to it anywhere I go. My partner can also listen to music on the go with his new Walkman MP3/video player. I'm having a ball with online music, since I can download virtually anything, and if I don't like it I delete it and move onto something else - all for a modest monthly subscription cost with [Napster.ca](#). We also constantly listen to commercial free music channels at home supplied by [Shaw Cable](#).

**I hope you and your family have a wonderful Christmas.  
May 2008 bring you much joy and happiness.**

*Joe Carr*