

Local student wins Arlyne Gillespie Award for astronomy



By Chris Drost

Ares Worsley, who is a grade 6 student at York River Public School, received first in his group and was awarded the Arlyne Gillespie Astronomy Award at the Quinte Regional Science and Technology Fair for his project "Night Sky" on April 15 in Belleville.

According to Ares' father, Leaf Worsley, Ares first entered a virtual project two years ago, but this was his first opportunity to travel to take part in the competition in person.

This year's project asked the question, "Can I predict the night sky?" Ares tried gathering evidence by taking photos of the stars in his backyard but found it difficult to make observations at regular times. This prompted him to take weekly photos with an app on his phone. This made it possible to track star clusters from week to week.

Ares learned that a full Earth day is only 23 hours and 56 minutes, rather than the 24 hours generally used. "So, if you think about a clock with a star being at the 12, the minute hand on the clock goes around in just under 24 hours so at the same time the next night the hand has gone just past the star. If you wanted to look directly at the star, you'd have to look up four minutes earlier the next night," explains Ares.

The day of the fair was a busy time. Ares was interviewed by multiple judges and was asked to explain everything from the process

he used, his findings, and his model and Scratch simulation.

At the end of the day, Ares was delighted to receive a special award for astronomy, the Arlyne Gillespie Award. This award was for having the best display board for grades 4-8 and was earned in part by what was described as 'his professionalism' during the event. The award was sponsored by The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. Arlyne Gillespie was a past vice-president of the RASC ? Kingston Centre.

Ares will have a lot more opportunity to study the stars as he received a telescope as a prize for his efforts.