



OSFS Statement

Newsletter of the **Ottawa Science Fiction Society, April 2014,**
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photograph is of a March fireball taken by Yuichi Takasaka.

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We are suspending requirements of membership dues for now, as we are not paying for meetings. The Executive will review our financial situation regularly.

website www.ottawasfs.ca
executive exec@ottawasfs.ca

Rates
Regular \$0.00
Family \$0.00
Extraordinary & Senior \$0.00

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Dinner-Gatherings Start at 6:00 pm.

Tue April 28 at Perkin's Restaurant 1130 St. Laurent Blvd,

OSFS Supper Meeting

On March 24, ten science fiction and fantasy fen gathered at Perkins Restaurant to talk and eat.

This was at least our second visit to Perkins where we have the spacious back room to ourselves. The food is pretty good, although if you are a vegetarian as I am, only one dish on the menu fits the bill. Luckily both times I joined the group there my meal was delicious and just the right size for me. Everyone enjoyed the variety of dishes ordered.

The event was billed as, 'Monthly Meeting to Set the World

Straight.' You may not have noticed any great change in the world since then, but we did have two or three hours of good conversation on the Canadian Military, Christmas Muzak in stores (with dead opposite opinions on that one), Japanese animated movies (championed by Starwolf), the charms of Myrtle Beach (Sheila and Ian had just returned from there) and what everyone was reading, watching and playing.

The Pack meets again at 6 p.m. on April 28 at Perkins 1130 St. Laurent Bl. See you there.

Hildegard Henderson

For Your Viewing Pleasure

Jupiter lies high in the south at nightfall and sets around 2am. Mars and Saturn rise around 8pm and 9pm respectively. Venus lies low in the dawn twilight. Its brightness makes it fairly easy to spot. The Moon was

Full on the 14th.

If you missed the total lunar eclipse; and for most of us the sky was overcast, the next one takes place on Oct. 8, peaking at 6:54 a.m. ET. Most of the eclipse will be visible from Ontario. The last two eclipses of this group of four are on April 4 and Sept. 28, 2015.

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MOVIES List submitted by Sandi Marie

Coming to Your Theatre

MAY	The Amazing Spider-Man 2 - May 2
JUNE	Edge of Tomorrow - Jun 6
	How to Train Your Dragon 2 - Jun 13
	Transformers: Age of Extinction - Jun 27

JULY

Maleficent - Jul 2
X-Men: Days of Future Past - Jul 18
Dawn of the Planet of the Apes - Jul 18
Hercules: The Thracian Wars - Jul 25

Coming Events List submitted by Lloyd Penney

Monthly social gatherings – DWSC-Ottawa, Social network for Whovians, www.facebook.com/pages/DWSC-Ottawa-Chapter/480591658637449

April 25-27 - FilKONtario 24, Delta Airport West, Mississauga. Guests: S. J. Tucker, with the Heather Dale Band; Gary Ehrlich, Piers Cawley. For more information, www.filkontario.ca.

April 25-27 - Midwest Media Expo, Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center. . www.midwestmediaexpo.com.

April 25-28 - Costume Con 32, Sheraton Airport Hotel, Toronto. For more information, www.costumecon32.com.

April 26-27 – Ottaw (model) Train Expo, Ernst & Young Center, www.OTTAWATRAXPO.com

May 2-4 - Eeriecon 16, Byblos Niagara Resort & Spa, Grand Island, NY. Literary SF/F/H convention. Guests: David B. Coe, Mark Leslie, more. For more information, www.eeriecon.org.

May 4 - Canadian 80s Toy Expo, Delta Meadowvale Hotel and Conference Centre, Mississauga. Guest: Alan Oppenheimer. For more information, www.80stoyexpo.com.

May 9-11 - Ottawa ComicCon, EY Centre, Ottawa. Comics convention, more. Guests: Kane Hodder, Amanda Tapping, more. For more information, www.ottawacomicon.com.

May 10-11 - Toronto Comic Arts Festival, Toronto Reference Library, Toronto. For more information, www.torontocomics.com.

May 11 - 18th Annual Fantastic Pulp Show and Sale, Lillian H. Smith branch, Toronto Public Library. Admission: \$3. Hours: 10am-5pm. For more information, see Facebook page.

May 16-18 - CanGames, Rideau Curling Club, Ottawa. Gaming convention. For more information, www.cangames.ca.

May 17-19 - SuperFan ComicCon, Better Living Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto. Guests: TBA. For more information, www.superfancomiccon.com.

May 23-25 - Anime North, Toronto Congress Centre + 3 hotels, Toronto. For more information, www.animenorth.com.

- May 23-25 - What The Fur!?, Sheraton Montreal Airport Hotel, Montreal. Furry Cconvention with steampunk theme. Guest: Alex Cockburn. For more information, www.whatthefur.com.
- June 1 - Burlington Toy Show, Holiday Inn Burlington Hotel and Conference Centre, Burlington. Early Bird price \$10, general admission \$5. Hours: 9am-3pm. For more information, www.burlingtontoyshow.com.
- June 6-8 - Bloody Words XIII, Hotel TBA, Toronto, ON. Mystery convention. Guests: Vicky Delany, For more information, www.bloodywords.com.
- July 26 – Chibi Anime, Capital Region's Anine & Geek Convention, Le festival d'animation japonaise et geek, place unspecified, <http://ganime.ca/chibi-2014/>
- March 1&2 - Ottawa Geek Market, Nepean Sportsplex, Ottawa. Bazaar for fannish interests. For more information, www.geekmarket.ca.
- June 6-8 - Niagara Falls ComicCon, Hotel and Facility TBA, Niagara Falls, ON. Guests: William Shatner, more. For more information, www.NFComicCon.com.
- June 12-15 - SteamTopia, DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Detroit-Dearborn, Dearborn, MI. Steampunk convention. For more information, see page on Facebook.
- June 28 - Steam on Queen, Campbell House, Toronto. Steampunk bazaar. For more information, www.steamonqueen.ca.
- June 28 - Oshawa Anime Festival/Comic Con/Toy Show, 15 Harmony Rd. N., Oshawa. \$5 admission, hours 10am-6pm. For more information, www.popculturecanada.ca.
- July 4-6 - Polar Chill 2, Holiday Inn Toronto International Airport, Toronto. Includes the 2014 Constellation Awards. For more information, www.tcon.ca.
- July 11-13 - TFcon 2014, Delta Meadowvale Hotel and Conference Centre, Mississauga. Transformers toy convention. For more information, www.tfcon.ca.
- July 13 - Oshawa Comic Con, 15 Harmony Rd. N., Oshawa. \$5 admission, hours 10am-3pm. For more information, www.popculturecanada.ca.

July 17-20 - Detcon 1, Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center, Detroit, MI. North American Science Fiction Interim Convention (NASFiC). Guests: Steven Barnes, John Picacio, Bernadette Bosky, Arthur Hlavaty, Kevin J. Maroney, Helen Greiner, Bill and Brenda Sutton, Roger Sims, Fred Prophet. For more information, www.detcon1.org.

July 18-20 - Ryu-Kon 2014, Buffalo Niagara Convention Centre, Buffalo. Anime/gaming/horror/steampunk convention. Guests: Riley Schillaci, more. For more information, www.ryu-kon.com.

July 18-20 - ConBravo!, Hamilton Convention Centre & Sheraton Hotel, Hamilton. Gaming/cosplay convention, more. Guests: Angry Joe, DJ Cutman, more. For more information, www.conbravo.com.

August 1-3 - Condition vs. The Monsters, Four Point by Sheraton Hotel, London, ON. Furry convention. Guests: Sigil, Wolfbird, Dixie von Fur. For more information, www.conditionfurry.ca.

August 14-18 - Loncon 3/72nd World Science Fiction Convention, ExCeL, London, UK. Guests: Iain M. Banks, John Clute, Malcolm Edwards, Chris Foss, Jeanne Gomoll, Robin Hobb, Bryan Talbot. For more information, www.loncon3.org.

August 28-31 - Fan Expo Canada, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto. 20th anniversary event. For more information, www.fanexpocanada.com.

Sept. 5-7 - Fan Events Forum, International Plaza Hotel, Toronto. Con runners' convention. More information TBA, sponsored by Anime North.

Sept. 7 - Oshawa Comic Con, 15 Harmony Rd. N., Oshawa. \$5 admission, hours 10am-3pm. For more information, www.popculturecanada.ca.

Sept. 12-14 - Steampunk event, name unknown, somewhere in the GTA. More information to follow.

Sept. 19-21 - RocCon 2014, Kodak's Theatre on the Ridge, Rochester, NY. Comics, gaming, SF and anime convention. Guests: Brent Spiner, Alaina Huffman, Vic Mignogna, Bonnie Piesse. For more information, www.rochesterscifianimecon.com.

Sept. 26-28 - JemCon, Airport Hilton, Mississauga. Convention about Jem cartoons and toys. For more information, www.jemcon.org.

October 3-5 - CanCon 2014, Hotel TBA, Ottawa. Literary SF convention. Guest: Jo Walton. For more information, www.cancon.org.

October 10-12 - Creation Salute to Supernatural, Toronto Weston Harbourcastle, Toronto. Guests: Jensen Ackles, Jared Padalecki, Misha Collins. For more information, www.creationent.com.

November 14-16 - SFContario 5, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Toronto. Guests: Robin Hobb, James Murray. For more information, www.sfcontario.ca.

November 22-23 - Toronto Mini Maker Faire 2014, Toronto Reference Library. For more information, www.makerfairetoronto.com.

January, 2015 - ConFusion 41, Hotel TBA, Detroit area. Guests: Karen Lord, Dr. Cynthia Chestek, Heather Dale, Monte Cook, Shanna Germain, Aaron Thul. For more information, www.confusionsf.org.

April 16-19, 2015 - FilKONtario 25. Filk convention. For more information, www.filkontario.ca.

August 19-23, 2015 - Sasquan/73rd World Science Fiction Convention, Spokane Convention Center, Spokane, WA. Guests: David Gerrold, Leslie Turek, Tom Smith, Vonda McIntyre, Brad Foster. For more information, www.sasquan.org.

October 12-15, 2017 - Bouchercon XLVIII, Hotel TBA, Toronto. World Mystery Convention. Guests: Louise Penny, Chris Grabenstein, Twist Phelan, Gary Phillips. More information TBA.

Ottawa International Animation Festival

(OIAF) today announced its worldwide call for entries. The largest festival of its kind in North America, the OIAF will take place in Ottawa, Canada from September 17 to 21, 2014, once again transforming Canada's Capital into the centre of the animation universe. Animators are invited to submit new work into various categories including Independent Short Films, Feature Films, Commissioned Films (series, commercials, music videos), Student Films and Films Made for Children. New this year, in recognition of the fact that more series are being made on non-television platforms, the Series for

Children and Series for Adult categories are no longer limited to television productions. 2014 entrants will also be able to submit their film via web link, in an effort to simplify submissions and reduce shipping costs. As always, the OIAF does not charge entry fees.

For more information about this year's Festival, as well as the online entry form, visit the OIAF website at www.animationfestival.ca. Questions about submitting a film may be sent to entries@animationfestival.ca or made by telephone at 613-232-8769.

Star Wars sequel

brings back R2D2 30 years after Episode VI

The highly anticipated next installment of the Star Wars franchise will be set 30 years after Episode VI: Return of the Jedi, Walt Disney Co.'s chief executive officer Bob Iger has revealed at the company's annual shareholders meeting. Disney purchased Star Wars production company LucasFilm for \$4.05 billion US in 2012 and announced it would release three new films in the popular sci-fi series. Fans have been avidly awaiting details of the next film, Star Wars: Episode VII. Return of the Jedi was the third film in the first trilogy of Star Wars released between 1977 and 1983. The series is set in a galaxy far, far away, in the past.

Speaking Tuesday, Iger did not reveal any casting news, other than to confirm the return of the robot character R2D2.

The official Star Wars website posted on Monday the new films would feature "a trio of new young leads along with some very familiar faces," and that filming would begin in May at London's famed Pinewood studios. Rumours have swirled for over a year on whether some of the franchise's stars, including Harrison Ford, Mark Hamill

and Carrie Fisher, would return. Trade magazines have reported that rising stars including Oscar-winner Lupita Nyong'o and Girls actor Adam Driver were being considered.

The Star Wars franchise was created by director George Lucas and comprises six films that have grossed more than \$4.4 billion US at the worldwide box office since the first film was released in 1977.

Episode VII will be released on December 18, 2015, and will be directed by J.J. Abrams, who helmed the recent Star Trek film franchise reboot.

Astronomy

Go outside tonight and you may get a good view of the planet Mars.

Mars is just past "opposition", when the Earth passes between Mars and the sun, bringing the two planets toward their closest approach within their orbits — something that only happens every 26 months.

That will make Mars an unusually bright orange dot in the sky — almost 10 times brighter than the brightest stars, NASA says.

Mars should be easy for you to spot with the naked eye even in the city. If you have a backyard telescope, you may even be able to see details such as one of the planet's polar ice caps, the U.S. space agency says.

This celestial event is called "opposition" because the alignment of Earth between Mars and the sun will make them appear at opposites sides of the sky.

Why 'fireball season' is so spectacular this year

Unusually bright meteors called fireballs have been blasting across the night sky all over Canada this spring. A fireball thought to have ended up as a meteorite on the ground was spotted in southern Ontario. In Nova Scotia, fireballs were spotted two days in a row. The first one was also visible from P.E.I. and parts of Quebec. Just two weeks earlier, a spectacular fireball exploded over Yellowknife.

How strange and unusual is this?

Well, in some ways, it isn't.

Bill Cooke, head of NASA's Meteoroid Environment Centre, describes spring as "fireball season."

"We do tend to see more fireballs just before early spring," he said at a news conference in St. Thomas, Ont., Friday.

Canadian astronomer Ian Halliday first reported the seasonal phenomenon decades ago, he added.

In fact, NASA reports that the nightly rate of fireballs increases 10 to 30 per cent around the spring equinox.

But scientists still don't have a good handle on why that is, Cooke said.

Martin Beech, professor of astronomy at the University of

Regina's Campion College, said the explanation may be pure chance, and it may be that "the Earth just happens to encounter more of these objects at this time of year."

Fewer meteors typically spotted in March

The strange thing about that is that, in general, March is the time of year when the number of meteors spotted overall is at its lowest. There are no major meteor showers and rates of "sporadic" meteors unrelated to meteor showers are also at their minimum.

That's because sporadic meteors tend to come from the direction the Earth is travelling, the apex, which is at its highest point in the night sky in the autumn.

Consequently, that's the time of year when sporadic meteors peak.

However, Robert Hawkes, a solar system astrophysicist at Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B., said fireballs may not necessarily have the same distribution as fainter meteors and in fact, some meteor showers are known to have a larger number of brighter meteors than fainter ones.

But are there more fireballs this year than in other years?

No, not according to a network of cameras across North America that track fireballs.

"This year appears to be a pretty normal year," Cooke

said Friday.

No relationship between Ont., N.S. fireballs

Nor does he think there was any relationship between last week's Ontario and Maritime fireballs, since they appeared before midnight and before dawn respectively. That suggests that they came from different directions in space relative to the Earth.

Meteor experts have a number of explanations for why there are so many reports of fireballs this year.

Beech said fireballs actually occur fairly regularly.

"Most of the time, they go unnoticed, believe it or not," he said.

He suggested that the location of the fireballs may have made a difference – they happened to be visible in highly populated parts of Canada.

CBC's national science correspondent, Bob McDonald, thinks the ability to quickly share reports with friends also plays a role.

"Everyone's got a webcam now on their phone, so we're seeing them more and their pictures are being posted online."

MERCURY

Ken Tapping, 8th April, 2014

On occasion, in the west after sunset or in the east before sunrise we see a brightish starlike object. Over a month or so it appears further out of the glare, then gradually sinks back into it, and vanishes. Some weeks later it then appears shyly in the other side of the sky, alternating its appearances between sunrise and sunset.

Our astronomical ancestors noticed this object, and lumped it in with the other starlike objects that appear in the sky and seem to move around among the fixed stars. The Greeks called these “planetes” or “planites”, from which we get the modern word “planets”. Because the planet mentioned here seems to scurry in and out of the Sun’s glare at high speed, it was named after the Roman messenger of the gods, “Mercury”. Until spacecraft gave us a close look at it, everything we knew about Mercury came from ground based telescopes looking at an elusive world, hiding in the sunset or sunrise glow, through cloud and haze. Even worse was the turbulence in the atmosphere, which can be particularly bad around

sunrise and sunset, and worse still when looking at objects close to the horizon. They determined that Mercury is about 4,900 km in diameter, compared with our Moon’s 3,500 km, and our Earth’s 12,800 km. It lies about 40% of the Earth’s distance from the Sun and completes an orbit around the Sun in only 88 days. Our Earth catches about 1400 watts of solar energy solar energy flow per square metre. It reflects about 40% of that back into space. The rest of it keeps us comfortable. Mercury, being closer, receives about 10,000 watts per square metre, and reflects only about 10% of that back to space. This makes the planet very hot, with a surface hot enough to melt lead and tin.

Our Moon is too small to hold onto an atmosphere. Even though Mercury is a little larger, with a stronger gravitational pull, it is also much hotter, which makes it even harder to hang onto an atmosphere, especially with a very strong solar wind constantly scrubbing it away. On this basis we could guess that Mercury would be a barren, almost airless world, covered with lava flows and craters, looking much like the Moon. Images taken from spacecraft

showed this to be the case. There are some geological differences compared with our Moon, but on the whole those deductions have proved pretty good. One thing we got wrong was an assumption that the tidal forces inflicted on Mercury by the Sun's gravity had slowed the planet's rotation to a point where the same side of Mercury faced the Sun all the time, with that side enjoying temperatures of hundreds of degrees Celsius while the other, perpetually dark, was very cold. It turns out that the Sun has not yet achieved that. At the moment Mercury rotates once every 59 days. So there is no permanently dark or light side.

However, now the planet has been mapped, scientists have found, near Mercury's poles, places where the Sun never shines. It is very cold in those places and there is growing evidence of large accumulations of ice. With occasional comets and other icy objects hitting Mercury, there would be water vapour which would tend to accumulate in cold, shaded places. At least some of that ice would have arrived that way. However we do not know whether we are seeing all the ice present on the planet. It is unlikely we will be

landing on Mercury any time soon, but we can use the Moon as an analogue. It too is an almost airless, dry world, with ice in permanently shaded craters near the pole. When we get people back on the Moon, it will be very interesting and useful to drill a deep hole to see if there are ice layers deep underground.

FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE

Jupiter lies high in the south at nightfall and sets around 2am. Mars and Saturn rise around 8pm and 9pm respectively. Venus lies low in the dawn twilight. Its brightness makes it fairly easy to spot. The Moon will be Full on the 14th.