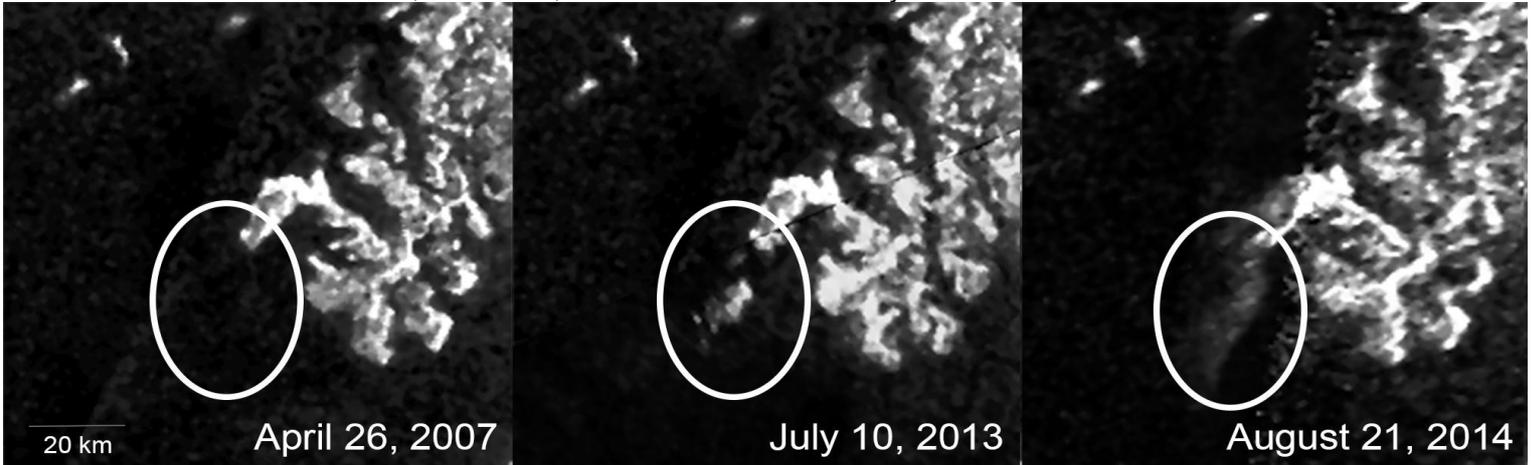




# OSFS Statement

Newsletter of the **Ottawa Science Fiction Society, October, 2014,**  
Issue 426, Volume 40, Number 10. Founded May 1977



**Mysterious Changing feature on Titan** Image Credit: [Cassini Radar Mapper](#), [ASU](#), [JPL](#), [ESA](#), [NASA](#)

**Explanation:** What is that changing object in a cold [hydrocarbon](#) sea of Titan? Radar images from the robotic [Cassini spacecraft](#) orbiting [Saturn](#) have been recording the surface of the cloud-engulfed moon Titan for years. When imaging the flat -- and hence radar dark -- surface of the [methane](#) and [ethane](#) lake called [Ligeia Mare](#), an object appeared in 2013 which was not there in 2007. Subsequent observations in 2014 found [the object](#) remained -- but had changed! The [featured image](#) shows how the 20-km long [object](#) has appeared and evolved. Current origin speculative explanations include [bubbling foam](#) and [floating solids](#), but no one is sure. [Future observations](#) may either resolve the enigma or open up more speculation.

**Monthly supper Mon, Oct 27, 5:30pm, to talk about Can-Con**     **NOTE TIME: 5:30-8pm**  
**Place: Nate’s Deli, 1545 Merivale Road Ottawa,**

Nate’s Deli is on Merivale Rd between Clyde and Meadowlands, on the east side of the street, just north of Emerald Plaza. There’s an early start because the restaurant closes at 8pm. Come whenever you can. Be glad to see you whenever you arrive.

**Please RSVP at our Meetup Site [www.meetup.com/ottawasfs-ca](http://www.meetup.com/ottawasfs-ca), or via email to [events@ottawasfs.ca](mailto:events@ottawasfs.ca)**

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**aWe are suspending** requirements of membership dues for now, as we are not paying for meetings. The Executive will review our financial situation regularly.  
 304-1568 Merivale Road  
 Ottawa, ON, K2G 5Y7  
 website [www.ottawasfs.ca](http://www.ottawasfs.ca)  
 executive [exec@ottawasfs.ca](mailto:exec@ottawasfs.ca)

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

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| OSFS Logo  | Bruce Wright |
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## MOVIES List submitted by Sandi Marie

### Coming to Your Theatre

#### **Dracula Untold** 17 Oct 2014

Vlad the Impaler (Luke Evans) becomes the mythological bloodsucker Dracula.

#### **Paranormal Activity 5** 24 Oct 2014

Ryan, Emily and their six-year-old daughter Leila move to Palo Alto. However, they quickly realize something is not right within their new house.

#### **Instellar** 7 Nov 2014

A group of scientists travel through a wormhole in outer space into another dimension. cast: Matthew McConaughey, Anne Hathaway, Jessica Chastain, Bill Irwin, Ellen Burstyn, Michael Caine.

#### **The Hunger Games - The Mockingjay part**

#### **1**

21 Nov 2014

With Peeta (Josh Hutcherson) captured by Snow and taken prisoner in the Capitol, Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence) reluctantly agrees to act as "the Mockingjay"—a poster child for the rebellion spearheaded by District 13.

#### **The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies**

17 Dec 2014

The conclusion of Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman), the Wizard Gandalf (Ian McKellen) and the thirteen Dwarves' epic quest to reclaim the lost Dwarf Kingdom of Erebor from the dragon Smaug (voiced by Benedict Cumberbatch).

## Coming Events

List submitted by Lloyd Penney

Oct 17-19 - Genrecon, Holiday Inn Guelph Hotel and Conference Centre, Guelph, [www.genrecon.com](http://www.genrecon.com).

Oct 30 - Nov 2 - Youmacon 2014, Detroit. Anime convention, [www.youmacon.com](http://www.youmacon.com).

Nov 7-9 - Hal-Con 2014, World Trade & Convention Centre, 1800 Argyle Street, Halifax

Nov 14-16 - SFContario 5, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Toronto. Guests: Robin Hobb, James Murray, [www.sfcontario.ca](http://www.sfcontario.ca).

Nov 22-23 - Toronto Mini Maker Faire 2014, Toronto Reference Library, [www.makerfairetoronto.com](http://www.makerfairetoronto.com).

Jan 16-18, 2015 - Back to the ConFusion/ConFusion 41, Dearborn Doubletree Hotel, Detroit. Guests: Karen Lord, Dr.

Cynthia Chestek, Heather Dale, Monte Cook, Shanna Germain, Aaron Thul, [www.confusionsf.org](http://www.confusionsf.org).

Jan 23-25, 2015 - GAnime, Palais de Congrès, Gatineau, QC. Guests: Doug Walker, John Lang, [www.ganime.ca](http://www.ganime.ca),

@ganime on Twitter.

April 10-12, 2015 - Ad Astra 2015, Sheraton Parkway North, Richmond Hill, ON. SF literary convention. Guests: Anne

Bishop, more, [www.ad-astra.org](http://www.ad-astra.org), Facebook.

April 16-19, 2015 - FilKONtario 25. Filk convention. [www.filkontario.ca](http://www.filkontario.ca).

May 22-24, 2015 - Anime North 2015. , [www.animenorth.com](http://www.animenorth.com).

Aug 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. [www.sasquan.org](http://www.sasquan.org).

Sometime in early 2017 - CostumeCon 35, somewhere in Toronto-Hamilton area. Information to com

Oct 12-15, 2017 - Bouchercon XLVIII, Hotel TBA, Toronto. World Mystery Convention. Guests: Louise Penny, Chris

Grabenstein, Twist Phelan, Gary Phillips.

## **Obituary: Ann Methe**

Well known to Montreal fandom as a former chair and later a board member of Con\*Cept has passed away October 5. She won an Aurora Award in 1999 for her work on Con\*Cept and was nominated two other times. Memorial details will be announced later. She also worked on the 2009 Montreal Worldcon, Anticipation, as a hotel liaison. She is survived by her husband, artist Jean-Pierre Normand.

I got to know Ann and her husband Jean Pierre Normand when I became registrar for Con\*Cept way back when. This is quite a shock.

Cathy Palmer-Lister

# Sunburst Award winners of the 2014 Literary Prize

The Sunburst Award Committee is pleased to announce that the winner of its 2014 adult award is *A Tale for the Time Being* by Ruth Ozeki (Penguin Group Canada - ISBN - 9780670067046) and the winner of its 2014 young adult award is *The Cats of Tanglewood Forest* by Charles de Lint (Little Brown Books - ISBN – 9780316053570).

About *A Tale for the Time Being*, the Sunburst jury said:  
... a seriously playful work is *sui generis*, free ranging over fact and fancy, physics and metaphysics, the intimate and the universal; in a true sense it is a Zen koan extended to 422 pages, which is yet another paradox. Like the bumblebee, it shouldn't fly but it does. Beautifully.

About *The Cats of Tanglewood Forest*: A deceptively simple wish-fulfillment fantasy, *The Cats of Tanglewood Forest* draws upon the deep tradition of animal fables and fairy tales ... distilled into pure de Lint, faithful to its sources yet shaped by his own sensibilities. The collaboration of writer and artist produces a fusion of word and image into a seamless whole, delighting the eye anew with the turning of each page. There are darker tones, to be sure ... and the magic of the deep wood will come at a cost, and a debt owed. But that's what a good fable is, timeless yet always cognisant of time's passage.

**The other shortlisted works for the 2014 adult award were:**

*Sister Mine* by Nalo Hopkinson (Grand Central Publishing – ISBN - 9781455528400)

*River of Stars* by Guy Gavriel Kay (Penguin Group Canada – ISBN - 9780670068401)

*This Strange Way of Dying* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia (Exile Editions - ISBN - 9781550963540)

*The Demonologist* by Andrew Pyper (Simon & Schuster - ISBN - 9781451697520)

**The other shortlisted works for the 2014 young adult award were:**

*Sorrow's Knot* by Erin Bow (Scholastic Inc. - ISBN - 9780545166669)

*Homeland* by Cory Doctorow (Tom Doherty Associates - ISBN - 9780765333698)

*The Path of Names* by Ari Goelman (Scholastic Inc. - ISBN - 9780545474306)

*Urgle* by Meaghan McIsaac (Dancing Cat Books - ISBN - 9781770863088)

The Sunburst Award takes its name from the debut novel of the late Phyllis Gotlieb, one of the first published authors of contemporary Canadian speculative fiction.

For additional information \ [www.sunburstaward.org](http://www.sunburstaward.org).  
<http://coppercylinderaward.ca/civicrm/ mailing/ unsubscribe ?reset=1&jid=122&qid=1570&h=cad06b32fb1a2460>

(see next page)

TORONTO, Ontario (October 6, 2014) — ChiZine Publications (CZP) and the Sunburst Award Society announced today that they would be working together to add a short fiction category to the Sunburst Awards' roster.

## **LOC:**

Dear OSFen:

Thank you all for the 425<sup>th</sup> OSFS Statement. Or is this issue 426? Last issue was 425... As the front cover alludes to, the Franklin Expedition's Erebus has been found. Franklin himself was supposed to have gone down with his ship as he was quite ill when it sank, so it is possible that Franklin's remains might still be there. Stay tuned; either Peter Mansbridge or Stephen Harper will be right back after these messages...

I guess my tastes have really changed; there's nothing in the upcoming movie list that appeals, not even the last Hobbit movie. Guess I'd better stick with the book, hmm?

The convention list...I've got to get working on a new one. Send me information on all Ottawa cons! In the meantime, Yvonne and I have purchased a dealer's table with memberships and a hotel room, too (our first in years), and we will be in the highway at Genrecon in Guelph October

17 to 19. It's an experiment, it's a convention we've never been to, let alone have a table at, so we hope being new to this market will mean good sales. We should also have the change to party a little and relax a lot.

My loc...the Fan Events Forum was a great little convention, with discussions about convention management, ideas tossed about, and on our part, old stories about what used to be expected, so today's expectations are okay or outrageous. We were only at the Grand Canadian Steampunk Exposition for one day out of the total three, but the day we had was great fun. Costume galore, and a fine day in Fort George in Niagara-on-the-Lake with Professor Elemental and hundreds of fellow steampunks. A splendid time was had by all.

Time to wrap, there's a lot more writing to do today. Tomorrow is the regular antiques market at the local mall, and we always look forward to it. See you all next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

# Videogame Tetris

## to be made into a movie.

Threshold has already scored some game-to-movie successes, notably two "Mortal Kombat" films.

The classic videogame Tetris, in which players slot a cascade of tumbling blocks together, is being turned into a science-fiction movie, the project's developers said.

Tetris has been a mainstay of computer gaming since it was created 30 years ago, but the shape-slotting puzzle may not seem like an obvious subject for a big-screen adaptation.

Threshold Entertainment said in a statement that it was partnering with The Tetris Company to develop the film. "Everyone knows that Tetris is one of the best known, most beloved brands in the world," Threshold chairman Larry Kasanoff said. "What everyone doesn't know yet is this epic scifi story that we're going to tell. That's what's really exciting."

Henk Rogers, the managing director of The Tetris Company, said the game feeds our "innate desire to create order out of chaos."

"You'll soon find out, there's much more to Tetris than simply clearing lines," he said.

Tetris has been downloaded more than 425 million times as a paid-for app on mobile devices, and is played more than a

billion times online annually, according to the statement.



An original Nintendo Game Boy© (1989) with Tetris playing

*I well remember this rather addictive time waster that the secretaries played non-stop. They were the ones with computers (286 at the time) large and fast enough. The directors had 386 computers but, for the most part, didn't use*

*them preferring pencil and paper or getting someone else to do it. The rest of us had C64s. Ed.*

# Astronomy:

## Due to a bad translation

Ken Tapping, 30th September, 2014

Despite what one might see in science textbooks, science rarely advances smoothly, or in a logical series of developments. It goes up blind alleys, may be driven by fortuitous discoveries or observations. However this erratic process will not happen without hard work and careful observation. One lovely example is the string of events driven by a combination of poor observations and bad translation from Italian to English.

Around the end of the 19th Century Percival Lowell, a wealthy American gentleman scientist, heard about interesting observations of the planet Mars made by Italian astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli, at the Milan Observatory. Schiaparelli had seen linear features on Mars, which he referred to as channels. Of course he used the Italian word, “canali”. He only meant they are linearish grooves in the ground; there are features like that on the Moon too, and are entirely naturally occurring. However, Lowell and others misunderstood, and interpreted “canali” as “canals”. This is a different issue altogether. Canals are made by engineers. So the idea arose that these structures indicated the presence of intelligent Martians, carefully

managing a scarce resource on an arid, dying world. This generated a wealth of science fiction stories, among which the writings of Edgar Rice Burroughs and H.G. Wells are probably the best known. If there were intelligent Martians capable of huge engineering projects, they would have telescopes. These would enable them to see our green, wet, warm world, become envious, and then consider the idea of coming here and taking over. There are probably more science fiction and fantasy books and movies about Mars than about all the other planets in the Solar System combined.

In such an atmosphere, it was easy for Lowell to develop a deep and lifelong interest in Mars – The Red Planet. So he selected a really high, clear, dark site, near Flagstaff, Arizona and had an observatory built on the top, intended exclusively for observing Mars. He spent many years meticulously mapping the planet’s surface, carefully charting all the canals criss-crossing it. His vision was of agricultural areas connected by canals transporting water from the Polar Regions. This idea was supported by seeing the icecaps around the Martian poles growing and shrinking with the passage of the seasons.

Some astronomers, including many amateurs, were skeptical about those canals. They had noticed that when

the atmosphere was fairly stable they saw canals flashing in and out of visibility. On the other hand, when the observing conditions were excellent, there were no canals. This led to some experiments with cardboard discs with random lines and blobs on them. Through a perfectly focused telescope, test observers saw random lines and blobs. On the other hand, if the telescopes were thrown slightly out of focus, the observers saw canals linking the blobs, just like canals taking water between agricultural areas.

However, the romantic picture of Martians carefully husbanding the resources of a dying world was so attractive that it survived until the 1960's, when an American spacecraft flew by the planet. It sent back pictures of huge deserts, mountains, craters and great canyons, no canals, no agricultural areas, and no signs of any Martians.

The big question is how much our romantic visions of Mars led to the intense study to which the planet has been submitted, with orbiting spacecraft, landers, rovers and continuing discussion of manned missions to the world – probably quite a lot. However, Lowell's telescope went on to contribute more directly to astronomical progress. Clyde Tombaugh used it to discover Pluto.

## **NO TOUCH TELESCOPES**

Ken Tapping, 14th October, 2014

A few years ago I had a chance to visit Percival Lowell's old observatory at Flagstaff, Arizona. This was the instrument Lowell built to study Mars. His intention was to map what he believed were the waterways built by Martians to manage the waning water supply on their dying world. I even got to look at the night sky through the instrument. There is a vision of what astronomers do that is still very much with us. The experience with Lowell's telescope was just like that. The dome was dark, with assorted faint indicator lights, and a slice of starry sky showing through the opening in the observatory dome. It was quiet except for humming and ticking from the equipment. Lowell would have sat in that dark dome for hours, patiently looking through the telescope. Although we still cling to images like that, making astronomical observations today is very different.

Once upon a time there was great similarity between telescopes and instruments at different observatories, so that with a little help before starting the observations, a visiting astronomer could drive the equipment and acquire data, armed only with a phone number to call if problems arose. By the 1970's telescopes and the instruments used on

them had become more complex. Observations were made with the help from a telescope operator or observing assistant. Then, as telescope control computers became more sophisticated, the astronomer could work with the computer, which would not let him do anything silly to the expensive equipment. The telescope operator sat nearby reading magazines, but was present, just in case. Soon after we were putting our entire observing session into a single computer file. The telescope could then do hours of observations with no human input at all. On one side this could make an overnight session stunningly boring. However, it also avoided the stupid things we do so easily between 2 and 4am.

Today, the instruments are so expensive and so complex we only trust them to trained operators. Moreover, with the high-speed Internet connections, for the usual experiments there is not much need for astronomers to be on-site at all. This is actually good for two reasons. Firstly it saves a lot of money that would have been spent on travel and accommodation, and secondly it means the observatory can operate to a more flexible schedule. This is a great advantage.

Until recently observations were carefully scheduled for fixed dates and times. You would be informed precisely when the telescope would be available for you to use. You

would then contact the airlines, hotels and rental car companies as needed for your observing trip. Unfortunately there was no guarantee that at your scheduled times the observing conditions would be suitable, and there was always a chance a critical piece of equipment could fail. With luck you could avoid a wasted trip by having an alternative project or two in your back pocket, but still you would not be doing what you had come hundreds or thousands of kilometres to do. This wasted your time and highly expensive telescope operating time too.

Today, since for most projects there is no need to be at the observatory, there is no need for such rigid scheduling. The staff can adjust the schedule to fit the observing conditions and to accommodate equipment failures. Since you are staying at home this is no problem. You just wait for a message saying your observations have been made and the data is ready to download. For ground-based observatories this way of operating is convenient, but for space-based instruments and observatories on the surface of the Moon, this will probably be the only way to observe, although an observing trip to one of those instruments would be fun.

Ken Tapping is an astronomer with the National Research Council's Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory, Penticton, BC.

*As an example of what Ken is referring to, an organization called Slooh – makes astronomy incredibly easy, engaging and affordable for anyone with a desire to see outer space for themselves. Since 2003 Slooh has connected telescopes to the Internet for access by the broader public. Slooh's automated observatories develop celestial images in real-time and broadcast live celestial events from partner observatories in Arizona, Japan, Hawaii, Cypress, Dubai, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Norway. Slooh's free live broadcasts of potentially hazardous asteroids (PHAs), comets, transits, eclipses, solar activity etc. feature narration by astronomy experts Bob Berman and Paul Cox and are syndicated to media outlets worldwide. Slooh signed a Space Act Agreement with NASA in March 2014 to "Bring the Universe to Everyone and Help Protect Earth,*

*These broadcasts are available off the net although it may take some searching to find them. Ed.*

<http://mars.nasa.gov/comets/sidingspring/>

<http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/files/resources/comet-siding-spring-whats-up-october.pdf>

www.nasa.gov

Space buffs around the world can catch all of Sunday's action via NASA's [online broadcast](#) and check out what the cosmic close encounter looks like through large Earth-bound telescopes via a live webcast from [The Virtual Telescope Project](#) starting at 12:45 pm EDT.

The next celestial events on their calendar are:

Comet Siding Spring (C/2013 A1) swings by on a Close Approach to Mars at 87,000 miles (139,500 kilometers).  
October 19 /2:27 p.m. ET

The Orionid Meteor Shower of Oct 2014

The Partial Solar Eclipse Over North America Thu Oct, 23  
2014 /5:00 PM EST

FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE

Jupiter rises in the early hours. Saturn lies low in the sunset glow, Mars is lower and hard to find. *Comet Siding Spring might be visible with binoculars.* The Moon reaches Last Quarter on the 15th.