



OSFS Statement.

Newsletter of the
Ottawa Science Fiction Society
June 2013,
Issue 410, Volume 37, Number 6.
Founded Feb 1977,
Incorporated Jan 16, 1979

The Landsat 7 satellite in the clean room being
prepared for launch. © NASA



Contributions may be edited for length and content. All opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of OSFS. All material is copyright © 2012 The Ottawa Science Fiction Society unless otherwise indicated. Permission to reproduce material contained herein is granted provided (A) credit is given to the original author and to the OSFS Statement and (B) a copy of the reprint is sent to The Ottawa Science Fiction Society at the above address.

<p>Membership information Mail Dues to: Ottawa Science Fiction Society, 1568 Merivale Road, Suite 304, Ottawa, ON K2G 5Y7 website www.ottawasfs.ca executive exec@ottawasfs.ca</p> <p>Rates</p> <table> <tr> <td>Regular</td> <td>\$18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Family</td> <td>\$24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Extraordinary & Senior</td> <td>\$12</td> </tr> </table>	Regular	\$18	Family	\$24	Extraordinary & Senior	\$12	<p>Board of Directors</p> <table> <tr> <td>President</td> <td>Diane Bruce</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vice-President</td> <td>Grant Duff</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Secretary</td> <td>Grant Duff</td> </tr> </table> <p>Appointed Officers</p> <table> <tr> <td>Archivist</td> <td>Grant Duff</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Auditor</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Constitution Advisor</td> <td>David Hurst</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Editor</td> <td>Grant Duff</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Programming</td> <td>Alex Binkley</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Treasurer</td> <td>Sheila Brown</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Webmaster</td> <td>Sheila Brown</td> </tr> </table>	President	Diane Bruce	Vice-President	Grant Duff	Secretary	Grant Duff	Archivist	Grant Duff	Auditor		Constitution Advisor	David Hurst	Editor	Grant Duff	Programming	Alex Binkley	Treasurer	Sheila Brown	Webmaster	Sheila Brown	<p>Contents</p> <table> <tr> <td>Coming Events</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LOC</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Astrophysics</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Astronomy</td> <td>--</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Historical</td> <td>--</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physics</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reviews</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OSFS Logo</td> <td>Bruce Wright</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cover art</td> <td>© NASA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pub by:</td> <td>Ottawa Science Fiction Society, Creators of Maplecon</td> </tr> </table>	Coming Events	5	LOC	10	Astrophysics	11	Astronomy	--	Historical	--	Physics	12	Reviews	7	OSFS Logo	Bruce Wright	Cover art	© NASA	Pub by:	Ottawa Science Fiction Society, Creators of Maplecon
Regular	\$18																																															
Family	\$24																																															
Extraordinary & Senior	\$12																																															
President	Diane Bruce																																															
Vice-President	Grant Duff																																															
Secretary	Grant Duff																																															
Archivist	Grant Duff																																															
Auditor																																																
Constitution Advisor	David Hurst																																															
Editor	Grant Duff																																															
Programming	Alex Binkley																																															
Treasurer	Sheila Brown																																															
Webmaster	Sheila Brown																																															
Coming Events	5																																															
LOC	10																																															
Astrophysics	11																																															
Astronomy	--																																															
Historical	--																																															
Physics	12																																															
Reviews	7																																															
OSFS Logo	Bruce Wright																																															
Cover art	© NASA																																															
Pub by:	Ottawa Science Fiction Society, Creators of Maplecon																																															

Dinner-Gatherings nominally start at 6:00 pm.

This seems to be another month without even a semi-formal meeting however check the OSFS web site at www.ottawasfs.ca for latest details and note that we are now communicating primarily by it and Meetup.

Please check the website beforehand.

www.ottawasfs.ca

and RSVP to

<http://www.meetup.com/ottawasfs-ca/events/94895822/>

to give us an estimate of the number to expect.

Editor's Blather:

The Planetarium trip was enjoyed by all those who went.

However the level of interest in OSFS as an organization seems to be falling. Or more accurately has already fallen very low. Even the monthly dinner doesn't attract. True it is now the summer hiatus but will there be anything left to revive come fall?

The Statement is down to a few contributors and a desperate scramble through the 'net to get enough to fill even these few pages.

Honestly is it still worth the paper it is printed on?

The 'net seems to be the way things are going. I've been on line since the early Internet and watched it grow from teletype chat rooms but I still don't like it. I use it and get interesting stuff off it but ... I still prefer hard copy despite the "convenience" of hypertext links; The most recent tablets are tempting except ... they will be outdated in six months by ever newer temptations. That and they are still just a little large to carry in a pocket. Not that pocket books aren't but they sorted out the typeface/size/layout problems long ago and tablets are still evolving.

FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE

Look for Mars, appearing low in the dawn twilight. Venus and Mercury lie close together in the sunset glow. Saturn is high in the southern sky. The Moon will reach Last Quarter on the 29th.

LOCAL AUTHOR

My novel **Janus** is one of several CZP titles that have just been released in **audiobook** format by Audible. (<http://www.audible.com>)

--John Park

Landsat 8 is now freely available, enabling researchers and the general public to access images captured by the satellite within twelve hours of reception. The data is available to download at no charge from [GloVis](#), [EarthExplorer](#), or via the [LandsatLook Viewer](#). To view and screen-grab full-res data: <http://landsatlook.usgs.gov>. Full data (~900 MB compressed; 1.6 uncompressed) @ <http://earthexplorer.usgs.gov> or <http://glovis.usgs.gov>. *[In simple words, don't use dialup. Ed]*

Landsat 8 launched in February 2013 and has been capturing images since April. The satellite orbits Earth every 99 minutes and captures images of every point on the planet every 16 days, beaming 400 high resolution images to ground stations every 24 hours. Landsat features nine spectral bands, which include three visible light bands, two near-infrared bands, and two shortwave infrared (SWIR) bands, among others, as well as two thermal sensors, which are used for a wide range of applications, including [monitoring environmental](#) change, detecting fires, and watching crops. Google is one of the biggest commercial users of Landsat images, which feed into Google Earth, but other users include scientists and conservationists involved in tracking deforestation and

forest degradation.

Landsat 8 is being jointly run by NASA and the U.S. Geological [Survey](#) (USGS). It has a five-year mission and augments the crippled Landsat 7 satellite, which suffers from partial data loss due a 2003 sensor failure.

Landsat 8/LDCM is the most advanced Earth observation satellite to date. It is the eighth Landsat since the initial launch in 1972.

For the conservation community, the launch of Landsat 8 is a welcome development. Conservationists say they intend to use imagery captured by Landsat to monitor forest cover in near-real time, potentially enabling authorities to take action against illegal deforesters. In the past, Landsat images have provided an important baseline for [tracking](#) land use change over time, including the expansion of oil palm plantations in Malaysia and Indonesia, conversion of rainforests for industrial timber production in Sumatra, and selective logging of rainforests in Peru.

Check out the Landsat website for lots of info: <http://landsat.usgs.gov>.

Coming Events Original list submitted by Lloyd Penney

When	What	Where	Information
2013-07-26>28	TF-Con (Transformrts0	Mississauga	
2013-07-26>28	ConBravo	Hamilton Convention Centre	conbravo.com.
2013-08-02>04	Condition: Wasteland, Furry	Four Points Hotel, London. ON	www.conditionfurry.ca .
2013-08-22>25	ComiCON aka FANeXpo, Toronto	Metro Convention Centre, Toronto	Toronto ComiCON -
2013-08-29>02	Worldcon	San Antonio, Texas	Worldcon
2013-09-18>22	Ottawa Internat' Animation Festival	Ottawa	www.animationfestival.ca .
2013-10-04>06	Canvention 33	Minto Suite Hotel	http://www.can-con.org/
2013-11-01>03	Reversed Polarity Dr. Who	Toronto, somewhere	www.tcon.ca .
2013-11-22>24	Astronomicon 2013	Rochester, NY.	www.astronomicon.info/
2013-11-29>01	SFContario 3	Ramada Plaza Toronto.	sfcontario.ca.
2014-04-25>27	FilK Ontario 24,	Delta Airport West, Mississauga	www.filkontario.ca .
2014-04-25>28	Costume Con 32,	Sheraton Airport, Toronto	www.costumecon32.com/
2014-06-06>08	Bloody Words XII,	Hilton, Toronto.	bloodywords2012.com

The **Ottawa International Film Festival's** TAC (the industry event), is pleased to announce the return of its Pitch THIS! program, presented by 9

Story Entertainment.

Pitch THIS! allows content creators the opportunity to pitch their project ideas to a panel of international broadcasters. Following the five-minute pitches, panel members will share their insight and provide valuable feedback to the presenters.

The panelists will assess each pitch based on their creative, innovative and financial merits as well as their marketability and overall appeal.

Animators are encouraged to submit their ideas. To qualify for the program, proposals from animators must include the following:

- Project synopsis, including target audience, technique, format, rough budget (1-2 pages)

- One episode synopsis

- Bio of key executives

- Short paragraph indicating your current stage of development and any additional information (i.e. interactive components, merchandise, etc.)

- Concept art (2 or 3 images)

TAC will be accepting proposal by email (tac@animationfestival.ca) until **July 1st, 2013**.

Hello OSFS,

I was pleased to pick up your newsletter at Perfect Books on the weekend. We had a reading there of Carleton Engineering recent grad Gilles Messier's "Our Own Devices".

I would like to pass this along because what is interesting, I think, about his collection of short stories is that they are set in the mid-20th century, based on scientific/-technological fact, and yet speculate about the human element and the circumstances.

Please see <http://petrabooks.ca> as well as <http://librarything.com> and other places.

Yours truly, Peter Geldart Managing editor
Petra Books, Fifth Avenue Court, Suite 140
Ottawa Ontario K1S 5P5 Canada 613-294-2205 |

geldart@petrabooks.ca

<http://petrabooks.ca>

REVIEWS

Our Own Devices - Stories of the Machine Age

By Messier, Gilles – Winnipeg 1989 - Petra Books

Review by Ann Elid

A collection of short “what if?” stories exploring human responses to three challenges of the mid twentieth century; the aftermath of the Great War - Act 2, Atomic Energy, and Space Exploration.

I can well relate to the kid in who found an old chemistry textbook with detailed examples and tried to repeat one of the more impressive examples. Sometimes it is better to fail ignominiously.

The Ocean of Storms leans a bit heavily on the American myths of the Soviet Space program, not that NASA was any different, while concentrating on the man on point.

[There was a small item in the news last week adding a few details to the Gagarin story. Ed.]

[The Fine Art of Boxing by Phil Voyd](#)

Eggplant Literary Productions. ISBN: 978-1-932207-39-2

Inside the ring, or out, genetically modified or free from tinkering, Bronzage is taking on all comers.

Bronzage’s life is complicated. He doesn’t trust his fight manager. He’s on the outs with his movie star girlfriend. Not to mention staying on the right side of public interest groups like the Genetically Correct League.

Bronzage can handle complicated, as long as he can keep funneling his winnings into building battered women’s shelters. It’s how Bronzage justifies the violence he unleashes in the ring. Until he gets KO’d in a humiliating defeat.

There’s no time for wallowing in self-pity while watching sushi westerns like the zombie flick *Shane Comes Back*, though. He’s got to get ready for his comeback fight.

But Bronzage isn’t certain things are what they seem at the new training facility. He’s not sure if he needs to watch out for anti-GMO Do Good Soldiers, or just the monsters in the woods. One thing is clear: to survive he’s going to have to let the violence loose outside the ring.

The Fallible Fiend by L. Sprague de Camp

A Del Ray Book 1972 152 pages

review by Lyn Saunders

This paperback was sitting on one of my crowded bookshelves for a time. I had just finished re-reading the series of Perry Mason stories I had and decided to look for something else I had not read for a length of time and rediscovered this title. I have no recollection of it, so I opened the pages. It stopped me from purchasing another book = which those who have visited my home will attest to the fact that I should downsize my collection before adding anymore.

As I have just begun the book, I cannot delineate all that happens in it. As someone out there may want to experience it for themselves, that would spoil the fun, and fun it is! In the first few pages where Sprague introduces Zdim Akh's son. He is a demon. He is also the voice in the story. Therefore, the viewpoint is not of a human of demons, but the other way around. What a human takes for granted has to be spelled out to him. Why? Well, a wizard, Dr. Maldivius, summoned one of the demonic populace by divination and offered the price of the demon's services for one year. Zdim's name was the one on the roster that his Provost had. He found that the reasons he had for deferral did not work. The businesslike manner in which the situation was defined was delightful. The demons got the

iron supply defined by rules and regulations (not specified - yet). So, Zdim Akh's son entered the pentagram and went from his happy home where his mate had just laid a clutch of eggs - which did not dissuade the Provost from completing the bargain, and ended up in a pentagram in the dingy confines of the inner sanctum of Dr. Maldivius.

The common, every day actions of life take a turn in some direction after that. Dr. Maldivius has an apprentice, Grax. He takes an instant dislike to Zdim. He is the one who is to instruct Zdim in his household chores since protection of the magical implements, papers, talismans, especially the Sybillonr Sapphire, and all else on the inner sanctum is not the only reason for the situation being started. Grax used to do it, but had become too educated to spend time on menial chores as he was now to attend Dr. Maldivius in his practices. Zdim had never done housework before. Or cooked.

The delightful details of how his first attempt at making a dinner got burnt were hilarious. One thing led to another, one of the main reasons various parts of his attempts failed was that when he tried to get by himself from the kitchen to the inner sanctum to report on the state of the meat dish, he got lost. The inner sanctum was in the midst of a maze. Grax had given him the instructions of how to get from the kitchen to the inner sanctum as he guided Zdim there once. Then he left. Anxious about the state of the food, Zdim

took a wrong turn andThe vegetables had dried and stuck to the pot in the meantime.

Fortunately for Zdim in that meantime and the three hours it took him to replace the burnt offerings, Dr. Maldivius and Grax had been imbibing an alcoholic beverage. That he got lost again when delivering the better cooked goods, so they were cold, escaped them.

I have just read the lines wherein Sprague sets up the next action in the interaction between the demon and his human master and his apprentice. Dr. Maldivius is going to leave the maze and his possessions in the secure hold of Zdim. Grax is not going with him on this journey of business-ransom, so he may resort to the city of Ir and his woman. Dr. Maldivius is going to the authorities to trade his warning of a coming doom for profit. Not a patriotic soul,

and he informs Zdim, and us, as to why. His name does start with mal which usually signifies wrongness or evil.

Oh, yes. A defining detail. Zdim is instructed to eat the first person who enters the maze and who is not Dr. Maldivius . I am sure Grax is going to rue that instruction! There are a lot of little details I am leaving out, so find a copy and discover them/

Now it is for me to read on and find out what happens next, and how.

Live Long and Prosper Lyn Saunders

[This is one of a series of de Camp's novels set in that universe and Dr. Maldivius isn't so much 'mal' as just a man of his times. Ed.]

LOC

Dear OSFen:

Greetings from the sunny wilds of Etobicoke...thank you for issue 409 of the Statement. Let's see what I can make remarks on this time around.

The view of Saturn's south pole makes me wonder if the centre of that vortex means the cloud layer there is shallower than elsewhere. It looks like a depression or hole, but that may be just the way I interpret the photo.

[It is a place where, for some reason, there are aligned gaps in the higher layers of clouds. The lower clouds still block any view of the planet's surface. Ed.]

What happens at the club Meetups? Gather at a bar or restaurant for a pubnight or something? With a few exceptions, pubnights seem to be the only way for local fans here to meet and network, although I think that's going away, or it's just not as popular as it used to be.

We weren't going to Anime North, but were asked at the last moment to take a shift at the CostumeCon 32 table, which we did. We got badges to go in and look after things, had a great time, publicized the convention, and also handed out Steam on Queen postcards. We did try the dealers' room, but it was so jam-packed with people, we

got out as quickly as we could. Just too much, and we didn't get to see much.

My letter...Art-O-Con 2 was actually a lot of fun. We knew a number of the vendors, got to meet a fair number more of them, and I'm sure they'd do a great job at Toronto conventions, too. With the success of this year's event, the chairman, Lara, said that Art-O-Con 3 would be at the same location, but with more room, and more vendors. I've asked for dealers information, and I think we might do well at the show.

I am pleased we have the Canada Aviation and Space Museum, but the Canadian Air & Space Museum, which was set up at Downsview Park here, is still in storage. There doesn't seem to be much support for the CASM, but there is still the possibility that it may be set up again near the airport, just north of us.

See you all with the next issue...doesn't look like we'll be coming up for CanCon and the Convention. Just can't afford anything, even after saying we could really use a roadtrip somewhere. See you all later!

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Astrophysics

NOT IN THE MIDDLE

Ken Tapping, 25th June, 2013

One of our stranger traits as human beings is our willingness to hang passionately onto ideas in the face of increasing and eventually overwhelming evidence they are wrong. A good example is our reluctance to give up the belief that our Earth is the centre of everything, with the Sun, Moon, planets and the rest of the cosmos circling round it.

To our ancient ancestors it was obvious. The Sun, Moon, stars and planets all rose in the east and set in the west. We could not feel the Earth moving, so it was common sense that everything in the sky was circling around us. As a rough and ready picture of the universe it worked. Since the idea of our centrality in Creation lay at the core of many religious beliefs, our Earth-centric picture became “Official”, with little future in arguing with it.

However, as astronomical instruments improved, and the data got better and available in large quantities, problems appeared. One of the most serious came from the planets. When measuring their changing positions with respect to the background stars, their motion turned out not to be what we would expect if we are looking at something circling around us. If that were the case, we would just see

the planets moving smoothly, in one direction; instead we see them suddenly doubling back, making a loop and then resuming their original direction. On the other hand, this is exactly what we would see if we are on a planet circling around the Sun, looking at the other planets, which are doing the same thing. We have all been on a roundabout sometime or other. Remember how our surroundings behaved as we were carried round and round?

[What I have wondered occasionally is why the concept of Earth centric except that the planets circle, not the Earth, but the Sun never is mentioned. Ed.]

In the 16th Century Nikolaus Kopernikus proposed that the Earth and other planets circled the Sun, but dared not publish his results until he was about to die. Galileo suggested the same thing in the early 17th Century and ran into problems with the religious establishment.

Unfortunately for the authorities, the cat was now out of the bag and the new vision of the cosmos was spreading rapidly across the world. Later that century, Johannes Kepler put the sun-centred view of the Solar System onto even firmer ground. Then still in that cosmologically explosive century, Isaac Newton formulated the theory of gravity and provided the tools to put the motions of things in the sky on a firm, mathematical basis.

In the 14th Century, William of Ockham came up with one of those blisteringly simple ideas that are useful guides today. It is now known as “Occam’s Razor”. Basically this

involves cutting ideas down to their bare essentials, and if one can explain something using simple, known things, there is no need to invoke unknown things. Start with the simplest solution. However, it is fascinating to see how we are also very good at avoiding such wisdom. Some of the ideas concocted to explain what we see in the sky while keeping the Earth in the centre of everything must have had William spinning in his grave. Of course today we are more logical and scientifically aware, and no longer passionately hang onto failed ideas. Is that true?

[Um! The jury is still out on that. Ed.]

A SPACEPORT IN ORBIT

Ken Tapping, 11th June, 2013

Anyone who has fought their way up hundreds of stairs to get to the top of a mediaeval building will have a full appreciation of gravity. Going upwards involves working against it, and that takes a lot of energy. This has been the main problem in our exploration of space. Everything we put into space has to be lifted from the surface of the Earth, which takes large amounts of fuel, costs a lot of money, and subjects the astronauts and spacecraft to a bruising experience. Most of the fuel for any ground-launched space mission, to anywhere in the Solar System, is burned in the first fifteen minutes.

Part of the solution is to start our missions from Earth orbit. Ever since our first dreams of exploring space, there has been the idea of having a space station orbiting the Earth, which would be the starting-off point for space missions to explore the Solar System and beyond. The spacecraft would be built in orbit and launched from orbit. This solves part of the problem. Shipping parts and materials to orbit would save some money, but we will still be looking at multiple rocket launches and high associated costs. The ideal solution is to minimize the amount of stuff we have to lift into space from the surface of the Earth. One approach is to obtain materials and possibly components from the Moon. The Sun shines unimpeded on the Moon's surface, so there is a reliable

energy supply, and the absence of an atmosphere and weak gravity means it will be easier to move materials from there to the construction site. We could of course build our spacecraft on the lunar surface, but for most space missions, fighting the Moon's gravity would be the mission's biggest task, so it would be nicer to avoid that problem too, and launch from Earth orbit.

Another possibility being discussed for obtaining raw materials is that of mining the asteroids. There are many millions of these in the Solar System, mostly orbiting between Mars and Jupiter. These range in size from dust to bodies up to a thousand kilometres in diameter. Some are mostly ice, others rock, and some of them contain useful metals.

Robot miners could work on them, sending us the result. Of course sending lumps of metal weighing hundreds or

thousands of tonnes in our direction poses certain safety issues we will need to address. Another possibility is to divert suitable asteroids towards Earth, parking them in Earth orbit. This also poses safety issues, even bigger ones. Mining makes a lot of tailings and dust. On the Moon there is no atmosphere to blow it around, and enough gravity to pull it down. The weak gravity of any asteroid small enough for us to move to Earth orbit will not be enough to hold down dust and mining debris, so it will end up orbiting the Earth as a new form of space junk, posing navigation hazards to astronauts and spacecraft.

This does not mean that obtaining raw materials from the Moon and the asteroids is something we should not do, or that manufacturing components for our spacecraft on the Moon or in Earth orbit is impractical. These are all challenges we can meet.