

# OPUNTIA

## 283

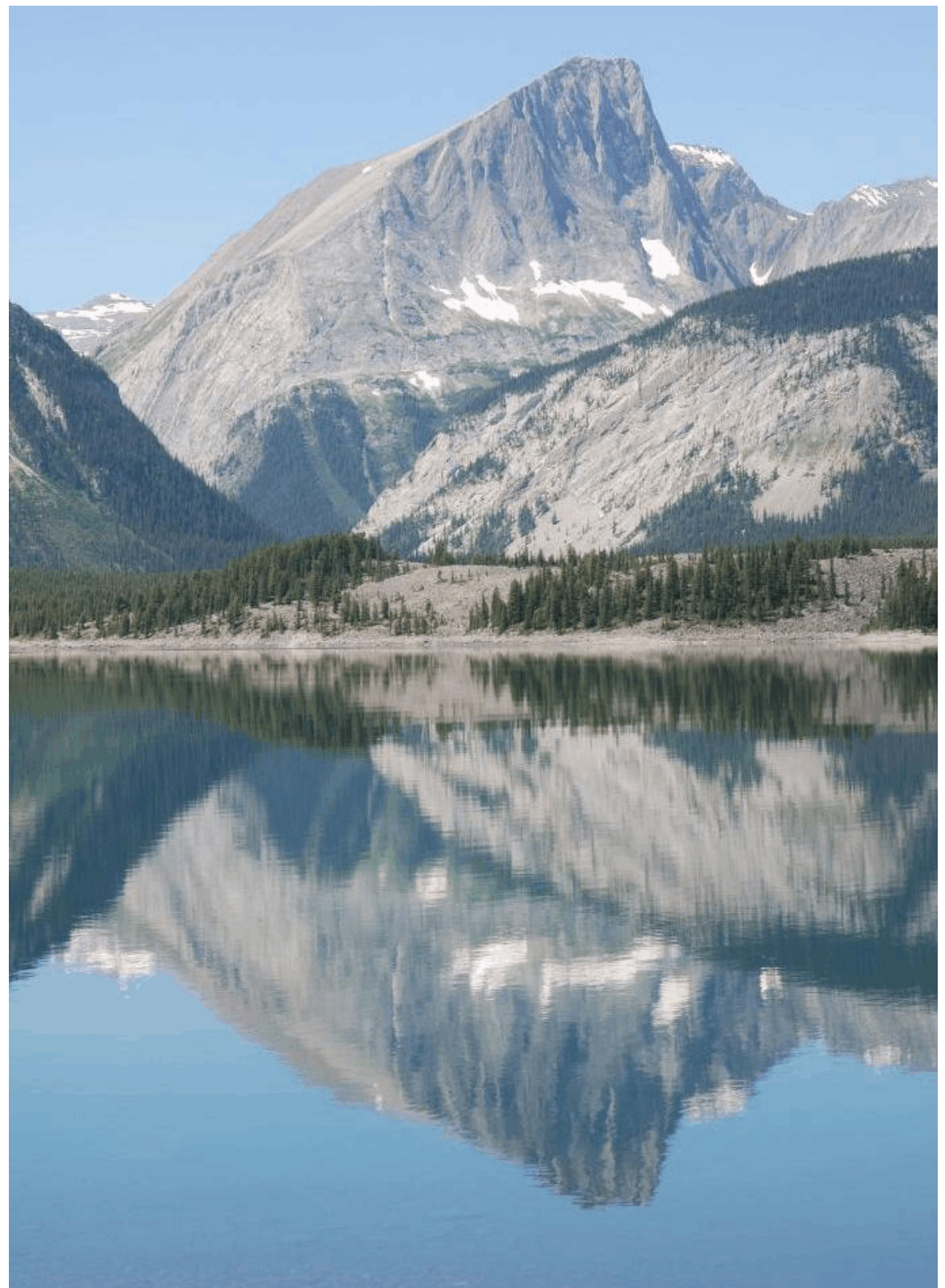
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When sending me an emailed letter of comment, please  
include your name and town in the message.

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN WAY: AND THEN I SAW ...**  
by Dale Speirs

Calgary and the adjacent mountains had very good  
weather this summer, and I've done quite a few day  
hikes. These photos were taken from the shores of Upper  
Kananaskis Lake at the head of the valley. At right is a  
view looking west across the lake toward Mount Putnik.



This view looking southwest at Mount Lyautey.



Looking SSW at the pitiful remnants of Mangin Glacier, almost gone.

Halfway down the slope from the glacier is its meltwater, Fossil Falls.



Mount Foch on the southeastern corner of Upper Kananaskis Lake.





Another island, one of several that speckle Upper Kananaskis Lake.

Although there were aboriginals and European explorers poking around the Kananaskis River valley in the 1800s, the area was never properly surveyed until just after World War One. That is why all the mountains are named after Allied commanders or battleships.



The previous photos were all taken from Interlake Ridge, shown here from the other side of the water.



The Spray River and the Kananaskis River have their headwaters in adjacent valleys which meet near Upper Kananaskis Lake. This is the Spray River road at its head. I've only driven it once, and call it the dustiest gravel road in

Canada. I went in from this end driving a bright red Honda Civic and came out the other end at Canmore in an off-white car with a touch of pink. The Kananaskis highway is paved, so that is the road I always travel on.

## WE'LL ALL GO TOGETHER WHEN WE GO: PART 3

by Dale Speirs

[Part 1 appeared in OPUNTIA #249 (2012) and Part 2 in OPUNTIA #276 (2014).]

### I Saw A Star Fall From Heaven Unto The Earth.

POLAR STORM (2008) is a movie that will delight anyone with even just a basic knowledge of astronomy. There are so many needless errors of fact that you can make it a drinking game. The film begins with not one but two flashback scenes. Flashbacks are a favourite method of poor directors and authors to add mystery by chopping up and rearranging a dull story. The plot quickly reverts to linear storytelling and moves forward, just like its nemesis, the comet Copernicus, which is about to travel closely past Earth.

All aircraft have been grounded in anticipation of the comet's passage, because apparently it has a massive magnetic field that will overpower Earth's field. Comets are Big Ugly Snowballs with a bit of gravel mixed in, so one wonders why Copernicus would have a magnetic field. If it were described as a metal-ore asteroid, then one could accept a bit of handwaving in explanation, but a chunk of dirty ice? This is the first instance of the main problem with this movie, that the numerous errors in it could have been easily corrected by a first-year astronomy undergraduate student at no extra cost to the film's budget. As an example, the scientists repeatedly refer to the comet's close passage as an "orbital fulcrum", a nonsense term that could have been fixed by the screenwriter doing a find-and-replace on his script and substituting the word "perigee".

The hero is Dr. James Mayfield, not a mad scientist or even a grumpy one, but a handsome man with a wife and teenage son. You have to be skeptical about his credentials though. He tells a television interviewer that the comet is ice and it will affect the Earth's magnetic field. Magnetic ice? Mayfield works for the Storm Hazards Laboratory in Washington State, which seems an odd place for an astronomer to be employed. And why would a storm centre be tracking space bolides?

Copernicus makes its orbital fulcrum and/or perigee. The ice has a magnetic field so strong that it not only warps the Earth's field but it pushes the Van Allen belts into the atmosphere. That's one heck of a snowball. As the comet reaches perigee, we are told that its radiation level has reached 4.5 million Angstroms.

This is a unit of microscopic length, not radiation intensity. A large fragment breaks loose from Copernicus and veers into the atmosphere. It is stated to be 300 metres in diameter. I wouldn't have been surprised if they said it was 300 Gauss in diameter. Given the fact that the fragment is shown to be ice and gravel as it enters the atmosphere, one then wonders why it trails thick black oily smoke behind it, like a semi-trailer with a poorly tuned engine.

The fragment should have vapourized completely in the upper atmosphere but instead hits northern Alaska. The SFX show the impact with a mushroom cloud a couple of hundred kilometres in diameter. The shock wave dissipates at the Alaska borders but a television announcer informs us a moment later that a quarter-million people are dead. Even if you add in Yukon and Vladivostok and ignore the fact that shock waves decline in strength exponentially as they spread, that seems a rather high death toll in such a thinly populated part of the planet. Normally most Big Ugly Rock movies take out Manhattan, for which it would have been a believable death toll, but for some reason the producer decided to spare New York City this time. (See Parts 1 and 2 for all the times dear old Manhattan has been taken out. Why Big Ugly Rocks make a beeline for it is a mystery that astronomers have not yet solved.)

The comet fragment, it transpires, has knocked the Earth off its regular axis of rotation by 10°, causing earthquakes, electromagnetic pulses (EMPs), and the sun to rise and set in different places. Earthquakes are inserted whenever the plot becomes especially dull. Various supporting characters fall into crevices that open up and swallow them while the lead actors immediately adjacent to the cracks stumble to safety. Mayfield's data on the impact is classified Top Secret by the White House. There are thousands of professional and amateur astronomers around the world watching the events, and the President wants to keep a lid on things. The Russians and Canadians certainly would notice something odd in their next-door neighbour's northernmost state.

Much to-ing and fro-ing of the characters then follows. One mildly amusing nitpick is that the Mayfield family, as they drive about from one scene to the next, keep switching back and forth between a Ford Explorer, a Nissan Pathfinder, and a Jeep Cherokee as the camera angles change. But never mind the magic SUV. Those pesky EMPs keep electrocuting people and shorting out electronics and car alternators. The EMPs are depicted as slow-moving atmospheric waves of purple ions, which is plausible as a side effect, but actual EMPs are invisible and move at the speed of light, so the characters would have no warning.

Meanwhile, what to do about the poles shifting and the magnetic poles reversing? When in doubt, break out the nukes. Mayfield's plan is to detonate them at the bottom of the Marianas Trench to shove the Earth's rotational axis back into place. If a 300-metre diameter snowball can tilt the Earth, I suppose it is plausible. It does make me wonder though, why the 57-megaton Tsar Bomba explosion in the Soviet Arctic on 1961-10-30 didn't tilt the axis.

Mayfield has to get the nukes to the Marianas Trench. The only available submarine is a Soviet-era diesel submarine the Russians now use as a training ship, but they manage to get from Washington State to the other side of the Pacific Ocean in a day or two. All the other submarines in the world never had mil-spec EMP-proofing, or at least what they thought they had was done by the lowest bidder and didn't work. The Russian submarine is an antique in no ways certified for deep waters. They descend to the bottom of the trench, far past the point at which the submarine would be imploded into paper-thin scrap metal by the water pressure. There are the usual scares and false alarms, but everything ends happily as you knew it would, except for some of the supporting characters of course.

### **The Moon Walking In Brightness.**

THE HOPKINS MANUSCRIPT (1939, hardcover) by R.C. Sherriff is the personal narrative of the Englishman Edgar Hopkins in the final days of the British Empire and the collapse of civilization as we know it. Hopkins is a pretentious twit who views others with a condescending air, completely unaware that he is a figure of ridicule to those around him. He was a nobody in London, England, who managed to take early retirement and settle in the wilds of Hampshire near the village of Beadle. His obsession in life is poultry, the raising and exhibition thereof, and his life is scheduled by poultry shows. He also takes an interest in astronomy and joins the British Lunar Society. It is at a meeting of that organization that he and the other members learn that the Moon has left its orbit, and is creeping closer to Earth. It will be about seven months before it becomes noticeable.

Hopkins and the others are sworn to secrecy. The government begins planning behind the scenes. Hopkins thinks them a bunch of bureaucratic fools but they are smarter than he realizes. When the Moon appears so large that even the lumpenproletariat notice, the government assures them that it is an unusual refraction of the atmosphere. Simultaneously, they announce that the new air defense measures will finally be fully funded, and every village will soon have

its own underground dugout. As this novel was published during the buildup to World War Two, the premise seems plausible, and in the novel the general public accept it for what it was announced as. When the Moon looms so greatly that its intent is obvious, the truth is let out: the Moon is going to graze the Earth before wandering off into space.

If everyone believes the world is going to end, no one will do any work and civilization will collapse. The government therefore admits the dugouts are to enable survival. We'll get our hair mussed, but if everyone does their part, the Empire shall survive. Hopkins and all buckle down. There are those who despair and give up, but the idea that the lunar crash will be survivable allows society to continue with minimal anarchy. Come the day of judgement though, Hopkins decides to shelter in a nook of his house rather than join the population of Beadle in their dugout. It turns out to be a wise choice. The dugout was built into chalk and flooded when the chalk cracked open due to gravitational stresses as the Moon came close. Hopkins survived because his house was just below the crest of a hill, low enough to escape the hypersonic winds howling across the Earth as the Moon falls into the Atlantic Ocean, and high enough to escape the flood waters as the rubble of the Moon displaces the ocean, which sloshes over the continents.

Eventually everything settles down. The author does some handwaving about the Moon being mostly hollow like a sponge, and traveling slow enough at final impact to collapse into the Atlantic and crumble, filling the ocean from one end to the other (hence the flood). He ignores the question of where the North Atlantic water went, since if the Moon had crumbled into that basin, sea levels would have risen the world over as the water sought its own level. Hopkins and other survivors begin reconstruction, thrown back into medieval times where there is no radio or postal system to communicate the news and every village is well and truly isolated. The long reconstruction and re-establishment of national government is documented.

The novel does not end there. The human race having rebuilt from scratch, war then breaks out in Europe after the countries begin contending for the abundant mineral wealth and new lands of the lunar rubble. The British cannot conceive of life without their Empire, and fail to understand that the rest of the world can get along better without Britain than vice versa. The novel is about 95% British-centric. Other nations around the world have seen the falling Moon and made their own plans. The European nations squabble over the newfound wealth where the North Atlantic used to be, as if the Americas had no say in the matter.

They wreck each other in internecine warfare, allowing the Muslims to finally move in and complete the spread of Islam. And so to finis, where the new world being born worships Allah, not God.

The novel reads well, especially with the knowledge of the modern reader about the fate of the British Empire. In 1939, that wasn't so obvious to the British readership who bought the book, and even to the 1950s there were a lot of Colonel Blimps in denial about how the colonies felt about them. The strategies used by government to forestall complete economic collapse were well thought out. Hopkins's character is drawn sympathetically as both a twit and a steady-on chap you could rely on in a pinch.

### **And The Kings Of The Earth Hid Themselves In The Rocks.**

Ben H. Winters has a trilogy of novels about what happens when it is confirmed that a Big Ugly Rock is inbound to Earth as an extinction-level event. Asteroid 2011GV1, about 6.5 kilometres in diameter, has been positively confirmed to hit Earth head-on next year on October 3. The protagonist is Detective Hank Palace of the Concord, New Hampshire, police, who tries to carry on and investigate murders even if most people don't see the point in bothering if everyone will be dead in six months. He was a street policeman who was suddenly promoted because of all the desertions on the force and is way in over his head. But he tries. These novels, by the way, are filed under mystery, not science fiction.

THE LAST POLICEMAN (2012, trade paperback) has him investigating a suicide, one of far too many since the news broke about the asteroid. The global economy vapourized months ago and everything is local. Palace thinks the suicide was murder, but few want to bother about it if it isn't going to matter anymore. The police ranks have thinned even though they are now the highest paid people in the country thanks to the feds trying to maintain law and order. What does money avail you when October 3 is the truly final deadline for everything?

The Internet has been offline since January, electricity is sporadic, and people are abandoning their jobs. Telephones, both cellular and landline, are mostly regional or even just within the range of one cellphone tower. The techies and linemen are gone on their own personal voyages before the arrival of The Day. Gasoline is unobtainable except for police and military, and the few civilian vehicles left are running on vegetable oil if they can get it.

Palace has to interrogate witnesses who don't give a damn because what's the point? He has to deal with colleagues, supervisors, and prosecutors who don't give a damn because what's the point? He has to deal with the ordinary world to find food, where supply lines are failing fast because what's the point? Somehow he still manages to complete the case, a stubborn man determined to carry on if not to keep calm.

COUNTDOWN CITY (2013, trade paperback) is the second novel in the series. Palace has now been laid off from the police force. Electricity is non-existent in much of the world and seldom on in the remaining sections. For almost everyone the world has shrunk to how far they can walk in a day. A semblance of feudalism exists so life isn't entirely the law of the jungle, but it isn't much good. Currency is worthless and the global economy has reverted to barter.

Palace is asked by an old friend to try and track down her missing husband, a hopeless case in a hopeless world. This novel is not really about a police procedural; if it was, then it wouldn't have made it out of the slush pile. As Palace travels about, we get a look at what the sudden fall of civilization looks like. Looters steal not only food and ammo but also useless junk for no apparent reason. Politicians hold hearings and try to assess the blame for something that won't matter after The Day. Spivs wheel and deal in the black market for enough food to survive until The Day. The world is filled with those who went insane, those who are in denial, those who run to religion, and those who just run.

WORLD OF TROUBLE (2014, trade paperback) has Palace searching for his sister Nico as the countdown reaches fourteen days. Everyone is going underground in any kind of shelter they can. Everything is worthless except food and bottled water. Nico became involved with a doomsday group who think they have a plan, much like other doomsday groups. Asteroid 2011GV1 is now confirmed for landfall in Indonesia, entering the atmosphere at about 60,000 km/hr on an angle of 19° from the horizontal.

Palace continues his odyssey across the pre-apocalyptic landscape, heading for Ohio where Nico seems to be. Again, the story is not so much the search for his sister but a view of societies that collapsed long before the cause arrived. Too many people with too many agendas, and Nico doesn't survive them. Her brother lives to October 3, taking refuge with a farm family. They gather for a last meal. And then the sky begins to glow ...

SEEN IN THE LITERATURE

Dyer, Gwynne (2014-08-09) **What if the Kaiser had won the war?** GLOBE AND MAIL, [www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/what-if-the-kaiser-had-won-the-war/article19981204/?page=all](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/what-if-the-kaiser-had-won-the-war/article19981204/?page=all)

Excerpts: “Germany would have had to be very fortunate to win the war: It and its allies were outnumbered by more than 2-to-1 from the start. In fact, it was lucky to hang on as long as it did. If the Germans had won, it would only have been by the skin of their teeth. Their last throw of the dice was the great offensives they launched in France in the spring of 1918, after standing on the defensive on the Western Front almost exclusively since 1914. They were able to launch those offensives only because the Communist revolution took Russia out of the war in late 1917 and freed a million German soldiers to move to the Western Front.

*But even if the offensives had torn the British and French armies apart, the Germans would have had to end the war fast, before millions of American troops arrived in France. (They were arriving at the rate of 10,000 a day in the spring of 1918.) But suppose Germany had somehow managed to win. What would the peace treaty have been like? Not nearly as bad as the Treaty of Versailles, the peace we imposed. A “victorious” Germany would not have had the power to strip the losers of their colonies, take away parts of their home territory, impose huge reparations and make the losers “admit” that the war was all their fault, the way we did. It would have been a peace treaty that basically restored the prewar status quo.*

*In the aftermath, having achieved a no-score draw thinly disguised as a victory, Germany likely would have been more or less democratic: no Hitler. And the losers, Britain and France (and, at a great distance off, Canada), would not have lost so badly that they were at risk of slipping into some sort of dictatorship. Which probably also means that there would not have been a Second World War just 20 years later.*

*So a German victory wouldn’t have been all that bad a result, really. Certainly no worse than the Allied victory, which led to a second world war that killed far more people than the first, and was effectively won by the Soviet Union.”*

Godefroit, P., et al (2014) **A Jurassic ornithischian dinosaur from Siberia with both feathers and scales.** SCIENCE 345:451-455

Authors' abstract: "*Middle Jurassic to Early Cretaceous deposits from northeastern China have yielded varied theropod dinosaurs bearing feathers. Filamentous integumentary structures have also been described in ornithischian dinosaurs, but whether these filaments can be regarded as part of the evolutionary lineage toward feathers remains controversial. Here we describe a new basal neornithischian dinosaur from the Jurassic of Siberia with small scales around the distal hindlimb, larger imbricated scales around the tail, monofilaments around the head and the thorax, and more complex featherlike structures around the humerus, the femur, and the tibia. The discovery of these branched integumentary structures outside theropods suggests that featherlike structures coexisted with scales and were potentially widespread among the entire dinosaur clade; feathers may thus have been present in the earliest dinosaurs.*"

Speirs: More and more evidence is accumulating that even primitive dinosaurs had filaments and quills that evolved into feathers, initially as insulation, later for colour and patterns, then for gliding or an assist in running, and finally for flying as the last dinosaur groups evolved into birds.

Martin-Chang, Sandra, Gene Ouellette, and Melanie Madden (2014) **Does poor spelling equate to slow reading? The relationship between reading, spelling, and orthographic quality.** READING AND WRITING 27:1485–1505

Authors' abstract: "*High quality lexical representations in memory, characterized by accuracy and stability, are said to underpin fluent reading. Here, the relationship between orthographic quality and reading speed was examined by asking undergraduates (N = 74) to repeatedly read and spell words. Spelling performance over five trials indicated orthographic quality. Single word reading speed was measured using E-Prime technology. A within-participant repeated measures analysis revealed that words which participants spelled consistently accurately, were read faster than words which were misspelled. This pattern also held in a within-word analysis; the same words were read faster by individuals who always spelled them correctly, compared to those who did not. Further, it was found that when words were spelled using the same incorrect letter patterns across trials (i.e., in the same*

*erroneous way), they were read faster than when they had an incorrect but less stable representation (i.e., inconsistent spelling across trials). Hence, the difference in reading speed appears to be a function of both the accuracy and stability of the orthographic representations stored in memory, rather than due to characteristics of individual participants or words."*

Peterson, T.L., and K.L. Turner (2014) **“Extravagance and Folly” versus “Proper Food”: Domestic scientists, celebrity chefs, and the ongoing food reform movement.** JOURNAL OF POPULAR CULTURE 47:817-837

*Extracts: "In 1895, writer and social reformer Helen Campbell described the life of New York City's poorest families in a book entitled "Darkness and Daylight, or Lights and Shadows of New York Life". ... Campbell's suggestion of cheap, but labor-intensive foods were at odds with the poor family's acute sense of the cost of fuel and the long hours of work. ... In autumn 2009, celebrity chef Jamie Oliver visited the home of the Edwards family in Huntington, West Virginia. Oliver helped the Edwards family dump all the food into trash bags, and ceremoniously buried their deep-fat fryer in the backyard while Stacie said a prayer. He brought them grocery bags full of vegetables, fresh herbs, and other raw ingredients. Oliver showed 12-year-old Kevin Edwards how to make a pasta dish and a salad for his family's dinner. A week later he accompanied the whole family to a physician's check-up where Kevin's parents learned of the effects their diet was having on the boy's health and life expectancy. Oliver's emphasis on personal responsibility and knowledge overcoming poor choices and ignorance resonates with Campbell's 1895 depiction of New York's working women. ...*

*Though the media through which they communicated differed, both generations of reformers warned of the dire consequences of bad eating habits: alcoholism and family disorder circa 1900, obesity and ill health today. Both were concerned about the loss of cooking skills in their generation. And, despite the century between them, both sets of reformers hit similar notes in their prescriptions. They tied cooking to morality and advocated more rational methods. Most importantly for our analysis, they placed the blame squarely on women's shoulders, and failed to recognize the importance of class: both in terms of their own class positions, and in terms of the real disadvantages faced by those they sought to help. ... But none of the contemporary food reformers acknowledges that missions to "fix" the way people eat have been attempted before, nor do they express much critical reflexivity regarding their own social*

*and cultural influences. ... Reformers in both eras promoted a certain ideal way of cooking and eating to the people (usually of a lower socioeconomic class) whom they tried to help. At the turn of the twentieth century, the ideal was middle-class New England cuisine made from scratch by the mother and eaten as a family together at a table. Today, it is a cuisine heavy with vegetables and fruits, made from scratch (generally but not always) by women and eaten together at a table. The accessibility or cultural appropriateness of these standards to the masses were rarely addressed, and the reformers tended to ignore or downplay the availability of material resources necessary to produce such meals on a regular basis. ...*

*There is a class dimension at work, too. Working-class people face some real obstacles to home cooking, not to mention more laborious home food production. They work long hours and have little time for the "second shift of housework." They might not have easy access to fresh food retailers. Working-class people are disproportionately single parents, rather than married or partnered, and thus bear a heavier individual burden of work and family life with fewer resources. Simply advising people to save money and their health by cooking at home does not take into account the difficulties and social pressures against doing so. Finally, advocating home food production, or small-scale local and organic food production, as a corrective to the problems of industrialized food runs the risk of transferring responsibility from society or industry back onto the individual: a consumer "choice" that obscures inequality. ... People in wealthy areas, with plenty of personal and community resources, have access to fresher, more sustainable, organic, tastier food; people in poorer communities must get what the system produces most cheaply."*

Speirs: My observation is that "slow food" advocates and health reformers ignore the fact that food for poorer people is not just a matter of shopping healthy, it is a matter of what else is going on in their lives. Double-income no-kids couples can spend the time preparing elaborate meals in their stainless-steel kitchens with granite countertops. Working poor have jobs with lousy hours and long travel times (usually on a city transit bus), more health problems from medical conditions (and not because they don't eat enough fresh food), and prefer starchy foods which kill the hunger pangs when there isn't enough to go around.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[Editor's remarks in square brackets. Please include your name and town when sending a comment. Email to [opuntia57@hotmail.com](mailto:opuntia57@hotmail.com)]

FROM: Lloyd Penney  
Etobicoke, Ontario

2014-08-12

[Re: trip report to Upper Kananaskis Lake] There's never enough time and money to get to where you'd like to be, and see what you'd like to see. The Rockies would be a great place to see, and do some touristy things, and non-touristy things, too. If ever I did get out there, I'd look you up and ask for your recommendations about what to see. I'm sure I'd enjoy a trip off the beaten path a lot more.

[It's amazing what I've found in the mountain parks over the years that aren't in the tourist brochures. One reason I spend so much time in the Kananaskis provincial park instead of Banff or Yoho National Parks is that there are no coach loads of tourists chattering their way up and down the hiking trails. In Banff NP, for example, if you want to visit Moraine Lake or Johnston Canyon, you have to be there before 08h00. By 11h00, the parking lots are full and the roadsides are lined with cars several kilometres back.]

We've been hearing the nonsense about outrage over parks like Algonquin Park here not having wifi and cellphone service. People say they want to get away from it all, but not 'it all', and definitely not too far away. Yes, these days, it is difficult to walk away from the cellphone or smartphone, and not be connected to Facebook and Twitter, but it will still be waiting for you when you get back. It is possible, if not probable, to be too connected to the electronic web we've woven around ourselves.

[Re: photos of kayaker death] Great photographs, a shame about the kayaker. Even relatively safe areas with relatively safe activities can be dangerous. Some people just need to be given their Darwin Awards immediately.

[I wouldn't say it was a case for the Darwin Awards, anymore than I'm setting myself up for one by hiking where a cougar might be stalking me or I could accidently surprise a grizzly bear. The lakes and rivers in the Rockies have ice-cold water even on the hottest summer day because they are glacier-fed. It is a

calculated risk to go fishing or kayaking in the mountains, just as it is for me to go hiking. The kayaker just made a mistake that proved fatal. I've hiked many times along escarpments where one metre the wrong way would have sent me over a kilometre-high cliff. The photo below is one I took from the edge of a cliff at Kananaskis Canyon looking straight down. Was I risking myself for a Darwin Award? I don't think so.]



The painted utility boxes reminds me of our activities a few weeks ago. Not far from where we live is a series of about 25 murals that are painted on the sides of buildings going through the old Village of Islington. They depict life in the Village around the turn of the 20th century and before, and they also certainly act as a graffiti deterrent. A very pleasant way to spend the day, and then tea at one of Toronto's most historic museums, Montgomery's Inn.

My letter: We had a great time at the Murdoch Mysteries event, and did watch out for people in funny costumes, so we wouldn't feel like we were the only ones. Yvonne was dressed as Queen Victoria, and I was a steampunk dandy. There were dozens like us, so we all had a good time.

[Re: When Words Collide panels about selling books] Toronto has its share of local authors who are trying desperately to market and sell their works. They

appear at every literary convention, are diversifying by also attending most of the literary conventions in town, and are seen everywhere. I don't know how well they are doing, though. They are joining forces to take a single table at a convention to reduce costs, and I have to wonder if they have saturated their market. In 2012, when Yvonne and I were guests at Loscon 39 in Los Angeles, I took down flyers and cards and business cards for many of them to see if some visibility in a new market might get them some sales. LA has their share of struggling writers, too, and the new names (to them) just became part of the larger crowd. I don't envy what they have to do, for they advertise everywhere on social media, they stage parties at conventions, they work hard, and seem to get very little in return.

[The good news is that anyone can publish today. The bad news is that anyone can publish today.]

I have some hopes that Montreal will win the 2017 Worldcon, but given its competition, especially from Helsinki, Finland, I have my doubts. I'd go to Anticipation II, but with the increasing audience for Worldcon coming out of Europe, I think there will be a lot more World in the Worldcon.

FROM: Cliff Samuels  
Calgary, Alberta

2014-08-12

When Words Collide 2014 had a membership cut-off of 550, though we had a final number of 568 which did not include our volunteers. As usual, about 10% did not make it, so our at-festival attendance was a little over 500 people. We're expecting to be larger next year with the new venue at the Delta South. Glad you had a good time. I did too. The panels and guests were great.

[More information about next year's WWC is available at: [www.whenwordscollide.org](http://www.whenwordscollide.org) You can subscribe at that Website for an automatic notification service which will keep you up to date.]

**ZINE LISTINGS**  
by Dale Speirs

[I only list zines from the Papernet. If the zine is posted on [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com) or [www.fanac.org](http://www.fanac.org), then I don't mention it since you can read them directly.]

[The Usual means \$5 cash (\$6 overseas) or trade for your zine. Americans: please don't send cheques for small amounts to Canada or overseas (the bank fee to cash them is usually more than the amount) or mint USA stamps (which are not valid for postage outside USA). US\$ banknotes are still acceptable around the world.]

[SF means science fiction. An apazine is a zine for an amateur press association distro, a perzine is a personal zine, sercon is serious-constructive, and a genzine is a general zine.]

**FLAG #16** (The Usual from Andy Hooper, 11032 - 30 Avenue NE, Seattle, Washington 98125) A report on Corflu 31 in Midlothian, Virginia, which is a tiny convention of SF fans who have known each other for decades, consider themselves the centre of true fandom, and wonder why kids these days would rather tweet about cosplay instead of listening to stories about who said what to whom forty years ago. I've read numerous Corflu reports in various zines over the years. They all confirm my belief that if Corflu was held directly across the street from my house, I wouldn't attend. Also some letters of comment.

**THE NEW PORT NEWS #277** (The Usual from Ned Brooks, 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, Georgia 30047-4720) Apazine with comments on various subjects.

**CHRISTIAN NEW AGE QUARTERLY V21#3** (US\$5 from Catherine Groves, Box 276, Clifton, New Jersey 07015-0276) The theme of this issue is more or less about the conflict between morality, ethics, justifiable violence, and forgiveness. Dan Hahn reviews the book THE RIGHTEOUS MIND, which brings out a point I hadn't realized before. Nearly all major psychological research has been conducted in Western industrialized democracies, and fails to understand that the majority of people live in societies where tribalism, family, and religion hold sway.

**OSFS STATEMENT #425** (The Usual from Ottawa SF Society, 1568 Merivale Road #304, Ottawa, Ontario K2G 5Y7) SF clubzine with news and event listings. As always, very strong in astronomy news.



Calgary's annual dragon boat races were held August 23 and 24 at Glenmore Reservoir, with 59 boats competing. Here some of the contestants get ready.

The sternwheeler passing by is the S.S. Moyie, from Heritage Park on the far side of the reservoir.



And they're off! Splash, splash, splash.

I didn't find dragon boat racing a particularly exciting spectator sport, so I only watched it for about a half hour.

The grain elevator on the far shore is in Heritage Park. Not too many of that style left out in the country anymore. Concrete silos are more efficient these days.

On the next page is a common sight in my central Calgary neighbourhood. The bungalow has just been moved sideways off its foundation out onto the street and is being loaded onto a 36-wheeler. I used to joke that I'd have the last bungalow in the neighbourhood, but it isn't such a joke anymore. The bungalows are gradually being replaced by twin two-storey infills. I hope to get another ten to twenty years in my house before they carry me out feet first or I have to go into a nursing home.

There is a great demand for bungalows out in the country where it is difficult to get labour to build houses the traditional way.





**TRANSIT FANNING IN CALGARY: PART 7. STILL GROWING**  
by Dale Speirs

[Part 1 appeared in issue #256 in 2012, Parts 2 to 5 in issues #258, #260, #264, and #269 respectively in 2013, and Part #6 in #275 in 2014.]

The Calgary LRT system consists of two lines. Route 201 runs from the deep south of the city through downtown and up into the northwest suburbs. Route 202 runs from the northeast through downtown out to the far west. The train network is still growing as the city expands, thanks to the booming petroleum economy. The trains and buses are fully integrated. Passengers can transfer from one to another with the same ticket or monthly pass. Tickets are good for 90 minutes anywhere on the Calgary Transit system, so you can do a quick errand and come back home on the same ticket.

On Monday, 2014-08-25, a new station, the 45<sup>th</sup> in the network, was opened at the far end of the northwest leg. It is called Tuscany after an adjacent suburb where the Prime Minister lives. There was a sneak preview of the Tuscany station the Saturday before but I skipped it. That was just a photo opportunity at the station for local politicians to make speeches and show off their dedication in spending taxpayer’s money for the good of us all.

I waited until Monday after the morning rush hour to mosey on up the line to have a look at the new station. I was not impressed. The station was modernistic style from the late 1950s and the pedestrian overpasses across Crowchild Trail freeway were industrial-strength trusses. Granted that it is difficult to be stylish in a narrow freeway median, but I was hoping for something that might remind people of Calgary’s heritage, not a bland structure that could be in any city in the world.

