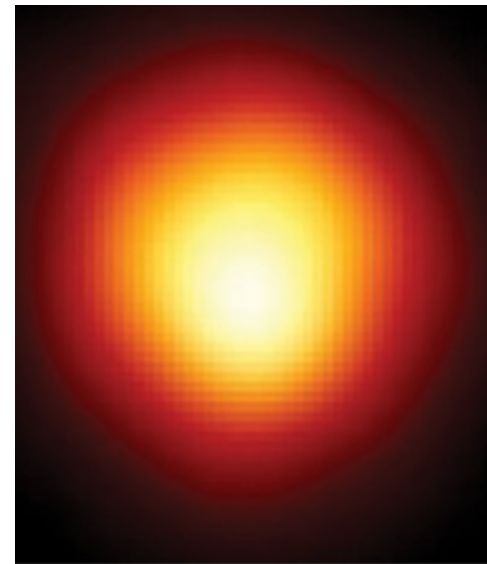
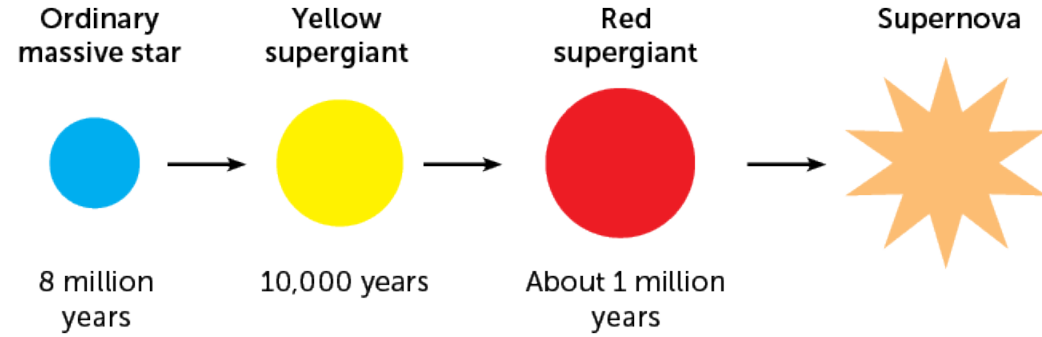


OSFS Statement

February 2021, Issue 503, Volume 46, Number 2



Betelgeuse, the left shoulder of Orion, is, or at least has been, predictably variable. The latest dimming though is deep enough, 35%, to draw attention. Betelgeuse is large enough and close enough to see a dark spot. Speculation is rife as to whether this is a dust cloud or a sunspot (see page 3) and whether it heralds going supernova. It is predicted to go “some time soon” which in astro-speak means in the next few hundred thousand years.

Event Coordinator – There will be another OSFS dinner someday. We have this monthly OSFS newsletter called The Statement. If you would like to be on the e-mail list contact the editor@ottawasfs.ca

Editor's Blather: – Arecibo was more than a telescope. It was also a radar that could map the terrain of Venus, determine the rotation of Mercury (59 days and found hints of water ice debunking a few SF stories), measure and track near-Earth asteroids, use pulsars to search for gravitational waves.

Realtors are wont to say; "Location, location, location". The hills are still there, as are many of the auxiliary structures, access road, power. Why not build a new dish with updated equipment?

Arecibo Observatory, an 'icon of Puerto Rican science'. Arecibo's days are done. After two support cables failed the radio observatory's 305-meter-wide dish was damaged beyond repair, the National Science Foundation announced that it would be decommissioned and dismantled.

"It's a death in the family," says astronomer Martha Haynes of Cornell University, who has used the telescope in Puerto Rico to study hydrogen in the universe since she was fresh out of college in 1973. "For those of us who used Arecibo and had hoped to use it in the future, it's a disaster."

ODYSSEY WRITING WORKSHOP

The 2021 workshop will be held from JUNE 7 to JULY 16. If the world has returned to a post-COVID state of near normality, it will be held as usual on the campus of Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire. If social distancing is still necessary but travel is possible, the workshop will be held in person with COVID precautions. If travel for many is not possible, the workshop will be held online, as it was in 2020 with great success. The application deadline is APRIL 1.

The tuition, \$2,450, includes a textbook and weekly group dinners. Housing in campus apartments is \$892 for a double room and \$1,784 for a single. College credit is available.

George R. R. Martin, the New York Times bestselling author of A Game of Thrones, funds the Miskatonic Scholarship, awarded each year to a writer of Lovecraftian cosmic horror attending Odyssey. It covers full tuition and housing.

The Walter & Kattie Metcalf Singing Spider Scholarship, covering full tuition, will be awarded to a fantasy writer whose novel excerpt shows great skill and promise.

Four other scholarships and a work/study position are also available.

LOC:

Dear OSFen:

Thank you for issue 502 of the Statement, and while I expect the next issue will be out soon, I figured I'd better get with it for this issue. I don't want to fall behind again.

Marvelous artwork on the front cover. Makes me wish I could take an Asimov-style time machine and go back to see how right or wrong the artist got it. (That would be Jurassic Park for real. Ed.)

To the Event Coordinator... what we do in Toronto is when it gets close to our Third Monday, we remind our mailing list that it's getting close, go and support our regular restaurant or any other restaurant you might like (because they sure need the support), enjoy your take-out, and then gather online, usually through a Zoom link, together at least virtually, and have an evening-long Zoom chat. Helps keep the community together, too.

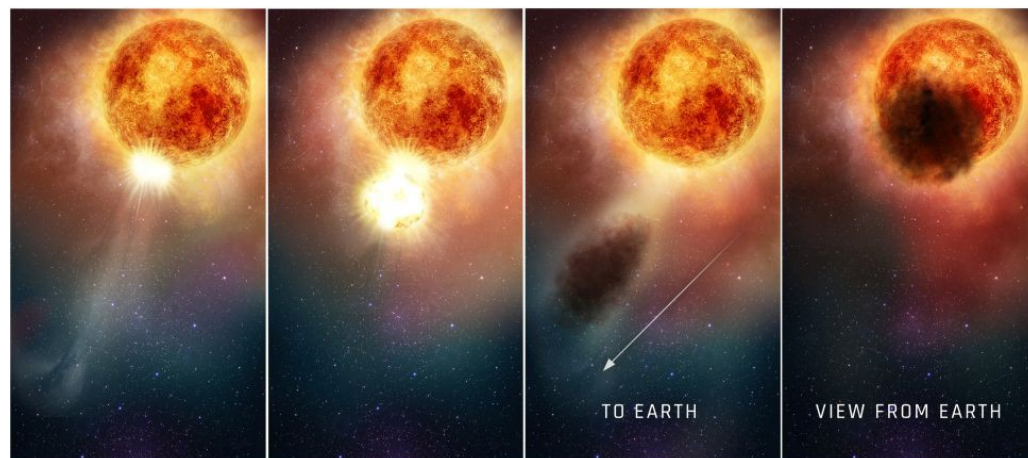
Obituaries...strange that you would like the passing of Alan Rickman...he died on January 14, 2016, so this past January 14 would have been the fifth anniversary of his death. (That happens with undated news clips. Ed.)

My letter... I am hoping to continue to keep up with my commitments in 2021. I have only a few fanzines in my IN box to comment on, and just one script left for my regular paid voicework gig. Other than that, not a lot coming up, although if the earrings hooks I ordered actually show up, I may have the time to make lots of fresh pairs of earrings for our steampunk table.

All done for the moment... We are over our bout of

COVID-19, although I have another test coming up shortly, and we are feeling much better. With luck, we won't have long to wait to get our first vaccinations. Everyone stay home, stay safe, mask up, and we will see you with the next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.



This four-panel graphic illustrates how the southern region of the red supergiant star Betelgeuse may have suddenly become fainter for several months during late 2019 and early 2020. In the first two panels, as seen in ultraviolet light with the Hubble Space Telescope, a bright, hot blob of plasma is ejected from the emergence of a huge convection cell on the star's surface. In panel three, the outflowing, expelled gas rapidly expands outward. It cools to form an enormous cloud of obscuring dust grains. The final panel reveals the huge dust cloud blocking the light (as seen from Earth) from a quarter of the star's surface. (Image credit: NASA, ESA, and E. Wheatley (STScI))

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