

Reprise of the February 11 issue



Ahhh! The canals of Venice: a romantic gondola ride by moonlight . . .
Wait a minute. Why is it so cold? Why isn't the gondola moving?

As the above recently taken image suggests, the prolonged cold spell experienced in North America also envelops much of Europe. This issue of *The Bulletin*, a one-off reprise of the previous one-off report, features selected reader email and two more glimpses into the sun. Warmer temperatures are expected within a week locally, as well as other parts of North America. After that we expect a return to regular coverage of our ongoing eco-adventures in Newport Forest.

Just below the Readers Write section, the IMAGES feature explores an unusually large sun-spot hurling huge shots of plasma into space (but not yet at us), as well as the video taken last October of an unusual elongated gash in the solar surface that NASA calls The Canyon of Fire. (This features unabashed sensationalistic science journalism at its worst.) Kee & Pat Dewdney

Readers Write:

Dan Bickel in Australia provides some interesting historical background:

“Europe has a recorded history of cool periods, some from solar activity and others from volcanic eruptions that sent large quantities of ash into the high atmosphere . . . One curious thing is that with the super cold winter in the eastern north America, Alaska has been rather warm and snow free and the Sierra Nevada in California has very little snow, not boding well for agriculture this year.

“What interests me more is the possibility of a Carrington Event resulting from a major solar storm. The last major one was in 1859:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_storm_of_1859

Then the ionosphere was charged, with the Aurora Borealis visible in Cuba, and telegraph operators getting EM induced shocks. But there were few electronic devices around then. Could you imagine it happening now with all the navigation and communications dependent on electronic signals? I quite frankly would be delighted to see all those i-Phone addicts wailing and gnashing their teeth when all their Twitter and Facebook messages become static!”

Chris Dewdney, Toronto:

“There is no doubt that this has been a cold winter. November temperatures were equivalent to a normal January. And this is the first time I’ve heard about cryoseisms, or “frost quakes” in Toronto. Here’s the response of a concerned twitterer from a few weeks ago: ‘. . anyone else in #Brampton; or #Toronto; just experience that loud ice quake or sonic boom thing? that was the loudest one yet.’

“This is just one of dozens of reports from Toronto. Frost is deepening its horizon. Of course the thing to watch for is lingering ice at Niagara Falls or in the escarpment caves, lasting past August. After all, as you point out we are in an interglacial period and if there’s any deviation from the [solar] cycle then concerns about global warming could turn into something more akin to wishful thinking. We’ll see what spring delivers.”

Pablo Jaramillo, Mexico:

“Thank you for sharing that interesting report on the sunspots and the "quiet sun" concept. We were wondering how these sort of events affect us since the weather here is absolutely crazy . . . we have been experiencing spring-like conditions a lot earlier than usual. Maybe this is also related to the ‘lazy sun’ concept.”

Bruce Parker, London (Canada): “Great report. I was hoping that the peak of the solar cycle would allow some local viewing of auroras. Not happening as of yet.”

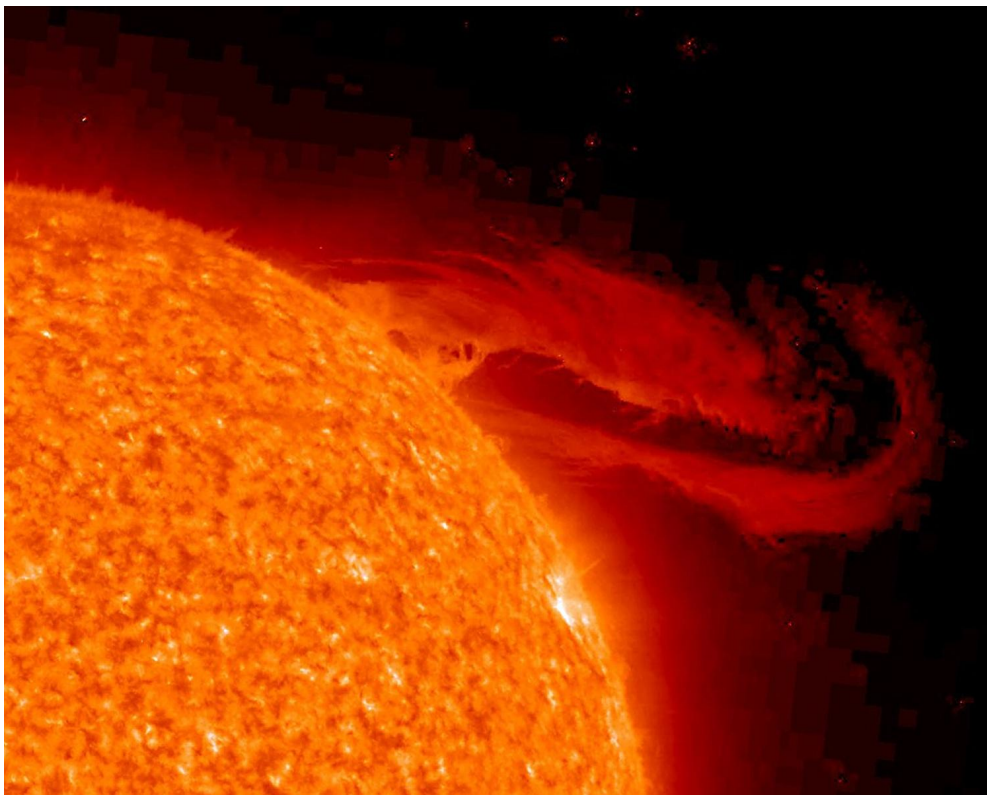
Greg Ziegler in Santa Fe sends this quote from the UK *Daily Mail*:

“Swathes of Slovenia have been entombed in a four-inch thick layer of ice after Eastern Europe was hit by a freak blizzard. Pylons buckled under the extraordinary weather conditions, leaving more than 35,000 households - up to 100,000 people - without power. The damage is expected to reach €66million. But authorities are not yet able to reach more remote parts of the country which have been cut off as the transport network failed. “

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2553989/Slovenia-buried-FOUR-INCHES-black-ice-freak-blizzard-leaves-100-000-without-power-does-66million-damage.html#ixzz2tEDeNrb1>

IMAGES:

AR1967, one of the few returning sunspots, recently produced a “strong M6 flare



which sent a coronal mass ejection off into space at the incredible speed of 1,305 miles per second (2100km/s).” The CME won’t hit us due to the sunspot’s position but over the next few days, as it moves across the sun disc, earth will be in the firing line. Google search on “AR1967”

The Canyon of Fire: Here is the spectacular NASA time-lapse video of a rather unusual solar phenomenon that occurred last October as astronomers scratched their heads over the absence of sunspots. An elongated gash in the solar surface that looks to be about 100 Earth diameters in length hurled a matching plasma filament, dwarfing those shown above, off into space. Views of the phenomenon are presented in different colours owing to different spectral filters being used. You will have a ringside seat at:

<http://www.space.com/23335-canyon-of-fire-sun-nasa-video.html>