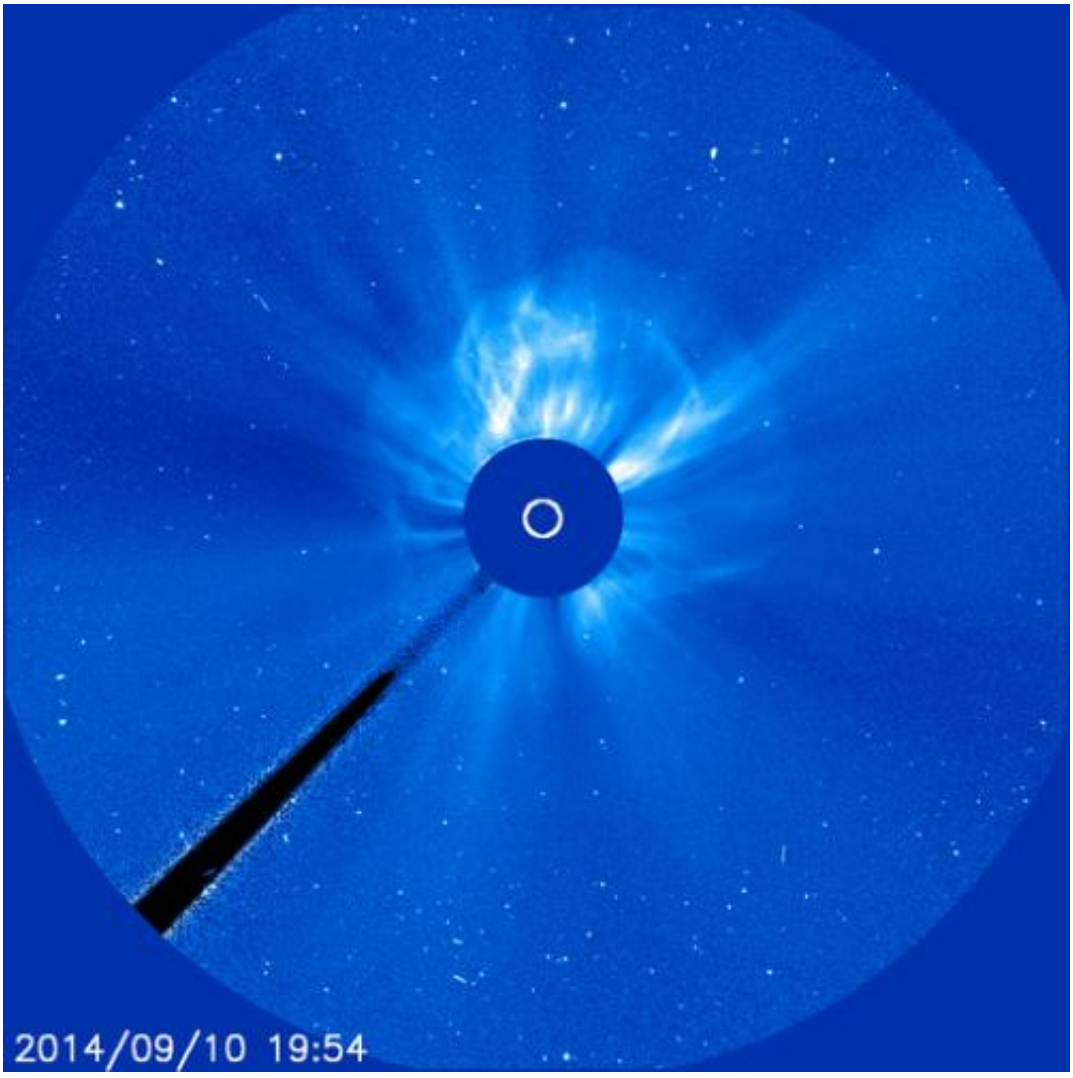
Two solar particle blasts could start smacking into Earth Friday

September 12 2014, by Elizabeth Howell



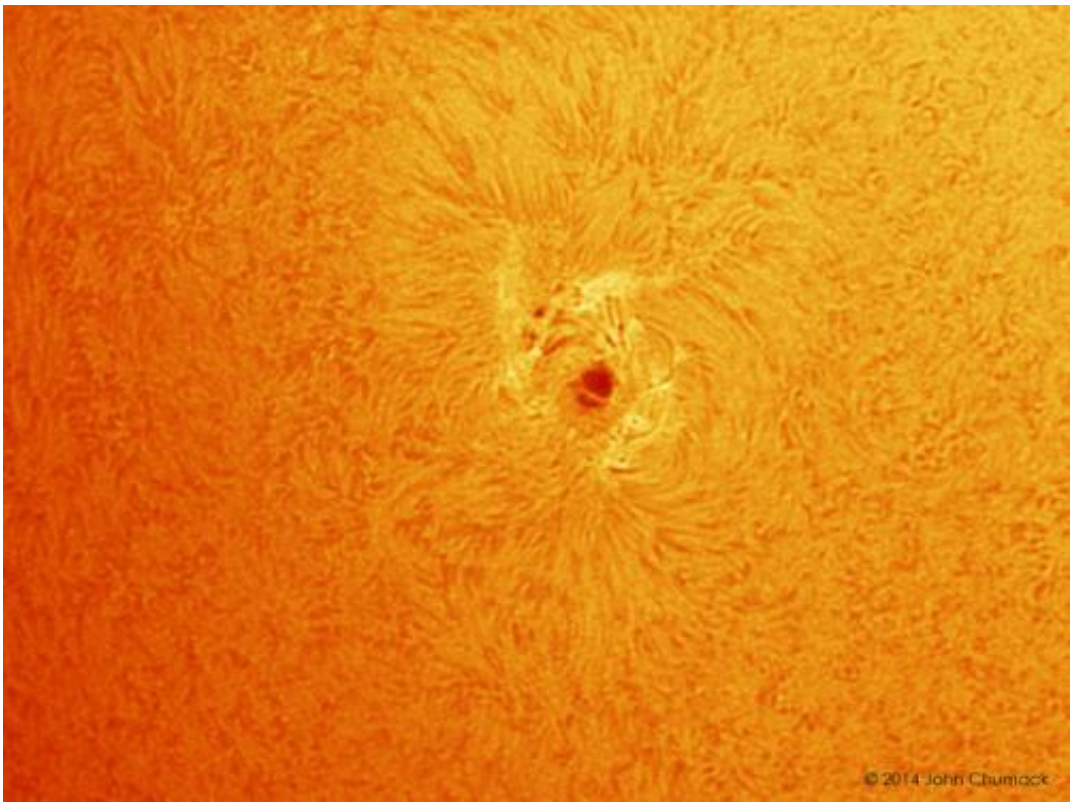
A solar blast erupts in this picture captured by the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory on Sept. 10, 2014. Credit: ESA / NASA / SOHO

Bim, bam, smash! The Sun hurled two clouds of particles in our general direction, putting space weather watchers on alert. There's now a high chance of auroras on Sept. 12 (Friday), according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, with more activity possible during the weekend.

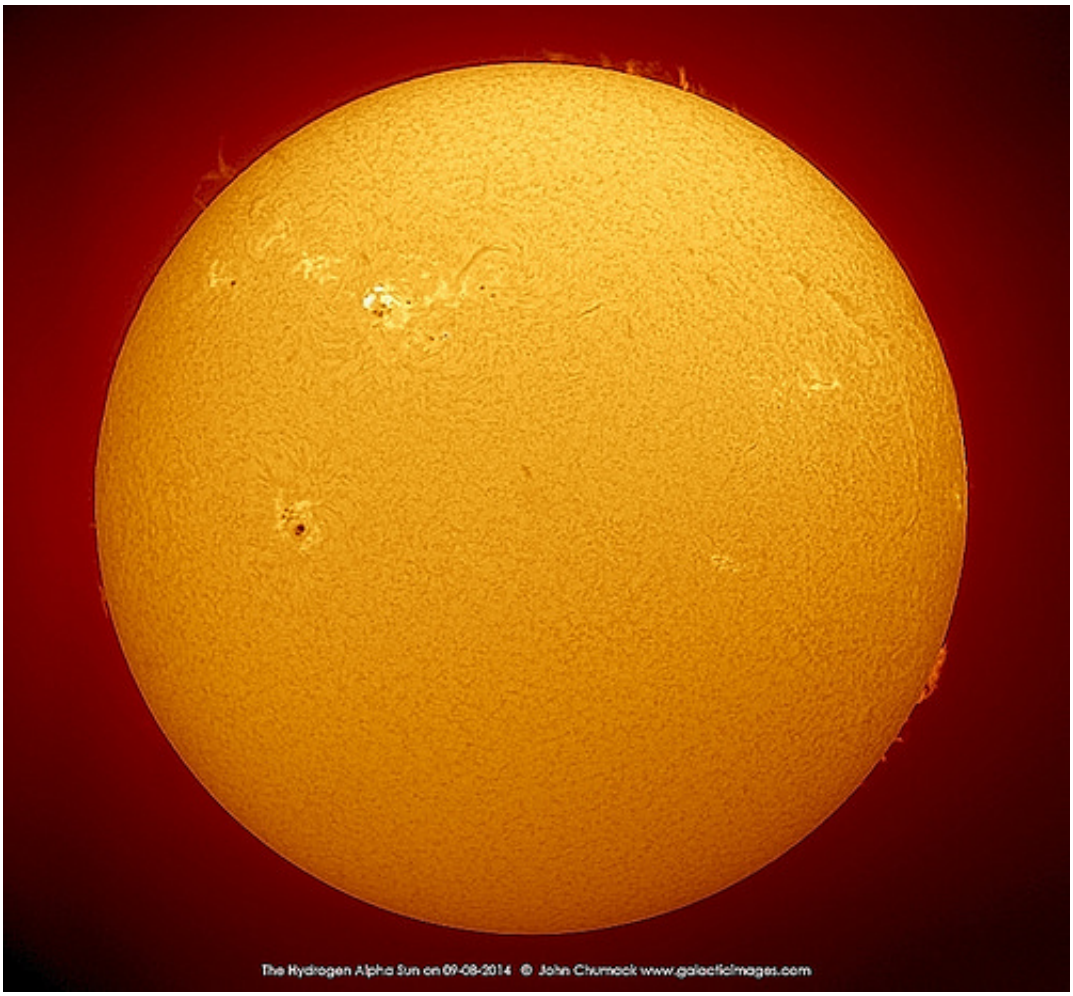
The coronal mass ejections erupted Sept. 9 and Sept. 10 from sunspot AR2158. The Sept. 10 flare packed the strongest class punch the sun has, an X-flare, which briefly caused HF radio blackouts on Earth. We have some amateur shots of the sunspot and Sun below.

"Radio emissions from shock waves at the leading edge of the CME suggest that the cloud tore through the sun's atmosphere at speeds as high as 3,750 km/s [2,330 miles per second]," wrote SpaceWeather.com. "That would make this a very fast moving storm, and likely to reach Earth before the weekend. Auroras are definitely in the offing."

Photographer John Chumack captured the Sun and AR2158 in these pictures from Monday (Sept. 8).



Sunspot AR2158 taken on Sept. 8, 2014. Credit: John Chumack



The Sun on Sept. 8, 2014, including active sunspots. Credit: John Chumack

Source: Universe Today