

WARP 54

The Official Newsletter of the
Montreal Science Fiction and
Fantasy Association (MonSFFA)

Volume 17, Number 1
Spring of 2003
Price: 

"We need a new logo!"

– MonSFFA President, Bernard Reischl

Days Inn Restaurant, Montreal – MonSFFA President, Bernard Reischl, astonished members of the BoA with his decision to abandon the “purple nebula” logo. At a meeting held in the restaurant of the Days Inn, March 9, Berny cited as his reason

Please see reason, page 4.



Hey!! And what do I do with all those pins I had made??!

Shocked reaction from anonymous MonSFFA member, Shocking retort from MonSFFA president! see page 4.



See inside for full contest details!

Page 4



Newgrange:
Barbara Silverman casts new light on
“Fairy Mound”, see page 5

And, by the way, WARP has a new editor! See “Drunk with Power”
Page 3

MonSFFA's Executive:

Bernard Reischl
President

Sébastien Mineau
Vice-President

Sylvain St-Pierre
Treasurer

Appointed Positions:

PR, Membership
Keith Braithwaite

Web Master
Bernard Reischl

Audio/Video
Wayne Glover & Steven Toy

Newsletter Editor
Cathy Palmer-Lister

Board of Advisors (BoA)
All members in good standing

SNAFUs
Somebody Else

On the Cover:

The "Purple Nebula" Logo
was designed by Keith Braithwaite.
Photo of "anonymous fan"
by Charles Mohapel.
Photo of Newgrange, Mark Brack,
used with his permission.

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MonSFFA Calendar of Events

Except where noted, all MonSFFA meetings are held
Sundays 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM.
Days Inn, St. François Room
1005 Guy Street, Corner René Lévesque

Programming is subject to change.

April 27: Star Wars

Star Wars Celebration – 1 year later R Star Wars Designs

May 25: Sci-Fi Web Sites

Your favourite Sci-Fi Web sites | 5-Minute Voyager (workshop)

June 1: MonSFFA BoA Meeting

11:00AM, Days Inn Hotel Restaurant
(All MonSFFen are members of the BoA)

June 8: Get Ready for TorCon!

All you ever needed to know about WorldCons!

July 27: MonSFFA Barbecue

(Rain Date – August 3)

August 17: Gaming

Introduction to Gaming B Actual mini game tournaments

Sept. 21: King Kong VS Godzilla

King Kong and Godzilla Tributes

October 5: Horror

H.P. Lovecraft C Stephen King

November 8

Con*Cept 2003

November 23: No Strings Attached

Gerry Anderson Tribute

December 6

MonSFFA Christmas Party

The Real Fine Print: WARP is published quarterly by the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA), a non-profit organization of fans interested in sharing their love of science fiction and fantasy. The opinions expressed in WARP are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of MonSFFA or the editor. To reprint any article, please contact the writer, or ask the editor to pass on your request. The use of copyrighted material is generally discouraged, but it's hard to talk about Star Wars without stepping on toes; our apologies to the copyright holders, no serious infringement is intended. This is an amateur production, your tolerance is appreciated by your fans!

DRUNK With Power!

WARP has a new editor! In the tradition established by Keith Braithwaite and continued by Lynda Pelley, another former president takes over the reins of MonSFFA's newsletter. Aren't you the lucky ones!

I want to take this opportunity, on behalf of MonSFFA members, to thank Lynda for all her work in the past. I know it hasn't been easy to balance her editorial duties and her work, not to mention the model building, costuming, Con*Cept, and a boyfriend!

I have been looking back over older issues of WARP and realizing that I have a lot to learn. I do hope I can eventually produce a newsletter of the quality you have become accustomed to when Keith, and then Lynda, ran the show.

I have a tendency to leave my fingerprints on all that I do, so watch for the odd stray dragon, and if you "didn't get it", don't worry; it was probably meant as a joke, and lots of people don't get my jokes!

One of Lynda's pet peeves was the dearth of submissions. This problem was raised at the BoA (the one at which I recklessly agreed to produce WARP) and we all felt that if submissions do not come in, there will be no newsletter. WARP is supposed to be written by the members for the members; it's a means of sharing our experiences, joys and frustrations in fandom. If we lose interest in sharing, then the newsletter serves no useful purpose, and will be allowed to pass on to the Other Side with honour and dignity.

What do I write?

Write about anything fannish, or anything you think would interest fans of science fiction and fantasy. In this issue, for instance, we have an article written by Barbara Silverman about an ancient site in Ireland. There is much about Newgrange to interest us, especially those of us keen on Celtic mythology and astronomy.

You could write about space exploration, stars and planets. A few members have been passing me information regarding the Space Shuttle Columbia, why not summarize these news articles to share with other members? Do you think the space programme should continue in spite of the risks? Opinion pieces are great!

Write about the Middle Ages, write about myth and legend. I know there are members who know as much about the Holy Grail as King Arthur did. Share the wealth!

Do you watch television? Go to movies? Sure, you do, and you have opinions about what you see, and we all want to see if we agree with you!

Do you read? What got me to join MonSFFA many moons ago were the book reviews, and it's thanks to people like John Dupuis and George Dodds that my library grows faster than Russell can build bookcases.

Can you draw? I really would like to have fan-made clip art to decorate pages and fill in little corners here and there. And of course, if you can REALLY draw, send me a good copy to scan for a cover.

Into construction? Send me a picture of your latest model or costume, and tell us how you built

it. What seems ordinary to you, may not seem so to others. I wish I knew where some of you do your shopping! And how many unbuilt model kits does Dominique have stashed away? Inquiring minds need to know!

It doesn't need to be long, I can bring a bunch of little articles together to fill a page with a small drawing, or photo. For instance, we have a meeting coming up on favourite SF web sites, why not send me your favourite URLs, and I will compile them into lists for all to enjoy.

How do I get it to you?

The easiest way is to send it with e-mail. In fact, short items could *be* the e-mail! You could save it to disk, or give me a NEATLY handwritten copy during a MonSFFA meeting. I appreciate having a hard copy of anything you submit electronically in case my computer does not understand yours. I read Microsoft Word and Corel Word Perfect. I can handle most graphics formats, and I have a scanner.

I can't spell, my grammar is atrocious, English is not my first language, I don't have a computer....

Okay, enough with the excuses already! Your writing can't possibly be worse than what I've been correcting at school for the past 30-some years, you can write in French, and I can do the typing for you.

Write to me! I look forward to a general outpouring of literary endeavours! Showers of e-mails! Lots of pictures! -



MonSFFA president announces logo contest!

Club president, Bernard Reischl, initiates contest to select a new logo for the club, the first step in updating the club's visual face for 2004.

The contest was launched at our March 23 meeting, which had for its theme, science fiction art, with the idea of coming up with an eye-catching logo that defines the club at a glance and works well large or small, in colour or black and white, and in print and on the Web.

"At the same time it should promote that this is a club & organization based in Montreal, Quebec, Canada," added Berny.

Devised as a group project, the president encouraged all the members of MonSFFA to take part. Artistic talent is not obligatory; all design ideas are welcome. Collectively, in the coming months, ideas will be honed down to a final sketch, at which point one of the club's artists* will undertake to refine the winning design and produce master artwork so that it will fit all the criteria mentioned during the March meeting.

At every meeting, members will be expected to present their ideas during a round table discussion where all submissions will be "fleshed out". Final submissions will be taken during the September meeting where they will be finalized.

*"The plan is to unveil the new club logo in November at Con*Cept 2003 and start using it on the web site, flyers, posters, business cards and all promotional material as of January 1, 2004"*

We expect to award some kind of a prize to the creator(s) of the successful design, this most likely to be a pin that will be custom crafted by the Two Wacky Pin Guys.

Good luck and good drawing!

*(most probably the one who actually does this for a bloody living - hint, hint – Berny!)



The MonSFFA Sunshine Girl!

Josée Bellemare strikes a pose at Wayne Glover's MonSFFA Pool Party. Or maybe it's an ad for beer, can't remember that far back...

Newgrange: The Winter Solstice and Fifty+ Centuries

The Fairy Mound Explained *Barbara Silverman*

What does December 22 mean to you? Another date on the calendar? Christmas around the corner? Another year almost over? Or perhaps to you, it represents the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year?

Whichever meaning, or meanings, this day does hold, they are modern day values. Christmas, religious significance or not, is just two thousand years old. While the calendar with its January 1st, did have its origin in antiquity, the Gregorian form used by the majority of the modern world, is just a few hundred years old. The Winter Solstice is another latter day value the result of astronomic observations made in recorded times.

OR IS IT?

Well, "things are seldom what they seem". My apologies to Gilbert and Sullivan.

Dolmens were typical burial chambers from the Neolithic period of Europe. They were constructed by setting huge stone slabs edgewise into the earth. These slabs supported a flat stone which served as a roof.

They evolved into passage graves by the addition of a long, stone roofed entry way leading to the burial chamber. This entire formation was covered by a large mound of earth and stone.

Newgrange, an Irish passage grave, is only one example of the knowledge and skills of these people. It demonstrates how big a role the sun played in their lives.

So prepare yourselves, we leave immediately for Ireland, the land of leprechauns and fairies. However I give you my word the tale I'm about to weave is not a product of the Blarney Stone or Irish Whiskey.

We are going to travel back in

time, five thousand years into the misty past of Irish history.

Come my friends, our trip begins in Dublin, along the roads of modern man. The N2 runs north out of Dublin through Country Meath and the rolling green hills of the Irish countryside. We pass the village of Slane, continuing west for another eight kilometres.

There on the north bank of the



River Boyne, forty-eight kilometres north of Dublin, sixteen kilometres from Drogheda, we see it, something foreign and intrusive to the luxurious pasture lands.

...Newgrange was constructed about 3300 BC by people who remain a mystery ...

Newgrange, constructed in approximately 3300 BC by people who remain a mystery, was home to five peoples who have resided on this land since the time before the Celts. It is known that Newgrange has a definite, unquestionable alignment to the Winter Solstice Sunrise.

Over a acre in size, it is a marvel of Stone Age construction – a huge

mound of stones and earth, covered with shining white quartz pebbles.

Once circled by tall standing stones, only two remain by the entrance, guarding those who rest within.

This area, from the River Boyne to Sligo, is rich with prehistoric cemeteries. Within a couple of miles, there are two other passage graves known as Knowth and Dowth. Almost the same size as Newgrange and built around the same period, both contain passages with inner chambers. Most importantly, as with Newgrange, they also have celestial connections.

Both Knowth and Dowth showed signs of entry. However, Newgrange discovered in 1699 by men searching for building stone, appears to have been undisturbed.

...In Celtic mythology, the mounds became homes of the Tuatha De Dannaan and gateways to the Otherworld....

The term Sidh comes from the Irish word for "fairy mound". In Celtic mythology, the mounds became homes of the Tuatha De Dannaan and gateways to the Otherworld. Built long before the Celts, they were already relics of a by-gone age when Rome built their empire.

As it is told, when the first arrivals landed in Ireland, they fought with the gods. These gods, known as the Tuatha De Dannaan, were living on the land, claiming it as their own. Eventually the De Dannaan were defeated and driven underground. Dogdha, the father king of the Otherworld, gave the Sidh to the Tuatha De Chiefs to use as dwellings.

Newgrange predates the Great Pyramid, which was constructed around 2600 BC

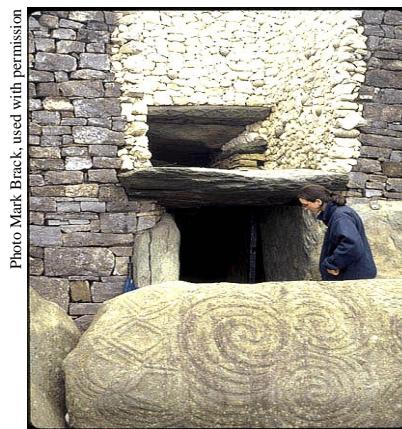
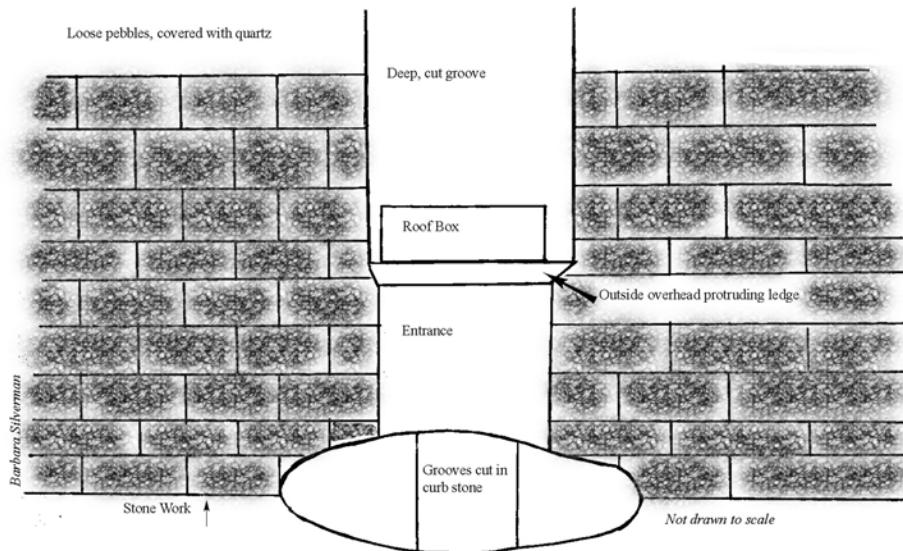
The Sidh were now considered to be sacred, places to stay well away from. Newgrange was said to be the home of Daghda, a good god, who was also referred to as a sun god. He was a divine tribal patriarch who could kill with one end of his club and return the dead to life with the other. According to the legends, Daghda mated with Boann, who was not only the spirit of the Boyne, but the nourishing river itself.

Reference to Newgrange goes back to 656 AD., when in Irish literature, it was referred to as the Brú na Bóinne (abode of Boyne). By now you're wondering, what is so marvellous about a mound of earth and stone? Well, shall we step inside?

Lined and roofed with megaliths, the passageway is three feet wide and sixty feet long. Five feet high at the entrance, the ceiling slowly rises to ten feet at the central chamber. This chamber was constructed with what we term a corbel vault roof, capped with a huge stone slab twenty feet above the floor. Due to the beak-like shape, the word corbel comes from the word 'crow'. Corbels protruding outward, which in ancient times consisted of stone slabs, were built deep into a wall. Pressure on the imbedded section counteracted its desire to fall outward.

An arch, resembling an inverted staircase, was formed from two opposing sets of overlapping corbels meeting at a peak. This structure could upport a roof or another layer. A corbel vault was formed by a series of corbel arches. No bonding agent was used. The uprights and lintels are held in place by their own weight; each slab weighs four thousand tons. Three smaller

chambers run off the central one, so that the passages and chamber form a cross.



his inside structure is covered by a huge cairn, consisting of 220,507 US tons (200,000 metric tons) of loose stone and surfaced with white quartz pebbles. The doorway is located on the southeast side of this circular mound, with a decorated curb stone in front of the entrance. An oval of smaller quartz pebbles, fenced with low stone slabs, lies just beyond the entrance.

Climbing the exterior wall, you will find yourself twenty feet above ground level, standing on a flat top. Newgrange is actually thirty-six feet high in the centre, and has a diameter of two hundred eighty feet. If you were bold enough to steal the central stonework of Stonehenge, you could

hide it inside this passage grave.

The whole structure was carefully designed, engineered and constructed. Grooves cut in the roof slabs drain away the rainwater, thus keeping the dead who rest inside dry for over fifty-four centuries, proof that a technical, sophisticated Neolithic society lived in the Boyne Valley.

Newgrange predates the Great Pyramid, which was constructed around 2600 BC, and the first phase of Stonehenge from around 2800 BC. Whoever these builders were, no one

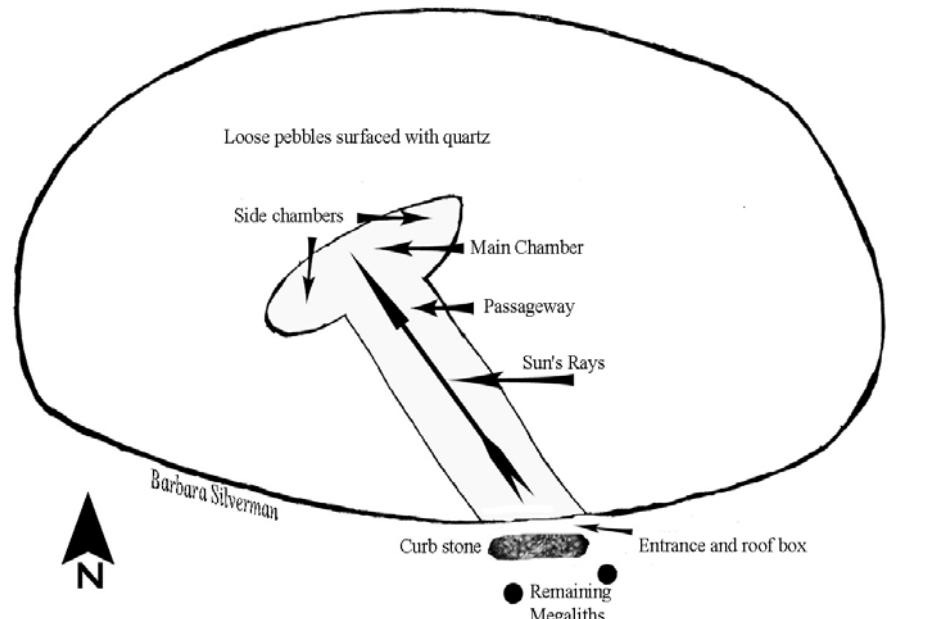
can question their skills.

The history of tomb building began thousands of years in the past. It probably started out as a family affair. Then, as communities began to form, slowly evolved into a clan or tribal endeavour. A community shrine, a tomb also designated territory.

There are approximately three hundred passage graves in Ireland. They were built by an unknown, ancient society to house their dead inside what might have been to them, an imitation of the birth chambers of Mother Earth.

Though Newgrange is a tomb, this passage grave is more than just a crypt, more than just a place for those without life. It contains only five remains – three consisting of ashes, while two others are skeletons – too few to be a community cemetery, especially as all five appear to have been interred at the same time.

This structure is estimated to have required 800,000 hours to build. It would have taken three hundred people twenty years. To have accomplished such a task, there had to be some specialization as to skills, and some sort of centralization or organization of



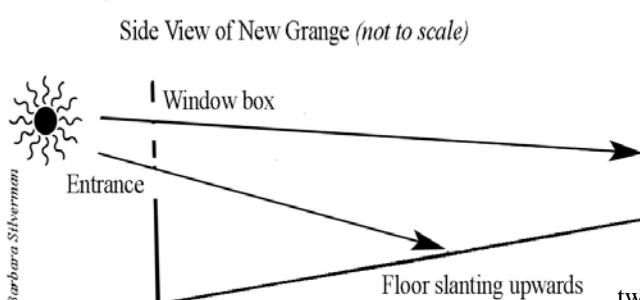
power. Not to mention a very good reason!

A legend originating in the long ago past, told of a special day when the rising sun would light up a triple spiral. This was believed to be impossible because the spiral was carved on a stone resting in the back of the passage. Due to the rising slant of the floor, and the placement of the stones in the passageway, the rays from the sun could not reach the inner chamber.

Believed impossible, that is, until 1969 when Michel J.O'Kelly proved otherwise. The late O'Kelly, an archaeologist, excavated and restored Newgrange in the years 1962 to 1975. It was using recalibrated radiocarbon dating on his organic samples which placed construction around 3200 BC.

O'Kelly discovered a roof box, about three feet wide, cut into the rock right above the entrance. This small window was at one time sealed by two, equal sized quartz blocks. One was still in place, the other was found nearby. Both blocks and the floor of the roof box contained markings showing that these quartz pieces had been removed and replaced several times.

For the winter solstice of December 21st, 1969, O'Kelly positioned himself inside Newgrange. Four minutes after local sunrise, the sunlight shone through this roof box.



For seventeen minutes, the rays from the sun reached into the cold, dark depths of Newgrange. For seventeen minutes, the sun shone on the floor in front of the rear chamber, lighting up the triple spiral carved on the stone resting in the back of the passage.

The impossible had become possible. Newgrange was now known to be the oldest astronomically aligned monument in the world.



There is no doubt as to the astronomical alignment, with strong evidence indicating it was designed on purpose. Martin Brennan is an independent researcher and author of *The Stars and The Stones*. He came to

an important conclusion concerning the deep cut grooves.

These grooves, all made by a stone instrument, vertically divide the stone above the entrance. Along the same sight line, there are grooves cut into the curb stone in front of the entrance, and a curb stone on the northwest side. These two stones lie directly opposite each other. Newgrange's axis of symmetry aligns with these grooves and the Winter Solstice Sunrise.

Any remaining doubts as to the intentions of our Stone Age builders went the way of the dodo bird in 1989. T. P. Ray, an astronomer-physicist connected with Dublin's Institute for Advanced Studies, reevaluated the solar alignment. Taking into account

the slow change in the tilt of the earth's rotation, Ray

proved that five

t h o u s a n d years ago, the sun would have shone

into the roof box at the exact moment of sunrise.

Five thousand years ago, a two foot wide beam of sunlight, would have shone into the far chamber on the morning of the winter solstice. Half of the chamber would have enjoyed warm sunlight, while the other half would have remained in darkness.

Last but not least, the upright stones would have reflected the light onto the triple spiral. The legend had come to life.

T.P. Ray also showed how the sun would have transversed the window, from the lower east corner to the upper right corner. This ancient Stone Age culture, using only basic skills and knowledge, not only had the direction correct, but also the size of the opening. And all without a computer!

There is additional support suggesting that the vertical grooves were purposely aligned to the heavens, for a specific event. Knowth, located just under a mile northwest of Newgrange, contains two passages, one on the west, and one on the east. George Eogan, an Irish archaeologist,

An intriguing question: why would the builders take the time and trouble to carve these designs, then hide them?

excavated and restored Knowth. He believes that the west passage aligns with the sunset equinox, while the east side passageway is oriented to the sunrise equinox. Once again we have megaliths lying in front of both entrances, with an upright groove cutting these huge pieces of stone in half identical to those at Newgrange. However, therein lies a tale for another day.

Newgrange is not believed to be an observatory. It is a place for the dead, probably a temple or shrine, sanctified by those who rest within. For some reason, long lost in the annals of time, it was important to have the winter solstice sunrise connect with these remains. Perhaps to this ancient, forgotten culture, the winter solstice sunrise represented the death of one year and the rebirth of another, perhaps the hope of revival for the dead. Whatever the reason it was obviously very important, worthy of a great monument.

Not only was Newgrange carefully constructed, it was also very carefully decorated. Many of the stones, both inside and out, contain complex geometric designs, a treasure of Neolithic art. There are spirals, lozenges and other puzzling patterns. Both curb stones not only contain cut grooves, but also abound with various other markings. The lintel of the roof box has one edge carved with a chain of X's while abstract symbols cover the upper surface of the interior stone supporting this lintel. Once the stone was in place, these markings were completely hidden.

Within Newgrange, other decorated stones also have their carvings carefully concealed. An intriguing question: why would the builders take the time and trouble to carve these designs, then hide them? A question to which the answer has, unfortunately, been erased by the sands of time, forever remaining an unsolved mystery.

It certainly indicates that this art was not just decorative. To them, these markings must have held some deep powerful, perhaps symbolic, meaning.. So, too, the quartz facing, which might have been a representation of a connection to the sun. Quartz was often used in prehistoric tombs and stone rings of Western Europe, in places where the sun held a position of importance.

Obviously, these people were familiar with the basic sky and the changes and cycles which it underwent. How they viewed this behaviour, what went on in their minds, that is the question which cannot be answered. Perhaps the shaft of sunlight represents fertility, consecrated by the dead, set into motion by the sun, a theme often found in prehistoric cultures. Or perhaps, the sunlight was just meant to bring warmth and comfort to the souls of those resting within.

Perhaps this was a place for answers. By being in touch with the heavens, this community understood its role in the world which surrounded them. Perhaps they found peace by keeping the remains of their brethren sacred, warmed by the sun, providing order for the living. Perhaps.

This Stone Age community showed a respect for the dead and a knowledge of the skies above. Newgrange is a monument to this culture. It humbles us, we of the modern technology. However it is much more. It brings us here on earth into a unity with the sky. It allows the dead, and therefore the living, to join with and become part of the celestial universe.



St. Paddy's Parade: Fan regrets lack of club presence

Are we letting the Parade pass us by?

Sadly, once again Klingons and friends had to pull out of the St Patrick's Day Parade because of lack of participation. Not enough people showed interest, many afraid of what the weather might be.

Granted, Klingons are not as popular as they once were but interested individuals could come as something else, maybe something out of Star Wars, Lord of the Rings or even Harry Potter for that matter.

Public events like this, and others, not only give us a chance to have fun outside the regular meetings but they also give us a chance to reach people and let them know we exist.

If we don't make our presence known to the general public how are we to recruit new members? We need to get new blood and increase our numbers if we are to survive as a club.

Recruiting aside, wouldn't it be fun, if, Monday morning at work, school, etc., when people ask you "What did you do this weekend?" we could say "I walked in the parade on Sunday." Unfortunately neither the Klingons nor MonSFFA can say that.

Are we letting the Parade pass us by?

- Josée Bellemare

TIME WARP

Creative Anachronism

Marc Durocher

Tonsider this! There are currently in the Montreal area, more groups devoted to re-enacting the middle ages than there were science fiction fan clubs in 1992. If that doesn't impress you, consider this! Although a couple of these groups are very small, overlapping memberships are not the feature they used to be for us back in the day.

From less than a dozen people getting together in a Westmount living room in '84, medieval recreationism has grown to industrial proportions. The three major Montreal groups can each claim forty plus members, with occasional participants numbering in the hundreds. Once, recreationists had to be very creative in finding their own gear. Costumes, accessories, armour, weapons, eating utensils – the whole nine yards – either had to be scratch-built or creatively scrounged.

Missing graphic: performers with Sire d'Howard, a CAF base turned castle at St-Adolphe

That was then! Today there are more stores on the island servicing medieval hobbyists than there are comic book stores. Take the competition off island to the 450 exchange and the super-heroes aren't even in the fight. Specialty restaurants serve modern, healthier versions of the

Missing Graphic: Members of Le Club de Recréation Médiéval playing games at the Hippodrome

make your own costumes and gear and there is no shortage of help available to that end.



SCA members practice 16th century rapier techniques – Marc Durocher

cuisine of the period. The armour you once had to make yourself is now made and sold by professional armourers. Professional wedding planners and caterers specialize in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Professional musicians, all local, earn their livings performing and recording period music. Professional fashion designers even specialize in recreating the period.

Assuming you want to play this game, how do you get started? Which group do you join, how much will it cost and how much effort will it take?

At the risk of sounding biased, I feel that the best place to get involved is with the group we already know. Born in California in '69, the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) sponsored a group in Montreal in, you guessed it, the spring of '84. The Shire (Seigneurie) de L'Île du Dragon Dormant, began in that previously mentioned living room and has since expanded to form groups in Quebec City, Trois Rivieres and Abitibi-Temiscaming. The shire offers pretty much everything at all levels of involvement from casual participant to full-timer with no life (If you're reading this, you're a fan and you know what I mean.) You're encouraged to

Missing Graphic: La Compagnie M/dieval giving lessons at the Hippodrome

Although they're best known for their combat forms, the SCA is a full service group. Costuming, cooking, music, dancing, storytelling, writing, drawing, and calligraphy are all part of the agenda, and it shouldn't be too difficult to find something of interest to keep you busy. Although they'd be called toy makers, there's even a place for miniaturists. Unless you want to fight or become an officer (member of the executive), you don't have to be a full member to participate in events organized by the local group. However, not unlike MonSFFA, excessive gate crashing is discouraged by imposing a surcharge on non-

members for participating in major events.

AMembers of the Shire get together for fighters' practices and general schmoozing every Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm at Wesley United Church, 5964 Boul. Notre-Dame-de-Grace, corner of Royal. During the warm months, the group gathers at Angrignon Park on Sundays, weather permitting.

**For further information, contact
Lady Cathrine de Monserrat:**
cathrinedemonserrat@videotron.ca



Minstrels, at the Hippodrome – Josée Bellemare

Next Event at the Hippodrome:

May 3 & 4
<http://www.nemesis.qc.ca/ciemedievale/>

Medieval Fair: Montreal Hippodrome

On Sunday September 1rst, the Montreal Hippodrome was host to a medieval fair. The event was well attended and many came in costume in spite of the heat.

Hats off in particular to the knights and warriors: with padded suits, chain mail, costumes and in some cases a large cape, these brave people must have been cooking in the sun.

There were a variety of vendors selling their goods: clothing, jewellery and various accessories. There were also demonstration of skill such as archery, woodcarving, sword fighting and embroidery.

Let us not forget entertainment: wandering minstrels, medieval fashion shows and even a mock trial.

A man stood accused of making improper advances to a married woman. After all witnesses were heard the accused plea-bargained his sentence down to three hours in the stocks.

It seems the Montreal Hippodrome does this sort of thing a couple of times a year, in collaboration with several clubs and businesses, including La Compagnie Médievale and Chateau Sire D'Howard.

Judging by the level of attendance it would seem that the age of chivalry isn't dead at all.

– Josée Bellemare



Man condemned to 3 hours in the stocks for making improper advances to married woman! – Josée Bellemare



The Goodwife is vindicated! Josée wears her “medievalized” tee shirt.

Internet Resources:

For the SCA:
<http://www.sca.org/>

Seigneurie de L'Ile du Dragon Dormant:
<http://home.total.net/~mbc/idd/>

Château médiéval Sire d'Howard:
<http://www.chateaumedieval.com/>

Weid's Links to the Middle Ages:
<http://www.fidnet.com/~weid/midageindex.htm>

Medieval Recipes from Authentic Sources:
<http://www.godecookery.com/>

Castles:
<http://www.castles-of-britain.com/castle6.htm>

The Labyrinth: Resources for Medieval Studies
<http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/labyrinth-home>

Speaking Our Minds, Struttin' Our Stuff!

Whether or not it's fit to print!

BAD MOVIES FROM GOOD BOOKS: THE HIGH CRUSADE

SF great Poul Anderson (who recently passed away) wrote a short novel in the 1950s, *The High Crusade*. In typical Anderson style, he mixed hard SF, social satire, and a bit of political commentary. The story concerned a UFO that landed in England during the Middle Ages. The bold English knights and stout English yeomen stormed the spaceship, seized it from the deceitful aliens, and then got themselves lost in space. But never fear, those true Englishmen won in the end, and set up a tidy little space empire.

Some months ago, while watching the Space Channel very late one night, I saw a film version of *The High Crusade*, made in that well-known cinematic centre, Bavaria. The script sounded like it had been written by someone who was embarrassed to be involved with the project, and tried to make it all into a joke. Memo to the script department: there is a difference between a script full of jokes and a script that is a joke.

The special effects weren't that bad? on a par with, say, a 50s "B" movie. The only recognisable actor in the film was John Rhys-Davies, who did a professional job as the village priest. His considerable acting talents meant he could avoid looking embarrassed at the incredibly feeble script and worse acting by his colleagues.

Of the other actors, the less said the better. But when the same names repeat themselves in the credits, you start thinking that this might be a family film in more ways than one.

- Joe Aspler

NEW SERIES: VERITAS & MIRACLES

If you liked Tomb Raider you'll like Veritas. An archaeologist using state of the art technology to uncover secrets more ancient than ever thought possible.

Along the way, Solomon Zond discovers another treasure long buried: a relationship with his son Nikko, the two having drifted apart since the death of Nikko's mother many years earlier.

Veritas is Latin for truth and that's what the team is looking for: the truth about the history of civilization. As the story unfolds, we find out more about the members of the team, their histories and specialties.

Trying to stop the Veritas Foundation are members of an ancient society, looking for the same secrets and willing to kill to get there first.

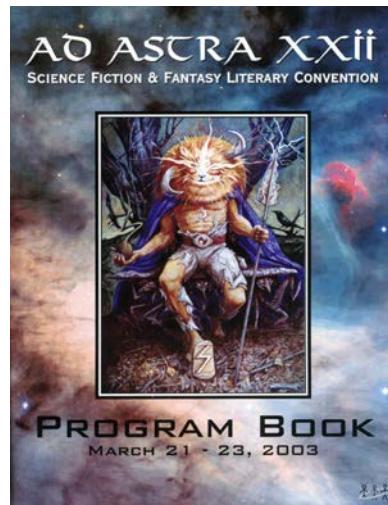
As far as I can tell, this series could be the beginning of an exciting adventure.

However, the same can't be said of Miracles. It's just the latest in a long line of series about a group of people secretly investigating strange goings on, looking for some greater truth and trying to stop a coming darkness.

The series starts with a young man, Paul Callan, working for the church as an investigator of modern miracles. Following a crisis of faith Paul becomes disillusioned with his superiors within the church and quits his job. It's then that he is recruited by a group of people doing research of their own.

Both series can be found on ABC on Monday nights: Veritas at 8:00pm and Miracles at 10:00pm. Of the two I find Veritas to be better written and overall more interesting with a better chance of survival in the ratings.

Ad Astra XXII - March 21-23



I had almost forgotten what it was like to attend a convention just as a member, and not having to volunteer for anything was a real treat! Cathy Palmer-Lister and I both took the train, and I highly recommend that mode of transportation if you are planning to travel between Downtown Montreal and Downtown Toronto. The trip lasted only four hours and a half, and we arrived quite rested and ready to enjoy the event.

Reaching back as far as 1981, Ad Astra is one of the oldest surviving conventions in Canada. It has managed to hang on in part because its successive organisers have not been afraid to restructure the whole thing when needed.

Happily for them they never abandoned the full weekend format, but it is only recently that the setting has moved back to the heart of town. The Colony Hotel proved to be quite well located, right next to City Hall, and with a decent layout for this sort of event. At \$109 a night, the con rate was rather reasonable considering the price of accommodations in that

neighbourhood. It appears that the convention space was almost free, provided that enough participants spent enough room-nights on site, something we never did quite manage to get in Montreal. To be honest, there were some hints that connections were involved...

While Ad Astra still leans heavily towards the Literary aspect of the genre, it combined its efforts this year with the Orion Gaming convention. I was a bit afraid that the latter might take over, but it turned out that we hardly saw the gamers at all, engrossed as they were in their own separate out-of-the-way room.

The panels were good and covered a decent cross-section of topics. They also turned out to be surprisingly well attended; the panellists never outnumbering the spectators. Sadly, there were also a few instances of panels being held before their scheduled time, a cardinal sin in my book!

Cathy and I both took copious mental notes during the Running a Con panel, trying to pick up new ideas. We learned a number of interesting tidbits, such as the difficulty for any literary convention in Canada to top four hundred members, no matter where it is held or how good the advertising.

Of particular interest were the now traditional Tasting Panels. For an additional fee, one could get to sample such delicacies as various beers, fine wines, Scotches and (yum) rare chocolates.

Apparently, the Brunch was not quite a success, being overpriced and poorly run. With three restaurants in the hotel and a very well stocked Con Suite, this fortunately did not cause any hardship for those who chose not to attend.

A certain pervasive lack of organisation, at least by the standards we are accustomed to with Con*Cept, was very much noticeable. There were no major foul-ups, but many things could certainly have been better prepared; especially at the Registration Desk, where people get their first impression.

All things considered, the Dealers' Room was not all that much larger and varied than Con*Cept's, so I guess we

SF/F SIGHTINGS!



Seen at a Biotech convention, summer of 2002, submitted by Joe Aspler



Welsh Bookstore, submitted by Joe Aspler

have it pretty good in that field as well. The Art Show, however, was bigger than anything we've had even in our heydays and displayed many interesting items.

The Masquerade was passable, nothing more. It is a sad fact that costuming is not as popular as it used to be. Call me an old fuddle, but I remember when Ad Astra could easily line up thirty contestants or more, many of them of outstanding quality. *SIGH* Ah, the good old days!...

Was it worth it to travel all the way to Toronto to attend this con? Yes, definitely! Sure, it could have been

made better, but even without any changes it was still most enjoyable. I shopped for weird and marvellous things, watched several new anime shows, sipped some interesting wines, attended quite a few lively panels, saw gorgeous art and met old friends I had not seen in years (including a few former Montrealers!). Even the Masquerade had enough interesting costumes to be fun. All in all, a most pleasant way to spend a weekend.

- *Sylvain St-Pierre*

Pages 13 & 14 had the Toronto Trek 17 Flyer on it.

GoH: Linda Park, Gil Gerard, Erin Gray, Julie Caitlin Brown.

Pages 15 & 16 had the Anime North Flyer

It was held May 16-18, 20003. At the Regal Constellation Hotel.

Page 17 had the Flyer for C-ACE 2003, in Ottawa, GoH was Chris Goodwin

Page 18 had the flyer for MIGSCON XXIV

Hamilton, Ontario, a model show

Page 19 Hd the flyer for Torcon 3

GoH: George RR Martin, Frank Kelly Freas, Mike Glyer,

Spider Robinson, GoHost of Honour was Rober Bloch

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA) | | I' Association montréalaise de science-fiction et de fantastique (AMonSFF) |
| Membership Application Form | | Formulaire d'adhesion |
| <p>Name _____</p> <p>Street _____ Apt. # _____</p> <p>City _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code _____</p> <p>Telephone: _____</p> <p>e-mail: _____</p> <p>Interests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Science fiction _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Fantasy _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Horror _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Movies/TV _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Writing _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Art _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Gaming _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Others _____ _____ _____ | | <p>Nom _____</p> <p>Rue _____ App. # _____</p> <p>Ville _____ Prov. _____ Code postal _____</p> <p>Téléphone: _____</p> <p>Courriel _____</p> <p>Intérêts personnels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Science fiction _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Fantastique _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Horreur _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Films/Télé _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Écriture _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Art _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Jeux de rôles _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Autres _____ _____ _____ |
| <p>Please send cheque or money order in the amount of 25\$ to:</p> <p>MonSFFA PO Box 1186 Place du Parc Montréal, Québec H2X 4A7</p> | | <p>Veuillez parvenir un chèque ou un mandat-postal, au montant de 25\$:</p> <p>AmonSFF CP 1186, Place du Parc Montréal, Québec H2X 4A7</p> |
| <p>Occasionally, we are approached by other fan clubs or fan-run conventions interested in soliciting our members. Please indicate whether or not you give your permission to pass on the information contained in this application.</p> | | <p>À l'occasion, d'autres clubs et congrès amateurs désirent se faire connaître de nos membres. Veuillez nous faire savoir si vous acceptez que les informations contenues dans cette inscription leurs soient communiquées.</p> |
| <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> | | <p>Oui <input type="checkbox"/> Non <input type="checkbox"/></p> |

MonSFFandom: February 2002-March 2003

All the Club News That's Fit to Print, We Print to Fit!
Keith Braithwaite

In the interests of posterity, the "MonSFFandom" column, in each issue of Warp, collects and reprints (in abridged form), reports on the club's activities taken from the pages of Impulse, MonSFFA's monthly one-sheet news bulletin and companion to Warp.

This particular edition of "MonSFFandom" will run a tad more pages than usual because the previous issue of Warp (number 53) appeared back in Spring 2002, and so we've got a lot of catching up to do. Before we cover the last year and a bit of club activities we'll keep it as concise as possible! An explanation of Warp's MIA status is due the membership.

Warp has suffered a number of production delays these past few years, and finally went missing altogether following that Spring 2002 issue. The 'zine had been receiving only scant submissions from the membership, often leaving editor Lynda Pelley with a dearth of content, which had the effect of delaying scheduled release of the publication. And when articles and reviews and opinion pieces did come in, they as much as not arrived on Lynda's desk past deadline, triggering yet more delays as postponement added to postponement. Needless to say, our quarterly schedule was soon off track.

Lynda was also finding that she had less time to devote to the newsletter, due in large part to a new schedule at work (evening shift and a lot of overtime). Add to that computer problems, which further hampered things (Lynda's computer is quite an old model and no longer up to the demands of modern desktop publishing) and Lynda, finally, found herself rather burned out. This led to her notifying the club that she had

decided to step down as Warp's editor.

And so that, in a nutshell, is the recent story of Warp. But the latest developments, we expect, will see our fanzine soon return to a regular publishing schedule (beginning with the copy you now hold in your hands).

Here's how Impulse reported, in its March 2003 issue, the news of Lynda's departure and Warp's anticipated revival:

Long-Time Warp Editor Retires, New Editor Steps In

Lynda Pelley has informed MonSFFA's Board of Advisors that she is stepping down as editor of the club's fanzine, Warp. A former MonSFFA president and Warp's full-time editor since mid-1998, Lynda cited her principle reason for taking leave of responsibility for the fanzine as burn-out. She added that her odd-hours work schedule has made it difficult to consistently devote the time needed to the task.

But most importantly, she stressed that a paucity of submissions to Warp from the membership in recent years often left her short of content. Lynda cautions that MonSFFen must take a more active role in this area lest the fanzine slip further off schedule than it already has. Warp cannot, and should not, be a one-person show.

With this in mind, the BoA meeting of March 9 added to its agenda discussion of the Warp situation and the formulation of an action plan. That plan sees Cathy Palmer-Lister assume editorship of the 'zine in what has become a club tradition of former MonSFFA presidents taking on responsibility for Warp. In volunteering for the job, Cathy echoed Lynda's thoughts regarding the need of the club's membership to produce content for the 'zine – book, film, and convention reviews, how-to articles, fan fiction, opinion pieces, art, etc. With the contribution of

MonSFFen, the BoA is confident of Warp under Cathy sustaining the excellence that is Lynda's legacy.

And so, as we welcome our new fanzine editor to the job, we offer these words of thanks to the departing editor for her many years of devotion to Warp, first as a member of the 'zine's production staff, then as a co-editor, and finally as solo editor these past five years. It was on Lynda's watch that Warp scored an Aurora award as best fanzine (1999), a proud day for the club (the Auroras are Canada's annual SF/F achievement awards). Enjoy your well-deserved retirement, Lynda.

Quick overview of the club's past 12 months or so ...

And now, on to a quick overview of the club's past 12 months or so (February 2002-March 2003). We'll run the monthly MonSFFA meeting reports, sequentially, last, covering, first, our non-meeting MonSFFActivities.

The club's amateur filmmakers embarked on a fresh project in February 2002 that involved ambitious digital movie-making technology. Impulse reported in March, and again in April, on their progress:

MonSFFilms Crew Shoot Short

Bryan Ekers oversaw a MonSFFilms video shoot the morning of the club's February meeting. Bryan is the writer/director of a humorous short subject that sees Anakin Skywalker take up smoking, and thus begin his descent to the Dark Side.

Sébastien Mineau, playing Anakin, performed in front of a blue screen that had been set up across the back wall of our meeting room. CGI backdrops will later be composited with this footage of Sébastien,

and animated elements, such as a lightsabre beam, added. John Matthias, the club's CGI wizard, was on hand to advise the live-action crew. John was responsible for the CGI flying saucer and post-production compositing that helped propel the club's UFO Video Project to top honours last year (2001) in a video contest sponsored by Toronto Trek.

Bryan's project marks the first time MonSFFilms has shot with a digital camcorder and employed a blue screen, serving as a test of our capabilities using these digital film making techniques.

Video Project Reshoot

Tests on the footage shots for the club's short subject video project proved our jerry-rigged blue screen set-up inadequate. Working with this footage, while feasible, would entail a great deal of time and effort on the part of the post-production crew. It was calculated that we'd get the job done more quickly and with less difficulty by simply reshooting the footage against a better blue screen.

And so, a blue screen-equipped TV studio was booked – courtesy project CGI artist John Matthias – the cast and crew recalled, and the whole thing shot again. Writer/director Bryan Ekers then oversaw the editing of the piece and we are pleased to report that post-production work is currently under way.

This project has yet to be completed. The digital post-production work proved more time-consuming than expected and John Matthias left Montreal for work in Ontario a few months later, before having had time to complete the CGI work. He remains in touch, however, and continues to work on the project, albeit on a less sophisticated computer system than that to which he had access here. Progress is slow, but John hopes to have a completed film to ship back to us sometime this year. Our fingers are crossed.

MonSFFA is called upon, from time to time, to help with fund-raising at the PBS television station in Plattsburgh, New York. From the March 2002 Impulse:

MonSFFen at PBS Pledge Drive

A crew of MonSFFen visited the Mountain Lake PBS television studios (WCFE) in Plattsburgh, New York, on Saturday evening, March 16, to man the phone lines during the station's 25th anniversary weekend Movie Marathon. MonSFFA has supported Mountain Lake PBS for more than a decade and we were pleased to answer the call once again, joining friends from the Plattsburgh Star Trek club at the phone banks.

Our people helped raise about \$5000 over the course of their stay.

Thanks to our group of volunteers, Berny Reischl, Cathy Palmer-Lister, Lynda Pelley, Dominique Durocher, Theresa Penalba, David James, and Keith Braithwaite.



Cathy, David, & Lynda answering phones at WCFE – Bernard Reischl.

The March 2002 Impulse also noted the premiere of the SF film Time Machine, attended by a handful of MonSFFen:

Time Machine Premiere

A half-dozen MonSFFen were among the first in town to enjoy the new sci-fi adventure The Time Machine, courtesy DreamWorks, who sent along tickets to the film's Montreal premiere. Included with the tickets were a few promotional items. Thanks DreamWorks!

Come May, Impulse reported that the club faced new costs with regard to its Web site.

Club Web Site

MonSFFA has, to date, benefited from cost-free Web site hosting, courtesy the good and generous folks over at LaLaWeb. But all good things must come to an end. Circumstances have arisen that will shortly see us, in all likelihood, reluctantly depart LaLaWeb and begin paying for our hosting service. Club president Berny Reischl is seeing to this matter and expects to have further details soon.

Those "further details" came in July:

New Web Host for Club

Berny Reischl reports that the club's Web site is now up and running under a new Web hosting outfit, Netfirms. The move to a new host was necessitated by the bankruptcy of LaLaWeb, our previous Web host.

We take a moment to thank the crew over at LaLaWeb for having provided us with excellent hosting services over the past year and more. We are saddened to hear of the company's failure.

Web hosting through Netfirms will run the club about \$100 annually, within the budget allotted. Netfirms recently dubbed ours a "Site of the Week." Cool!

*Con*Cept, was back in 2002, following the successful revival of the defunct SF/F convention by MonSFFA in 2001. MonSFFA had assumed control of Con*Cept early in 2001, after its previous organizers had thrown in the towel. Impulse ran the first details of the 2002 edition of the con in June's issue, including news of the acquisition of a sponsor, the French-language sci-fi TV channel, Z:*

Con*Cept 2002 Confirms Guests

Keith R. A. DeCandido, TV personality, critic, editor, and principally a writer of SF/F media tie-ins (Spider-Man, Farscape, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Star Trek), has been confirmed as a guest at this year's Con*Cept SF/F convention, coming November 2. Artist and entertainer, and a perennial favourite, Larry Stewart returns

once again as the con's MC. In an effort to expand French-language programming in 2002, Con*Cept has secured the participation of the fledgling French sci-fi channel, Canal Z. Featured here: Éric Arson, chief editor, Canal Z's Webillard Sci-Fi, and Pascal Forget, host, La revanche des nerdz. The con will also welcome Claude Legault and Pierre-Yves Bernard, co-creators of the popular television comedy *Dans une galaxie près de chez vous*.

The concom is working to add gaming, an art show, and an all-day video track to the mix, this year. Further, the "Alien Garage Sale" is an innovation for 2002. Persons attending Con*Cept may, for a nominal service fee, sell some of their SF/F collection through the convention. Plans are coming together, as well, for some kind of sci-fi carnival, details to be announced.

The SF/F Collectibles Auction returns, as does last year's well-received "Jar Jar" Auction. These auctions raise funds for Con*Cept, MonSFFA, and local charity.

Subsequent news followed next month:

Con*Cept Guest Announcement

Con*Cept is pleased to announce that actor Ted Raimi (*Xena*, *seaQuest*, *Spider-Man*) will guest at this year's convention, Saturday, November 2. With the help of a few benefactors, the con has been able to secure the participation of Mr. Raimi. We thank these benefactors and will have further news re Con*Cept t 2002 in coming issues.

That further news included information on pre-registration and at-the-door prices, details re the various activities planned, appeals for donations to the con's fund-raising auction, and news that Mr. Raimi would not attend the con after all! At the eleventh hour, he was replaced by a duo of Babylon 5 stars, reported the October 2002 Impulse:

B-5 Duo Are Con*Cept 2002 Guests

Con*Cept is pleased to announce that Babylon 5 stars Richard Biggs (Dr. Franklin) and Jason Carter (Marcus Cole) have been added to the guest list of this

year's convention. They are appearing in place of Ted Raimi, who was originally scheduled as the con's actor guest, and who had to bow out due to professional commitments.

We thank Mr. Raimi for his interest in our event and hope to welcome him to Montreal another time. And we thank misters Biggs and Carter for agreeing to attend Con*Cept on short notice.

But let's not get too far ahead of ourselves, here. Back, for a moment, to summer, where July's Impulse noted a strong MonSFFA presence at the huge Toronto Trek sci-fi convention:

MonSFFA at Toronto Trek 16



Is Sylvain trying to sell Cathy a copy of WARP? —Bernard Reischl

A sizable number of MonSFFen attended Toronto Trek 16 (July 5-7) and the club was pleased to see a few of our members tapped by con organizers as panelists. Several MonSFFen brought home masquerade and model-contest awards. Congratulations!

Meanwhile, MonSFFA ran a promotional booth, selling back issues of Warp, MonSFFA lapel buttons, etc. We also distributed a good many information flyers, publicizing MonSFFA and Con*Cept 2002.

Thanks are due the following club members for staffing our booth: Keith Braithwaite, Cathy Palmer-Lister, Sylvain St-Pierre, Josée Bellemare, and Wayne Glover. Thanks as well to Berny Reischl and Mark Burakoff, who arranged for the booth. Keith, Cathy, and Wayne also transported our promotional supplies and merchandise, as did Ernst-Udo Peters and Michele Berry; thank you all.

MonSFFA held a successful outdoor barbecue in July, a month traditionally quiet for the club, leading

to talk of organizing future such events. August's Impulse offered a brief report:

Summer Barbecue

Over 20 MonSFFen and friends trekked to Parc Angrignon in LaSalle Sunday afternoon, July 21, to enjoy a club-sponsored summer barbecue. The group picnicked, relaxed in the shade, or faced off in cooling water gun fights. A good time was had by all.

MonSFFA has always taken a break mid-summer, suspending all activities, but the success of this barbecue, our first, will likely see us schedule other such July events in future.

Thanks to club president Berny Reischl, Mark Burakoff, and Mark's brother, Dave, for organizing the event and providing the grills and cooking kit.



MonFFen enjoying the shade on a hot, muggy day — Berny Reischl

The club has, indeed, scheduled a barbecue this year (July 27, same locale).

Summer segues into fall and MonSFFA is approached by Chapters Books re the club hosting SF/F-themed events at the chain's downtown store. The November 2002 Impulse provides the gist of the arrangement under discussion:

MonSFFA Events at Chapters

MonSFFA has been asked by Chapters Books to put on a series of SF/F-themed special events at the bookseller's downtown Montreal location. The idea is to entice SF/F readers to visit the store, which profits Chapters, while at the same time promoting MonSFFA, which benefits us.

We are presently working out the particulars of the first of these events, which Chapters hopes to schedule end of

this month. Other co-operative undertakings between MonSFFA and Chapters are currently being discussed, including jointly sponsored appearances by SF/F authors.

*Chapters donates items to Con*Cept for auction and facilitates the club's advertising of the con by placing our flyers and posters in its stores. Unfortunately, a scheduled December slideshow on special effects in sci-fi movies is cancelled due to electrical problems which render the downtown store's conference room unusable. Chapters apologizes for the glitch and tells us they will reschedule for 2003.*

*With Con*Cept 2002 only a couple weeks done, November's Impulse also excitedly reported on the con's considerable gains re attendance, and overwhelmingly positive reviews:*

Con*Cept Attendance Almost Double Last Year's



Early estimates put Con*Cept 2002's paid attendance at some 330, almost twice last year's draw! Registration-desk staff, day of, reported many first-timers and word on the convention floor was overwhelmingly positive.

Much of this resulted, no doubt, from a terrific guest line-up. Babylon 5 stars Richard Biggs and Jason Carter headlined, joined by local talents Claude Legault and Pierre-Yves Bernard, creators of the television series *Dans une galaxie près de chez vous*; and writer Keith DeCandido, author of several Star Trek, Spider-Man, Farscape, and Buffy the Vampire Slayer novels. And, certainly, we were well served by a more aggressive advertising campaign, this year, which included spots on French-language sci-fi TV station Canal Z,

co-sponsor, with MonSFFA, of the event.

The ConCom is currently examining in detail the attendance numbers, as well as revenue and expenses figures, and expects to present a full and final report in early-mid December.



Teresa Penalba, about to burst from excessive joy & enthusiasm, poses with GoH Richard Biggs & Jason Carter – Bernard Reischl

Let's jump ahead, here, for a moment; the January 2003 issue of Impulse provides the details of this report, which includes news both good and bad:

Con*Cept: Good News and Bad News

Con*Cept 2002 is officially behind us, now, the concom having closed the books on last year's edition of the convention at a recent wrap-up meeting. There's good news and there's bad news.

Good news first. Con*Cept 2002 almost doubled attendance over 2001, drawing 338 paying customers, of which about half were newcomers. The con successfully added an art show and gaming to the mix, more than tripled the number of dealers participating over 2001, and featured more French-language programming (estimates are that about 40 percent of attendees were Francophone).

Advertising of the event was stronger than it has been in years, thanks to a solid presence on the Web, TV advertising courtesy Z télé (the local French-language sci-fi channel), and more aggressive poster/flyer distribution. Interestingly, half the folk surveyed indicated word of mouth as the principal means by which they learned of Con*Cept.

Our headlining guests proved popular,

were very fan-friendly, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Lastly, the con was overwhelming praised by attendees, who, it seems, largely overlooked the few glitches that plagued the event. Some described the con as one of the best Con*Cepts ever.

Now the bad news. Con*Cept 2002 cost about \$1600 more to run than it took in. Fortunately, the healthy profits realized by 2001's con offset 2002's loss, and managed to leave us still with some \$500. So while the 2002 event lost money, Con*Cept overall remains in the black, though with a considerably reduced pool of start-up money for 2003's event.



Spy vs Spy – One of these pyromaniacs is Mark Burakoff, the other is Lindsay Brown. What a cute couple! – Bernard Reischl

The eleventh-hour change of marquee guests is at the root of the loss, we believe. Our originally scheduled media guest regrettably cancelled within a couple months of the con due to professional commitments. While Babylon 5 stars Richard Biggs and Jason Carter – slotted as replacements – probably boosted attendance some, and definitely the positive reputation of the convention, bringing them in at the last minute also boosted costs. Perhaps, had we had more time to advertise the guest change, we might have pulled in the additional 100 or so people that would've seen the con break even.

Con*Cept 2003, then, will be hobbled somewhat, working from a reduced start-up fund to begin with, and dealing with rising hotel function space rental costs. No doubt, we can expect Con*Cept ticket prices to rise this year. Further, plans for expanding to a full-weekend convention within a couple of years are now on hold. Also noted as a problem is the ongoing need for more concom members and day-of volunteers to run the whole thing.

As 2002 nears its end, MonSFFA vice-president, Sébastien Mineau

decides not to seek another term in office. December's Impulse explains:

Club Elections

Sébastien has recently informed us that he will not seek re-election as the club's VP. Citing an honest difference of opinion with his fellow BoA members over some of MonSFFA's tenets, Sébastien has come to the conclusion that his approach to the VP's job does not jive with the club's current thinking. He thinks it best that he step down at this time, take a bit of a break, and sit as a regular member of the club. We thank him for his enthusiastic service to MonSFFA these past few years.

But over the Christmas holidays, after talking things over with some his fellow BoA members, Sébastien will have a change of heart and reverse his decision not to run, pledging to rededicate himself to the job. He, president Berny Reischl, and treasurer Sylvain St-Pierre will all be returned to office for 2003.

MonSFFA's year-ending event is its annual Christmas party. Impulse announces an addition to the club's Christmas celebrations for 2002:

MonSFFA Christmas Celebrations

MonSFFA will hold its annual Christmas party at the familiar Park Place Bar, site of last year's party and many before that. The friendly Park Place staff are pleased to welcome us again.

We have decided to expand our seasonal celebrations this year; members and friends are invited to the downtown Alouette Steak House for dinner.

The first Impulse of 2003 is an "extra-large" issue (legal rather than the standard letter size) in order to accommodate a bit more than the usual quantity of news, including a report on the Christmas party and dinner:

2002 Christmas Dinner and Party

MonSFFA added a pre-party dinner to its traditional seasonal celebrations last month. Over two dozen MonSFFen and friends enjoyed a good meal and conversation at the downtown Alouette Steak House, following which celebrations adjourned to the bar, that being our traditional Christmas party locale, the Park Place Bar, a few blocks walk from the restaurant.



Wining & dining at the Alouette Steak House – Bernard Reischl

And so we dined and danced, toasted and talked, shot a little pool, and in the process, collected several boxes and bags worth of toys and non-perishable food items for donation to local charity.

The evening's raffle prizes included SF/F books, posters, T-shirts, a few Lord of the Rings action figures, and a selection of sci-fi-themed lapel pins given to the cause by Berny Reischl and Mark Burakoff (The Two Wacky Pin Guys).

Thanks to Berny and Mark for their generous donation, and indeed, to all who offered items for raffle. Thanks to Berny, once more, for setting up the dinner, and to Keith Braithwaite for setting us up at the bar, providing music for the occasion, and seeing to the delivery of our collected charity. And thanks to the staff of the Park Place Bar – Debbie, Heather, and the guys – for welcoming us again, as they have these many years.

A good time was had by all, and we trust that all of our members and friends had a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

And word on increases to the club's operating budget:

Budget Tight as Room Rental Rates Rise

We are informed that our meeting room rental rates will rise substantially if not this year, then certainly next. With membership having dipped some over the last couple years, the club's treasury cannot, at this time, handle much of an increase in operating costs. As such we are looking at alternate, less expensive meeting locales (such as the Atwater Library) and other ways of keeping spiraling costs in this area under control. Watch this space for further news.

In the meantime, we remind our members to renew their memberships on time to insure the club regular cash flow. And tell a friend about us, encourage them to join the fun. Adding just one new member to the roster each month this year will go a long way to easing the financial pinch.

February's Impulse paid tribute to the lost Columbia astronauts:

Columbia Lost

Infused as science fiction fans are with a keen interest in space exploration, we mark with great sadness the tragic loss, on Saturday, February 1, 2003, of the space shuttle Columbia, destroyed in the sky over southwestern Texas with all aboard. During re-entry and less than 20 minutes from its scheduled landing in Florida, the spacecraft experienced a catastrophic failure and broke apart in a fiery explosion at an altitude of about 200,000 feet.

Columbia's crew of seven, which included Israel's first astronaut, join the ranks of those lost to mankind's noble adventure in space. We mourn their passing and honour their contribution to the continuing exploration of that final frontier.

Rick Husband, Commander

William McCool, Pilot

David Brown, Mission Specialist

Laurel Clark, Mission Specialist

Kalpana Chawla, Mission Specialist

Michael Anderson, Payload Commander

Ilan Ramon, Payload Specialist

The March 2003 Impulse announced a logo contest initiated by club president Berny Reischl:

MonSFFA Logo Contest

Club president Berny Reischl has initiated a contest to select a new logo for the club, the first step in a proposed updating of the club's visual face for 2004. Launching this contest at our March 23 sci-fi art-themed meeting, the idea is to come up with an eye-catching logo that defines the club at a glance and works well large or small, in colour or black and white, and in print and on the Web.

Devised as a group project, Berny encourages all MonSFen to take part. Artistic talent is not obligatory; all design ideas are welcome. Collectively, in the coming months, we will hone things down to a final sketch, then have one of the club's artists refine the winning design and produce master artwork. The plan is to unveil our new logo in November at Con*Cept 2003.

We expect to award some kind of a prize to the creator(s) of the successful design, this to be discussed and decided upon shortly.

*Also included in March's issue were several items re Con*Cept 2003, including the list of the con's membership rates, news of a bank account having been set up specifically for Con*Cept, and this announcement re guests:*

Con*Cept Firms Up Guests

Babylon 5 fans who enjoyed meeting series stars Richard Biggs and Jason Carter last year courtesy Con*Cept have reason to celebrate this year, too. The convention has signed Claudia "Ivanova" Christian as its headlining media guest. Award-winning Canadian SF/F novelist Dave Duncan is aboard as the con's literary guest. Frédéric Ouellet, writer of the new fantasy adventure TV series *Le secret de la Grande Ourse*, has been tapped as our French-language guest. And local artist Heidi Taillefer is Artist Guest of Honour. Our perennial MC, entertainer/artist Larry Stewart, is, of course, also back in 2003, joined by last year's French MC, Pascal Forget, who returns in that capacity.

The ConCom is talking to other potential guests at press time and running the numbers to see if the con's budget can manage a few more invitations.

Monthly Meeting Reports

And finally, we come to the monthly meeting reports, a full year's worth reprinted here in chronological order, February 2002-February 2003:

February MonSFFA Meeting



Now, there's a sight to worry our president! Cindy, Fran, and Lindsay scheming in the back row – Bernard Reischl

Our February downtown meeting took place on the 17th and drew about 25-30 people for an afternoon of debate and discussion.

Keith Braithwaite, Bryan Ekers, Ernst-Udo Peters, and Sylvain St-Pierre formed our panel for the first half of the meeting, which dealt with what we called "The Mr. Data Question." We asked the whether artificial beings like Mr. Data, human clones, genetically modified humans, and aliens are deserving of the same rights we have bestowed upon ourselves as humans.

Bryan opened with a brief multimedia presentation on artificial intelligence, or A.I., highlighting the Turing Test, devised by mathematician, World War II-era code-breaker, and computer scientist Dr. Alan Turing to determine if a computer can think. Turing's "imitation game" has a person ask questions remotely of a computer and another person. Based upon the responses received, the questioner must differentiate between man and machine. If he cannot, the computer is said to be able

to think.

Discussion followed on the criteria required to qualify as an intelligent being, self-awareness, for example. As we venture out into the galaxy, we would probably demand intelligence comparable to our own before extending the same rights to an alien race that we've bestowed upon ourselves. Apes are certainly intelligent animals, but not intelligent enough, we've decided, to share our rights. An alien that didn't measure up would not likely share those rights, either.

With cloning increasingly in the news these days, talk turned to the ethics of human cloning. Would a human clone be considered wholly a person? In citing the ongoing abortion debate, it was noted that modern society has yet to agree on what can be considered a human being, and thus entitled to human rights. Once the science of cloning is perfected, would it be morally acceptable to grow clones, perhaps making genetic modifications in the process, in order to provide slave labour? Do we have the right to create a race of clones purely for our own benefit, as sexual playthings, or organ donors? The consensus was that such practices would be unacceptable. A cloned human should enjoy full human rights.

But while most had no problem granting human rights to a clone, not all were as prepared to do the same for a machine, based on the position that a machine is not a biological entity, is created from scratch by human hands, and has an on/off switch. It emerged that the more unlike a human is a being, the less sympathetic are we in affording it human rights.

Following the mid-meeting break, Keith served as moderator of a group discussion on political correctness in SF/F. Most agreed that there are a few positive aspects to political correctness, such as bringing a little sensitivity to the table regarding other cultures and beliefs. That said, it was felt that PC has gotten entirely out of hand as it is applied today.

Condemned was the banning – or worse, the rewriting – of books authored long ago because minority groups were depicted in what by modern standards is judged a negative fashion. Most felt that to apply contemporary standards to works of the past is misguided. Old sci-fi films, for instance, that portray women as helpless screamers should be viewed in context, noting the times in which they were produced. Keep in mind that the screamers of those years became the Ripley's of

today. Through past works of SF/F, we witness the development of the genre. "Correcting" these past works so that they jive with modern sensibilities succeeds only in distorting or erasing that past, robbing us of the history of the genre.

Several people expressed the opinion that it is simply wrong to tamper with the original vision of an author or filmmaker, regardless.

And PC can backfire, as was pointed out re Star Trek. Changing "boldly go where no man has gone before" to "where no one has gone before" responded to criticism that women were boldly going as well, and ought to be included. But the revised wording succeeds in dismissing the boldly going of all but the human race! Surely the Vulcans must be included, too, as they were boldly going long before humans. And what about the Orions?

Thanks to all who put together and ran our February meeting.

Guest Speakers at March Meeting

MonSFFA welcomed guests Donald Kingsbury and Francine Quesnel to our March 24 meeting to speak on the topic of writing in universes created by others. Mr. Kingsbury is a noted SF/F writer (*Courtship Rite*, *The Moon Goddess and the Son*) based in Montreal. Ms. Quesnel-Fran to her friends is a local fan fiction writer turned semi-pro. She has three books to her credit. Keith Braithwaite served as moderator.

Mr. Kingsbury, who has penned tales in both Larry Niven's (Man-Kzin Wars series) and Isaac Asimov's (Psychohistorical Crisis) universes, enjoys writing in someone else's universe when he finds that an interesting story can be told in an area of that universe that the original writer has not explored. Equally, he is motivated to tackle an established series that he likes, but that he feels has lately gone astray. In such cases, he takes readers in the direction he thinks should have been taken by the original writer.

While Fran's fiction is original, her principle characters take their personalities—their "essence," as she puts it—from the Xena TV series, a favourite of hers. Fran's approach is, if you will, a subtle form of "writing in universes created by others." She insists on remaining free to tell the stories she wants to tell in her own settings, but imbues her characters with the

qualities of her TV favourites. Xena fans, she says, will recognize that when reading her books.

Mr. Kingsbury maintains creative freedom by creating his own characters within the established universe in which he is writing, thus allowing him sufficient latitude to do what he wants. The characters created by the original author play a peripheral role, leaving Mr. Kingsbury largely free of having to deal in detail with characters created by someone else.

Both of our guests stated that they make no attempt to emulate the prose style of another writer. Nor are they prepared to take things too far with another's character, writing something that would not respect the original author's rendering of that character.

Following the mid-meeting break, club vice-president Sébastien Mineau gave an extensive historical overview of the Jedi and Sith, as laid out in the Star Wars comics. It was noted that the relationship between the two is a close one, two sides of the same coin.

Sébastien also filled us in on plans by some of the area Star Wars groups for celebrating Star Wars in conjunction with the release of *Attack of the Clones*.

Thanks to our guest speakers, Donald Kingsbury and Francine Quesnel, and to Keith, Sébastien, and all who helped to plan and run this meeting.

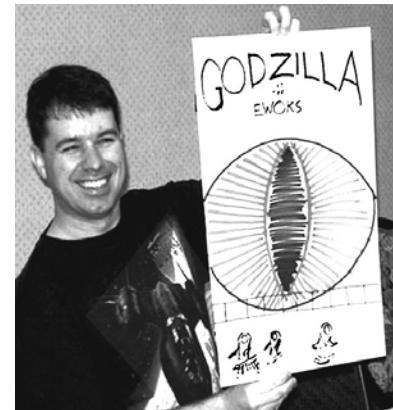
Early birds enjoyed a pre-meeting screening of the Babylon 5 TV movie *Legends of the Rangers*.

April MonSFFA Meeting

The club's April meeting was held on the 21st, drawing about 20 people.

Programming opened with "Coming Soon," a game in which artists were asked to come up with movie poster designs for such concocted films as *Godzilla vs. the Ewoks*, *Attack of the Clowns*, *Mutant Rouge*, and *Austin Powers 4: Thunderballs*. As our artists sketched, the audience was encouraged to suggest tag lines. At the conclusion of the game, the sketches were auctioned off and brought in about \$13 for the club's coffers.

Thanks for this one to game host/artist Keith Braithwaite and participating artists Phil Fogel, Berny Reischl, and Dominique



Dominique Durocher's movie poster for "Godzilla & the Ewoks" – Bernard Reischl

Durocher.

From our game we segued into a look at movies that really are coming soon, this year's crop of summer sci-fi flicks, including probable blockbusters *Spider-Man* and *Star Wars – Episode II*. Berny Reischl and Stephen Toy screened a number of trailers they had downloaded – *Jason X*, *Scooby-Doo*, *Lilo & Stitch*, *Men in Black II*, and *Signs*, to name a few – and panellists Lynda Pelley and Sébastien Mineau joined Berny and Stephen in opining on which films were likely to please, and which were not. While *Spider-Man* and *Episode II* were eagerly anticipated, for example, there was considerable skepticism re *Jason X* and *Scooby-Doo*. *Minority Report* and *Signs* appear promising said our panellists, as does the very cool looking *Reign of Fire* (big, fire-spewing dragons!). And *Austin Powers 3: Goldmember* is sure to be a lot of silly, stupid fun.

Raffle prizes this meeting included a number of movie posters: *Spider-Man*, *Men in Black II*, and the *Star Wars Trilogy (Special Edition)*, complete set.

Thanks to all who put together and ran our April meeting.

May MonSFFA Meeting

We were pleased to welcome a number of new faces to the club's May 26 meeting. Programming included a discussion of the latest Star Wars film, *Attack of the Clones*, and an exploration of the DVD, which has greatly expanded home video entertainment.

MonSFFA VP Sébastien Mineau

moderated our Attack of the Clones discussion. Bryan Ekers and Keith Braithwaite were recruited from the audience to join him on the dais.

Reviews were mixed. The room agreed that, visually, the movie is an amazing piece of work, though not without a few missteps. The fantastic vistas and vehicles, marvellous aliens and costumes are wonderfully evocative of sci-fi's finest space opera-ish, pulp-era illustrations.

Most agreed that the love story between Anakin and Padmé, central to the developing tale, suffered from particularly poor writing. Some, however, were forgiving of this, finding that these scenes were not all that bad. The script was cited as the film's weakest element.

Those lightsabre-wielding Jedi forces proved a crowd-pleaser, as did the titular clone army. Yoda's dramatic battle with Count Dooku was a highlight for all but a few detractors, who found that the whole thing looked a bit silly.

Everyone was happy with Jar Jar's limited screen time!

Decidedly better than Phantom Menace and a return to the feel of the original Star Wars, said some, while plot holes and lapses in internal logic bothered others.

Following the mid-meeting break, during which a couple of lucky raffle-ticket holders scored Attack of the Clones movie posters, Berny Reischl and Keith Braithwaite held a primer on home entertainment's latest big thing, the DVD. They spoke of the superior quality of DVDs, which are to VHS what CDs are to vinyl records.

But the most fun and interesting feature of the format: the many cool extras offered along with the movie. These include theatrical trailers, alternate language soundtracks, and the option of listening to commentary tracks by the director or stars. Some DVDs add "making of" documentaries, picture galleries of storyboards and production art, special effects test footage, scenes deleted from the final cut, or alternate endings. Cinema buffs are certain to love such stuff.

Hidden features, so-called "Easter eggs," can be found on many DVDs. They are not advertised on the packaging or listed in the on-screen menus, and provide an enjoyable surprise when stumbled upon by viewers. Lists of Easter eggs and directions on how to access them are readily available on the Web.

Berny and Keith screened a few Easter eggs, along with a sampling of extras, culled from their respective collections of SF/F DVDs.

We thank our panelists as well as those who helped to plan and run our May meeting.

Early arrivals viewed a video of the 2001 WorldCon Masquerade (courtesy Cathy Palmer-Lister) during the morning session while the club's Special Interest Group for Writers removed themselves to a quiet corner to hold their scheduled meeting.

June MonSFFA Meeting



Attentive audience at June meeting – Bernard Reischl

About 30 people were in attendance as MonSFFA met June 9.

Josée Bellemare, Phil Fogel, and Theresa Penalba were up first on the topic of live-action film adaptations of Saturday morning cartoons.

Various examples were listed, the most recent being Scooby-Doo, released last month.

Often, it was put forth, live-action versions of children's cartoons fail to connect with audiences because the simple charm of the Saturday morning cartoon is lost on the big screen. Fancy special effects tend to come across as over the top, and live actors just seem out of place playing animated characters.

It was noted that some producers insist on including situations and humour inappropriate for young children in order to appeal to an older, notably teen, audience. Thus, the movie is compromised for kids. Such measures, however, are usually not enough to satisfy a young, "hip" crowd, who still regard the movie as something for their little brothers and sisters. On the other hand, adaptations that abandon all pretense of being made for kids can succeed as adult-themed parody.

Our panellists and audience were almost universally negative on live-action film adaptations of Saturday morning cartoons, but quite positive on the reverse, cartoon versions of live-action films, like Batman and Men in Black. Popular action movie characters can continue their adventures in cartoon form, satisfying the desire from audiences for more. These cartoons generally work well, and can be geared to kids of all ages.



Dominique looks over Sylvain's shoulder as he explains how to videotape a masquerade – Bernard Reischl

Following the mid-meeting break, we assembled a panel of photography hobbyists from among our ranks. Lynda Pelley, Dominique Durocher, Charles Mohapel, Berny Reischl, Sylvain St-Pierre, and Daniel P. Kenney held an informative and very interesting primer on photographing sci-fi models and costumes, and videotaping masquerades.

An overview of cameras, lenses, filters, film, etc. was given, including tips on lighting the subject, getting the focus right, insuring a proper exposure, and steadying a camera or camcorder when one does not have a tripod handy. A few photo albums were available for perusal, and the art of digitally retouching photos was demonstrated.

MonSFFA thanks our June meeting's program participants for a fine job done. Thanks, also, to all who helped to plan and run the meeting.

Con*Cept 2002's programming people met with MonSFFen during the morning session, welcoming suggestions for panels and workshops re this year's convention. Lots of ideas were kicked around and over

40 potential panels were the result. Con*Cept thanks everyone for their input.

August MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA resumed its schedule of monthly meetings following the summer break with our August 18 gathering. A review of the summer convention season and a primer on accessorizing sci-fi costumes drew a full house.

We began with a discussion of the summer sci-fi convention season just ended, sharing experiences at various SF/F conventions attended.

Encounters with star guests were recounted, overheard Hollywood sci-fi scuttlebutt exchanged, and tales of partying told. Toronto Trek proved the most popular con of the year among us; many in the room had attended this large, regional media con and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

And with the annual World Science Fiction Convention coming to Toronto next year (2003), talk turned to the WorldCon as veterans of the event painted a picture for those yet to enjoy the ultimate SF/F convention.

Following the mid-meeting break, Lynda Pelley, Dominique Durocher, and Sébastien Mineau introduced the group to the art of accessorizing sci-fi costumes, which includes crafting such gadgets as communicators, ray guns, and space helmets. One can purchase these kinds of things on the sci-fi market, but usually at premium prices. Our panellists prefer to make their own accessories, if only for reasons of budget.

They described how a few dollars worth of plumbing supplies picked up at a hardware store, or old appliance parts, can be moulded into a variety of futuristic skiffy devices. Even a simple child's toy can be modified with little effort to produce a convincing prop. Those adept at electronics can easily add lights and sound using a handful of inexpensive components.

Key is durability and weight. A heavy prop will quickly become uncomfortable to carry or wear, and could damage one's costume. A weighty sidearm, for example, may pull against the fabric, risking tearing the costume. And a fragile prop will stand up poorly to wear and tear.

Well-crafted accessories, it was emphasized, complete a costume.

On hand as examples were some of the panellists' own homemade props, in varying states of finish.

MonSFFA thanks all those who planned and ran this meeting, as well as those who donated items for raffle, and stocked our snack table.



Sebastien, Dominique, & Lynda teach the art of accessorizing sci-fi costumes
— Bernard Reischl

The club's writers' group met during the morning session, wrapping up one project as they began another. Con*Cept 2002's concom also met this morning, as planning and preparation for the convention continues apace.

September Club Meeting

MonSFFA's September 15 meeting centred on what we labelled "space monkeys," described as "saccharine, annoyingly cute, pointlessly distracting, pander-to-the-kiddies alien critter things that can positively ruin an otherwise perfectly serviceable sci-fi movie or TV series." Some 25 or so MonSFFen gathered to list and rate the offending varmints.

Working from a list of candidates drawn up by MonSFFen at the previous month's club meeting, Sylvain St-Pierre and Berny Reischl put together a slide-show of space monkeys, expanding upon our original definition to include robots, A.I.'s, and talking vehicles. Sylvain broke the nominees down into categories and provided a bit of background on each as the audience evaluated just how gaggingly cute and insufferably annoying they were. Among the worst culprits were Pikachu (Pokémon), Newton the centaur and his little friend, Toot (The Mighty Hercules), and Zippo the rather dainty dinosaur (Dinotopia).

And, there's a special corner of Hell reserved for Mitch the talking monkey (Supercar) and any number of similar chimps from such fare as Lost in Space, Space Ghost, and Tarzan.

As Sylvain spoke, little support for

such sci-fi characters was proffered. They rarely serve any purpose other than as a salve to very young viewers and a way of selling plush toys to these same youngsters.

In a brief follow-up discussion at the conclusion of the slide show, however, it was argued that in certain cases, space monkeys do play some significant role, enlisted for a particular dramatic purpose, providing the means of making a telling point, or contributing comic relief. Often in such cases, the space-monkeyish attributes are turned way down. And so, these space monkeys, in fact, are not really space monkeys as we've defined them. The three maintenance robots of Silent Running were given as an example.

Further, it was put forth that space monkeys meant to appeal to three- and four-year-old kids are fine within the context of a TV show or movie aimed at that age group. Barney the big, purple dinosaur falls into this division. Star Wars' Ewoks, on the other hand, remain an abomination, George Lucas' space opera appealing, as it does, to a principally teenage audience not at all sympathetic to the teddy bear-like Endorians.

We thank, as always, those who planned and ran this meeting.

Con*Cept 2002's concom availed themselves of the club's meeting room during the morning to begin working on final preparations for the convention.

October MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA's October 20 meeting was given over to a sci-fi trivia contest put together by Berny Reischl and Mark Burakoff. About 25 MonSFFen were in attendance to witness a single champion emerge from a pretty strong field of trivia buffs.

But first, Con*Cept 2002 chair Cathy Palmer-Lister took a few minutes to talk to everyone one last time about the convention – just two weeks away – and encourage all to attend. She also thanked her concom for their tireless efforts and welcomed needed volunteers.

Then it was time to play The Weakest Fan! Berny and Mark designed their "Contest of Evil" along the lines of the television game show The Weakest Link. Players were first grouped, then the weakest eliminated over a series of increasingly difficult questions covering

sci-fi literature, film, television, comics, etc., until one remained in each group. These semi-finalists squared off against each other in a final, championship round. Congratulations to our winner, Josée Bellemare!

We thank, as always, those who planned and ran this meeting.

Con*Cept 2002's concom met to deal with last-minute details of the convention during the available morning session. The club's Special Interest Group for Writers also touched base that morning.

November MonSFFA Meeting

November 17 wrapped up another year's meeting schedule for MonSFFA. We closed on Tolkien and Con*Cept 2002. About 20 people trekked through a nasty snow storm to attend.

Marc Durocher, Cathy Palmer-Lister, and Mark Burakoff were first up with a discussion of the fantasy genre and J.R.R. Tolkien's influence on it. The question had been posed "is Lord of the Rings the be all and end all of fantasy literature?"



Marc & Mark wonder if they'll ever be able to get a word in edgewise!

-- Bernard Reischl

First of all, it was explained, the fantasy genre is quite broad, the sword and sorcery stuff being but a part, albeit a substantial part and that which most people today equate with the term fantasy. Sometimes called heroic or high fantasy, this kind of fiction most often involves some kind of quest and features richly imagined, medieval-like worlds in which magic dominates.

First published some 50 years ago, Tolkien's Lord of the Rings is seen by many as the template for much of the fantasy literature that followed. But it was not so much a template as a modernization.

Fantasy adventures have been around

since well before Tolkien wrote his seminal work. Our panellists put forth that by introducing the idea of the ordinary guy as hero, Tolkien made the traditional fantasy tale more accessible to the 20th century reader. A simple, everyday fellow (Frodo) is the hero of the piece; this was something new for a story form that traditionally wrote its heroes as noble rulers and great warriors destined to vanquish evil and bring peace and prosperity to the valley. That the job falls to a regular Joe appeals to modern sensibilities, offering a character to which we can relate.

Tolkien showed that a fantasy adventure could successfully introduce a contemporary angle without compromising time-honoured tradition. Lord of the Rings became the catalyst that got other writers going and helped to popularize the genre like never before. And let's not forget, of course, that it's a darn good yarn!

The panel also listed a number of fantasy authors, like Michael Moorcock and Dave Duncan, who have created quite interesting variations on the theme.

Following the mid-meeting break, Con*Cept 2002 chair Cathy oversaw a feedback panel on the convention.

She began by briefly outlining Con*Cept's mission statement, explaining some of the inner workings of the con, and answering a few of the most frequently asked questions about the event. (Will the con expand to a full weekend next year? Probably not, for reasons of cost, but going full-weekend remains a long-term goal).

Comment on, and constructive criticism of, this year's convention was then welcomed. Cathy and other ConCom members present took notes and were pleased to find that the con was overwhelmingly well received and that no one in the room had any major complaints. Day-of comment and post-convention e-mail received by Con*Cept has been of a similar sentiment.

Thanks to all who planned and ran our final meeting of 2002.

January MonSFFA Meeting

A near-full house was on hand for MonSFFA's first meeting of 2003. We began the new year with a discussion of what panellists Marc Durocher and Cathy Palmer-Lister had termed "extreme technology."



The book exchange, a popular feature of MonSFFA meetings – Bernard Reischl

Science fiction, of course, is in the business of imagining future technologies. By pushing known science to the next probable level, by taking extrapolative leaps with current scientific theory, fictional technologies are rendered that read as plausible. But when technologies are presented that extend well beyond these boundaries, SF effectively crosses into the realm of fantasy. The panel defined such as extreme technology, that which is so afar of SF's usual prognostications that it may as well be magic. Arthur C. Clarke's third law was cited: Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

A narrower definition was offered that characterized extreme technology as radical, cutting edge stuff that, while well above the norm, remains at least partly within the boundaries of the possible. Larry Niven's Ringworld was given as an example.

It was noted that a number of technologies commonly employed in SF – faster-than-light-travel, for example – defy the known laws of physics.

Star Trek's transporter and holodeck, time travel, and David Brin's kiln people were among the extreme technologies explored by the panel.

Just before the mid-meeting break, we were treated to an amateur film culled from the Web. Starship Exeter recreates the look and feel of the original Star Trek series with considerable success, given that the production is an amateur undertaking. Well written, for the most part well acted, and cleverly shot, Starship Exeter is one of the better fan-made films we've seen.

We also screened a few recent movie trailers, including Daredevil and The Hulk.

The second half of the meeting was given over to the club's annual elections and a discussion of club business, including the impact of recent increases in our operating

Welcome, new MonSFFen!

Frédéric Gosselin

Kris Leblanc

Martin Miller

Khoba Sysavane

Cindy Hodge (returned after lengthy absence)

Charles Mohapel

Alice Novo

Fernando Novo

Dave Legault (returned after lengthy absence)

Steve Fontes

Pierre A. Renaud

Kathleen Boucher (Irulanne)

costs, and plans for Con*Cept and other club projects in 2003.

MonSFFA's Special Interest Group for Writers met prior to the club meeting, joined by a couple of visitors who expressed an interest in participating. Our writers meet regularly to discuss and critique each other's manuscripts, and to launch writing projects.

MonSFFA thanks all those who planned and ran our January meeting.

February MonSFFA Meeting

We entertained a good-sized crowd for our Mars-themed February 16 club meeting. Headlining the afternoon's program was guest speaker David Shuman, of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Montreal Centre, who gave a slide show on our planetary neighbour. A group discussion of Mars-centred SF/F stories, moderated by Keith Braithwaite and club president Berny Reischl, complemented David's presentation.

David covered the history of Mars observation, from the detection of "canals" early on (an optical illusion, we now know), suggesting some kind of Martian civilization, to the spectacular modern

images realized by the Hubble and other telescopes. Numerous robotic orbiters and landers have brought Mars to us in close-up and with the advent of digital photography, even modestly equipped amateur astronomers are delivering extraordinary photos, a few examples of which David showed. He had on hand for our perusal an eyepiece from his own telescope and spoke briefly of the different kinds of telescopes available to the astronomy hobbyist. Also covered were planned Mars missions and the fact that this summer, Mars will be at its closest to Earth in centuries, offering a prime opportunity for observing the fabled Red Planet.

Following the mid-meeting break, Keith opened discussion of Mars as depicted in SF/F with a quick overview of one of his favourite science fiction novels, H. G. Wells' War of the Worlds, about an invasion of Earth by Martians. He spoke as well of the film and television versions of the tale, and of the famous 1938 radio adaptation that, by means of fake news bulletins, convinced millions of Americans that the Martian invasion was real. Berny added a rock musical, comic book series, and short story collection – War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches (the Martian invasion as if witnessed by notable historical personages of Wells' day) – to the list of WotW spin-offs. The Edgar Rice

Burroughs series of Mars-set science fantasy adventures, beginning with the magazine serial Under the Moons of Mars in 1912 (later published as book A Princess of Mars), was cited as one of the best known examples of Mars in SF/F. Of more recent vintage are Ray Bradbury's Martian Chronicles and Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars trilogy (Red Mars, Green Mars, Blue Mars).

Our Hidden Gem/Second Chance feature this meeting offered 10 minutes by Keith on the under-appreciated animated film The Iron Giant. He screened a clip and described the film – about the virtue of choosing to do good over one's own ignoble instincts, and the strength of friendship – as wonderfully rendered and evocative of 1950s-era "sense-of-wonder" sci-fi.

Film student Guillaume Houle visited during our morning session, screening a sampling of largely Quebec-produced amateur SF/F short films. Guillaume has been invited to give a presentation at Con*Cept 2003 on the amateur genre film scene in Quebec.

MonSFFA thanks all those who planned, ran, and participated in our February meeting; a special nod to our guests, David Shuman and Guillaume Houle.

**DEADLINE FOR AUGUST ISSUE: I need your stuff by 1st of August, and that includes Toronto Trek reviews & photos.
FEATURE ARTICLES: AREA 649 – THE MYSTERY DEEPENS!**

MonSFFA AN INVITATION TO JOIN AmonSFF

The Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA) is a Montreal-based non-profit organization dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of all activities which engage and support the interests of science fiction and fantasy fans.

MonSFFA is administered, on behalf of all of its members, by an executive committee, who is empowered to appoint officers and advisors to assist it with the operation of the club. Executive committee members are elected annually by vote of the general membership; any member in good standing may run for office.

The benefits of membership in MonSFFA include:

Membership Card

Your MonSFFA membership card identifies you as a MonSFFA member, allows you free admittance to the club's monthly events and entitles you to certain discounts at SF/F-oriented retailers participating in MonSFFA's discount program!

Monthly Events

Attend MonSFFA's regularly scheduled events, held about every month, and meet other SF/F fans! Share interests, exchange ideas, view current and classic SF/F movies and TV shows, enjoy guest speakers and special presentations, participate in workshops and discussion panels, get involved in various club projects, and more!

Discount Program

As a member of MonSFFA, you are in a position to save on your SF/F purchases, and your membership pays for itself within the year! If you buy an average of only

\$5.00 worth of SF/F books, comics, collectibles, gaming and hobby items, etc. per week, your yearly *MonSFFA* membership will pay for itself in discount savings

You will receive a one-year subscription (four issues) to MonSFFA's newsletter, WARP. Produced by our members for our members, WARP keeps you up to date on club activities and brings you general news from around the greater SF/F community! WARP is also a forum for you, the members – we want your book and movie reviews, opinion columns, short fiction and humour, artwork, etc! And, as a MonSFFA member, you are entitled to place (non-commercial) ads in WARP at no charge – sell your old SF book collection, announce that you're looking for gaming partners, or whatever!

How to Join

The fee for a one-year membership in MonSFFA is currently \$25.00. You may join at one of our meetings, or send in the application form on the opposite page.

Please allow 3-6 weeks for your membership to be processed. You will receive your membership package by mail. Special Offer: **Family members sharing your address may piggy-back on your MonSFFA membership for a nominal fee. Details of this offer will be included with your membership package.**



For more information, visit our website at
www.monsffa.com

MonSFFA Discount Programme Conditions are subject to change

1,000,000 Comix, 20% off most merchandise

Jean-Talon, Pierce Street, Queen Mary Road

OAS, Rocketry Division, 10% off all orders

El Paso Komix, 15 % off most merchandise

Hobby World, 10% off models & role-playing games

Hangar 18 Models, 10 % off at shows & by mail

Kangourou, 10% off on models & role-playing games

Komico, 10% off on new issues, 15%off on back orders

Cosmix, 10% of most merchandise

Mars, 10-15% off most merchandise