

# MONSFEAL WARPOGRAPHIC

## THE RIDDLE OF THE ICY SPHINX



Abydos, an Ancient City is Reborn 5

Worlds of Wonder 8 TorCon III 10 Area 6/49 20

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The Icy Sphinx  
Acrylic/Ink- 12"X18"  
Personal illustration inspired  
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**MonSFFA CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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

**Programming is subject to change.**

**March 21, 2004**

**March Bites!**

Bite sized morsels of the myth of Vampires!  
Guest Speaker: Nancy Kilpatrick

&  
Video Montage: History of Vampires on Screen  
Presented by Khoba Sysavane

Exclusive for MonSFFA members!  
WIN FREE MOVIE PASSES  
HELLBOY

Starring Ron Perlman, Directed by Guillermo del Toro  
15 prize packs including a double pass, poster, and promotional item!



**April 18, 2004**

**Humour in Science Fiction**  
Video Programming: It's Thumbelievable

**May 23, 2004**

**"Ani-May" (Animé) – Not just for kids anymore**

**June 13, 2004**

**The Dark Side of Science Fiction and Fantasy**  
Dune in June

**July 25, 2004**

**MonSFFA Summer Barbecue (August 1 – Rain Date)**

**August 22, 2004**

**"Summer's a'dragon"**  
Dragons and Other Monsters!  
Game: Dungeons and Dragons



**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!

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**WILDLIFE AS MONSFFA SEES IT**

*Photo by Charles Mohapel*

**Klingon Maelgwn**

**Size:** Tall, very tall

**Habitat:** Montreal region of Quebec, Canada

**Surviving Number:** Unknown

The Klingon is a sturdy, humanoid species, well adapted to survive hostile environments.

Native to a world far, far away, it is not known for certain when the Klingons first arrived on this world. After an initial population expansion, the Klingons now appear to be in serious decline.

Pictured here is a hybrid of the species which seems to have come through the StarGate.

We, as an active, committed fan club, join worldwide efforts to promote awareness of endangered species. Just one way we are working to make the world a better place – today and tomorrow.



## *You've Got Mail!*

September 28, 2003

Dear Cathy and MonSFFen:

Issue 55 of Warp has arrived, the Summer 2003 issue, in spite of the interior footers saying issue 54, the Spring 2003 issue. That's okay, Torcon did that lots in their progress reports...time for some commentary.

Neat cover! Amazing! Astounding! Fantastic! (Analog! Asimov's!) Colour ain't cheap, so it's good to see.

My letter...we're definitely going to the Gathering of the Fellowship LotR convention, and the chairman of Ad Astra XXIII this coming April is Amanda Foubister. If you have feedback to give to Amanda, she'll get those messages at [info@ad-astra.org](mailto:info@ad-astra.org). Many of you were at Torcon, but those of you who weren't should know that the Los Angeles in 2006 Worldcon bid won for that year. If you'd like information on L.A.con IV, check out their website at:

[www.laconiv.org](http://www.laconiv.org)

If you're thinking of a membership to L.A.Con IV, let us know; Yvonne and I are their

Canadian agents. Contact us at:

[penneys@allstream.net](mailto:penneys@allstream.net)

(AT&T Canada changed their name) and we can give you details about how you can pay for your L.A.con IV membership using Canadian funds and Canadian cheques.

I hope Georges Dodds will let us know when these books are available. Such efforts to save the precursors to modern-day science fiction and fantasy are always worthwhile if we care enough to wonder where all our favourite stories come from.

Re: *Why do good SF stories end up as bad films?* Science fiction is full of interesting ideas that are quite complex. Because of the limitations of film, we can comprehend those ideas much faster than we can express them physically. So many good stories make poor films because of this, and because of short attention spans of the general public. I may have had my start in Trek fandom, but as I've gotten older, I find I want the more complex ideas, and books satisfy that desire much more than television or movies can.

I imagine you've got all the Hugo and Aurora results, but also remember that Orillia author Julie Czerneda won a Golden Duck award for children's SF. It will be interesting to see and read all the Torcon 3 reports. (Cathy...need a list of upcoming conventions? Let me know, and I'll send you my latest list. Could be useful for the next issue.)

Yours,

Lloyd Penney.

Dear Lloyd,

*I was mortified when I saw the error in the footings of WARP 55! Such are the hazards of using templates!*

*MonSFFA has chosen a new logo, (more on that later in this issue) so the cover of WARP 55 was a kind of swan song for our rocket-riding dragon. Glad you liked it!*

*Thanks so much for the convention listing. I e-mailed it to our on-line members, and will be printing excerpts in our clubzine. The first installment is on page 9.*

*Thanks also for your review of The Gathering. I don't think any MonSFFen attended, which is strange given the popularity of LOTR in Montreal. However, their decision to have the con on weekdays may have been a factor. Getting out of work isn't always easy, and few people plan their vacations for early December. Interesting that 90% of their membership was from out of country. Sounds like the Toronto fans also stayed away in droves.*

*I agree with your thoughts on books. Special effects have come a long way, but the aliens I read about are still a whole lot more real in my head than on the screen. Authors like C.J. Cherryh, who will be GoH at Ad Astra in April, are especially good at creating believable characters. They let us see into their hearts and minds, but try getting hearts and minds on screen!*

*Speaking of Ad Astra, at least 3 MonSFFen are attending, so we'll see you there!*

Cathy

*Through the Stargate to the origins of*

# Abydos!

By Barbara Silverman

The name Abydos is well known to fans of Stargate SG-1. It is one of the planets somewhere 'out there', reachable only through the Stargate. However, Abydos is not as extraterrestrial as it sounds.

On our planet Earth, Abydos was a prominent, sacred Egyptian settlement and cemetery during the years 3500 to 100 BC. Known in prehistoric times as Abdu or Ebot in Coptic, the modern name is Al-Arabat Al-Madfuna. Located in the low desert west of the Nile near al-Balyana, it was the royal necropolis of the first two dynasties. Developed during the Naqadah II period it became a place of wealth and status.

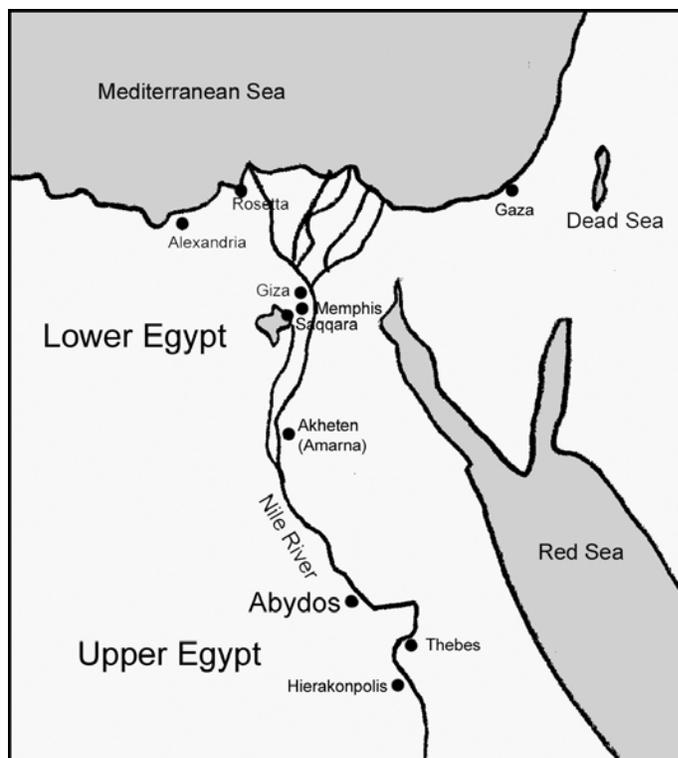
Excavation, beginning in the 19th century by Emile-Clément Amélineau and Sir Flinders Petri, have unearthed funerary remains, temples and thousands of graves from various dates. History has connected it to the political and religious development of Egypt, with its roots dating back to the beginning of Egyptian history.



This mummified cat was found at Abydos.

Here, in the region known as Umm el-Qa'ab, kings from the 1st Dynasty and some from the 2nd, (3100 to 2686 BC) constructed underground tombs. These were mud-brick superstructures with stone features, roofed with timber baulks, then buried beneath a low earth mound. Warehouses for grave goods and additional tombs for servants and dogs, surrounded each edifice. Nearby each tomb was a massive rectangular mud-brick enclosure, the purpose of which is unknown.

There is a mystery surrounding Abydos, caused by grave robbers with their destructive ways and the ravishes of time. Stelae containing the names of kings from the first two dynasties, have been discovered throughout Abydos. However, was Abydos the place of burial or were these stelae part of the many cenotaphs which, dating back to the Archaic period, have been a feature of Abydos?



C. Palmer-Lister

It is believed that many of the pharaohs were buried at Saqqarah. Located on the west bank of the Nile near Memphis and Giza, Saqqarah was the capital of Egypt's Old Kingdom from 2700 to 2200 BC. There are a series of mastaba tombs, containing objects inscribed with the same names, as found at Abydos. Mastaba, coming from the Arabic term for bench, were the forerunners of the pyramids. Trapezoid in shape with cut off or open tops, they were not as tall as the later pyramids. These tombs, larger than those found at Abydos, were richer in both content and decoration, leading to the supposition that this was the true place of burial. Unfortunately, the real evidence which would settle the question, has long since vanished.

While the tombs are of interest to the people of today, it was one of the gods which made Abydos important to

the ancient Egyptians. During the Middle Kingdom (2023 to 1786 BC), it became known as the burial place of Osiris, the god of the dead. It quickly turned into a major cult centre where pilgrims often left pots as offerings. Wanting to be close to the tomb of Osiris, pious Egyptians who could afford it, were buried at Abydos. Those who were not wealthy enough, had stelae erected. These contained the dead man's name and title along with a prayer to Osiris. Thousands of such stelae have been found.



Isis, Osiris, and Horus

An annual festival was held, a commemoration of the death and rebirth of Osiris. The Abydos Passion Play, held until around 400 BC., portrayed the slaying of Osiris and his followers by his brother Seth. The figure of Osiris, having been torn apart by Seth, was dispersed in various places. Isis his wife,

## In its time Abydos played an important role in the lives of the Egyptians.

along with their son Horus, gathered up the various remains and restored Osiris to life. The play follows the pattern of birth, death and resurrection which echoes the cycle of the seasons. It was a time of great sanctity with intense mourning, followed by a period of great rejoicing. Unfortunately, the enactment of the play, often caused real deaths.

Pharaohs, especially Pepi I, Ahmose I, Thutmose III, Ramesses III, and Ahmose II, encouraged the cult worship and helped it along by embellishing and enlarging Osiris' temple. Through they were buried at their city of residence, many had cenotaphs or mortuary temples at Abydos. Two exceptionally fine examples, were constructed by New Kingdom pharaohs, Seti I, 1306 to 1290 BC, and his son Ramesses II 1290 to 1224 BC.

Seti's temple, beautifully decorated with

elaborately carved columns, was constructed in an unusual 'L' shaped formation. There were two courts, off of which ran two hypostyle halls leading to seven chapels. These sanctuaries were dedicated to the seven gods, Ptah, Re-Harakhty, Amen-Re, Osiris, Isis, Horus and Seti himself. Behind this section, there was a long gallery leading to rooms used for secret rites connected to the Osiris Passion Play. The wing to the left contained storage and ceremonial rooms.

Throughout the temple there were beautiful, delicate wall reliefs. Many, depicting daily ritual scenes, are well preserved. One shows Seti holding up a tray of food offerings to Isis. In another, referred to as Abydos' list of kings, Seti and his son Ramesses are making offerings to cartouches of his 76 dead predecessors, beginning with the king Menes.

Another unusual feature of Seti's tomb is the Osireion. Also underground, it was constructed 26 feet/8 metres behind the main temple. It had the form of New Kingdom tombs with gigantic granite pillars supporting the roof. There is a vaulted hall with a central

platform which is surrounded by 10 monolithic pillars and a water channel. Since Seti was actually buried at Luxor, it was probably built with the intention of being a cenotaph.

Ramesses' temple was smaller with no Osireion, through to date, the area behind has not been excavated. Once again, we find marvellous wall reliefs. One in particular, painted in vivid colours, shows the pharaoh in war dress. This tomb, as probably many of the others, was meant to bring Ramesses' spirit into close association with Osiris.

Around the temples, there is a huge complex of cemeteries. It was used during every period of



When Seth tore out the eyes of Horus and buried them in the desert, lotus flowers sprouted. Detail from a wall of the temple of Seti I.

Egyptian history, from prehistoric to Roman. It is thought, that some of the 2nd dynastic kings were indeed buried at Abydos. At the northwestern end of the necropolis, there were impressive funerary enclosures, one of which covered over two acres (8 hectares). Again the material proof, either proving or disproving the theory has probably been destroyed. However, excavations are still ongoing. Perhaps, the answers we seek will be uncovered with the next fistful of dirt.

One other interesting find at Abydos was a tiny statuette of Khufu. The builder of the Great Pyramid, he was called 'Cheops' by the Greek historian Manetho. The statuette shows the king seated, holding a flail in his right hand. He is wearing the Red Crown of Lower Egypt and his name is inscribed in a serekh on the right side of the throne beside his leg. This was an extremely important find as it is the only surviving complete representation of the king.

In its time Abydos played an important role in the lives of the Egyptians. Now, it plays a role in the lives of the Stargate team and especially Daniel Jackson and in helping to bring the forgotten past into the minds of modern man.

**Note:** In cases where a pharaohs' name had more than one spelling, I used the version usually found in the book, 'Archaeology: The Definitive Guide'. Below are two of the most widely used variances.

Ramesses - Rameses, Ramses    Seti - Sethos

**Bibliography:**

- Archaeology: The Definitive Guide, edited by Paul G. Bahn.2003
- The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Edition 1993. V1 page 48, V6 page 336, V9 page 928 (Ramses II), V18 page 109 (Naphthali; dah II), V 18 page 146 (Tomb Architecture), V 28 page 538 (Abydos Passion Play)
- The Egyptian Kingdoms, A. Rosalie David, 1988. Pages 14, 87, 88, 96, 98
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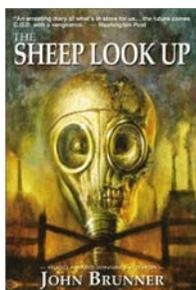


**The Enterprise over Mount Royal**

During the summer of 1983, the space shuttle Enterprise (the one built for training, but not for space flight) was being flown back from the Paris Air Show on the back of the special NASA 747. It had to refuel at Dorval, so it did a couple of circles around downtown Montreal first. I was on top of the Bank of Commerce Building, so I had the best seat in the city!

There used to be a public observation gallery on the top floor of the Bank of Commerce Building. I showed up there for the Enterprise visit, and found that the gallery had ben closed for some time. However, the building management had specially re-opened it for that day, only for newspaper photographers. With my cameras and spare lenses festooned around my neck, the guards waved me through.

– Joe Aspler



**We see SF wherever we go!**

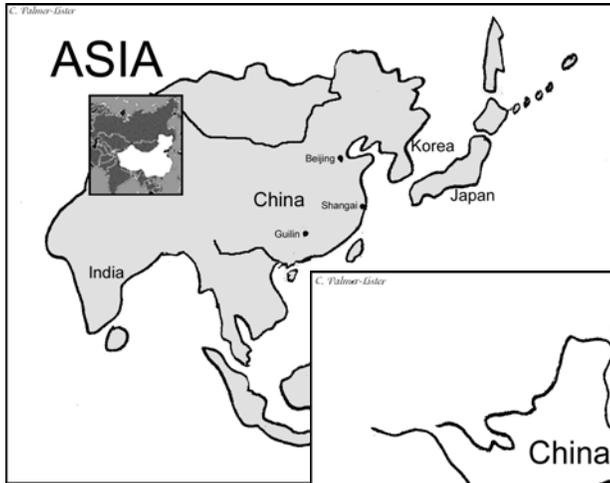
This display at *Les Ailes de la Mode* must be an homage to John Brunner's masterpiece, *The Sheep Look Up*.

– Ann Methé



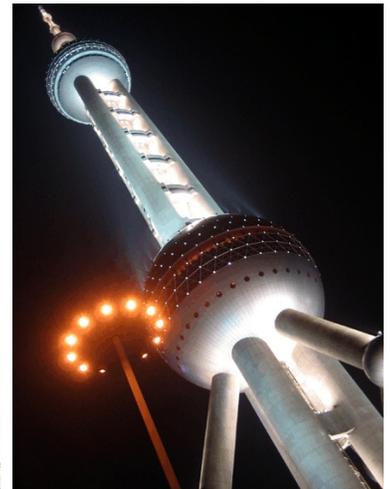
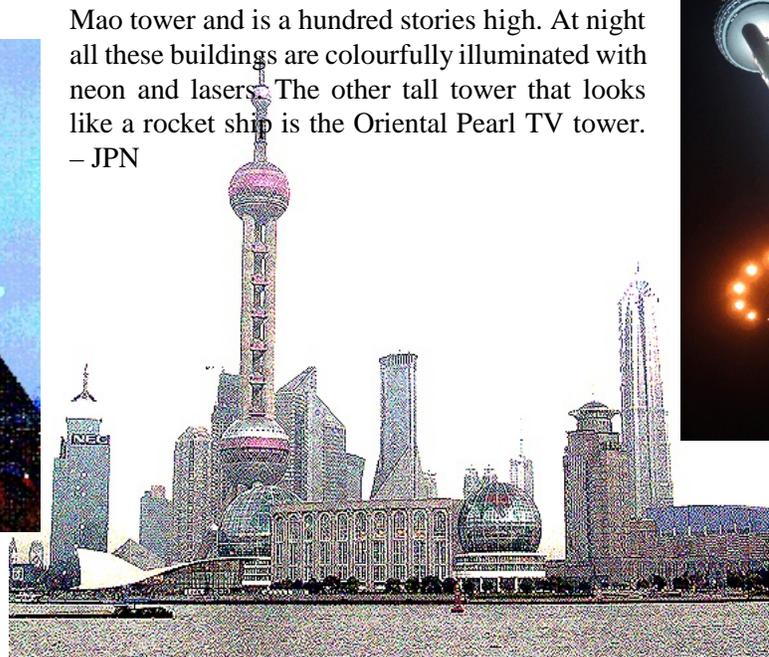
An artist visits Asia and finds

# a World of Fantasy, and a Futuristic City



The Jin Mao Building is the third tallest in the world.

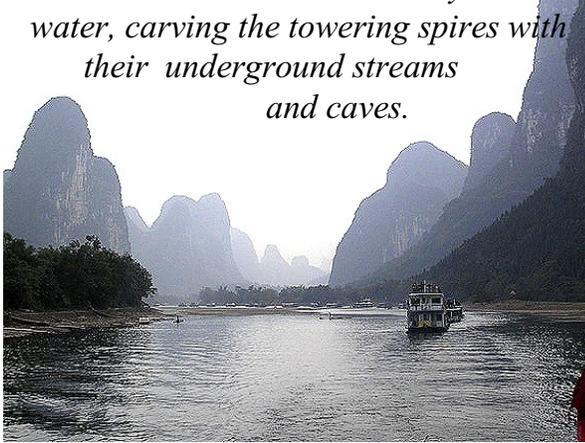
*Pudong (East Shangai)* is a new business centre that grew from nothing in less than 10 years! Yes, 10 years ago this parcel of land contained farms and factories. Now it look like a set from a Jetsons movie. The tallest tower is the Jin Mao tower and is a hundred stories high. At night all these buildings are colourfully illuminated with neon and lasers. The other tall tower that looks like a rocket ship is the Oriental Pearl TV tower. – JPN



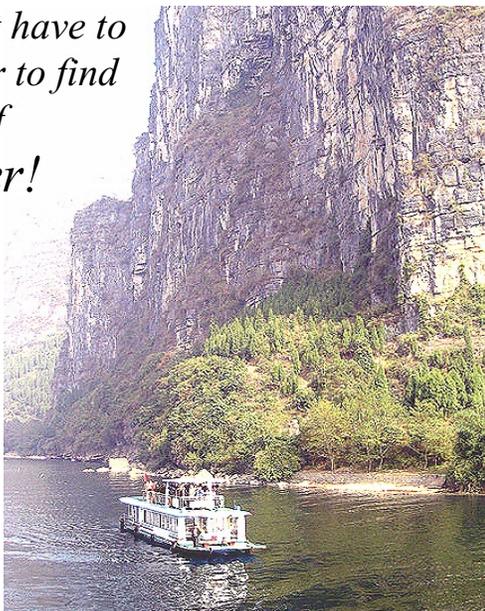
The Oriental Pearl TV Tower is 468 metres tall.. Along with the Nanpu Bridge and the Yangpu Bridge, it forms a picture of two dragons playing with a pearl.



*A hundred and ninety million years ago, pressures exerted by the movement of tectonic plates forced the region of Guilin above sea level. The limestone was eroded by wind and water, carving the towering spires with their underground streams and caves.*



*We don't have to travel far to find worlds of Wonder!*



## **Conventions** *Coming Soon to a City Near You!*

MARCH 12-13 - TRANSFORMERSCON 2004, Holiday Inn Select Toronto International Airport, Toronto, ON. Toy convention and show. Guests: David Kaye, Pat Lee, Brad Mick. [www.transformerscon.com](http://www.transformerscon.com).

MARCH 20-21 - TORONTO ANIMECON, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, ON. Guests: TBA. [www.hobbystar.com](http://www.hobbystar.com).

MARCH 28 - Meeting international des Maquettes de Montréal - Dorval Four Points Sheraton Dorval <http://pages.infinit.net/dragons>

MARCH 26-28 - FilKONtario 14, Delta Hotel Toronto Airport West, Mississauga, ON. Guests: Michael Longcor, Kathleen Sloan, Blind Lemming Chiffon (Raoul Benefiche) [www.filkontario.ca](http://www.filkontario.ca)

April 3-4 Expo-Train-Modélisme, Polyvalente George Vanier, Laval <http://www.hobby-passion.com/avenir/20031108.html>

APRIL 2-4 - UBCON XV, Location TBA, University of Buffalo, Buffalo, NY. Gaming convention. Guests TBA. [www.ubsarpa.com](http://www.ubsarpa.com).



Crowne Plaza Toronto Don Valley Hotel, Toronto, ON, April 2-4

GOH: C.J. Cherryh, Robert Charles Wilson, Patrick Neilsen Hayden, Mark Askwith,, Don Bassingthwaite, Gord Rose [www.ad-astra.org](http://www.ad-astra.org)

**N.B. Hotels rooms are very unlikely to last past the March 2 deadline! The Hotel has another event planned on the same weekend.**

APRIL 17 - Can/Am Con V, Comfort Inn Banquet & Conference Center, Plattsburgh, NY <http://www.dana-nield.com/canamcon>

APRIL 16-18 - EERIECON 6, Days Inn at the Falls, Niagara Falls, NY. Guests: Larry Niven, Anne Bishop, Brian Lumley . [www.eeriecon.org](http://www.eeriecon.org).

APRIL 26 - 7th ANNUAL FANTASTIC PULPS SHOW AND SALE Lillian H. Smith branch of Toronto Public Library, Toronto, ON. Pulp and collectibles. Guests: TBA. Admission : \$2 [www.girasolcollectibles.com](http://www.girasolcollectibles.com), click on Events and Shows.

APRIL 30 - MAY 2 - THE GREAT CANADIAN BAYCON, Hamilton Convention Centre, Hamilton, ON. Gaming convention and trade show. Admission: \$15 [www.greatcanadianbaycon.ca](http://www.greatcanadianbaycon.ca).

MAY 1 - GENRECON 2004, Sarnia Branch, Lambton County Library, Sarnia, ON. SF writing convention. Free! [genreconca@yahoo.ca](mailto:genreconca@yahoo.ca).

MAY 2 - TORONTO COMICON, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, ON. Comic convention. [www.hobbystar.com](http://www.hobbystar.com).

MAY 21-23 Congress Centre, Toronto, ON [www.animenorth.org](http://www.animenorth.org)



MAY 21-23 - CANGAMES, Rideau Curling Club, Ottawa, ON. Gaming [www.iosphere.net/~cangames/](http://www.iosphere.net/~cangames/).

MAY 30 - TORONTO SCIFI-CON, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, ON. SF media convention. [www.hobbystar.com](http://www.hobbystar.com).

JUNE 4-6 - C-ACE 2004, Chimo Hotel, Ottawa, ON. Furry/crafts convention. Guests: Heather Bruton, more TBA. [www.c-ace.org](http://www.c-ace.org)

JUNE 6 - CANADIAN STAR WARS EXPO 2004, Holiday Inn Oakville, Oakville, ON. Star Wars collectibles sale and show. Memberships: \$10. For more information, [www.starwarsexpo.com](http://www.starwarsexpo.com).

JULY 2-4 - TORONTO TREK 18, Doubletree International Plaza Hotel, Toronto, ON. Media SF convention. Guests TBA. [www.tcon.ca](http://www.tcon.ca).



# The Making of the TorCon III Masquerade Awards

Text and photography by Sylvain St-Pierre

When I learned that the World Science Fiction Convention was going to be held in nearby Toronto this year, I decided to make a contribution of some kind. Not wanting to spend too much time away from the fun at the event proper by being a volunteer, I opted to provide trophies for the Masquerade instead. Upon hearing, in March, that my offer had been accepted, I started to work immediately. It turned out that six months was not too much time to make a total of eleven sculptures, for the last one was finished less than a week before the start of the con.

I had hoped to be able to hand over proper ceramic, but the logistics of finding a kiln and arranging for the required two firings proved too complex. Fortunately, I came across a type of clay that hardens without heat and it turned out to be quite a time saver.

Having settled on the material, I started designing. This was not too hard, as I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted to do. I made the sketch here included specifically for this article, as I am good at visualising but lousy at

*I hope that I will not be considered a chauvinist, but technical problems, inspiration and the peculiarities of anthropomorphic beaver anatomy conspired to limit the number of immediately recognizable females to only three (I did, however, lavish special attention on them...*

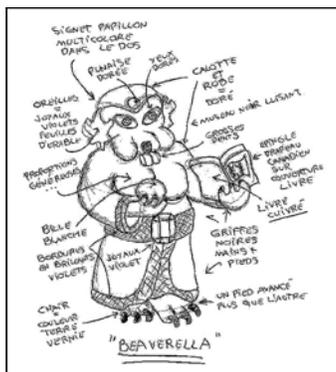
drawing. The mascot of Torcon 3 being a beaver, it was natural that this should be the unifying theme. Producing a series of identical sculptures would perhaps have been easier and faster; but I felt that this was my chance to leave a small mark in the Worldcon chronicles, and concentrated on creating different designs. Their number had been easy to decide upon, as I had found only eleven of the glass candle holders I wanted to use as bases at the Dollar Store... Looking very much like blocks of ice, they were just the right size and, once inverted, perfectly suited for the task. I also decided from the very start that those trophies should be clearly Canadian and that each of them would include at least one maple leaf somewhere.



*Lady Castoria of the Beaver Lake: special attention was lavished on her armour!*

Since there are so many themes in SF&F, my problem was not so much finding ideas as deciding which ones I would use. Trying to offer a mix of science fiction and fantasy, I finally settled on a superhero, an alien, a magician, a cyborg, a barbarian, a vampire, a monster, an astronaut, a warrior, a robot and a fairy.

## FROM Concept....



Sketching



Modelling



Drying

I hope that I will not be considered a chauvinist, but technical problems, inspiration and the peculiarities of anthropomorphic beaver anatomy conspired to limit the number of immediately recognizable females to only three (I did, however, lavish special attention on them...).

In several instances, the detailing was dictated by whatever accessories I happened to have handy. I always keep a large quantity of odd bits and pieces gathered over the years, and must have recycled the equivalent of a medium size dump since I started doing this sort of things. I am particularly proud of *Lady Castoria of the Beaver Lake's* armour, even if it took forever to push all those Thumb Tacks in!

It took between an hour and an hour and a half to properly fashion each sculpture from lumps of virgin clay. While brittle once dried, it is a very forgiving material to work with while still damp and mistakes are easy to correct. Care must be taken not to let delicate appendages stick out, otherwise the final product will not survive casual handling for very long. It is also important to take shrinkage into consideration when inserting various non-clay parts in order to prevent cracking.

*When doing so many items over such a long period of time, accidents are unavoidable.*



*This one didn't make the grade...  
The tentacles were too thin.*



When doing so many items over such a long period of time, accidents are unavoidable. An early version of *Robeaver* was knocked down by my father. It was, I must admit, partly my fault for having left it too close to the edge of the table. No great loss there, for I was not happy with it. My first try for *Canadian Fairy* was improperly balanced and fell on its own. Either that, or she committed suicide! (It was rather goofy looking...) I decided to re-do *It Came From Beneath the Dam* from scratch after careful examination. While that one did look good, the tentacles were definitely too thin and would have snapped under the slightest pressure.

Not being very large, the basic shapes took only a couple of days to dry properly. After a careful sanding to remove surface imperfections, each one was given a coat of sealant to protect against crumbling and water damage. This was followed by painting, with acrylic paints, and then the gluing of accessories and sparkling dust. Because of the need to glue some items in awkward positions, this step often required several stages and it took up to a week to complete some of the more complex sculptures. A coat of transparent lacquer provided both shine and additional protection to the figurines before cementing them to their base with a liberal amount of clear epoxy.

Finally, computer generated colour labels were inserted in the hole intended for the candle, and each trophy carefully nested in bubble wrap and packed in a S.A.Q. bottle gift box, plastered with oversize FRAGILE warnings.

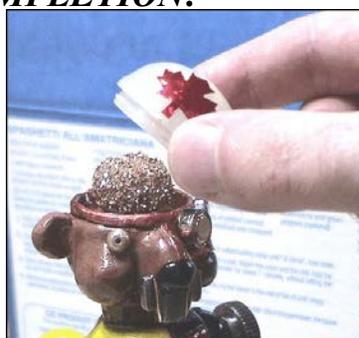
**...to COMPLETION!**



Sealing



Painting



Gluing



Captain Castor!



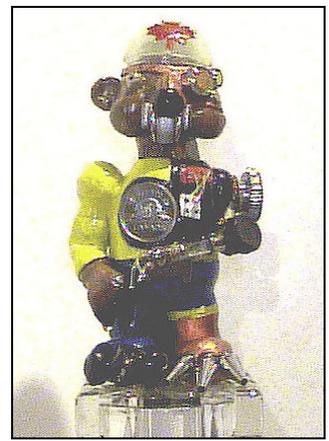
*The enchanting Beaver Fairy Queen*



*The well-endowed Beaverella*



*Beavorg*



*Conan, the Beaverian*



*It came from beneath the dam...*



*Beavula, the Vampire Beaver*

***"I hope they all found good homes!"***



*Beaver from Mars!*



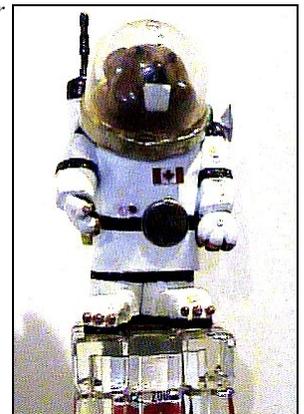
*Captain Castor's Canadian cape*



*The lovely Lady Castoria of the Lake*



*Marc Castorneau*



*Robebeaver*

My precautions did pay off, for the whole lot made it all the way to Toronto without a single crack or chip. Much to my pleasure, they were displayed in the Art Show room prior to the Masquerade and I am told that my babies were quite appreciated.

While it was a big job, it was also a lot of fun and I truly enjoyed making the little buggers. It was a marvellous chance to let out my whimsical side, and those nice flat beaver tails were too much of an opportunity to miss... I must admit that it had been my hope that the gift of those trophies would buy me a nice seat to view the costume competition, but it was still a pleasant surprise to be offered a chair right next to the judges! Furthermore, I was asked to attend their deliberations so that could help decide who would get which sculpture. Better yet, one of them is now part of the permanent Worldcon Fannish Exhibition, and should be seen by thousands of fans for years to come.

I hope they all found good homes...

# MonSFFAndom: July 2003-January 2004

by Keith Braithwaite

*Under the “MonSFFAndom” banner in each issue of Warp, we offer an abbreviated form of the club news and activities reports that run in Impulse, the club’s monthly news bulletin. This issue’s block of MonSFFActivities ranges over the latter half of last year and the opening weeks of this year. Out-of-meeting activities first, followed by the chronology of our most recent half-year’s worth of MonSFFA meetings.*

*MonSFFA’s annual summer barbecue offered members an afternoon of relaxation midway through what was proving to be a very busy year for the club. Impulse reported on the event in its August 2003 issue:*

## MonSFFA BBQ

Overcast conditions and a brief downpour late in the afternoon failed to dampen enjoyment of the club’s summer barbecue by the dozen-plus MonSFFen who made their way to Angrignon Park on Sunday, July 27, to grill up a feast of hamburgers and hotdogs, and while away the afternoon. Our planned water games having been scrubbed because of the unseasonably cool weather, a few of us spun a large flying saucer-shaped balloon back and forth across the open field next to our picnic area. Bets were placed on which of the seagulls, gathering in Hitchcockian numbers, would steal away with the few leftover hamburger buns we tossed their way. Despite cloudy skies, the outing proved a most relaxing day in the park for all present.

*Meanwhile, our short film, Beavra, was able to reach a wider audience and continued to draw praise in the wake of its video-contest win at Toronto Trek earlier in July. The August Impulse covered Beavra’s latest triumph:*

## Beavra a Crowd-Pleaser at G-Fest

Courtesy Toronto-area fan Dawn McKechnie, who acted as MonSFFilms’ agent, Beavra travelled to Chicago for G-Fest, North America’s big Godzilla convention. Despite her best efforts, Dawn reports that she was unable to enter Beavra in G-Fest’s video contest as the deadline had passed. But our tape was screened out of competition and, according to Dawn, was “the biggest hit of the video show” and “clearly the people’s choice.” Significant, explains Dawn, in that G-Fest’s video competition is a “huge attraction” that draws a lot of entries. The con’s staff are encouraging MonSFFA to enter Beavra in next year’s G-Fest contest, she adds.

An “avalanche of kudos” for “Canada’s Kaiju creation,” as Dawn put it, followed the Chicago screening. (Kaiju is fanspeak for the Godzilla/Japanese-style monster movie genre.)

Among Beavra’s new-found fans were Godzilla movie actor Robert Scott Field and director Yoshikazu Ishii, guesting at G-Fest. Mr. Field, apparently, asked for a second screening.

Describing Beavra as one of the funniest things he’d ever seen, one fan said that “it could be shown on any kind of television comedy show, like SNL or Kids in the Hall, and not look the least bit out of place. For an amateur film,” he continued, “it was very professional. Anything that looked amateurish or cheap looked (so) intentionally.” The problem with most homemade productions is that they are too long, he opined. “Audience members not involved in the making of an amateur film tend to get a little bored if a gag or effects shot goes on for a while. Beavra, despite being the longest film in the (show), never overstayed its welcome.” “I thought the



*There goes the neighbourhood....*

beaver was cute and the guy who kept showing up in different outfits was hilarious!” offered one Jennifer Marley. Enthused another G-Fest attendee: “The beaver was kicking butt! The beaver was like the Terminator. Canada’s future was in its paws! Great film! Make a sequel!”

Beavra was “the funniest G-film I have seen since Destroy all G-Fans back in ‘97. The only way to describe it would be, ‘Woahhhhh!awesome beaver’,” wrote Michael McCants, lifting a line from our film. A Nick C. posted a review

that went one further, describing Beavra as the best amateur film he had ever seen at G-Fest. “It truly captured some of the campiness of our favorite films and also poked fun at ‘America’s Attic’ (as many of my friends like to call Canada). I especially loved the jokes about the military. They were right on the money.” Another reviewer had this to say: “Beavra was great! Besides presenting a unique picture of Canada’s cross-cultural mosaic, it made G-fans laugh and featured the Avro Arrow! What’s not to like? I really enjoyed it.”

Meanwhile, the most recent posts on Toronto Trek’s message board are a testament to Beavra’s growing popularity. “I laughed my ass off! way too funny,” reads one.

"It was just so Canadian! I laughed just as hard the second time I watched it as the first," Monique from Lancaster, Ontario, had to say. "Wow! You folks rock!" raved Katherine E. Bignell of Toronto. "I miss living in Montreal (home)...great atmosphere for creative people to get something together."

MonSFFA is positively thrilled (not to mention overwhelmed) by the extraordinary response Beavra has received. A final cut of the short film (the version screened in Toronto and Chicago was a rough cut) is nearing completion as we go to press, and VHS copies are in the works in response to demand.

*That final cut was completed on schedule and sale copies produced in time for Con\*Cept 2003 (November 8). In release for just a little over two months, now, more than three dozen copies of Beavra have been sold! A DVD release is currently in the works.*

*And speaking of Con\*Cept 2003, September's Impulse had this news to relay:*

### **Con\*Cept Welcomes Stargate Guests**

We are pleased to announce that Stargate SG-1 actress Teryl "Dr. Frasier" Rothery has agreed to attend Con\*Cept 2003 as our headlining guest. (Teryl replaces B5's Claudia Christian, who cancelled her originally scheduled appearance due to conflicting professional commitments.)

Also expected to "swing by," as he put it in his e-mail to Con\*Cept's concom, is Joseph Mallozzi. A former Montrealer, Mr. Mallozzi is a writer/co-executive producer on Stargate SG-1.

We are thrilled to welcome two of the creative people involved with a current and very popular sci-fi series.

*Mr. Mallozzi would be unable to get away from his Stargate office for the con weekend, as it turned out, and sent the concom his regrets. But despite his, Claudia Christian's, and a couple other guest cancellations leading up to the event, Con\*Cept 2003 proved to be one of the most successful in the almost 15-year history of the convention. Let's jump ahead for a moment to the November issue of Impulse, which rejoiced at the news of both a critically and financially successful Con\*Cept:*

### **Con\*Cept Rocks!**

Con\*Cept 2003 was an across-the-board success! Day-of estimates put attendance at about 350, an increase over 2002's figure. Our guests had a great time, taking home fond memories of Montreal fandom. And, feedback from attendees has been universally positive, much as it was last year.

But unlike last year, early estimates suggest that this year's con certainly broke even, and probably made a pretty decent profit. Revenue generators like the Sci-Fi Collectibles Auction and Con Suite pulled in nearly double the dollars of previous years! Our contribution to local charity is expected to be almost half again as much as last year's.

All of this adds up to one resoundingly successful event, and puts the con in fine shape for next year.

A big thank-you goes out to our guests and panellists, the concom, those who pitched in to help in any number of ways, and of course, to attendees.

The concom meets at the end of this month to go over the details of Con\*Cept 2003, at which time we'll have the official attendance and financial numbers to pass on.

*Those numbers were given in a follow-up report published in the January 2004 Impulse:*

Con\*Cept 2003 is expected to clear about \$2000 when all is said and done (an official accounting of revenue and expenses was delayed last month but is pending). Oddly, paid attendance, at 313, was down by 25 in 2003 against the 338 of money-losing 2002. But it seems that a greater number of premium-priced passes were sold last year than were two years ago, thus boosting revenues. In general, revenue-generating operations in 2003 brought in a hefty amount more than in 2002. Attendance estimates of 350, made on con day presumably included guests and other non-paying participants.

*Back to September's Impulse, now, for a nod to club VP Sebastien Mineau, who was at the forefront of efforts to secure complimentary passes to local sci-fi movie previews, and garner publicity for MonSFFA at these screenings:*

### **Publicity for Club at Movie Premieres**

MonSFFA vice-president Sebastien Mineau is to be commended for his efforts over the past few months at raising the club's profile at local movie premieres. Sebastien arranged for passes for MonSFFA, and publicity for the club, at the premiere of the critically acclaimed *28 Days Later* earlier in the summer. Same again for the French-language opening of *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*.

*Sebastien was joined in his efforts by MonSFFA's Khoba Sysavane, and later Tamu Townsend, who had done the same kind of thing for Con\*Cept 2003, resulting in club members enjoying further preview screenings, duly mentioned in November's issue (Alien: Director's Cut) and January's (Timeline and The Last Samurai).*

For more on Con\*Cept see page 26.



B.K.R.

September's issue also reported that the club's BoA (Board of Advisors) had booked meeting dates for 2004, and had discussed Fund-raising, a targeted publicity campaign designed to attract niche fans to the idea of a general-interest SF/F club, and our involvement with the new Montreal Sci-Fi Expo. The club arranged to attend this new pro-con and was enthusiastically received by its organizers, offering interesting possibilities:

### Montreal Sci-Fi Expo

The Montreal Sci-Fi Expo is coming to town November 14-16 and MonSFFA will be there! Recalling the great benefit to the club's membership roster that came of our presence at the Creation Entertainment shows in the early- mid-'90s, we view the arrival of a large pro-con as an excellent opportunity to reach thousands of sci-fi fans, all potential MonSFFA members.

The organizers of the MSFE have kindly reserved us a table at their event, free of charge, and seem keen to involve us in future plans, including, possibly, some kind of cooperative venture with our own convention, Con\*Cept. These people are the same crew responsible for Toronto's SFX convention. We envision exciting possibilities in 2004 and beyond as a result of all this.

Plans are to sit down with the MSFE people later this year or early next, hear what they have in mind, put our ideas on the table, and see what comes of it.

November's *Impulse* followed up with a quick report on the event:

### Montreal Sci-Fi Expo

The club was in attendance at the Montreal Sci-Fi Expo (November 14-16), MSFX for short.



BKR

From our MonSFFA table, we handed out promotional flyers and talked up the club to the couple thousand SF/F fans who attended the event. More than a few dropped by to offer us compliments on our own convention, Con\*Cept, which ran the previous weekend..

We also touched base with MSFX's organizers on the idea of mutually beneficial cooperative ventures in future regarding MSFX, the club, and Con\*Cept. We expect to

discuss details in the coming months.

Thanks to Berny Reischl and Mark Burakoff, who arranged for our table, and to those who crewed the table and helped promote the club, Wayne Glover, Keith Braithwaite, Cindy Hodge, Fran Quesnel, Theresa Penalba, David James, Dominique Durocher, and Lynda Pelley.

*We subsequently heard from the MSFX's organizers that the con went fairly well for them, and we are eager to explore the possibilities re those "mutually beneficial cooperative ventures in future."*

*As big a show as the MSFX was, however, for many fans, the major convention event of the year took place in Toronto the month before. October's *Impulse* included a brief note on the 2003 WorldCon. We were pleased to have done our small part:*

### Torcon 3

Torcon 3, the 61st WorldCon, unfolded in Toronto over the Labour Day weekend. A good many MonSFFen attended and a few of our contingent pitched in as volunteers. We were among some 4000 fans on site.

Reviews of the con are mixed. While the nightly room parties were plentiful and popular, many attendees expressed disappointment at the small (by WorldCon standards) dealers' room and art show. Most complaints, however, centered on the programming schedule, described by some frustrated fans as completely disorganized and wildly inaccurate. Others cut the con some slack, finding things workable enough to get by.

Torcon 3 was the third Toronto-hosted WorldCon in the history of the event and organizers highlighted the past on a few occasions during the course of the festivities. As a warm-up to the masquerade, for example, 30-year-old film footage of the previous Torcon was screened.

Canadian SF/F enjoyed a proud moment as novelist Robert J. Sawyer of Toronto won top honours (best novel, *Hominids*) at the prestigious Hugo Awards ceremony.

And lastly, a small but appreciative crowd enjoyed a screening of MonSFFA's *Beavra*, included as part of the con's short films program.

*But October's lead story rocked MonSFFen with news, from out of the blue, of a:*

### Budget Shock!

The club is reeling from a just-discovered bookkeeping error that finds us with considerably less money in the bank than we believed. Treasurer Sylvain St-Pierre has gone over our financial records with the proverbial fine-tooth comb and confirms that about \$1300 now sitting in the MonSFFA bank account in fact should be sitting in our Con\*Cept account. We had, as recently as last month, thought the amount remaining in the club account that pertained to Con\*Cept to be in and around \$400.

Exactly how this situation arose has yet to be entirely sorted out. It appears, however, that what happened is that \$900 in loans to Con\*Cept was thought to have been transferred out of the club account and into the Con\*Cept

account some months ago, when in fact that transaction never took place. The situation is further complicated by incomplete financial records stemming from Con\*Cept 2002, and at least one cheque issued from the MonSFFA account pertaining to Con\*Cept that was not cashed, escaped notice until now, and must be reissued. All of this has muddied the waters in determining what money is supposed to go where.

MonSFFA, thus, believed it was (financially) healthier than it really was. Which brings upon us a budgetary crisis like never before. The club has only a few hundred dollars left!

*Emergency cost-cutting measures were immediately put into effect, including the cancellation of December 2003's Impulse, providing a saving on both photocopying and mailing charges. Fortunately, revenue streams from Con\*Cept 2003, brisk sales of Beavra, and a steady rate of membership renewals and sales, helped the club recover more quickly than expected from a dire situation. November's Impulse reported that things were looking up:*

### **Budget Update**

Last issue we reported on the club's "budget shock," the discovery of a bookkeeping oversight that left us low on funds. We are pleased to bring the membership news that our financial situation is now much, much brighter.

Thanks largely to the club's piece of the unprecedentedly robust Con\*Cept 2003 revenue pie, MonSFFA's general operating budget is getting back up to the dollar levels at which it should be. Healthy sales of *Beavra* VHS tapes have also contributed to the recovery. So, too, are the cost-cutting measures introduced last month in response to our budget crisis and currently in effect. These include trimming costs related to *Warp* and *Impulse*.

In a nutshell, while we have not yet quite reached a "comfortable" bank balance, we are not far off and expect to be fully back on the rails months before we thought we'd be.

Further, as of the end of last month, all Con\*Cept-related monies remaining in the club's general operating account have been transferred to our dedicated Con\*Cept account. This will make bookkeeping a whole lot easier and avoid any more confusion stemming from Con\*Cept cash getting mixed in with general funds.

*The January 2004 Impulse wrapped up coverage of the club's 2003 activities, the closing weeks of which included a visit to our sister club in Ottawa for a screening of Beavra, and our annual Christmas dinner/party:*

Keith Braithwaite and Charles Mohapel visited the Ottawa Science Fiction Society (OSFS) on November 30 to present *Beavra* to SF/F fans in the nation's capital. Amid a small display of *Beavra* props and miniatures, they related the behind-the-scenes story of *Beavra*'s production and screened the project's blooper reel. A few copies of *Beavra* were sold to appreciative OSFS club members.

We thank OSFS for inviting us to visit, and we are glad of their enthusiasm and support re our filmmaking group. Thanks to Keith and Charles for representing MonSFFA on

this occasion.

Some 30 MonSFFen and their friends braved the first real snowstorm of the winter to attend the club's 2003 Christmas dinner, held on Saturday evening, December 6, at the new Legends of the Forum restaurant. A pleasant meal was enjoyed by all and about half the group continued the seasonal celebrations after dinner at the Park Place Bar, joined there later by a few more of their fellows. We are pleased to report that three large boxes-plus of non-perishable food items and children's toys were collected at the party for donation to Sun Youth's Christmas Basket Drive.

Thanks to our Park Place hosts for once again welcoming us to their fine establishment, and to Berny Reischl and Keith Braithwaite, who made the arrangements for, respectively, the dinner and party.

*The issue then set the stage for the club's election of its 2004 Executive:*

### **2004 Club Elections**

The club's election of its 2004 Executive Committee will take place at our January 18 meeting. The vote is expected to take no more than 15 minutes and all club members are encouraged to participate.

MonSFFA elects annually a president, vice-president, and treasurer, who together form the Executive Committee, and charges them with the responsibility of running the club on behalf of the membership. The Executive recruits advisors and appoints officers to assist them in carrying out this responsibility.

Berny Reischl, Sebastien Mineau, and Sylvain St-Pierre, the current president, vice-president, and treasurer, respectively, have all indicated that they are prepared to continue in their respective capacities, should the membership so deem.

*And indeed, the membership so deemed, returning this slate to office for another year.*

*Included, too, in the January issue was the latest on the club's logo contest:*

Berny Reischl has put together a number of designs for the proposed new club logo based on rough sketches and/or ideas submitted by MonSFFA members over the past few months. A winning design will be selected at our January 18 meeting.

*That winning design depicts the club's familiar rocket and dragon icons flying over Montreal's skyline. The artwork will be refined, based on a few suggestions given by members, and will soon debut on our Web site.*

*We've saved the monthly meeting reports for last, August-November 2003:*

### **August MonSFFA Meeting**

Our August 17 meeting was devoted to SF/F gaming.

The first part of the meeting brought MonSFFen Sebastien Mineau, Mark Burakoff, and briefly, Keith Braithwaite to the dais to speak on the many types of SF/F games available, and

to offer some background on the development of such popular games as *Dungeons and Dragons*.

Role-playing games, or RPGs, are probably the most widely enjoyed by sci-fi enthusiasts. And there are countless themes and variations to choose from: magical fantasy worlds, starship battle scenarios, robot warrior adventures, games based on popular film or TV properties. RPGs can be quite complex and can easily involve hours upon hours of preparation before play begins. The rule books required are encyclopedia-thick in many cases, and rather pricey, it was noted, which is why some avid gaming groups collect fees from their members to offset the cost of these volumes. But RPGs are flexible enough that they can be made simpler to accommodate those with less patience for all the minutiae.

The RPG experience can be enhanced by use of various miniature figures, vehicles, and structures set upon a large table-top diorama. The construction and detailing of such model worlds is a craft enjoyed by many a gamer.

While some role-players take their gaming very seriously, to the point of “becoming” their characters during the game, most play simply for the fun of it, and appreciate most of all the social aspect – a group of friends enjoying each other’s company – that their hobby provides.

Computers and the internet opened up exciting new possibilities for gamers, not the least of which was that it became possible to play against opponents, literally, from around the world without ever leaving home. The sophisticated graphics of modern computers allow players to really immerse themselves in the imaginary worlds offered them. But the aforementioned social aspect is largely absent from computer gaming, though interestingly, computer gamers are increasingly getting together in the same room to play, regaining that lost face-to-face contact.

Our panellists also covered customizable card games, and of course, traditional board games, including the granddaddy of all strategy games, chess.

A screening of *Beavra*, MonSFFA’s latest video-film, followed the mid-meeting break. This was the first look, for many club members, at MonFFA’s award-winning giant monster beaver. Also shown was Berny Reischl’s Hidden Gem/Second Chance selection, *Batman: Dead End*, a truly Dark-Knightish short film that finds Batman fighting not only

the Joker, but the Alien and Predator, too!

And then it was back to gaming. The remainder of the afternoon saw the room divided into three stations at which were demonstrated/played various games, MonSFFen circulating from one to the next. Sebastien and guest “Pierre from Hyperborea,” as he tagged himself, demonstrated *Mechwarrior: Dark Age* while MonSFFAn Christopher Hammock ran another RPG at an adjoining table. Keith, meanwhile, introduced members to *4000 A.D.*, a pure-strategy, space battle board game. At a fourth station, Mark offered not a game, but a lesson in painting gaming miniatures.

The club’s writers’ group met during the available morning session, touching base following the summer break.

Thanks to all who put this one together!

### September MonSFFA Meeting

Our September 21 meeting featured presentations on two of fantasy cinema’s most recognized monsters, *King Kong* and *Godzilla*. About 25 MonSFFen were in attendance.

Screening excerpts from the 1933 classic that was inspired by the image of a giant gorilla climbing the Empire State Building, Keith Braithwaite described the spectacular *King Kong* as the *Star Wars* or *Lord of the Rings* of its day – an amazing cinematic fantasy adventure augmented by

stunning visuals and state-of-the-art special effects. Many of the top talents who have worked in fantasy film since drew their inspiration from *King Kong*, including none other than master stop-motion animator Ray Harryhausen. Harryhausen saw the movie as a young lad and was set upon his career path by the incredible animated sequences that pitted Kong against the dinosaurian denizens of Skull Island.

Outlining the characters, story, and showcasing several of the film’s many breath-taking sequences, Keith paid tribute to a genre masterpiece that stands up well even today, 70 years on. The film’s top-notch creative team, he said, succeeded brilliantly in creating an enduring work of cinematic art. He drew attention to the script’s skilful building of mystery, romance, and tension through the first half of the film, in anticipation of the peril to come. The relentless, heart-stopping action that follows Kong’s arrival on the scene cements the film as an action-adventure like no other. The film culminates, after Kong’s tragic finale, in one of the



[WWW.MONSFFA.COM](http://WWW.MONSFFA.COM) B. Reischl, web-slinger

greatest closing lines in all of cinema.

Imitated and remade many times but never equalled, *King Kong* remains, indeed, the Eighth Wonder of the World.

The mid-meeting break yielded to guest speaker Michel Prévost, who spoke on *Godzilla* and exhaustively covered the Kaiju (giant Japanese monster) genre, of which *Godzilla* is the star. Michel took his audience through a half-century's worth of Kaiju, highlighting both good and bad examples of the genre. He noted the different approaches taken by filmmakers over the years, ranging from *Godzilla* and his brethren (Mothra, Rodan, etc.) as allegory to silly children's fare.

Michel screened a great many video clips and the impressive visual style of many of these films was in marked contrast to those equally many which featured ridiculous Wrestlemania-like nonsense.

Michel also offered information on DVD releases of Kaiju while warning that a typical North American version will often cut bits and pieces out of the film, sometimes substantially altering the crux of a scene.

The writers' group meeting scheduled for the morning session was postponed; date of reschedule to be announced. Guest Guillaume Houle, meanwhile, offered a preview screening of some of the short films he will be presenting at Con\*Cept 2003.

In addition to the usual crew who put our meetings together, MonSFFA thanks guests Michel Prévost and Guillaume Houle, as well as our own Keith Braithwaite, for providing us with our programming this meeting.

## October MonSFFA Meeting

Halloween came early to MonSFFA this year, courtesy our horror-themed meeting of the 5th.

Keith Braithwaite and MonSFFA VP Sébastien Mineau opened with an appreciation of the works of H.P. Lovecraft and Stephen King, two masters of the genre.

Best remembered for his extraordinary Cthulhu Mythos, Lovecraft wrote in the early decades of the 20th century. His stories are so very effective as horror because he keeps his monsters in the shadows, shrouded in mystery, leaving the reader's imagination to conjure up the worst.

His unique prose and his skill at creating a truly creepy atmosphere were highlighted. Passages from some of his best stories were read aloud as example while pulp-era illustrations of his hideously weird and macabre bestiary were projected on screen.

The modern king of horror, Stephen King, was described as sometimes difficult to read, often requiring a certain measure of patience. Ultimately, though, his stuff is rewarding.

King sets up his characters and situations in meticulous detail. He then begins to introduce, first, the slightest hints of the strange, the disquieting, the supernatural. As the narrative progresses, the horror intensifies and finally climaxes in a big pay-off.

King's prolific collection of novels, novellas, and short stories have explored horror from the psychological to the supernatural to the bizarre and include many ghastly, inventive premises and twists.

Janusz Zurkowski (1914-2004)  
Test pilot, Avro Arrow

MonSFFA were saddened to learn of the passing of test pilot, Janusz Zurkowski. He was 89.

Mr. Zurkowski spent the second half of his life as a backwoods tourist operator and boat designer, but was Canada's most legendary test pilot until politics grounded him. At the time of his death, he was working on a design for the world's fastest sailboat!

He tested nearly 60 new models, but is best remembered as the test pilot of the CF-105, the Avro Arrow. He was named Honorary Fellow of International Society of Experimental Test Pilots which also includes Charles Lindbergh, Neil Armstrong, and Igor Sikorski.

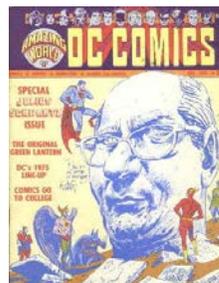
For more information:

***Zura: The Legend of Janusz Zurkowski***

by Bill Zuk, Published By: Vanwell Publishing Limited  
Hardcover, ISBN: 1551250837  
Published: November 2003



Dominique Durocher applies finishing touches to the Avro Arrow, in preparation for MonSFFA production of Beavra!.



Julius (Julie) Schwartz (1915-2004)  
DC Comics editor

Julius Schwartz passed away February 8, 2004. He was 88.

As editor of DC Comics he had a profound influence on the Superheroes: Superman, Batman, The Flash, Green Lantern, Wonder Woman, Captain Marvel and the

Justice League of America during the 1940s, and again with the relaunch of the superheros comics in the '60s. His main job was to create plots and edit the scripts.

He began his career as editor of a fanzine called the Time Traveler in the 1930s, went on to become a literary agent with such clients as Ray Bradbury, H.P. Lovecraft, and Alfred Bester. He found time in the 80s to edit a series of graphic novels based on the works of popular SF writers including Larry Niven and Ray Bradbury.

For more information:

Don Markstein's Toonopedia: [www.toonopedia.com](http://www.toonopedia.com), scroll down to *People Behind the Toons*.

With a few notable exceptions, film adaptations of his books almost always pale next to the books themselves.

Khoba Sysavane took centre-stage following the mid-meeting break, offering a brief retrospective of horror cinema.

Screening clips, she covered the early gothic horror films, the cheesy creature features of the 1950s, the psychological thrillers of the '60s and early-'70s, and the blood-drenched slasher fare popular in the late-'70s and '80s.

Today's horror movies, it was noted, all too often rely on the jump-out-from-behind-the-bushes method of frightening audiences, throwing in a lot of gratuitous carnage for good measure. But all the cheap scares and gruesome make-up effects Hollywood can muster fail to deliver the kind of skin-crawling creepiness, shadowy spooks, and edge-of-your-seat suspense to be found in genuinely terrifying modern classics like *The Sixth Sense* and *The Others*.

#### November MonSFFA Meeting

Our November 23 gathering capped a year of solid

MonSFFA meetings with Keith Braithwaite's presentation on

the fab sci-fi craft and vehicles featured in British puppet master Gerry Anderson's many circa-1960s TV series: *Stingray*, *Thunderbirds*, *Captain Scarlet*, etc. Keith showcased some of the most popular and interesting designs produced for the Anderson shows, charting their development from conceptual sketches to completed shooting models. Characteristically mammoth in size, Anderson's planes, trains, and automobiles often took after the real-life space-and-aircraft designs, and concept vehicles of the time, bringing a certain verisimilitude to his imagined futures.

Cathy Palmer-Lister followed Keith, moderating a feedback session on Con\*Cept 2003, which had run just two weeks previous. Comments from MonSFFen who attended were generally positive and the successful convention can safely be rated one of the best Con\*Cepts in the history of the event.

Thanks re this meeting Keith and Cathy.



## COSTUME CORNER

Recently, Sandra Phillips who writes a weekly column for the Gazette called Smart Shopping, ran an article on finding unusual fabrics. She recommended 4 places in Montreal: Les Textiles Bon-Mar, Tissus Dorés, Tonitex, and Stretch-Text. A little research on the Internet by yours truly yielded interesting results.

Tissus Dorés does not have a web site, but they can be reached by phone: (514) 272-5314. They carry many hard-to-find fabrics, such as synthetic furs, canvas for artwork, twills and drills for work wear. They are the place to go to for wide (2 metre +) fabrics. They are at 5425 Casgrain, just a couple of blocks east of Blvd. St-Laurent.

Les Textiles Bon-Mar counts Cirque du Soleil and professional ice skaters as clients. Their web site(www.Bon-mar.com) spotlights fabrics in five areas: Show, Athletic, Style, Safety, and Novelty. A nice feature is a section on how to care for various kinds of synthetic fabrics. They also supply materials for making masks, and reflective tapes. They are at 8448 Blvd St-Laurent, between Guizot and Highway 40.

Tonitex (www.tonitex.com) supplies the nearby manufacturers as well as individuals. They are the official distributors for Nordic Spirit and Yukon fleece. They have a really neat catalogue on line. They are at 9630 Blvd. St-Laurent, corner Louvain St.

Stretch-Text (www.stretchtextfabrics.com) claims to be Canada's largest distributor of stretch fabric. They supply such diverse clients as the Canadian Olympic Team, Les Grands Ballets Canadien, and Cirque du Soleil. Look for them at 9320 St-Laurent, Suite 308, at Chabanel. It is just north of Highway 40, near Tonitex.

In fact, all four could probably be visited in a day if you do not get lost in a coupon bin selling sequined stuff by the kilo. NB: None are open Sundays, Tonitex is the only one open on a Saturday afternoon, and Bon-Mar is not open on Saturdays during the summer.

—Cathy Palmer-Lister

***Costume Corner is a new feature in WARP, and if it is to continue it needs submissions! If you know a good place to buy costume materials, make-up, body paints, and so on, or if you can offer tips on making costumes, contact the editor at <cathypl@sympatico.ca>.***

## Sweet Summer Memories!

Or was it **AREA 6/49?**

Wayne's pool party

Text & photos by Josée Bellemare



Wayne Glover, Ernst-Udo Peters, Robert Copot, Lynda Pelley, Dominique Durocher, Theresa Penalba, David James

We had all gathered at the house of friends for a bar-b-q. Just a group of friends getting together for a good meal, pleasant conversation and some fun and games.



Theresa Penalba & Josée Bellemare, or are they the Knights of Area 6/49?

Things were going fine and everybody was getting along. We were talking about gardening, hobbies or our favourite shows. Our host had just started cooking the meat, making a lot of smoke.

Then, all of a sudden, a thicker, larger cloud drifted across the guests. We were all transformed... nobody seemed to think it was strange but .....

In one corner, a former marine was negotiating the purchase of an island to use as a secret base. Apparently he already had ships and related technology to go with it. Next to the stairs, a group of military engineers were discussing the merits of various tanks, planes and ships, their strengths and weaknesses and how they had even seen some of these up close. At the other end of the deck, a group of Klingons were boasting of past glories, trying to impress a new recruit. We talked of the parades we had marched in and the uniforms we had made.

Then another thick cloud of smoke rolled across the deck and we were all back to normal.

None of us understood what had happened. Was it something in the cooking smoke, something about the land, had one of us caused it without knowing, or was it... **theArea 6/49 effect??**

Always leery of Klingon food, Dominique examines his doughnut for sign of life, while Mark Burakoff, Ernst-Udo Peters, and Barbara Silverman enjoy their dessert.



A group of friends having fun, or is something more sinister going on here?



# IT CAME OUT OF THE BOX!

Dominique Durocher reviews new models

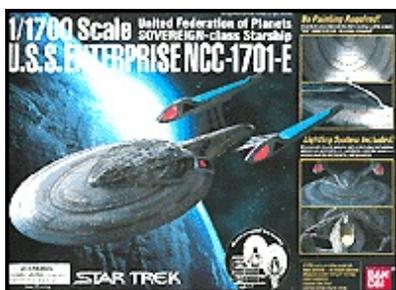
## Bandai! Bandai! Bandai!

Once again, the models reviewed all come from across an ocean. Bandai has provided us with two more Star Trek kits, following their movie Enterprise with the Enterprise-E and finally the NX-01 from the latest entry in the franchise. They have also started a series of kits ship kits from the series Gundam. I will also share a nice little surprise from the net.

### U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-E

by Bandai in 1/1700 scale

As their second kit of the series, this one shows that they have learned a few lessons from the first one. It is once again a predecorated, snap-together,



lighted kit. They have improved the positioning of the tree gates, so there are fewer areas of damage to the surface finish. There are not too many visible seams, mostly between the nacelle halves and along the dorsal panel. There is one very deep one between the primary and secondary hulls, though. While not visible from the top or sides, this gap forms a considerable trench when viewed from the bottom.

The lighting system has been somewhat simplified in this kit. The wires have been pre-cut to the right length and their ends stripped. The light guide for the primary hull already has its bulbs installed with all the

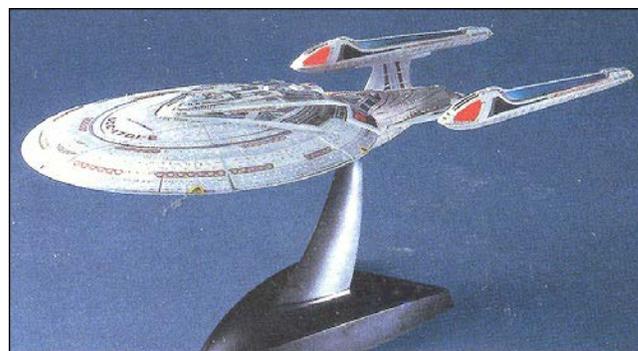
soldering done. One only needs to trim off the test wires once proper function of the bulbs has been verified. The one problem with the lighting has been attaching all the wires to the stand mount. That area



The lighting is somewhat better than on the first kit, as the lights seem brighter, particularly in all the smaller portholes

gets to be very tight during assembly. Stickers are again required to hide the wires passing through the pylons. I find the result is somewhat better than on the first kit, as the lights seem brighter, particularly in all the smaller portholes. I'm not sure if the position of the portholes on the secondary hull is accurate, but they do look nice. While better, they still do seem a little underpowered as the kit uses the same stand with three AA batteries.

The painting is again quite nice, although the colours look somewhat more garish than on screen. They took a short-cut with the aztec pattern, as there is only a series of angles to represent it. Otherwise, many of the small details, like the escape pods and pennants, are nicely represented.



The painting is again quite nice, although the colours look somewhat more garish than on screen

It took me over 5 hours to build this one. While it is a smaller scale than the previous model, it builds up to a slightly greater length, though not as high. It is once again rather expensive, ranging from \$115 to \$180 depending on the source, and its distribution is rather limited. It is overall an impressive piece for those willing to pay that price.

### U.S.S. Enterprise NX-01

by Bandai in 1/850 scale

The latest and smallest of their Star Trek kits, it represents the latest, or should I say earliest, version of this famous starship. It is the same scale as the previous classic version, so they display well together.

This kit has the least work to do on the lighting, as the bulbs are already built into the nacelle's and



saucer's light guides. The only problem was that the wires from the nacelles didn't want to stay in their guide tracks during assembly.

The rest of the model goes together very well. Unlike the other two which are largely smooth, this kit has a lot of finely engraved detail. There are a couple of visible seams along the nacelle halves and a rather noticeable one around the bridge. The biggest assembly problem is the panel that covers the stand mount. It remains loose and is constantly falling off.

This kit is predecorated, as with the rest of the series. It is painted in a metallic gray, with two other



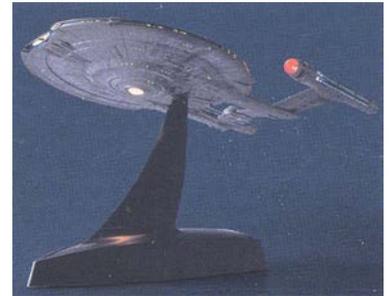
This kit is predecorated, painted in a metallic gray with two other shades to create the aztec pattern.

shades to create the aztec pattern. While it may be accurate, I find the finish looks rather toyish. I also find the colour of the registration and name to be too light a grey, as it shows little contrast with the basic paint scheme. There are also some missing markings, the most noticeable being all the ones around the launch bays.

Unfortunately, this one has the worst lighting of the three. It again uses the same three-battery stand, but this leaves the model severely underpowered for some reason. At best, the lights are difficult to see, with only the underside dome well lit. There is almost no light visible behind the deflector dish, and the navigation light might as well not be lit. There is also a clear blue light in the middle of the engineering pod, but they

didn't even try to light it. This kit has fewer bulbs than the others, but somehow seems to have less power for them. The position of the nacelle bulbs, facing away from the forward cap, probably doesn't help.

It took less than 3 hours to build this one. The finished result is quite nice, although the lighting is insufficient. Once again, it is somewhat pricey at around \$115, and difficult to find. It also is no longer in production, so availability will only drop from now on.



At best, the lights are difficult to see, with only the underside dome well lit.



### Mobile Suit Carrier Albion MSC-07, from Gundam 0083: Stardust Memory

by Bandai in 1/1700

Ah! Something I had been hoping to see for a long time. Bandai had made a few models of the ships from Gundam when the series first aired. The designs weren't great and the kits were basic. They then concentrated on the mecha, and the ships were pretty much relegated to rare and expensive resin kits ever since. That is now changing with the release of this model, one of my favourites in the series, and the announcement that there are at least eight more to come.

This model is exquisite. The detail is very finely moulded, and most of the seams are hidden along module lines. The remaining seams are on the engine pods, bridge and habitation module. Assembly is very

straight forward and simple. It only took me a few hours to put it together. It also comes with two scale mecha, the Gundam GP-02 which is stolen from this ship at the beginning of the series, and the GP-01 in which the hero pursues his nemesis through the first few episodes. There is also a set of mobile suit launch catapults. These are unfortunately cast in metal, a medium I really hate to use. The stand is relatively bland, but the recess in mounts into can also be filled by another part, making it's absence seamless.



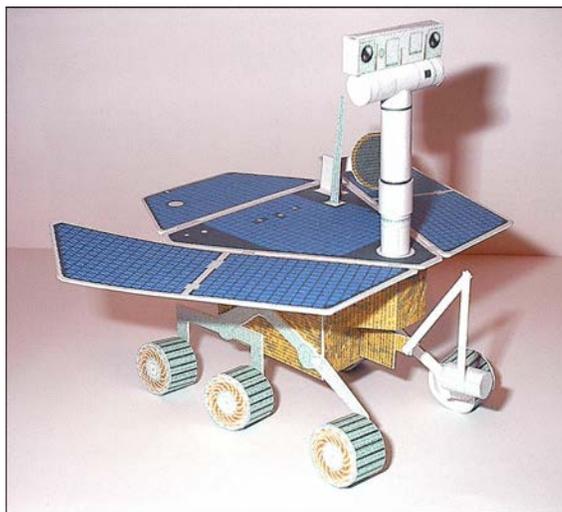
This model is exquisite. The detail is very finely moulded, and most of the seams are hidden along module lines.

We finally have a good model of one of the beautiful anime space ship designs. It is a beautiful kit which captures very well the look of its subject. A definite "have to get" for any anime modeler. Unfortunately, it is in Bandai's EX-Model line, an expensive and limited production series. Hopefully, these models will do well enough for a more diverse variety of subjects to be produced in the future.

### Space Subject Card Models

I stumbled onto these during an online discussion about Mars rover models. While no plastic kits are available, there is a set from Lego (which I've seen and it looks interesting) and a card model available online. Designed by E. te Groen for the Public Observatory Philippus Lansbergen in Holland, it is one of a series available for free download in PDF form from [www.lansbergen.net](http://www.lansbergen.net). As well as the Spirit/Opportunity rover model, there are some of the Delta launcher for both rovers, a few space probes and telescopes, and even Canada's first satellite, Alouette I. After printing them onto paper (cover and card stock recommended),

all one needs to build them is a sharp knife, some white glue and some patience. The results can be quite nice.



MER Designed by E. te Groen for the Public Observatory Philippus Lansbergen in Holland, it is one of a series available for free download in PDF form from [www.lansbergen.net](http://www.lansbergen.net). *Photo by Claude J. Pelletier*

### Upcoming Releases

There are a few new items on the horizon. Fine Molds have a T.I.E. Interceptor and their long-delayed Slave I in 1/72 scale coming out any time now. Polar Lights have delayed the release of the 1/350 scale NX-01, which will be about 24 inches long, for some detail improvements. It should now be hitting the shelves around late March or April. A 1/1000 Klingon D-7 Cruiser, to match their earlier Enterprise, is now available. It has to four decorating options, two Klingon and two Romulan. There are also rumours of a Romulan Bird of Prey in the works as well. And finally, a representative has confirmed that a 1/350 movie version of the Enterprise is development. This one will be almost a metre long! While slated for a late 2004 release, I expect it will be delayed into next year, much like the NX-01. It's status at this time is that it only exists as a set of drawings.

For paper models of space subjects:

<http://www.lansbergen.net/modelbouw.htm>

For models from Bandai:

<http://www.bandai.com/>



## The Science Fiction Book Club: Canadian Fan Friendly?

Joe Aspler

I must admit to mixed feelings regarding the Science Fiction Book Club (SFBC from now on). They put out good, relatively low-priced editions (printed with somewhat inferior paper and bindings, but let that pass). They also have their own special editions and collections. A good part of my hardcover SF and fantasy collection consists of the SFBC books that I bought either second-hand or as a member.

That's the good news. The bad news is the attitude that the SFBC takes towards Canadian readers. I occasionally compare their US prices to their Canadian prices. Just go to [www.sfbc.ca](http://www.sfbc.ca) and to [www.sfbc.com](http://www.sfbc.com). (Another gripe: the US site is better organised, and offers a wider selection to new members, than does the Canadian site).

Prices for Canadian members of SFBC are out of line



*The US site is better organised, and offers a wider selection to new members, than does the Canadian site.*

with any reasonable assumption of the Canada/US exchange rate, and have been for years. As I write this, the Canadian dollar is going up. However, we can't blame the price difference on the rapid rise of the looney, since the SFBC has always maintained a stiff price difference, for at least the 11 years since I started to compare.

Let's check the list prices on the two web sites, as of July 27, 2003. Today, the premium on the US dollar is about 38%.

1. James White, *Alien Emergencies* - \$CDN 25.50, \$US 14.99 - premium, 70%
2. Harry Turtledove, *American Empire - Blood and Iron* - \$CDN 23.95, \$US 13.99 - premium, 71%
3. Neil Gaiman, *American Gods* - \$CDN 23.95, \$US 12.99 - premium, 84%
4. Anne Rice, *Blood and Iron* - \$CDN 25.95, \$US 14.99 - premium, 73%
5. Lois McMaster Bujold, *Diplomatic Immunity* - \$CDN 23.95, \$US 12.99 - premium, 84%.

And so it goes. The SFBC does adjust its prices on occasion. Six months ago, the premium on some books approached 100% (e.g. \$CDN 25.95 vs. \$US 12.99). But the

fact remains that prices are maintained far above any reasonable interpretation of the exchange rate.

In June 2003, I had a chat with somebody at SFBC's Toronto office. I was informed that:

1. Their Canadian prices have nothing to do with their US prices.
2. More than the exchange rate is involved in setting the prices.
3. SFBC in Canada is a separate corporate division from the US operation.
4. SFBC in Canada provides many special prices and offers.

Let's look at point No. 3. Yes SFBC in the US and SFBC in Canada may be legally distinct. However, SFBC in Canada has the same US parent company, and they sell the same books, shipped from the same printing plants, only to a Canadian warehouse rather than to a US warehouse.

Point No. 4 - yes, SFBC does have many special prices and offers. But when I go to a store, I look as much at their "everyday" prices as I do at their specials.

And as for their pricing policies in general: SFBC (Canada) better have a long, hard look at the on-line retailing business. The competition is closing in rapidly.

I quit the SFBC six months ago based on their prices. I may rejoin soon, to take advantage of their sign-up bonus of six (nearly) free books. I will then buy the minimum number of books that their membership terms require. And then I may quit - again.

Additional note: This article was written at the end of July, 2003. The Canadian dollar is still rising, with the premium down to 30%, but the SFBC prices that I've shown above are unchanged as of January 6, 2004.

We offered the SFBC the opportunity to reply to this article. The reply came in the form of a two-page letter signed by their Marketing Manager. In summary, he claimed that:

1. SFBC prices are based on Canadian publishers' prices.
2. SFBC prices are competitive with Canadian on-line booksellers.
3. Operating costs such as postage, advertising, and processing are higher in Canada.

There is some small truth in what he says. I checked [chapters.indigo.ca](http://chapters.indigo.ca) and [amazon.ca](http://amazon.ca), and found that SFBC prices are typically a couple of dollars cheaper. But the fact remains that if I order more than \$39.00 worth of books (effectively, two hardcover books) from either online bookseller, I get free shipping - which SFBC does not offer.

And some - although not all - SFBC editions are made with inferior materials. And finally, if Canadian parcel post rates are indeed higher than in the US, these are irrelevant to the SFBC list price, since SFBC charges its postal fees over and above the cost of the book.



## Medieval Festival

Josée Bellemare

This labour day weekend, while many Monsffa members were off in a galaxy far away (Torcon), a few of us took a trip back in time to the medieval period.

Fortunately the weather was sunny and the temperature comfortable as the event was held outside, on the grounds of the Montreal Hippodrome. While not as big as last year, the Medieval festival was entertaining. The most popular attractions were the archery demonstration and the dance lessons.

The dealers were absent from the event but there were many people demonstration various skills such as spinning wool, embroidery, sword fighting and a blacksmith.

Throughout the afternoon the stage welcomed actors performing short plays and several groups of musicians.

Overall, a pleasant afternoon.

## An Evening with Howard Shore Sébastien Mineau

On Monday, February 23rd, Montrealers were lucky enough to get the chance to see Howard Shore conducting the Montreal Light Festival Orchestra in an incredible Lord of the Rings concert.

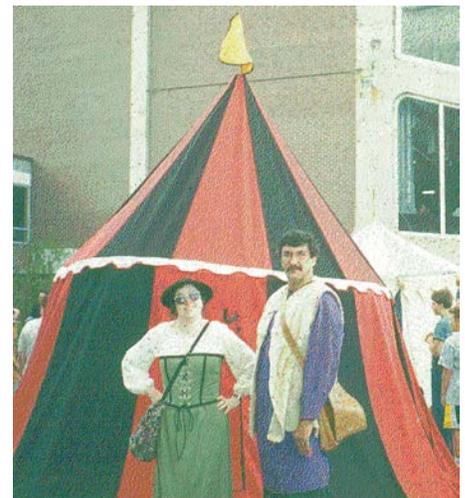
“Every generation has a legend,” said the teaser for George Lucas's Episode I. Well, for this generation, The Lord of the Rings as definitely joined the ranks of GL's Prelogy (And even busting every Box Office record thus far with the exception of Titanic). Howard Shore, to my eyes and ears, joined the ranks of John Williams, Basil Poledouris and Jerry Goldsmith.

The only downside of the evening was the singer who sang "Gollum's Song" and "Into the West". It seemed as if she was having trouble following the Maestro's tempo. And I seriously doubt she had a lot of time to study the two songs she had to sing.

One of the interesting things of that evening is that there was a nice little presentation of the concept art of the movies while we were listening to the music.

Funny thing is that at one point, I closed my eyes and from the music pictured the two statues of the king. And I opened them and I saw the statues of the kings.. yeah I've seen the movie too much.

A great Concert in any case going to the second place of my best classic concert ever.



MonSFFen Josée Bellemare & Marc Durocher

## Con\*Cept 2003

### Lloyd Penney

When Yvonne and I decided to go to Con\*cept, we thought we'd try our best to make a full weekend out of it, and go to and come back from Montréal leisurely. So, the Friday before the convention day, we hit the 401 for Montréal. Leaving at about 9:30am, and hitting every rest stop along the highway, and enjoying a meal at the Swiss Chalet in Kingston, we got into a dark city at about 5pm.

We found the good old Days Inn on Guy to be freshly renovated, looking none the worse for wear after the long strike of years ago. As we got our luggage, and went in to the front lobby to check in, Andrew Gurudata, Kim Nakano and our roommate, Lance Sibley arrived. They left Toronto a couple of hours after we did, but then that Andrew drives like a maniac, anyway... We found Larry Stewart lurking about the lobby, and we saw co-chair Cathy Palmer-Lister gathering up members of the committee there, too. We checked into our room, and found it bigger and better than we room at the Royal York we shared at Torcon.

Yvonne and I joined Lance, Larry, Andrew and Kim in a mad dash into the frigid, windy Montréal night, and fortunately, a good restaurant was close by, La Cage Aux Sports. (The hotel was indeed renovated, and the cost of renovations was reflected in the hotel restaurant's prices. Ouch.) After a hot dinner in a good pub-like atmosphere, we ran back to the hotel. Yvonne said she'd been feeling poorly since she had arrived, and that run in the cold didn't help her. She retired upstairs to chat with Lance and Larry, and I joined up with Keith Braithwaite to move tables, projectors and chairs to get the panel rooms, the dealers' room and the main room looking just right. We'd noticed that some of the function space used in previous years wasn't used this time, especially what little space there was on the lowest floor. (One large room was under renovation, the other had been turned into a spa. CPL)

Saturday came, and so did the crowds for the convention. Good to see so many, especially after the convention attracted almost no interest a few years before. Yvonne and I had been Friends of the Convention the last two years, so our memberships for this year were waiting for us. There were lots of giveaways and some great books to pick up, so our thanks go to the committee for arranging so much. Where to start...we hit the dealers' room where we found more things we wanted to buy than we did at Torcon...and we did buy more there than at Torcon. I tried to sell some of my Fears For Ears CDs at the dealers' room garage sale, but to no avail... There were four track of panels, all very interesting, the video room was always full, and the art show had a good,



new selection of artwork, and a staple of Con\*Cepts, a diorama table to admire.

The con suite was small, but had lots of good munchies. (Perhaps an improved budget in the future might allow for some healthier food.) The retractable wall at the end of the room made the con suite look like the private box overlooking the programming in the main room. I saw a lot of the convention alone; Yvonne was feeling quite ill by this time, and headed back upstairs around 2pm.

The panels were well attended, the dance was rockin', the coat check was a good idea and a money maker, and all seemed happy. That was quite a good programme book for a one-day con! It was good to see some young students helping out with the

operation of the convention, and I gather they were there because their participation counted for marks in a school



Rob Sawyer signs at the Ghost of Nebula table in the dealers' room.

Photo by BKR

course. I hope some of them will come in later years because they liked what they saw. The best sign of success Cathy observed at the convention is that treasurer Sylvain St-Pierre was smiling. When the treasurer smiles, everything's okay. Sunday morning, we followed our Friday schedule in reverse...we left the Days Inn at 9:30am, had lunch in Kingston at the Swiss Chalet, hit every rest stop on the way home, and got home around 5pm.

I think Con\*cept 2003 was a roaring success. All seemed pleased with the efforts of the committee, and I think attendance was around 350. The committee has been very wise to be cautious in growing this convention back up to where it was, and I think the current talk about expanding to two days is a good idea. You've got the locals, and now

you've got to get more out of town people to swell your numbers, and you won't do that with a one-day convention. You've got to continue to advertise in Ottawa and Toronto, and check to see if there are any potential members in Québec City and any cities and towns in northern New England. I'd even try sending flyers to the Boston conventions. People must be coming south to go to Arisia and Boskone; perhaps they'd like to go north to a convention for a change? I hope personal and political difference on the committee won't drive apart the people the convention needs to survive and thrive. (The success of Con\*cept is driving some Ottawa fans to reconsider whether a small one-day con might work in Ottawa, but there's still doubts. However, there are some hopes, too, so you never know what might happen.)

Will we come back next year? If the money and time are there for us to do it, I think we will. It was a good time, and it was good to see lots of old friends we often don't see outside of Ad Astra or Toronto Trek. When you have Con\*cept 2004 set up, send us flyers, and we'll distribute them as best as we can.



**Con\*Cept 2003-The greatest con ever!**

**Maureen Whitelaw**

The first guest I met was Michael Sheard. He was great! When I was introduced to him by Ernst-Udo, I got a big handshake. I was so happy to meet him!

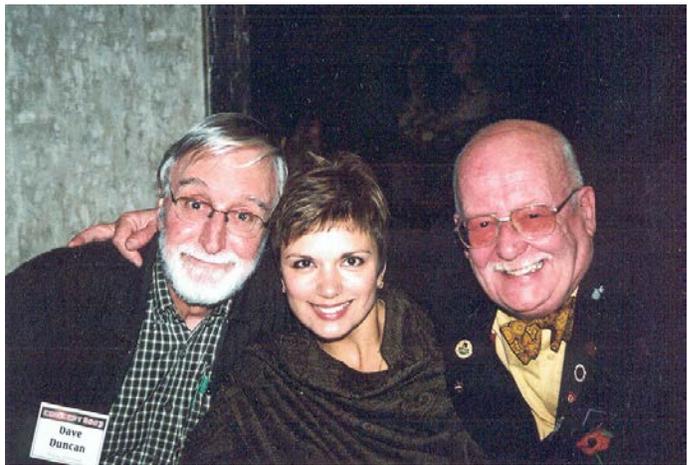
As usual, Larry Stewart was great. My friend Lucy thought he was very witty. He is a natural MC, he had us all laughing like crazy.

The guests signed autographs for us. Teryl Rothery, (Dr. Frasier of Stargate SG-) was very sweet and outgoing.

The Dealers' room was a hub of activity. I was at my table, the garage sale table. I felt it went pretty well. I made some money out of it. We had a lot of things to sell at our table, like books, magazines, videos, DVDs, puzzles, and a few toys. I enjoyed helping Josée Bellemare.



Model awards were designed by Dominique Durocher.



Masquerade judges: Dave Duncan, Teryl Rothery, Michael Sheard.  
Photo courtesy of Charles Mohapel.

I remember trying out the dart game twice. I won a brain teaser game and a black & white Con\*Cept/Boreal T-shirt. There were three great judges at the masquerade: Michael Sheard, Dave Duncan, and Teryl Rothery. After the masquerade awards were presented, hi-jinks broke out between MC s Pascal Forget, Larry Stewart, and Michael Sheard. They were throwing Krispy Kreme doughnuts out into the crowd!

There were people everywhere, even at night. They were all having fun, talking all the time.

The awards for the model competition were so beautiful. The art show was a success also! I hope next year, we'll have some awards for that, also!



## THE GATHERING OF THE FELLOWSHIP

### Con report by Lloyd Penney

The third and final movie based on J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings, The Return of the King*, has had a chokehold on the box office for some weeks now, but the anticipation for the movie in the months beforehand was palpable, perhaps even stronger than for some *Star Wars* movies. With that anticipation in mind, some Tolkien fans decided that what was needed to channel that anticipation was a convention where all could gather, meet, enjoy each other's company, and witness the finale of the series. That get together was *The Gathering of the Fellowship*, December 15-17, 2003 at the Sheraton Centre in downtown Toronto. (That's right, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. That was just one instance where this wasn't a regular convention. More on that later.)

Monday morning...as I wandered into the convention area of the Sheraton Centre, I found a huge line-up of people

***I found that most of the people in attendance were from the United States, Britain, France, Poland, Australia, New Zealand, Czech Republic and elsewhere, and they found out about the convention through their membership in Tolkien-oriented websites.***

waiting for registration to open. I looked about for familiar faces, and perhaps found one or two, namely chairman Ed Rodrigues who had manned information tables at Ad Astra, Toronto Trek and Torcon 3 to promote the Gathering. From him, I found that most of the people in attendance were from the United States, Britain, France, Poland, Australia, New Zealand, Czech Republic and elsewhere, and they found out about the convention through their membership in Tolkien-oriented websites. Ed attended local Toronto cons to get local memberships, but about 90% of the final attendance of 1500+ were from out of country. That proportion resembled Worldcon, but I also found that few people in attendance had ever gone to the kind of SF conventions we're familiar with. This was a new experience for them, and they really enjoyed getting away from the computer, and meeting friends for the first time.

Once registered, I was able to wander a bit, and observe many of the people there. Before coming to the convention, I checked the con website, which listed all members. There, I discovered that Yvonne and I were among the few people who had registered under their own names. Most people used their online monikers. I also saw that about 50% of the people there were in costume. Lots of tall, blonde elves, short, curly-haired hobbits, and even a dwarf, and lots of Men. One costume that stood out because it was so out of place was someone dressed as Captain Jack Sparrow from *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Cap'n Jack was in character the whole time, and if I had five bucks for every time someone asked him to pose for a picture...

Anyway, back to the convention. I found some Ad Astra committee members had arrived, so I spent most of my time at their convention tables, which allowed me to root myself and see many people wander past. But, I did wander myself to see more of the convention. The Sheraton Centre has some large function space, and some I never knew how to get to until this con. The huge basement ballroom could seat a thousand for the showing of special films, and presentations from the actor guests (Craig Parker, Mark Ferguson, Bruce Hopkins) and the artist GoH, Ted Nasmith. Another room was the autographing room, which also held Malabar Costumers, who were only too willing to rent you a costume for your stay. The dealers' room was a little understocked, but still had a variety of handicrafts and movie-based merchandise. One of the dealers, Adam Smith, told me he made more money at the Gathering than at all the SF cons in Toronto he attended put together.

The programme book was informative, and detailed much of the programming, which was rather scholarly and

sercon, if it wasn't devoted to the actors, but the convention maps in the programme book centre were drawn in a Tolkienesque fashion, which made it hard to read, and hard to know where everything was. The map detailed two floors, but didn't indicate where they were. The main part of the con was on the second basement level, but more of the con was on the second floor of the hotel. On the second floor in one direction, there was the con office, a special art display devoted to Ted Nasmith's *Lord of the Rings* artwork, a room displaying battle-oriented props, and several programming rooms. Another direction, a rather undermanned and undersupplied pseudo-consuite, a lounge, a gaming area, an art show without sales, but with near-compulsory judging by everyone who walked in, and a semi-private club room for the con-sponsoring Tolkien club from New York. The programme book needed straightforward maps on how to get places, and the convention itself needed more signage to get to all parts of the con.

Monday night, Yvonne and I saw the extended version of the first movie, and Wednesday night, we saw *The Return of the King* on its premiere night. She couldn't get the time off in the day time, so she only came to the movies in the evening, and to the Gathering banquet on Tuesday night. It was held at Medieval Times on the Canadian National Exhibition grounds, and on reflection, I kinda wish I'd gone to see the second movie instead. I'd never been to see Medieval Times, which provides an Arthurian atmosphere, but that night, they tried their best to give it a Middle-Earth flavour, and they almost succeeded. A few flubbed lines didn't distract, but the Tolkien veneer quickly thinned out to

nothing, and the event became the usual jousting tournament the attraction provides. I am pretty jaded these days, so I likened the whole thing to a medieval Wrestlemania, with six sections of the crowd rooting for six different knights in a choreographed melodrama. We did an MST3K version of this, and laughed all evening. The whole thing hit an 11 on my hokey-meter, I'm afraid, but we did get well fed. It was amusing to see Cap'n Jack in the stands, playing to the audience, and to see the guests in more authentic costume than the people who worked there. There was entertainment before and afterwards, with the band Glasshammer and the local filk group Urban Tapestry both providing the kind of music you'd expect to find at the Prancing Pony.

To their credit, the convention provided transportation from the hotel (downtown) to the movies in the Yonge and Sheppard area (north end of the city), and to Medieval Times in the west end. They had fully manned information tables, and souvenir movie passes. They didn't know about flyer/freebie tables, so I had to set one up, and it was quickly full.

Overall, almost all were pleased with the convention, and there was a rumour going around that there was to be another Gathering next year...Ed Rodrigues confirmed it, but only if there's enough support, and there may be. There may even be other Gatherings in future years, but in other cities. Would I go back? Definitely. As soon as I find out more information about another Gathering, I'll let you know.



## BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

reviewed by Keith Braithwaite

The new Battlestar Galactica falls short.

First of all, for all the PR buzz about the female Starbuck, she comes across as a marginal player in the story. I gotta wonder why producers made such a big deal about a character who contributed so little of consequence to the proceedings? Boomer, also recast as a girl, had a more important role and proved far more interesting. Apollo might as well have been a girl! Disappointingly, most of the remodelled characters populating this familiar story were bland stereotypes.

The new spacecraft designs are faithful to the originals, which I appreciated, but it was often difficult to get a good look at the ships with all that Blair-Witch camera work going on during the space battles. Still, I give 'em points for trying something fresh.

Many die-hard fans were turned off by the decidedly darker tone of the piece as compared to the original, but I found this to be a better fit for the premise. The original was a bit too Saturday-morning-cartoon for my tastes.

The updated Cylons were also an improvement. You pretty much had to rework these guys' face it, those

chrome suits looked kinda silly even in 1978! The they-look-just-like-us approach provided a level of paranoia (as in post-9/11 America) that set up a couple of nice dramatic situations.

But despite a few good moments, the end-product was a hollow attempt at an edgier Battlestar Galactica. And an edgier, re-imagined Galactica, less melodramatic, cheesy, and cheap than the original, would have been welcome. Too bad we didn't get that.

But if you liked this thing more than I did, you will be pleased to hear that it has been picked up as a limited series, with six episodes ordered initially.



## Battlestar: Remake

Lynda D'Ortun-Boyer

Salut!

J'ai regardé la première partie de la mini-série, "Battlestar: Galactica" hier soir à Space, de 9h pm à 11h pm.

Quoique le début est un peu lent, j'ai bien aimé le reste, surtout la fin. On voit nettement toutefois, durant certaines parties du film, qu'il y a une caméra en arrière que bouge et tourne.

Personnellement, j'ai vu la série originale, et je l'ai bien aimée, du début à la fin. Bien que les producteurs n'aient pas été préparés à faire une série télévisée à l'époque, je trouve qu'ils s'étaient bien débrouillés.

Les producteurs de celle-ci sont préparés à une série, mais je doute que ça "poigne". Qui sait? Certaines idées qu'ils ont eu sont bonnes, comme les coloniaux sont pris à utiliser leurs anciens vaisseaux spatiaux lors de l'attaque-surprise ou le fait qu'Apollo ait des problèmes avec son père. Certains changements sont surprenants: Starbuck est maintenant une femme(!?), comme Boomer. Elles se sont "modernisées".

J'espérais sincèrement une suite à Battlestar: Galactica comme l'acteur Richard Hatch (qui jouait Apollo à l'époque). Ça aurait aidé à combler certains vides entre la série originale et "Galactica: 1980".

Par exemple, comment est mort Apollo? Comment s'est passée l'enfance du jeune être de lumière sur le Galactica, l'être qu'a sauvé Starbuck sur cette planète déserte? Quel parcours a-t-il suivi pour qu'on le découvre chef au début de "Galactica:1980"?

Toutes ces questions et plus je me pose à nouveau quand je regarde l'actuel mini-série.

Je ne sais pas quelles réactions auront les fans de l'ancienne série, mais personnellement pour le moment je ne trouve pas celle-ci digne d'une série télévisée. Et ce, même si ses producteurs y sont préparés.

Au moins, ils le seront. On verra ce qui arrivera.

## THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

reviewed by Carl Phillips

I heard that The Butterfly Effect was laughed off the screen at this year's Sundance film festival and can only assume that the art-house crowd at the screening found the film to be lacking in any meaningful allegorical exploration of the zeitgeist of the post-modern universal dyspopia yada yada yada.

Hey! It's a straight-up commercial SF movie, you pretentious bicycle-riding Marxist coffee-sipping 16mm-black-and-white-using subtitle-loving pro-Kyoto "free the whales" twits! Judge it as such!

And as such, it was pretty darn good. The movie stars Ashton Kutcher (of TV's That '70s Show), whose acting skills have been much maligned by the Sundance flock and other critics. Now while he may never rise to the apex of his profession, here, Kutcher does a perfectly fine job in a movie that efficaciously draws the audience into a series of increasingly dark and disturbing alternate realities.

Kutcher's character discovers that he has the ability to revisit his past and make good what was bad. But changing the past to insure a better future is not so easily done, and he finds that the ripple effects of his "corrections" bring unforeseen consequences. He only succeeds in making things worse, and the more he tries, the worse it gets, until he realizes that he can make it all right only at great personal sacrifice.

A solid script and terrifically dramatic editing compellingly piece the whole thing together for both character and audience.

So take that, ya self-important Sundancing film-school chimps!



### A Utopian Ship: The Lotus

Sébastien Mineau

When I first stepped aboard Leithunion 6, I never thought the Force would have led me to this.

At first it looked like wreckage, but at a closer look, I saw I had tumbled upon one of the most impressive organisms I had ever seen. Then something brought me around the wreckage, which wasn't much more than a 3 metre wide crate, and then a door opened up. Well disappeared would be a better guess.

I walked into the hole of what had called up to me. That's when I felt the gravity field kick in and support my body so I wouldn't have to climb down.

It was helping me.

I followed the dim lights to the control room. It was a fairly good walk there but when I walked in, it was fairly weird.. everything seemed fine.

And then a force grabbed me and all went black...

When I woke up, I was seeing multiple screens in front of me displaying information.. not actual physical screens.. but 3d transparent.. standing in the air in front of my eyes – 9 of them.

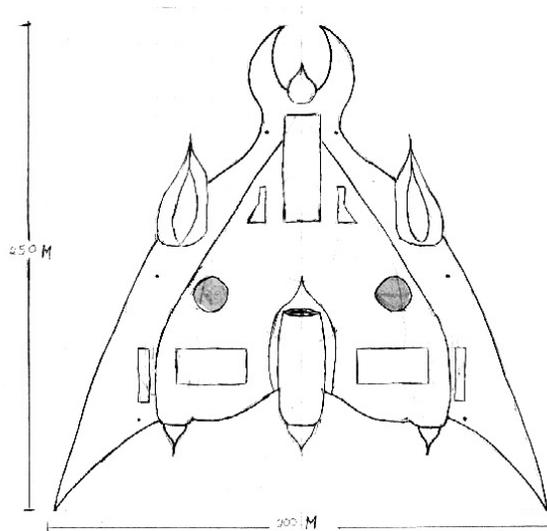
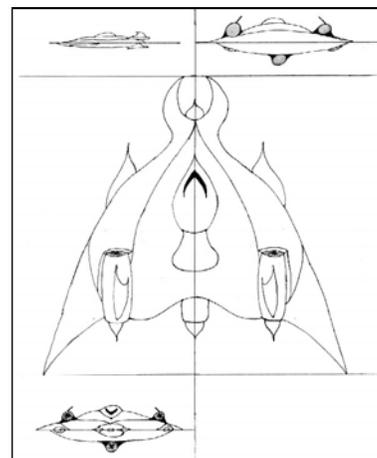
It was talking to me, and on the middle screen, a lotus.

To be continued...

As you can understand so far, The Lotus isn't exactly a normal ship. If you can imagine an indestructible ship this would be it.. except it's not, for much like a Dragon it has a flaw of it's own, but you need not be concerned with this for the time being.

All you need to know are the following, the rest we will discuss in time at a later MonSFFA meeting.

**scale:** I have no clue but since it's a really big ship ( 2 5 0 x 2 0 0 x something, I'm not too sure about yet), I'll say 1/1000 so final dimension of the ship 25



centimetres x 20 centimetres x something to be figured out later.

**Material:** I'd love to have a clay model to see and paint afterward (maybe even three) then probably some sort of plastic model. (still open for discussion)

**Cost:** to be discussed, I still have to propose MonSFFA president to get some funds in this project, but I would rather we fund it ourselves.

GJM Uilmuteiz Qur Nomar Enrixtoar

## 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

\$5 only 5\$ 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 you membership package.**



For more information, visit our website at  
[www.monsffa.com](http://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

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**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

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**Cosmix**, 10% of most merchandise

**Mars**, 10-15% off most merchandise

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<p><b><i>Please send cheque or money order in the amount of 25\$ to:</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"> MonSFFA  PO Box 1186 Place du Parc  Montréal, Québec  H2X 4A7 </p>	<p><b><i>Veillez parvenir un chèque ou un mandat-postal, au montant de 25\$:</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 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 style="text-align: center;"> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>    No <input type="checkbox"/> </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 style="text-align: center;"> Oui <input type="checkbox"/>    Non <input type="checkbox"/> </p>