

# MONSIEUR'S WARP 63

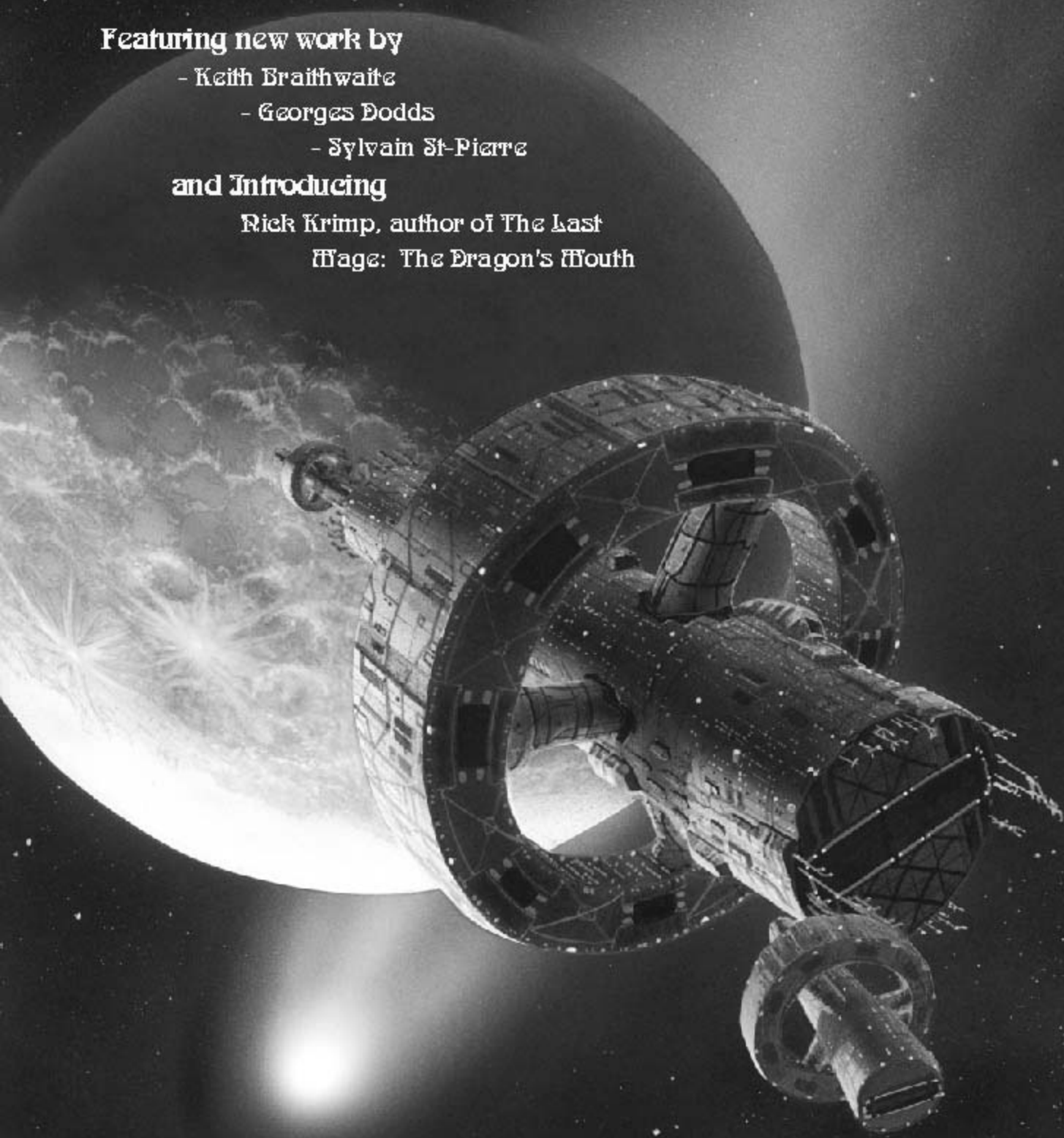
Winter 2006 ❁ Volume 20 ❁ 01

**Featuring new work by**

- Keith Braithwaite
- Georges Dodds
- Sylvain St-Pierre

**and Introducing**

Rick Krimp, author of *The Last Mage: The Dragon's Mouth*



**MonSFFA's Executive:**

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President

Keith Braithwaite  
Vice-President

Sylvain St-Pierre  
Treasurer

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Keith Braithwaite

Web Master  
Bernard Reischl

Audio/Video  
Wayne Glover

Editor of WARP  
Cathy Palmer-Lister

**Board of Advisors (BoA)**

All members in good standing! Please help  
us plan our activities!

**On the Cover**

(No more spoof covers!)  
Our winter issue features *art* by MonSFFan  
Jean-Pierre Normand. Comet was in fact the  
cover art of the September 2005 issue of  
*Analog*, so WARP is in good company!

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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.**

**February 19, 2006**



Hit or Miss: The State of SF Television

Urban Legends: True or False Game

**March 26, 2006**

Ray Harryhausen & Stop Motion Retrospective

**Anticipation** – Montreal's WorldCon Bid



**April 23, 2006**



Superman Returns: A look into the entire mythos  
of the Man of Steel  
from the comics origin to television and the movies.

A case for life on Mars



**May 28, 2006**



Hot Rods in Science Fiction

You are Not Alone! A Primer to Fandom

**June 11, 2006**



Sequel to a previous panel: Literacy in SF  
Why are people reading less and watching more TV?



Sequels, Remakes & Revisitations - Why Bother?

**July 30, 2006**



MonSFFA BBQ  
(rain date, Sunday August 6)



**See our web page for complete schedule of events!**

[www.monsffa.com](http://www.monsffa.com)

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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## Andreas Katsulas

1946 – 2006



Just over a year ago, Andreas Katsulas -- who loved smoking with a passion that cannot be described -- was diagnosed with lung cancer, which by then had already spread to other areas. He quit smoking at once and went on a healthy diet and vitamin program, but there was little hope of a good resolution even though the new regimen was very good for him. When we spoke about it, he laughed, and said, "Now that I'm dying I've never felt better!"

His spirits were always up and positive, putting everyone at ease about his condition, because...well, that's the kind of person he was.

A couple of months ago, he and his wife convened a dinner with me, Doug, and Peter Jurasik, which was filled with laughter and stories and good food. He wanted to know all the stories we never told him because, as he said, "Who am I going to tell?" So we did. Because we knew we were saying goodbye, and there would not be a second chance.

Last night, in the company of his wife and family, Andreas closed his eyes and went away.

He lived an amazing life...full of travel and wonder and good work...was part of the world renowned Peter Brook company...he saw the planet, loved and was loved, ate at great restaurants, smoked too many cigarettes...he lived a life some people would die for.

And, sadly, due to the last part of that equation...he did.

Andreas is gone...and G'Kar with him, because no one else can ever play that role, or ever will.

I will miss him terribly.

J. Michael Straczynski

Andreas Katsulas died Feb. 13 of lung cancer in Los Angeles, his agent, Donna Massetti, confirmed to SCI FI Wire. He was 59.

Katsulas, a longtime resident of Los Angeles, played the Narn ambassador G'Kar for five years in the syndicated cult TV series *Babylon 5*, starting in 1993. He reprised the role in subsequent *Babylon 5* telefilms.

Katsulas was also no stranger to Trek fans, playing Romulan Cmdr. Tomalak in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. His last appearance in a Trek series was as a Vissian captain on an episode of *Enterprise*.

Born in St. Louis, Katsulas held a master's degree in theater from Indiana University, his official Web site said. After performing in plays in St. Louis, New York and Boston, he went on to film roles in such movies as Michael Cimino's *The Sicilian*, which brought him to Los Angeles, then in Ridley Scott's *Someone to Watch Over Me* and Blake Edward's *Sunset*. Katsulas moved to Los Angeles permanently in 1986 and found scores of television and film parts in everything from TV's *Alien Nation* and *Max Headroom* to the big screen's *The Fugitive*, in which he played the infamous one-armed man, and *Executive Decision* opposite Kurt Russell and Steven Segal. – SCI FI Wire

### For tributes to Andreas see:

<http://www.isnnews.net/>

<http://www.thegalacticgateway.com/aktrib.htm>

### To know more about his career:

<http://us.imdb.com/name/nm0441537/>





*You've Got Mail!*

Dear MonSFfen:

I am trying my best to get caught up with lots of fanzines that have come my way, and I have a copy of issue 62 of Warp. The last of Christmas is out of the way, and New Year's will be here in a day or two. Might as well use the time available.

How many of us might remember the old SF pulp magazine the front cover is modeled on? Ah, not many, not many...the years accumulate, and the memories fog.

Toronto Trek...I might be back to help this year to help with a dealer, selling Sectarian Wave CDs. When it comes to Yvonne, I do not think she will be there at all. Perhaps if the convention was more suited to her interests, and if it was a \$60 pre-registration rate... Other conventions...I gather that the Bad Wolf Doctor Who convention was quite successful, and there might be plans for another next year, especially given the popularity of the new DW. Also, Yvonne and I did run the con suite at Astronomicon 9 in Rochester in November, and we had a fine time. We kept most people watered and fed, and we had an enormous amount of space to not only provide a quiet area for some and a noisy area for others, but also provide space for an impromptu poker tournament and a cozy area for Spider Robinson to have his traditional Beatles jam. A very good time indeed.

I may make a decision soon about a national newsletter. So far, the response to the idea has been either apathetic or vaguely hostile. No

one has come forth to say it's a great idea, go ahead. Garth Spencer is right; I am relying on my own training in journalism to keep people informed, and I am used to being actively involved in things. If I produce a newszine, who will care? I am from an older generation who would care; I don't think this newer generation, what few there are, would, and as Garth might say, there's no reason why they should.

I'm sure that Sylvain St-Pierre has done his research, especially on the electro-magnetic railgun, and its creator, Gerald Bull, who may have sold the technology to Saddam Hussain many years ago. Both the CBC and CTV have done investigative pieces on Bull and his researches, and I'm sure Discovery Channel has had something, too.

Quite like Bryan Ekers' shortshort. A cautionary tale, one that says that if we're not careful, we may put ourselves under the care of our own AIs, and not be able to get back out again. And, Jose   Bellemare's Doctor Who pastiche was enjoyable, an interesting mix of various universes. The Lupien story...well, the language doesn't bother me; adds a modicum of realism to the plotline, which I believe is to be Iraq-like. This is the brutality of war, the de-humanizing part...on both the parts of the soldier and the civilian.

Just yesterday, Yvonne and I saw the movie The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. It has been a while since I read this book, so it may take a re-reading to determine if the movie was faithful or not. Nevertheless, it was a wonderful trip into a fantasy realm, very reminiscent of The Lord of the Rings. It did not have LotR's depth, given that it was from a story of a couple of hundred pages instead of the 1000+ of LotR, but that didn't matter much. The battles scenes are also reminiscent of LotR, especially if you remember that it was shot in New Zealand, too. Still...a wondrous trip, and a very enjoyable movie. Two

hours go by effortlessly. And now that the Narnia series has been established in the public's eyes, I hope they will soon take another Narnia book and go in a different direction so that it doesn't look like LotR. The actors in it are wonderful in that typically English way, and the characters truly change and grow within the movie. Go and see it, and hope for even more real soon. If not, it was a great little trip into Narnia, not Middle-Earth, but pretty close. (P.S.... ILM did all the effects and special characters for this movie, so I think there is a Wookiee in there, one that Aslan restores from being a statue.)

C'est tout for now, and Yvonne and I wish you all the happiest of New Years. I am hoping that 2006 will be a big year, mostly because it won't be 2005, if you get my drift. Take care all, and see you next issue.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney.

Hi, Lloyd!

I, for one, would like to see some sort of national newsletter, though in keeping with the times, I think it should be electronic. I've been enjoying the "conversations" with yourself, John Mansfield, and Garth Spencer. (See next letter.) Part of the reason fans feel disconnected to other fans is that they honestly don't know what else is out there.

I didn't go to see Narnia, mostly because the happiest moments of my teaching experience involved reading the books to the kids. No film could possibly live up to that!

I look forward to chatting with you again at TTrek,

Yours in fandom,  
Cathy

---

Dear Cathy,

After I wrote (with John Mansfield responding):

I have no recent news about Edmonton,



>Nothing heard, except that some fans are interested in helping with the last remaining Alberta con: *Conversions.*

the Prairies,

> Nothing heard that would have been of interest to Toronto, Vancouver.

or the Sunburst Awards.

>Reported in latest *Locus*.

Come to think of it, I used to hear about gaming conventions, at least, in Halifax and Wolfville (Nova Scotia) and Brandon (Manitoba)

>The Brandon con - Prairie Con was cancelled this year

and Regina (Saskatchewan),

>Heroes Gambit (Sask) was announced with less than two weeks to go. Poor turnout

and I haven't heard anything from those regions, either.

Cathy wrote:

>This is very worrying....

>Is fandom really dying? Are we happy & cozy in cocoons?

No, small local clubs have been staying out of touch for a long time - and I think they are usually pretty specialized in focus, or interest, or activity. All it means is that "fandom" for many small, local clubs means exclusively /face-to-face/ activities: e.g. gaming, costuming, filking or other activities that don't entail correspondence, publishing or otherwise relating to distant fans.

I have a number of ideas about this. One has to do with the first impressions fans gain, at different times in fandom. Another has to do with demographics - how many fans are going to emerge in a given area or population. Another has to do with communication, which brings me back to the impressions communicated to fans when get involved.

In the 1980s I nearly, but did not quite, mistake absence of evidence for evidence of absence. But I had a

Horrible Example placed before me, specifically the American fan Fred Patten. He was involved in a federated Japanese-animation club called the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization, and he kept responding to lack of correspondence from clubs by writing that he guessed they had folded up. There were several Canadian C/FO chapters, and they began complaining about the way he would arbitrarily declare they didn't exist anymore, which made it rather difficult for them to carry on. The fact is that Fred Patten is an old guy, conceivably the C/FO members were a generation younger, so conceivably he was stuck on the idea that fans are fanpublishers. This was the definition of fan activity once; it hasn't been for a long time.

Still, after observing other newszines as well as editing my own, I think fans are simply scarce on the ground, throughout the Prairies.

This covers my /demographic/ argument about fandom. Really I have no business holding forth, the qualified professional is Robert Runte, who not only participated in fandom, documented fandom, but holds a sociology degree. His personal and fandom websites are on the University of Lethbridge site.

After some very sporadic correspondence, I concluded in the 1980s that Maritimers are more prone than other Canadians to go \*for years\* without communicating outside their provinces. This can have unfortunate effects, though.

It took me years to understand that people without information actually imagine misinformation, they don't generally realize they don't know something, nor do they necessarily go find things out. Two incidents highlighted this for me. The first was a 1981 report by the first Edmonton fans to visit Halcon, a Maritime convention; Rick Leblanc's report revealed the misconceptions the committee insisted on (e.g.: allowing members to see only one film or limited numbers of panels apiece, and treating the consuite as a

\*closed\* and unadvertised party, just for concom and GoHs). The second was a few years later, receiving a letter (once) from Anne-Marie Feetham about Maritimes fan activities, and incidentally stating that yes, Halifax was hosting the next Convention, "and don't anyone /dare/ take it away from us!, can you tell we're a bit exercised about this?" (approximate quotation) I responded, "I can tell you're operating on strange input - what makes you think anyone is trying to take the Convention away from you?" She never did answer that.

Maritime fans have an excuse for being out of touch: they're at least as broke as other Canadians, and they're isolated both from the nearest Canadian and from the nearest American fan groups; but the excuse doesn't mean much in the Internet age.

Why, though, do small specialized local fan groups, in places like Toronto and Vancouver and Montreal, generally live out of touch with each other? I can only conclude that it's far easier to find other fans to relate to, nowadays, than thirty or forty years ago. There's not a lot of compulsion to go forth and seek new worlds. Also people get pretty narrow initial ideas of fan activity, and may simply not buy into more versions of fandom, once they have a broader base of information.

This covers my /communications/ argument about fandom. I only write about this - well, obsess about it - because there's an implicit, chronic problem that I'm trying to resolve, and it has to do with failures of communication such as fans demonstrate.

Feel like publishing the foregoing?

Yours,

Garth

Hi, Garth!

Well, yes, I do feel like publishing the foregoing! <grin>

I am enjoying our "conversations" and hope we can

actually meet to chat over a coffee some day. World Con in LA, perhaps?

In WARP 62, the Autumn Issue, I wrote that Keith Braithwaite was working on an article on fanzines. He sent it to me just a few days ago, and it appears on page 7 of this issue. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on it.

Yours in fandom,  
Cathy

---

*From Sébastien Mineau,  
commenting on the passing of Michael  
Sheard, as reported in WARP 62:*

Dear MonSFFen:

It's the little things you often remember in life. Most of the time they are even ridiculous.

I first met Michael Sheard on a TV screen in *Star Wars The Empire Strikes Back*. (Yeah back in the days where there were no such things as Episode V in the titles.).

Years later I was finding myself honourably taking a leak right next to him at the International Indianapolis Airport.

He had been meant to come to Montreal but sadly the Con\*Cept of 2000 being cancelled, I never had a chance to actually meet him in person.

I introduced myself and Richard Le Parmentier after coming out of the "Imperial soothing facilities" and explained to him who I was and how sad I was that he never made it to Montreal.

It was an honour to help bring him back and then even share a meal with him when he came to Montreal in 2003 a year later.

Michael was a very active man in the fandom community, no matter to him if it was Star Wars, Doctor Who or any other TV or movie appearance he may have made. He even helped turn Robert Picardo into a more fan friendly person, if you've never heard the story coming from him, I guess you'll have to hear it from Picardo to get its whole distinction.

Author of 3 autobiographies, Michael appeared in over 40 films, made more than 57 Television appearances and even directed a few

features. He was always present at a convention where good fans and scotch could be found. I can tell that he will be missed amongst the Star Wars fan community.

Michael Sheard passed away in his home on the Isle of Wight on August 31st 2005. He lived a full life and he is now sharing his life with the angels in the clouds above Scotland.

Michael, thank you for your good humour and constant encouragement towards the fans of all fandom.

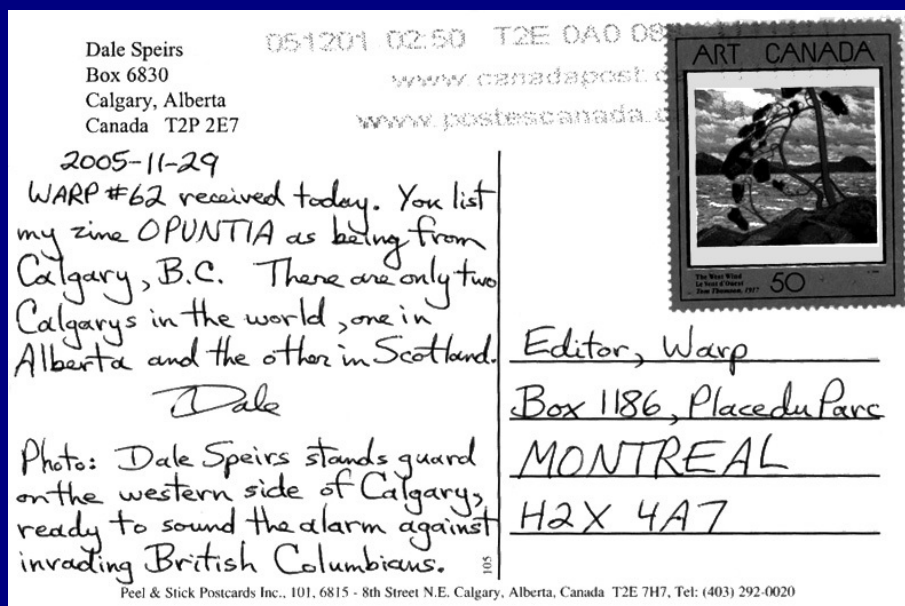
Yours,  
Sébastien Mineau

Hi, Sébastien!

Thanks for sharing your memories of Michael. Fandom lost a very good friend with his passing. I was chair of Con\*Cept 2003, and remember him fondly. He was a great Guest of Honour, and it was an honour to have him at our convention.

Yours in fandom, Cathy

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### QUEBECER UNILATERALLY REDRAWS MAP OF CANADA!

Having once famously mistaken the planet Jupiter for Mars during a stargazing session with her fellow MonSFFen, astronomy enthusiast and Warp editor Cathy Palmer-Lister has lately taken up cartography!

– Keith Braithwaite

OOOPS!

– Cathy, blushing...

## Fanzines: The Fourth Phase of Fanac

From “fan magazine” was coined the contraction “fanzine” in 1941 to characterize the homemade periodicals produced by and for science fiction fans. The earliest prototypes predate by about a decade this appellation.

Generally photocopied or printed today, once faithfully duplicated on fabled machines not far removed from Gutenberg’s press, fanzines have endured for the better part of a century. But with the advent of the Internet, has the fanzine become obsolete?

That may be jumping the gun. While the number of titles continuing to publish has declined some in recent years, I will nevertheless venture that reports of the death of the fanzine are greatly exaggerated, to paraphrase Mark Twain. Fact is, the principal conveyors of the printed word today remain books, newspapers, and magazines. As a subgroup of the last, we can include fanzines.

Also, a broader definition of the form might embrace Net-based electronic variants of the traditional paper fanzine. And these “e-zines” certainly seem to be proliferating at a healthy rate.

The publishing of fanzines, one of the elder forms of fannish activity, or “fanac,” is regarded as the “fourth phase of fanac,” referring to a stage in the typical development of a science fiction fan, circa 1930s. The reading and collecting of SF was seen as the first phase. Writing letters to “prozines”—professional SF magazines—and fanzines, and corresponding with other so-called “letterhacks,” ranks as the second phase. These activities usually motivated a fan to join an SF club—the third phase—which brings us to the “pubbing”—publishing—of one’s ’zine, the fourth phase. (Subsequent phases included convention-going, which quickly became popular and in later decades was moved into the second spot.)

Note that while often associated specifically with science fiction fandom, the fanzine is not unique to that group. Sports, music, and other non-SF fandoms have adopted the term to describe their own do-it-yourself publications. Note, too, that the practice of publishing such amateur magazines did not originate with science fiction fans. Some 50 years before the birth of fandom in late-1920s America, amateur press associations were distributing collections of their members’ writings in what were called APAs.

Genre writers cottoned to APAs like *The Recluse* in the 1920s, which included the works of H.P. Lovecraft, and

Donald A. Wollheim’s 1937-founded *FAPA—Fantasy Amateur Press Association*—the first properly SFnal APA. Such volumes frequently lifted contributors from the amateur to professional ranks of publishing.

The first of what would come to be known as fanzines appeared in the early 1930s. These were club-sponsored publications dealing extensively with popular science while offering reviews of the stories that appeared in professional SF magazines of the day, like Hugo Gernsback’s *Amazing Stories*.

As interest in what Gernsback had dubbed “scientifiction” grew throughout the ’30s, individual fans of the genre began publishing their own ’zines, diversifying content, exchanging issues with each other, and offering complimentary copies to their contributors and “locers” (those readers who wrote letters of comment—“locs”—to fanzine editors, encouraging a dialogue among fans). SF fans had fashioned for themselves a homespun communications network that afforded them a free-wheeling forum for the exchange of ideas and opinion.

Fanzines would prove prime incubators for SF writers. Many of the genre’s top names—Ray Bradbury, Frederik Pohl, Harlan Ellison, and Michael Moorcock, to

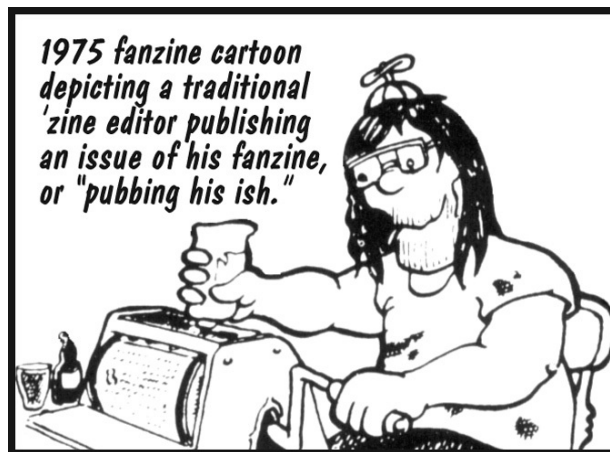
name a few—got started as fanzine editors.

America’s fledgling fanzine movement soon spread to the U.K. and other English-speaking parts of the world, and ultimately to every populated continent on Earth. By some estimates there are, today, several hundred fanzines in production worldwide. That said, the United States remains the locus of fanzine publishing; the sizable majority of the world’s ’zines are based in the U.S. and published in English.

In exchange for our own *Warp*, MonSFFA receives a number of American fanzines, as well as a handful of Canadian titles. We also swap ’zines with SF clubs in such distant lands as South Africa and Australia. In upcoming issues of *Warp*, I’ll illuminate some of these trades for the benefit of MonSFFen and other *Warp* readers.

Varying greatly in style, page-count, and quality, fanzines, then as now, are produced in limited runs of between a dozen and a few hundred copies per issue. In more recent years, some particularly ambitious ’zines, boasting print-runs of over 1000, have been categorized as “semiprozines.”

During the 1960s and ’70s, fandom’s ranks swelled acutely as media fans—aficionados of *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and other screen-centred SF—joined the party. Fanzines



devoted to favourite television series, movies, and stars emerged. Fandom was no longer the select domain of a few hundred avid readers of SF.

Modern fandom includes many thousands of participants active in a wide range of specialized sub-groups, from comic book fans and gamers to filkers (fannish musicians) and furies (those into the anthropomorphism of animals). This marvellous variety of interests is mirrored in the community's fanzines.

The onset of desktop publishing software, meanwhile, greatly aided 'zine pubbers in their efforts, vastly improving upon decades-old techniques that were not especially forgiving of errors. Most contemporary fanzines make use of Word, PageMaker, or similar applications.

But according to some observers, the irony is that computer technology is also effecting, if not the demise, then certainly the diminution of the conventional paper fanzine, a conjecture not without merit. The Internet explosion of recent years has opened to fanzine publishers numerous heretofore unthinkable possibilities with regard to content, distribution, and interactivity. Many are moving online to take full advantage, gaining thousands more subscribers while providing material that paper 'zines plainly cannot equal. And

yet paper fanzines persevere, though as mentioned earlier, fewer are currently publishing than were just a few years ago. Younger fans in particular, it seems, favour the sweep and instant gratification of the Internet.

But whether in a format familiar or novel, I believe the fanzine will abide as a key ingredient of our fannish soup, first as a vehicle for the earnest exploration and sharing of our manifold interests, and perhaps more importantly, as the tangible chronicle of a fascinating and ever-evolving sub-culture.

Consider that fanzines hold between their covers a treasured heritage: the collective observations, deliberations, humour, originality, creativity, and enthusiasm of science fiction fandom. Our commentary on a century of science fiction and our own novice contributions to the genre inhabit the pages of our fanzines. And we have documented for posterity in those 'zines, as well, a record of our clubs, conventions, parties, and myriad other activities; of individuals and ideas; of storied days. Fanzines embody much of our tribute to the science fiction field and are the archive of fandom's history, our common diary, if you will, our story, told by us as only we can tell it.

Such a legacy must be both preserved and perpetuated.



**Suzanne Marie Ann  
Larose  
Q'Onego  
1959 - 2005**

Suzanne Marie Ann Larose "Q'Onego", CD, CSO, beloved wife of Paul Carreau of Calgary passed away on Thursday, December 22, 2005 at the age of 46 years. Suzanne was born November 2, 1959 in Montreal, Quebec. Besides leaving her loving husband Paul, Suzanne leaves behind her daughter Angela Carreau and family members. As well as her extended family in Fandom.

To quote Paul.

"I referred to you, (and please read this personally) as our extended family. We met at a Science Fiction Convention. The Maritime Science Fiction Festival in 1996. A large part of our identity - who we are...were, was in a large part to our friends in Fandom. Q'Onego had a big heart. It is tearing me apart now that it is stilled."

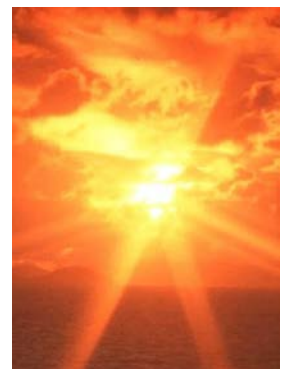
As a member of KAG/Kanada I extended my condolences to Paul and his family as did a few others on the Yahoo group.

**David James**

**Red Star  
Leslie Perryon**

In the year 3366 AD, there was a war—  
12.8 million people in the world, but  
when the war ended in 3396, we had only 1.7 million...

Years and years later..  
In the year 4677, we had 14.5  
million people in the world,  
We had 3000 ships for the next  
war..  
We made many more, and  
in the year 4766 we had 5500  
ships, and  
20,000 worlds —



We are one in all we can give,  
We will have more ships than all the others...



## *The Last Mage: The Dragon's Mouth, by Nikolai Krimp*

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*When I asked for our members to submit some original fiction for publication in WARP, I didn't expect to be sent a whole novel, but MonSFFan, Nick Krimp, has done just that! **The Last Mage** is fantasy in what I call the "classic style", and it will be serialised in WARP à la Dickens. We thank Nick and his agent, Maureen Anderson, for allowing us the honour of being first to publish Nick's book. Enjoy! –Editor*

### Prologue

It was just after nine p.m. when Jennifer decided to call it a day. After a long week, a nice restful weekend would be just what the doctor ordered.

Changing from her sterile apparel into her street clothing, she left the lab. Walking to her car that was parked in a vast underground parking lot, her thoughts were only of the weekend ahead. Looking around, it always amazed her how they could build such a huge complex deep into a mountain. The ceiling must have been about twenty feet high and ran at least a few hundred feet in each direction. Dozens of strategically placed, steel re-enforced concrete columns kept the mountain from caving in. Jenny worked for a Biohazard Research Laboratory situated deep inside a mountain just south of Seattle, Washington. She worked on the top level where most of the research was conducted on computers. Each lower level experimented with more hazardous materials. The lowest level, the fourth, dealt with the most deadly ones. Soon, she thought to herself, I'll be down there, for that's where the big money is made. Graduating tops in her class at the University of B.C., is what landed her here, but like everyone else, she had to start at the bottom, which in this case ironically meant the top floor. So for now Jennifer would have to be content with working on the less sensational diseases.

Pulling the keys from her purse she unlocked the door of her brand new red Toyota and sank down into its black, plush interior. It still smelled brand new, even though she had owned it for a few months already. Fully equipped; stereo, electronic windows and locks. Air conditioning was standard with this model. It was her first new car and she was proud of it, because she had always been given her parents' old one. This one was all hers, bought and paid for by herself. Adjusting the rearview mirror, she smiled and started the engine. The radio crackled, for there was a lot of static here under the mountain. Turning down the volume, she backed the car out of its space. Just then some one tapped on the passenger side window. When Jennifer lowered the glass, her friend Helen peered in.

"Don't forget tomorrow night," Helen said, "Supper's at seven-thirty sharp, and... oh yes, bring wine."

Jenny cursed under her breath as she closed the window. She had completely forgotten about Helen and Roger. Oh well, she sighed to herself, there goes a perfectly good restful weekend. She didn't particularly like visiting them, for the

evenings always ended very late. That meant sleeping in late the next day. Whenever she could, Jennifer enjoyed watching the sun come up.

As she exited the mountain, Jenny saw that there was a storm brewing. "I hope it won't ruin my weekend," she said softly to herself. Moments later she came to the main gate and guardhouse.

"Good evening, Ms Wells," said the guard.

"Hi Charlie," answered Jenny. "Looks like we're in for quite a storm."

"It's a strange one," said Charlie looking up at the sky, "I've never seen blue lightning and look, there aren't any clouds about. Yes I would say, it's a strange one all right."

Charlie was an older man, nearing his retirement. He always had a kind word for everyone here at the Lab. An old vet of the Vietnam War, he spoke only of the good times he had over there and never talked of the killings that went on.

"It must be some sort of atmospheric phenomenon," said Jenny. "Anyway, I don't think it's anything to worry about."

"You're probably right," agreed the guard. "You drive safely and have yourself a good weekend."

Charlie pressed a button and the big gate slid silently out of the way. Once clear, Jenny waved and drove on. Soon she arrived at the junction that would take her down the twisting mountain road, which led to the village of Ashgrove where she lived.

It sure was a strange storm, she thought to herself. The stars were out and not a cloud in sight. Where did this light show come from? Shrugging her shoulders she put it out of her mind and began thinking of the weekend ahead. Maybe a visit to the archery range or a camping trip was out of the question because of Helen's dinner invitation. In any case the next couple of days would not be wasted.

Jenny had day-dreamed her way half way down the mountain, when a loud bang and flub... flub startled her back to reality. Holding tight onto the steering wheel and pumping the brakes, she wrestled the car over to the shoulder of the dangerously winding road and stopped. By now the blue flashes in the sky had intensified. She got out and checked the car. The front, right tire was flat. "Damn!" she swore softly, as she opened the trunk. As she bent inside and loosened the spare, a sudden flash of blue light hit the car. Jenny felt a searing pain and all went black.

## Chapter One

When Jennifer opened her eyes again, she saw a young brown haired girl, dressed in deerskin clothing, staring down at her.

"Are you all right?" asked the girl.

"I think so," answered Jenny. "Who are you?"

"It's me, Roma," the girl answered with a puzzled look on her face. "That lighting hit closer than I thought. Are you sure you're all right?"

Upon further examination, Roma concluded that her friend had not been injured. She stood up and said. "Come on Shannon, let's continue our search. I know the entrance is here somewhere."

"Wait!" Jenny said sharply and managed to sit up. She found herself dressed in the same garb as this stranger and sitting on the floor of some sort of cave. "First of all, my name isn't Shannon. Second, I don't know you, and third, I don't know what you're talking about. What entrance? Oh! And where the hell am I?"

Roma sat back down and put some more wood on a small fire, which she had built while waiting for her friend to regain consciousness. With the added light she looked into Shannon's eyes and asked, "Who are you if you're not Shannon?"

Staring back with a look of total confusion on her face, Jennifer answered, "My name is Jennifer... Jennifer Wells."

Seeing that the girl was serious, Roma looked up at her and sighed. "Here!" Handing the girl a small polished metal mirror, "If you don't believe me, then see for yourself."

"Will you please tell me what's going on?" Jenny insisted, as she stared at what looked to her like an elf in the mirror staring back. "This is not me! ... Why am I here? ... Where's my car? ... What have you done with it?"

"Slow down and I will try to answer your questions, Shan ... uh ... Jennifer Wells. You are Shannon Brightstar, daughter of Annabelle Pennifeather and niece of Teagan Twofeathers. And all I know is that we were sent here to find some ancient magic and that no matter what happens, we are not to give up until we've found it and brought it home. Shannon began to tell me something, when the blue light struck her... or you. So now, here you are; Shannon's body, but apparently not her mind. .... Why?..... I don't know."

Jennifer began to recall the events that led to the flat tire. She remembered the blue light. After that, it was all a blank. "So you're saying that my being here has something to do with your ancient magic?" she asked.

"I think so," answered Roma. "When we get back, you can ask your mother," she continued, not knowing quite how to answer her. "Maybe she'll be able to answer all of your questions."

"Why don't we just call her?" asked Jenny.

"Because it's too far," replied Roma. "She couldn't hear us from this distance."

"No..... no....." interrupted Jenny, "I mean by phone."

"What's a phone?" asked Roma.

Jenny fell silent. She began to realize how serious her problem was. How was she ever going to get to Ashgrove? "Can you help me get back home?"

Roma agreed to help, as she busily boiled some tea over the small fire in the cave. She couldn't blame this girl whoever she was. Then her thoughts turned to Shannon. She remembered how happy her friend always was, no matter what situation they got themselves into. She also realized how much she depended on Shannon for help when things got out of control. Like the time when they were in Montrose for the Spring Festival, when two locals started a fight with her. Calling her a boy. This didn't sit too well with Roma, who without warning punched one boy in the face, breaking his nose. Little did she know that he was a son of one of the wealthier merchants. It took Shannon to step in to calm things down before the merchant's guards arrested her. She also remembered how they laughed until the tears flowed while running away. They dared not go back this year, but spoke of next Spring. Now she wondered, would she ever talk to Shannon again? Roma felt very strange. Here was Shannon, or at least her body was here, but who was in her head?

"Let's take this problem one step at a time," Roma said. "If the storm that brought you here was magic, then Malodor knows where we are and will come searching."

"Who's Malodor?" asked Jenny.

"I don't think you would want to meet him," replied Roma. "He is an evil man; a dark Druid. He is the right hand in this world for Apolyon, 'The Prince of the Underdark'; whose only ambition is to wipe out all of mankind, so he and his consorts could have this world all to themselves. They claim it was theirs from the beginning of time. Then powerful wizards and clerics imprisoned them in the netherworld."

A shudder ran down Jenny's back. What kind of a world had she landed up in? Demons, magic. What else?

"How good are you with a sword and a bow?" Roma interrupted her thoughts.

Jen thought for a moment and answered. "I've won some trophies in the past and did some hunting with my brother, but that's all. Now the sword is something else. I've fenced a bit, but nothing serious. Why?"

"Well, for one thing," explained the other, "in this world we live by the sword and bow. If you cannot defend yourself, you die. What magic do you bring with you from your world?"

"MAGIC!" Jenny almost laughed. "What magic? Where I come from there isn't any. Those myths went out in

the Middle Ages.”

Now Roma really looked concerned. A girl who looks exactly like Shannon, but no magic. This could pose a problem. She thought for a moment and then said, “I can teach you the sword as we make our way home, but we will have to be careful and stay away from any magic. So for now you must become Shannon for your own safety. At least until we reach your mother’s house.” Seeing that Jennifer was confused, she added, “Don’t worry, I’ll teach you about her as much as I can. We’ve been friends for as long as I can remember.”

This added little comfort to Jenny as she stared into the flames and drank her tea. “So what next?” she asked.

“We continue as if you were Shannon and find that box we came here for,” said Roma.

Jenny watched with fascination as her new-found friend lit a small oil lamp, using a firestone and some dry tinder. She had only read about these things in books. Once lit, Roma snuffed out the fire, by kicking dirt onto it, picked up her backpack, a coil of rope, and her weapons. When Roma pointed to another backpack leaning up against a wall, Jenny grabbed it and slung it across her shoulders. Soon they were searching the walls of the cave.

It was Roma who found the loose stone, which hid a small lever in the back wall. The two looked at each other and smiled as she pulled on it. The heavy stone door creaked and groaned loudly as it slid slowly open. Holding the lamp in front of her, Roma stepped into a narrow, dark corridor, leading deeper into the mountain. They were about ten paces into the passage, when Jenny stepped on a loose stone in the floor. “CLICK” and the stone door quickly slid shut, trapping them inside. They searched every inch of the door and its adjoining walls, but couldn’t find another lever to open the door.

“I think we’ll have to find another way out,” said Roma.

Jen agreed and the two made their way deeper into the mountain. In the dim light Roma examined the walls by running her free hand along them. “Built by dwarfs,” she said. “Only they can work stone this way. Probably made during the last cycles of ‘The Age of Darkness.’”

“When was that?” asked Jen.

“About two thousand cycles ago,” answered Roma.

“How long is a cycle?”

“Four of our seasons,” was her answer.

The passage twisted and turned. Sometimes it ran up hill and then back down. Finally, for what seemed like an eternity, they stood in front of what definitely looked like another huge stone door. By now the light from the lamp was beginning to flicker so they anxiously groped around until they found a movable stone with a lever hidden behind it. This time the door slid silently and the two stepped out into a large passage. Then the lamp went out.

*Something awakened him. Someone had used magic. Although faint now, it must have been powerful enough to wake him from his timeless sleep. He sat up and rubbed the*

*last fifty years of sleep from his eyes. Smiling, as his stomach growled, he patted it and told himself, first things first. His leg muscles were weak from the long sleep and would not support him so he canted a few lines and his body rose about six inches above the ground. He floated out of the sleeping chamber, into a tiny hallway and down a spiral stone staircase that ran along the inside wall of the Tower of Tophet. The old man made his way down past the Great Hall to where the dungeons were. Here off to the side was a heavy wooden oak door. It opened under his command and he floated in. Once inside, he spoke some indiscernible words and the room lit up. All around him one could see a three dimensional map of Aan. His eyes grew wide as he saw three very faint blue dots appear. One from Sanctum, in Rogalandt, another from Storr and the last one from somewhere in Caldor. He could not tell exactly where its origin was, but he could be sure that he knew who was behind it.*

*Now to find out where all this magic would manifest itself, he rubbed his hands together and began to chant anew. Then spreading his arms, a straight line formed from each of the dots and pointed to the mountain where the two girls were. A smile came over his face. He clapped his hands and the image disappeared. Now he knew where to look. At daybreak he would leave for Enderby.*

Roma was the first to notice the faint glow coming from the wall closest to them. Reaching into her backpack, she again pulled out her fire starter and lit two candles. As she handed one to Jen, the wall began to glow brighter.

“Glowstones,” spoke Roma, “must have been put here by the dwarfs when they lived here.”

Looking deeper into the passageway, a feeling of déjà vu overcame Jenny. She felt sure she had been here before. Then something caught her eye just above the glowstones. Something very familiar.

“Roma!.....Come and see this!” exclaimed Jennifer.

Roma turned to the girl by the wall.

“These are remnants of light fixtures.” She spoke excitedly, “See...here... bits of plastic. These used to be the covers of florescent lamps.” Then it struck her and she exclaimed. “I used to work here!”

“The Cave of the Ancients,” whispered Roma.

“Do you know what went on here?” asked Jen. “If your ancient magic, comes from here...then, whatever is still here, should be left alone. This is a dangerous place.”

“And if Malodor gets his hands on it. What then?” asked Roma. “What will happen to mankind, the dwarfs and elves? No! We must take it to your mother. Besides Shannon told me that it was magically protected. Nothing can escape from it unless the spell is broken. Malodor has that spell and wants the box. If he gets his hands on it, it’ll spell doom for all of us. “Look,” she continued, “we’ve made it this far and you said you know this place; shouldn’t we be able to find it and get out as quickly as possible?”

"You're forgetting one thing," interrupted Jenny. "We found our way in, but not a way out. The entrance has caved in," she said, pointing the other way, "so how do we know the rest of this place isn't the same? And as you said, we haven't much time, so digging ourselves out cannot be in our plans."

"We don't know for sure," replied Roma, "but standing around here, discussing it, won't bring us any closer to the answer."

Jenny shuddered, but realized, that if any of those vials had survived and fallen into the wrong hands, it could be disastrous. "All right," she said, "if any of this magic still exists then we will find it. We're going to have to find our way down to the bottom level. That's where we.....uh ..they worked on the deadliest diseases I know of."

"Then let's not stand around here chatting," said Roma. "Let's go!"

Jenny was off down the corridor with Roma right behind her. The brightness of the glowstones illuminated the cave in a soft green glow.

They passed the parking area, which Jenny had used in the past, but all that remained were bits and pieces of plastic and rusted metal from vehicles of a long gone era. They passed the change room that had been filled with debris from a past cave-in.

Jenny stopped, pointed to a doorway and said. "That's where I worked, but as you can see there's nothing left except for all this rubble." Pieces of the ceiling were strewn all over the floor. "It won't be long," she continued, "and the rest of it will fall. If this is what the first floor looks like, then just imagine all those below us. Maybe there's nothing left. What will we do if we can't reach the lower levels?"

"I don't know," answered Roma, "but we have to try, because if we can't reach it, then nobody else can either."

Across from the lab was the first of the two elevator shafts, but this too was filled with fallen rocks and old concrete. It was beginning to look less likely that they were ever going to reach the bottom level, when Jenny remembered something she had been told in the event of an emergency.

"I think I know a way down," said Jen. "There is a small shaft beside the rear exit, near the guard house. It's narrow enough that it might have withstood any cave-in."

They spent little time getting there, but with all the debris and loose rocks lying about, finding the trap door took some doing. The rear entrance was blocked solid but the rubble did not pass the guardhouse. The trap door lay under some six inches of dirt, which they kicked aside with their feet. Grasping the metal ring in the door, it took their combined strength to pry it open. A whoosh of stale, musty air rushed up to greet them as both stared into the black hole. There were no glowstones here.

"How far down does it go?" asked Roma.

"Eighty to a hundred feet, I think," replied Jen as she watched her friend uncoil the rope. "How much rope do we have?"

"Not enough, I'm afraid," was her answer.

The two agreed to tie an end to each of their waists, and then climb down the rusted rungs. Jen, since she knew this place, went first, while Roma acted as a safety backup in case one of the steel bars broke loose. Letting her backpack dangle about three feet below her, she descended into the three foot round abyss. Roma watched until her friend was out of sight, feeding her rope until it drew taut. Then it was Roma's turn.

The second half of their climb proved to be more dangerous. Twice a rung came loose. Roma had anchored herself by pressing her back against the opposite wall and keeping a firm grip on the rope. This prevented Jenny from plummeting all the way down to her death.

The backpack struck solid ground, telling Jenny she had reached the end. At the bottom she lit a candle and looked for the opening that led from the shaft. She found the exit about five to six feet above her, so quickly she climbed back up before Roma could reach her. Once outside the shaft, the glowstones began to glow from the light of the candles and by the time her friend reached the doorway, the entire passage was well lit. Recoiling the rope and slinging it over her shoulder, Roma set out after her friend.

Jenny had been down here only once before, and that was when she first arrived at the facility. Now, with all this debris lying about, everything looked different. There were cave-ins everywhere. Where there had been fifteen-foot wide corridors, now only a few feet allowed passage. Most of the rooms and labs were gone. Anything made out of wood had long since rotted to rubble. The metal doorframes no longer existed, as most had rusted away.

Moving slowly, the two examined every fissure, hole or indentation, hoping that it would lead them to the Biohazards Lab. After what seemed like hours, Jenny found the lab. She could just make out the words on a bronze metal plate imbedded in the wall. But looking inside the doorway, she could see that there wasn't enough room for a dwarf to turn around in.

"Is this the place?" asked Roma.

"I'm afraid so," replied Jen. "Your box is buried somewhere under all this." She pointed at the pile of rubble.

"There's more room in my backpack," Roma said disappointedly as she turned away.

"What will we..." Jen started to say, when a strange tingling sensation began to rise within her. Something was not right, she thought.

When Roma asked what was wrong, Jen said, "I feel funny... It's as if something or somebody was nearby."

Unsheathing her sword, Roma took the lead to find another way in, but the farther away from the doorway they got, the weaker the sensation became and it was gone entirely by the time the passage way came to an abrupt halt. Turning around, they returned to the lab. Here the feeling came back, lighting up Roma's face. "You may not be Shannon, but her magic is still within your body," exclaimed a delighted Roma.

Understanding what she meant, Jen climbed through the debris, looking for a box. After some searching, she came



upon an opening, just wide enough for her to squeeze through. The tunnel was about ten to fifteen feet long and opened up onto a large chamber. Peering into the chamber, Jen saw a small man dancing around, holding an ornate wooden box. Silently she backed up to where Roma was waiting. After she explained what she saw, the decision was made to reenter the tunnel and confront this little person.

This time Roma went first, dragging her backpack behind her. With as little noise as possible the two entered the chamber without the stranger noticing. The tingling sensation became so intense that Jenny could no longer hide it and let out a whispered groan. Turning quickly, the little man's hand stretched out and a three-foot flame shot forth. The two girls reacted quickly and jumped aside, and the flame fell short of its mark.

"We are not your enemy, Halfling," cried Roma and quickly added, "We are here to seek your help."

The little man, a hobbit, seemed to relax a bit but kept both arms raised, ready to strike again at a moment's notice.

"Who are you and what do you want here?" he asked.

"We are here to seek a box," Roma explained, "a box containing a very powerful magic spell."

"And what if I had such a box?" the Halfling asked.

"It would be of no use to you, for only an Elven mage such as Teagan could work it," answered Roma.

"You still didn't tell me who you are!" the Halfling shrieked as if to exert authority.

"My name is Shannon and this is Roma," Jen spoke softly, trying to calm him, "and my friend here speaks the truth. Now who might you be?"

"I'm called Treymane. Teagan Twofeathers taught me all my magic," he answered.

"Hmm.. I see," said Roma. "Then you won't mind giving us the box."

Treymane stepped back a step and said, "I'll never give up what's mine. I found it first and shall keep it."

"What is my Aunt Teagan going to say when she hears of this?" Jen asked as she turned to face Roma and winked.

"Treymane," asked Roma, "is there another way out?" But when she looked back the little man was gone.

"Where'd he go?" asked Jenny.

"I don't know," answered her friend, "but we better find him, 'cause that little weasel has the box."

They rushed past the spot where the little man had stood and found a passageway leading out of the chamber. The narrow way and low ceiling, built by and used by dwarfs, made it difficult for the taller girls to run.

"Tell me something," Jenny panted, running as fast as the tunnel would allow, "What was that sensation that I was feeling before? There's nothing magical about the vial."

"No, but the box it's in, is magically protected," answered Roma, "Whenever you come near anything magic you sense it."

"I wonder if I could ever get used to this world of yours," Jenny said with a sigh.

"The sooner we get that box," Roma said in a calming

voice, "the faster you'll get home to your own time. For now you take the lead, because it's too dark for me to see."

Squeezing past her friend, Jen took the lead. The tunnel ran on for several miles before opening up into a vast cavern. Jenny was about to step out into the opening, when Roma's arm reached out and pulled her back.

"I feel that tingling again," whispered Jenny. "He's close by."

"Yes, but he's not alone," Roma whispered back as she peered into the well-lit subterranean cave. "Look," as she pointed beyond some rather large boulders, towards the center of the chasm where Jen could hear Treymane arguing with someone.

Roma faced her. "There are five Grey Dwarfs out there who have our little friend," she whispered. "We've got to help him, or they'll kill him if they find that box."

"What's this?" demanded one of the gruffy looking dwarfs.

"IT'S MINE!... IT'S MINE!..." cried Treymane. "I found it! It belongs to me!"

With all the commotion going on, the two girls crawled from the tunnel and using some of the large boulders scattered here and there as camouflage, made their way toward the group. They snuck as close as they dared.

"Now we'll find out how good you really are with that bow," whispered Roma. "You take out those three on the left and I'll handle the others."

A shocked Jenny wrestled with herself. Could she actually kill someone?

The dwarfs tried to open the box. They tried to smash it with a large rock, but nothing happened. One of them took his battle-ax and tried to cleave it in two, but again nothing happened. Finally one of the dwarfs grabbed Treymane and threatened to roast him and have him for supper if he didn't tell them how to open it.

Jenny didn't need any more coaxing than that. She pulled out three arrows.

The two girls let their arrows fly at the same time and two dwarfs lay dead before the others could react. Treymane stabbed another with his dagger while Roma downed the fourth. Jen was much slower with her second arrow and the missile missed its target, letting the fifth dwarf escape down another tunnel.

By the time Treymane had recovered from his ordeal, Jenny had the box in her hands.

"Why didn't you use your magic on them?" asked Jen.

"He's got no more knowledge of magic than I have," answered Roma. Turning to the hobbit she continued, "Now that we have the box, you'd better show us a way out of here. For the dwarf will surely come back with more friends and I don't plan to greet them. Do you understand?" Pulling the little man to his feet she cautioned him once more. "Now lead the way and remember that Shannon and I will be close behind. If you try to escape, she'll scorch your hide."

Swallowing heavily, he agreed and led the two to the other end of the cave. Against the wall, behind a huge flat

rock, the hobbit showed them a secret tunnel. "This is the way I come and go," he said.

The passage was the same width, but about a foot higher in height. The hobbit and Jenny squeezed through quite easily, but Roma had to remove and carry her backpack.

Hearing loud voices coming from the other tunnel, Roma ordered them to hurry. Jenny with her keen eyesight, had taken the lead with Treymane in the middle.

The shouting grew fainter the farther into the tunnel they got. When the three of them thought they were safe they slowed their pace a bit. Just then, a loud rumble of moving stone was heard behind them. The dwarfs had found the entrance. The three of them began to run. Trying to run with her pack in one hand, Roma decided to drop her bow and unsheathe her sword. In these tunnels a bow would be useless.

"Can't we stop and light a candle?" asked the little man, "it's too dark to see where I'm going."

"No!" Roma said sharply. "They're closing on us."

The tunnel ran down hill, which made it easier for the three, but twisted left and right. Jen could hear the grunts and groans from her two companions as they bounced off the walls as they fled.

They hurried along with Treymane holding onto Jenny's belt and Roma clinging to the hobbit's robe.

"How much farther?" Jenny asked aloud.

"When the tunnel starts to rise, we'll be close to the entrance," replied the little man.

The dwarfs were still gaining on them, when the tunnel began a sharp incline. This slowed their pace and they were beginning to tire. The hobbit stumbled, but Roma grabbed him by his collar, lifted him right up off the ground and continued without missing a step.

Just as their strength began to give out, they arrived at the entrance. It was still dark, but there was a full moon. In the bright light, Jen could see the outline of a forest down in the valley.

"If we can make it to those trees, we might have a chance." said Jen, breathing heavily.

They renewed their race down the slope; Roma and Jen taking long strides while Treymane ran as fast as his little legs could carry him.

Halfway down the hill they could still hear their pursuers, even though they were still deep within the tunnel. Scratched and bruised from the roughly-hewn tunnel walls, leg muscles burning with exhaustion, they made it to the safety of the forest. Not a second too soon, as the dwarfs broke out into the open.

Jenny counted twenty of them. They searched around looking for any sign as to which way their quarry went. Some went up a trail that led to the other side of the mountain. Another group searched farther up above the entrance of the cave and the rest came down the slope towards the three hiding in the forest. A black cloud had moved in front of the moon cutting its light. It was suddenly so dark that even Jenny couldn't make out any tracks. Trying

to run now would only give away their position, so the party hoped to remain unseen by keeping to the shadows. As the dwarfs came within fifty or so feet, a roar from the other side of the slope cut the silence.

"They've found them!" cried one of the dwarfs, as they turned and bolted back up the slope.

"We'd better get to the river as fast as we can," said the hobbit, "for once across, we can lose them."

"Cross the river?" asked Roma. "Where?" She turned and looked at Treymane. "Have you seen it? There's no way to cross that raging water."

"There is," continued the hobbit, "if you know where to look. Anyway we can't stay here. They'll soon realize their mistake and return."

"I agree," said Jenny. "Treymane, you lead the way. Roma, you watch our sides while I keep an eye out behind us."

Without further words, the three headed east towards the river. Again the moon was in full bloom illuminating the forest around them. Suddenly the familiar shouts from the dwarfs that were close by alarmed the three. Looking around frantically, Jenny spied a thick bush off to their right.

"Follow me!" she whispered as the two were right on her heels. A warm feeling came over her as if someone or something told her to do this. Once inside the thicket, Jen pulled her cloak over her companions and became still.

The shouting grew closer and closer, until they were almost on top of them. The dwarfs looked into the treetops and found nothing. Two of them encircled Jen's hiding place and peered in.

"Nothing....." said one of them. "It's like they disappeared into thin air."

"I told you," said the other, "the little one was a wizard and the other was an elf." Sounding more nervous than before, he continued. "They could be preparing a spell right now to kill us all."

"Don't be so stupid," spoke another one who just came into view. "If that were true, then why did they run? No, I don't think there's any magic here. I think they've outsmarted us by doubling back. Come, let's check back up the trail."

"I hope you're right, Olaff," said the nervous one as the party fell in behind their leader and returned back up the trail.

Jen hung on for a few more minutes, giving the dwarfs time to get out of hearing range before she uncloaked. Once outside the bush they wasted no time in leaving the area.

"Can't we hide our tracks some way?" Jen asked.

"We'd just be wasting our time," answered Roma. "They'd see right through our attempts to brush away our footprints."

Black clouds moved in again, plunging the forest back into darkness. The smell of rain hung heavy in the air. They stumbled onto a path and struggled along in silence.

A few hours later a light rain began to fall. Still they trudged on, keeping to the well-worn path.

"Hopefully this rain will wash away some of our tracks,"

whispered Roma.

As daylight touched the sky, the three came to the river. The steady rain now dropped off to light drizzle. Finding a large oak to sit under, the party stopped to rest and eat. Reaching into her backpack Roma passed around some hard cheese and bread. They rested, since no one had slept the night before and dared not now, for at any time they might have to make a run to escape their hunters.

"How far is the crossing from here, Hairfoot?" Roma demanded, "and how sure are you that we can get across?"

"If we keep up this pace, we should reach it by mid-morning" he replied. "My uncle Ruffus told me about the crossing many years ago and it should still be there."

"Then I suggest," Jen interrupted, "that we make haste, because I want to be on the other side when those dwarfs pick up our trail."

Without further word, they gathered up their belongings and began to follow the river. The trek south was not an easy one, as the path curled through the thickening forest and finally disappeared altogether. Here there were no more trails to follow and it became an up-hill climb.

"Why didn't we cross when we reached the river?" asked Jen.

"It's all rapids from here to the black hole, where the river falls into a deep endless pit," answered Roma. "If you lose your footing, the fast water will dash you against the rocks or take you into the hole. In any case you would not survive."

Treymane sensed something was not right with Shannon, for everyone knew of the Black Hole. He would keep a careful eye and ear open for now until he figured out who this elf was.

The rain stopped and the sun broke through the clouds warming them when Treymane halted. Spanning the gorge before them lay a rotting, old, thirty-foot giant fir tree.

"There's your way across," said the hobbit pointing at it.

"Are you sure this will hold us?" asked Roma.

"One at a time, yes," answered the hobbit, "but not all of us at once."

Finally Jenny walked up to the fallen tree and turned to her companions and said, "We can use the rope as a safety line and cross one by one. This way if the log breaks, it will stop us from plunging into the gorge."

The others agreed with her and Jen tied one end of the rope around her waist while Roma and Treymane held onto the other end. Then the elf walked over to the fallen tree and stepped up onto it. After steadying herself, she slowly put one foot in front of the other. When she was half way across, she called back to her companions. "How far down is it?"

"About four or five hundred feet..." replied the hobbit.

"SHHHH...little man!" snapped Roma. "She doesn't have to know that. DON'T LOOK DOWN!" she shouted to her friend.

The tree cracked and snapped under Jenny's weight.

This won't hold for much longer, she thought. Time seemed to be standing still and the other side seemed still far away. Again a loud crack was heard. Concentrating as hard as she could and putting one foot in front of the other, Jenny made it to the other side. Keeping the rope tied around her, she signaled to the hobbit to cross. Slowly he pulled his way across. The hobbit dared not look down, for he could not appear frightened. He could not let them know that this was the first time he had ever crossed here. Treymane was soaked in sweat when he reached the safety of the other side. Then it was Roma's turn. Being the heaviest of the three, the hobbit helped hold the rope.

As Roma stepped onto the log, a loud cry from the dwarfs was heard deep within the forest.

"I think they've found our tracks," muttered Treymane. "You'd better hurry!"

They could see the frightened look on her face and the sweat as she fought to keep her balance. The dwarfs were getting closer. As Roma reached the middle, all three heard a loud snap. Bits and pieces of the tree fell into the ravine. The dwarfs were now at the edge of the forest not two hundred yards away. This time the tree moved sideways almost knocking the young girl off. As soon as she steadied herself, Roma made a dash for the other end and safety. Now the hunting party was about half way to the log. Untying themselves, the three made a run for the trees. Here they would make a stand if they had to.

When the party of dwarfs reached the tree, they stopped. After deliberating for a moment, three of them stepped onto the tree. Slowly they began to cross.

"That tree won't hold them," said Roma. "It nearly threw me into the gorge."

"We know that," answered the hobbit with a slight grin on his face, "but they don't."

As the three on the log reached the halfway point the log rolled to one side and broke in half, sending its riders to their death some five hundred feet below. The remaining dwarfs stood motionless for a few minutes until the cries from their companions were silent. Then anger grew within them, as they hurled their spears and daggers at the three on the other side. To no avail, their efforts fell well short of their mark.

"Why don't you throw a bolt of lightning or something at them?" the hobbit asked Shannon, revealing a tiny smile.

"No!" she replied, pointing at the dwarfs. "If they are working for Malodor, he'll sense the magic and know our position."

Treymane seemed content with her answer and Jen was happy she didn't have to reveal her true self to him. But she knew she could not keep this charade going for much longer. Sooner or later the hobbit or someone else would trip her up. She would speak to Roma about this at the earliest possible time.

Leaving the dwarfs peering into the ravine, the three turned, entered the forest and turned south towards Storr. ●

*The Last Mage continues in WARP 64.*

*The author, E.L. Cole, was a bookdealer in Melbourne, Australia who in the early 1870s had opened a shop on the outskirts of town, near the farmers' market.. He wanted to boost his client base, so he began putting ads in the Melbourne Herald. That worked a bit, but he was still only just getting by. He then came up with a great advertising scheme: "An account of a race of human beings with tails" -- with a twist ending (I won't spoil it) -- people came in droves! -- Georges Dodds*

**MELBOURNE HERALD**  
**SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 1873**  
(No. 8596)

**DISCOVERY**  
**OF A**  
**RACE OF HUMAN BEINGS**  
**WITH TAILS**

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Many eminent scientific men have inclined to the belief that human beings in the long past were possessed of tails, good respectable tails, and not the stumpy apology for one which man now possesses. The statement that men now possess tails may somewhat startle some of our readers, who are unacquainted with the fact, yet nevertheless it is a fact that every human being amongst us possesses, just under the skin, and distinctly palpable to the touch, a rudimentary tail, a real veritable tail of about two inches in length. Look at a human skeleton in any anatomical museum, and you will see at the bottom of the backbone generally four distinct bones exactly resembling the short tail of a gorilla. These bones are called collectively by anatomists the os coccyx from their being curved in the shape of a cuckoo's beak. Our readers will have observed how a person writhes from being slightly kicked behind, or from falling backwards a short distance against a stone, or the blunt point of some hard substance. It is the striking against the coccyx, or to speak in plain English, the point of the stumpy tail that causes the excruciating pain. As man now exists physically, the human tail, from conception, through life to death, presents several strange changes. For a few weeks in the early stages of the embryotic state he has a tails as does a dog, a cat, a monkey, and most other mammals, and it is only in the later stages that it retrogrades and becomes rudimentary. Just after birth, and in the child it remains simply a piece of gristle. As youth advances it hardens consecutively into four distinct bones, not moveable at pleasure as in the lower animals, but moveable backwards and forwards for about an inch by external pressure, and finally, as a rule, about middle age, the four bones, one after the other, grow together into one bone. Mr. Darwin, Mr. Huxley, and others have long held that this stumpy tail in man is simply the remains of a much longer tail that the race once possessed; that there is evidence vast and varied to show that it is quite a common thing in the animal kingdom for organs to shrink up and become rudimentary from disuse. As illustrations taken from thousands which

could be quoted, that the eyes of the common mole who burrows under ground, the fish and other mammals who inhabit the mammoth cave of Kentucky, and such places, and the wings of birds accidentally located on far isolated islands in the ocean have become rudimentary from disuse, that they plainly indicate by their anatomical structure that they were once used, but that changed natural conditions not requiring their use, in the course of many generations they have shrunk up and become rudimentary; and, finally, that the human coccyx or tail, by its bony, muscular, and nervous structure, bears within itself exceedingly strong presumptive evidence that by gradual disuse, extending over a long period of time, it has shrunk up to its present stumpy state. The theories of Darwin, Huxley, Hackel, and several other eminent naturalists collectively seem to be that in the course of progressive development, extending over many thousand generations, men having gradually accustomed themselves to the erect attitude by standing and walking upon their hind legs only, have set free the fore legs, which we call arms, to swing about, &c. and so done away with the necessity of a tail. These preliminary observations on the physical fact of man's rudimentary tail, and the elaborate theories of eminent natural philosophers thereon, have been called forth by the startling announcement which has just reached us of the discovery by a traveller of a race of men in the interior of New Guinea still possessing tails of unmistakable length, thereby once more triumphantly demonstrating to the world that the deductions of honest, laborious, scientific men are, as a rule, verified by later discoveries. Mr. Thomas Jones, the talented and observant traveller in question, informs us that he arrived by ship at the native village of Etihwretep, on the north-east coast of New Guinea, on the 24th of December, 1871, with an intention of exploring the upper waters of the river Tramsderf and the country thereabout; that on the 3rd of January having his outfit completed, he started in company with a European body-servant and a native guide and interpreter for the interior. We have not space, nor is it our purpose, to recount the adventures with beasts, reptiles, and human savages, the sufferings from exposure, and the interesting and useful observations of the traveller; suffice it to say, that after seventeen days of dangerous and arduous marching through the jungle, he reached the hill country, and in two more days arrived at a country where dwelt a community of people which filled him with astonishment, and the discovery of which will render his name immortal. Mr. Jones found a community of men walking upon two legs, but bent forward, with a considerable amount of hair on their bodies, long arms, claw-like fingers,



and real tangible tails, more or less long. Mr. Jones's discovery, although far more extraordinary, is very similar to the discovery of the strange nation or community of the Mandan Indians, by Mr. Catlin. A few years ago Mr. Catlin found a community of men, one of the most remarkable the world has ever seen, within a few hundred miles of important English, Spanish, and Dutch settlements in the Eastern Archipelago. We have called Mr. Jones's discovery extraordinary — it is more than this; — it is perfectly astounding. Accustomed as we have been from time immemorial to consider man as pre-eminently the one sole biped at least without a visible tail, and so strong are our prepossessions in favor of the uniformity of the human shape in the present age in all the known countries of the world, that were it not for the high standing and well-known integrity of the traveller, and high character of the Calcutta Anthropological Review — to the proprietors of which he

imparted the startling information on his way back from the Archipelago to Europe — we should still doubt; but, of course, with such authorities before us, strange as is the fact, our doubts must cease. But to return to our traveller's own narrative. He informs us that after penetrating through an immense jungle, and crossing a mountainous district, he arrived on the 12th of January at a valley called by the natives Eloc. Here he first met with the new race of men. The natives call themselves Elocwe or Elocwoans, the exact meaning of which could not ascertain. When he first beheld them at a distance he concluded by their form, attitude, and motions, that they were a species of gorilla, remarkably approaching the human form, and was dubious of getting too near to them, but was soon greatly and agreeably astonished to hear them utter distinct human speech, and a moment later saw in front of him a number of human habitations.

**(To be continued in Monday's issue)**

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**MELBOURNE HERALD**  
**MONDAY, AUGUST 25, 1873**  
 (No. 8597)

**FURTHER PARTICULARS**  
**RESPECTING THE R A C E OF**  
**HUMAN BEINGS WITH TAILS,**  
**DISCOVERED BY**  
**MR. JONES**  
**IN THE INTERIOR**  
**OF**  
**NEW GUINEA**

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**NO. II**

**T**heir houses are built of bamboo, very ingeniously constructed of two and sometimes even three stories in height, but for some reason they never sleep or dwell at all upon the ground floor. Mr. Jones saw about him the evidences of a high but remarkably unique civilisation, plainly of spontaneous native growth, but perhaps, all in all, scarcely inferior to that of India, or China, or even Eastern Europe. Of their speech he could not understand a word, nor could the native interpreter, who accompanied him from the coast, give him any assistance. He therefore determined to remain amongst them for a time to learn sufficient of the language to enable him to inquire into their manners, customs, laws, &c., and obtain all the general knowledge he could about them. He remained amongst them for about fourteen months. For general information of what he saw and what he heard we must refer the reader to the pages of our authority, the Calcutta Anthropological Review, or to the traveller's own book, which will shortly be published, and shall simply epitomise some of his information about the most astonishing part of his discovery, that relating to the human

tail. Mr. Jones informs us that the Elocweans believe that they are the only people in the world who have tails (in this they are probably correct), and that consequently they are superior to all others; that the tail is the most sacred and most important part of the whole body, that while amongst Europeans and most other peoples the dandies, male and female, are prouder of their face than any other part of their body, the dandies among the Elocweans are proudest of their tails; that while they generally wear nothing on their head or body except a slight covering around their loins, yet that they deck out their tails with the most costly and delicate finery; that while among the Europeans, and in fact all the peoples of the known world, the various passions and emotions are indicated by the expressions of the face, among the Elocweans they are shown through the tail, and in this respect they correspond in some particulars to such expressions of the lower animals. The twisting of the tip of the tail indicates impatience, the lateral lasting stroke indicates anger, a twirling motion indicates applause, the ordinary wagging of the tail recognition, the tail depressed in certain positions between the legs indicates respectively fear, submission, or great grief; one peculiar attitude of the tail indicates determination, another love, another hatred, another contempt, another joy, another respect, another pride, another humility, another dogged-sulkiness, another defiance, another despair, another commiseration, another expectancy, another jealousy, another inquiry, another approbation, another disapprobation, another yes, another no, another excessive mirth, or, more properly, tail laughter. In fact the tail itself is literally an organ of speech, such is the variety of feelings indicated by its numerous turns and nice shades of movement; one in particular we must mention, it being very remarkable, as bearing upon a European custom, namely, that of shaking hands. The Elocweans in bidding each other welcome or adieu move the tail up and down just the same as Europeans shake hands, and they have a theory on this subject which may or may not be true. They hold that all

mankind once had tails; that all except their own nation lost them as a punishment for eating animal flesh, and that the general mode of shaking hands was merely adopted as a convenient but miserable substitute for the previously similar shaking of the tail. But the expression of the passions and emotions are not the only use to which the tail is put. The Elocweans play games of dexterity and skill, beat time, ring small bells with great nicety, and, absurd as it may appear, play certain musical instruments with it. Mr. Jones describes one kind of melody which they produce by fixing two pieces of reed in a peculiar manner near the tip of the tail, and then by a sudden twirling swing produces a most magnificent effect, something like the sounds of an elaborate but loud Æolian harp, and he asserts that when a number of fifty or more gyrate

their tails so attuned in concert in a building that reverberates the sound, that the effect is sublimely magnificent. In all public games and amusements the tail counts as the most important member of the body, and has more work thrown upon it than either the legs or the arms. The various societies in marching to the recreation grounds do not walk arm in arm or hand in hand, two or four abreast, as Europeans do, but move in single file; the oldest man in the society goes before, the next in age the[n] follows, taking hold of his tail with one or both hands, the next in seniority the same, and so on to the youngest, who brings up the rear. Mr. Jones asserts that on one occasion he saw not less than 500 men so marching in Indian file like a huge serpent winding between the hills.

**(To be continued in Thursday's issue).**

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**MELBOURNE HERALD**  
**THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 1873**  
**(No. 8600)**

**FURTHER PARTICULARS**  
**RESPECTING THE R A C E O F**  
**HUMAN BEINGS WITH TAILS,**  
**DISCOVERED BY**  
**MR. JONES**  
**IN THE INTERIOR**  
**O F**  
**NEW GUINEA**

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**NO. III.**

**I**n the same way also the members of a family invariably move through the streets and lanes of the city, along the roads, or across the fields to wherever they may be bound, the rule of seniority always being observed — the father goes first, then the mother, the oldest unmarried son, then the oldest unmarried daughter, and so on to the youngest child capable of walking, who comes last. Mr. Jones says that it is not at all an uncommon thing to see families composed of the father, mother, and twenty children, varying from two to twenty years of age, in one connected string, walking leisurely along; that these strings of families pass each other in the most crowded thoroughfares with the greatest ease, and that the inconvenience of being brought to a full stop or run up against, arising from the absurd European custom of walking arm in arm or hand in three or four abreast, never occurs. But although the Elocweans in some aspects act very sensibly, more so than Europeans, in some other respects they act very absurdly, particularly in matters of fashion. Fashionable deportment is an element that enters largely into the question of tails, to say nothing of the ever-varying dresses and ornaments of the tail. There is always a fashionable position in which to bear it, and among the upper classes particularly this is carried to a ridiculous extent, in fact

to a sublime absurdity, probably beyond even the conception of Europeans, foolish as they themselves are in some respects on the question of fashions. Pride of caste, of position, of wealth, is indicated through the tail to a very great extent. It is quite a common thing to see dandies of either or both sexes walk along the streets, tossing and twirling and swinging their tails in the most haughty manner imaginable. Mr. Jones affirms that the various turns, and twists, and twirls, and shakes and motions of all kinds of the tail performed by the aristocratically inclined to signify pride and contempt alone are not less than forty in number. The color, size, shape, and general contour of tails is another question which largely engages the thoughts of the Elocweans. It is more or less genteel or vulgar to have a large tail, a small tail, a curved tail, a straight tail, a bare tail, a hairy tail, a fleshy tale, a bony tail, a long tail, a flat tail, a round tail, a lanky tail, a stumpy tail, &c. A stumpy tail is considered vulgar, the same as a snub nose is among Europeans. A tail, according to our measurement, nineteen inches long, gradually tapering from about one and a half inch at the base to a quarter of an inch at the tip, moderately fleshy, of a copper color, and with a slight natural curve downwards, is the ideal tail of the Elocweans. It is a common practice to put the tail of children into a sheath, to gradually give it the fashionable shape, the same as young ladies wear tight stays to give them small aristocratic waists, as the Chinese put their children's feet into diminutive shoes to make their feet aristocratically small, or as the Flathead Indians of North-western America put their children's heads between boards to make them aristocratic Flatheads. There are six distinct classes who get their living entirely by attending to the wants and science of the tail. First, tail-doctors, who are skilled in the diseases peculiar to the tail, and attend to the physical welfare of diseased, injured, or deformed tails, just as exclusively as eye and ear doctors attend to those organs among Europeans. Second, tail barbers, who shampoo and shave the tail, make and sell washes, perfumes, lubricating oils, &c., with which to wash and anoint it, tattoo the tail with elaborate designs, make sheaths to protect it in the same way as gloves protect the hands, and also to make it grow to the

required shape, and last, but not least, make false tails, for so much importance being attached to the tail, false tails are much more common among the Elocweans than false eyes, noses, teeth, legs, and arms are among Europeans. Third, tail milliners, jewellers, and general decorators. This class prepare and sell ribbons, fringes, gorgeous feathers, rings, small bells, decorations, and trappings of all kinds to ornament the tail according to the fashions of the day. Fourth, tailologist, a class of professors who study the science of the tail, write

books, and deliver lectures upon it; describe the characters and dispositions of persons as indicated by its size, texture, complexion, shape, &c., the same as phrenologists and physiologists do respectively by the head and face amongst Europeans. Fifth, tailomancers, a class of men and women who profess to tell fortunes, solve problems, predict events, &c., by the particular arrangement of the hairs, the veins, the color, the shape, and the involuntary motions of the tail.

(To be continued in Saturday's issue).

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**MELBOURNE HERALD**  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 30, 1873  
(No. 8602)

FURTHER PARTICULARS  
RESPECTING THE R A C E OF  
HUMAN BEINGS WITH TAILS,  
DISCOVERED BY  
MR. JONES  
IN THE INTERIOR  
OF  
NEW GUINEA

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**NO. IV.**

Sixth, tail doctors, a class who make, advertise, and sell certain ointments which they assert will, under favorable conditions known only to themselves, make the tail beautiful, obliterate deformities, cure it of any complaint, or even make it grow in length, thickness, or to any required shape. Mr. Jones informs us that this class, although looked upon with contempt by the most intelligent, are extensively patronised by the ignorant; he himself has the most supreme contempt for them, and relates a certain anecdote at their expense which we think too good to let pass. A certain quack tail-doctor, from a professional point of view, was a very modest sort of man; he did not profess to compound and sell a pill or ointment like Holloway's, or an elixir of life like somebody else's; that a few boxes or bottles taken or rubbed on would cure all disease incident to the human frame present and to come, but he devoted himself exclusively to the department of tail surgery, and in this line he asserted himself to be superior to all living men. His peculiar ointment he called *tail bone and nerve all-healing salve*. According to his own account, on one occasion he thought he would try an experiment with it to see its full force under the most favorable conditions, so he cut off his dog's tail and applied some to stump. A new tail grew out immediately; he then applied some to the piece of the tail which he had cut off, and a new dog grew out. He did not know which dog was which. As the tail is so highly esteemed, their laws respecting it are numerous, elaborate, and severe; the tail being considered the most sacred member of the body, it is held to

be the most heinous crime against man to injure it, therefore, for wilfully cutting off or vitally injuring the tail of another, the punishment is death. One heavier crime is known — the eating of animal flesh — and that is followed by the heaviest punishment known to the law, viz, the amputation of the offender's tail; 100, 250, and sometimes 300 strokes with a bamboo are given for the first offence; for wilfully jamming a tail in a doorway, wilfully treading on it or wounding it in any other way, although the part may be little injured, the intention is held to constitute the deed, but for second offenses of the kind the principle of equivalents, of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, is brought into notion, the offender's tail is always injured by the public executioner in the same manner, and to the same extent as the one he wilfully injured. Condemned persons are always made fast by their tails, and so sacred do they consider them that they never attempt to get away for fear of injuring them. Our traveller has seen as many as 150, all made fast by their tails to a length of rope, marching along the road to their task-work, and only one person to look after them on the journey. Many of what are considered the most heinous crimes are punished by loss of parts of the tail, hence a person condemned of habitual lying loses one joint; of habitual laziness, two joints; of habitual theft, three joints; of murder, four joints; of killing one of the red kind of the birds of paradise, all except the last joint; and as before mentioned, for eating animal flesh, amputation of the entire tail. The Elocweans are very kindly in their dispositions, and will not knowingly injure a living animal. According to their notions the next heaviest crime to eating animal flesh is the taking of animal life, and the penalty of which is the same as for murder. They have a law making cruelty to animals punishable by heavy penalties, and singular to say, so great is their veneration for, or prejudice in favor of tails, as it were, even in the abstract, that an offender receives ten times as much punishment for cutting off or otherwise injuring an animal's tail as he would for hurting the same animal in any other part of the body. But at the same time that they inflict heavy penalties for cruelty, it must be cruelty within the meaning of the act, that is, wilful and deliberate cruelty. This excessive admiration for, and careful conservation of tails, even those of the lower animals, by the Elocweans, and their extreme conscientiousness in punishing only the wilfully cruel, even in so sensitive a matter, moves our traveller considerably; he is pleased with their humane feelings and

strict conscientiousness, but astonished and amused at their absurd belief and practice in the matter, and relates an apt but amusing anecdote: — A gentleman having a fancy dog with a long tail told his servant Patrick to cut it off, as is the custom with many people. Pat promised to do as ordered; for three or four weeks after this the gentleman heard a great yelping of the dog every morning before he got up; his curiosity was excited, and one day he asked, "Pat, what makes Pincher cry out every morning?" "Shure, and you told me to cut his tall off," says Pat. "I could not find it in my heart to cut it off all at once, so I cut off half an inch each morning to make it go asier with the poor baste [*sic*]." Mr. Jones is in doubt how the Elocweans would deal with this case: he thinks they would be somewhat mixed in opinion; their extreme humane feelings at the prolonged sufferings of the poor dog, and their excessive sensitiveness that the mutilation of that almost sacred membe[r,] the tail, would incline them to murder him but then Pat acted from the most philanthrop[ic] of motives, and certainly was not guilty of intentional cruelty, and on this ground the[y] would incline not to only acquit him, but give him their blessing. Taking all the aspects of the case, therefore, the judgment would probably be, give him a beating, and a handsome reward, and let him go. Space will not allow us to follow this extremely interesting and scarcely less amusing account of the traveller any further. He seems to have been fully aware that he had made a discovery such as it falls to the lot of few men to make, and certainly not one man in a generation, scarcely in a century, does make a discovery so startling in itself. He saw that the most interesting subject connected with the new-found people was that caudal peculiarity, which certainly places them as the most unique

people on the face of the earth, He knew that this peculiarity, so strangely and exceedingly novel, while it most interested himself, would also most interest the world at large, and consequently he has given it his almost undivided attention, and has collected a mass of curious information, not a quarter of which is summarized in this notice. We cannot, however, close without mentioning one of his curious, in fact the most curious of his many reflections. It is this. He refers to the thousand and one tail pains and the thousand and one tail pleasures that the Elocweans respectively suffer and enjoy, and he asks himself the question, is it best or not to have a tail? After enumerating the many mental and corporeal sufferings that the Elocweans undergo from ugly tail, defamed tail, diseased tail, frostbitten tail, rheumatic tail, crushed, mangled, and sore tail from all causes, and tail pains of all kinds, besides the enormous cost of keeping it clothed, doctored, decorated, &C., he seems more than half inclined to congratulate himself that he has escaped much suffering from being, in spite of his rudimentary tail, practically tailless; but upon passing in review the numberless ecstatic delights, extra sensations and pleasures, mental and corporeal, that the Elocmeans [*sic*] enjoy in consequence of having that extra member, and upon the principle that the pleasurable sensations of our members always exceeds the pains, and, therefore, the more members we have the more we enjoy, he finally and positively concludes that taken all in all, the good with the bad, that the Elcoveans, in possessing another important organ, are the most happy people in the world, and that it is best for man to have a tail.

#### Final Particulars on Monday.

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**MELBOURNE HERALD**  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1873  
(No. 8603)

MR. JONES'S  
LAST REFLECTION UPON  
THE R A C E OF

**HUMAN BEINGS WITH TAILS,**

WHICH HE DISCOVERED  
IN THE INTERIOR  
OF  
**NEW GUINEA**

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**NO. V.**

**H**e refers to the thousand and one tail pains and the thousand and one tail pleasures that the Elocweans respectively suffer and enjoy, and he

asks himself the question, is it best or not to have a tail? After enumerating the many mental and corporeal sufferings that the Elocweans undergo from ugly tail, defamed tail, diseased tail, jammed tail, frostbitten tail, burnt tail, scalded tail, rheumatic tail, crushed, mangled, and sore tail from all causes, and tail pains of all kinds, besides the enormous cost of keeping it clothed, doctored, decorated, &C., he seems more than half inclined to congratulate himself that he has escaped much suffering from being, in spite of his rudimentary tail, practically tailless; but upon passing in review the numberless ecstatic delights, extra sensations and pleasures, mental and corporeal, that the Elocweans enjoy in consequence of having that extra member, and accepting the principle that the pleasurable sensations of our members always exceeds the pains, and therefore, the more members we have the more we enjoy, he finally and positively concludes that taken all in all, the good with the bad, that the Elcoveans, in possessing another important organ, are the most happy people in the world, and that it is best for man to have a tail.

E.W. Cole, 1 Eastern Market, perfectly agrees with Mr. Jones, and begs particularly, earnestly, and almost



affectionately, to inform all the tailless inhabitants of Melbourne and suburbs, that he has for sale a great variety of

### TALES: —

Indian Tales – Australian Tales – Irish Tales – Scotch Tales  
– Sea Tales – Battle Tales – Moral Tales  
Boys' Tales – Girls' Tales – Little Children's Tales  
Ghost Tales – Funny Tales – Love Tales  
Thrilling Tales – Startling Tales – Horrible Tales  
Mysterious Tales – Fairy Tales – Temperance Tales  
London Journal Tales – Family Herald Tales  
Bow Bell Tales – Wedding Bells Tales  
Wedding-Ring Tales – Every Week Tales  
Family Reader Tales – Penny Miscellany Tales  
Australian Journal Tales

Also, a great variety of short and long, old and new, varnished and unvarnished tales. The following is a list of some on hand,

with price attached to each tale:

*(editorial clipping happens here)*

Also

About 100 Kinds of Tales at 6d  
100 Kinds at 3d  
And 50 Kinds of Short Tales at 3d each.

Finally persons residing in the bush who want tales, persons going aboard ship who want tales, and persons residing in town who want tales, particularly light interesting and cheap tales, can be shown the largest variety in Australia, at

**COLE'S  
CHEAP BOOK STORE  
1 EASTERN MARKET**

**TALES TAYLES TAILS**

### USE YOUR MONSFFA MEMBERSHIP CARD TO OBTAIN DISCOUNTS AT THESE FINE STORES!

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**MÉLANGE MAGIQUE:** 15% off all merchandise (1928 St-Catherine West)  
<http://www.themagicalblend.com>

**MILLENNIUM COMICS:** 15% off all merchandise (451 Marrriane-est) <http://libmillenium.com>

**Go to**  
<http://www.monsffa.com/monsffahtml/discountpage.html>  
to learn more about where to shop for tales and tails!

### Conventions & Events in and Around Montreal

(With thanks to Lloyd Penny)

March 11-12 – **Toronto Super Animecon**, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, ON. Guests: TBA.  
Admission: \$20. [www.hobbystar.com](http://www.hobbystar.com)

March 19 – **March Winds Toy & Collectible Show**, Hansa Haus, Mississauga, (905)272-5597.

March 31 – April 2 – **Ad Astra 2006**, Hotel Crowne Plaza Toronto Don Valley Hotel, Toronto, ON. Guests: Ray Harryhausen, Terry Brooks, Peter David, Betsy Mitchell, David Warren, plus Satellite Linkup with Ray Bradbury, & more. [www.ad-astra.org](http://www.ad-astra.org).

March 31 – April 2 – **Filkontario 16**, Delta Toronto Airport West, Mississauga, ON. Guests: Chris Conway, Tanya Huff, Judi Miller. [www.filkontario.ca](http://www.filkontario.ca)

April 28-30 – **Paradise Comics Toronto Comicon**, National Trade Centre, Toronto, ON. Guest: Stan Lee.  
[www.torontocomicon.com](http://www.torontocomicon.com).

April 29 – **Transformerscon 5**, Doubletree International

Plaza Hotel, Toronto, ON. Convention for the Toy/comic/shows/movies. Guests: Joe Ng, Alex Milne.  
[www.transformerscon.com](http://www.transformerscon.com).

April 23 Toronto Comicon, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, ON. [www.hobbystar.com](http://www.hobbystar.com).

May 5-7 – **Corflu 23**, Hotel TBA, Toronto, ON. Fanzine Convention. [www.corflu.org](http://www.corflu.org).

May 5-7 – **Boréal 2006**, Concordia University, Montréal, QC. Guests: Guy Gavriel Kay, Sylvie Bérard, Jacques Baudou, Joël Champetier, Yves Meynard, Patrick Senécal, Élisabeth Vonarburg. [www.congresboreal.ca](http://www.congresboreal.ca).

May 19-22 – **Cangames 2006**, Rideau Curling Club, Ottawa, ON. Gaming Convention, [www.cangames.ca](http://www.cangames.ca).

May 26-28 – **Anime North 10**, Toronto Congress Centre & Doubletree International Plaza Hotel, Toronto, ON. Anime Convention. [www.animenorth.com](http://www.animenorth.com).

## Out of Their Minds!

*“Mwahahaha”, laughed the mad doctor, brandishing a small black box which sported a single ominous red button. “If I press this ominous red button”, cackled the brilliant but demented scientist, “my device will be activated, generating a burst of energy that will turn every single cubic zirconium on Earth into propesteronium 69, which will then quickly reach critical mass and turn everybody into my personal love slaves!”.*

Okay, *this* particular one sounds like fun, but all too often the weapons created for novels, comics, cartoons, TV programs and movies tend to be a little grimmer, if just as colorful. The idea is not to actually kill people, but to find an *entertaining* way of doing so!

### III - The (Not So) Far Fetched Ideas

Just because something is *possible* does not mean that it is *practical*. Otherwise, we would all have private helicopters and be spending our weekends on the Moon. It is true that some of the following weapons would be cumbersome and potentially as deadly for their users as for their target; but most of them would probably actually work, and it should be remembered that real life early guns were hardly convenient affairs.

The theory behind the **Electro Ray Tank**, for example, is perfectly sound. Simply direct a stream of conductive liquid at somebody and send a very large jolt of electricity along it.



*Electro-Ray Tank, Modern Mechanix & Inventions Magazine.*

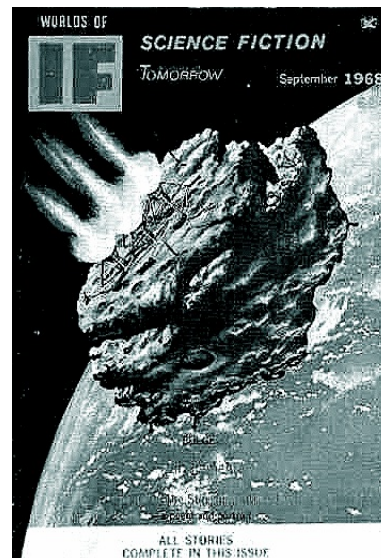
is still another way an artificial satellite can be used for warfare: the **Space Devastator**. Put a big mirror into orbit,

and you can focus the Sun's ray to burn up an entire city if you want to. The model described in the following picture is not nearly large enough to do any serious damage, but the basic principle is quite sound, not to mention environmentally friendly as weapons go. It would also make a very easy target, so it is a practical weapon only if your enemies do not have space flight.

For a while now, there has been some



*Space Devastator. Illustration by Julian S. Krupa for Amazing Stories, July 1939.*



*IF Science Fiction, September 1968*

objects would actually work. If you keep the boulder sufficiently small, you might even cause just enough damage



to soften up the adversary without ruining the whole place, as in Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle's novel *Footfall* (1985).

The trick in making a thrown object really hurt is to throw it *very* fast. The faster it goes, the more damage it causes and the smaller it needs to be. Consider, for example, how much more dangerous is a small gun-fired bullet compared to a fist-sized rock thrown by a sling. Push that concept to the limit,



*Schlock Mercenary*, by Howard Tayler, November 5, 2000.  
<http://www.schlockmercenary.com/>

and you get a **Particle Accelerator** weapon, where tiny bits of matter are sent hurling at a very high speed. Think of it as a kind of superlative sand blaster... The practical range of such a device would probably be less than that of a laser, but it could not be

defeated by a simple reflective surface.

**Relativistic Weapons** take the idea of using speed for offensive purposes to its limit. When you reach a sizable fraction of the speed of light, just about anything becomes deadly on impact. Definitely not a short range weapon, as even a wet hanky will produce a very impressive blast as soon as it hits the atmosphere, which is why you need to launch it from space. Next to useless against a moving target, such as a spaceship, because it is very hard to steer anything moving so fast once it is on its way.

It never fails: whenever somebody discovers a new principle of science, somebody (sometime the same person) will try to turn it into a weapon

Behold the **Cosmic Ray-Gun**, imagined in the late 1940's when the penetrating power of a newly found type of radiation was discovered. The strange apparatus in the illustration above is really a mishmash of several devices known at the time, and combines elements from a telescope, a nuclear reactor and a particle accelerator.

It was only fair that

“our” side should be granted the development of such futuristic weapons, for during the Cold War, the communists were consistently rumoured to already possess a frightening arsenal that included ways of throwing lightning at a distance and deadly freezing mists!



*“What About These Secret Weapons”, by Clive Howard, Mechanix Illustrated, March 1951*

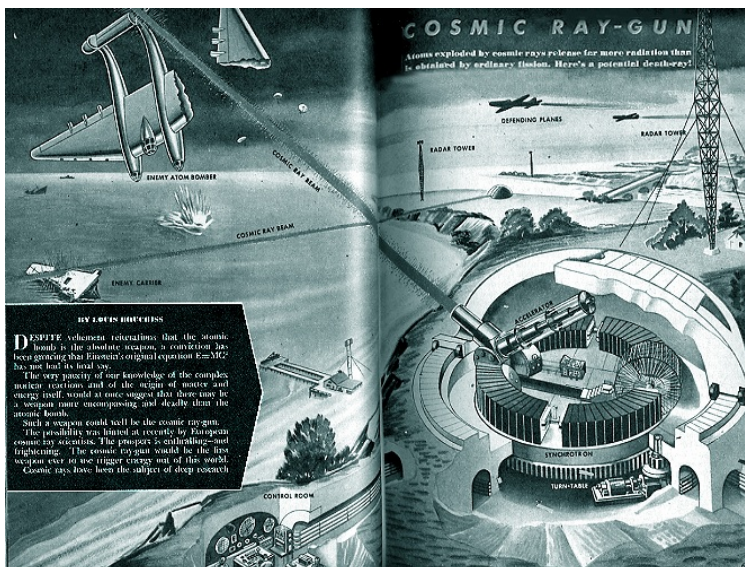
Before you laugh at any of the previous devices, or even at those that will follow – which are much more unlikely – please bear in mind that things like guided missiles and atomic bombs were once, not so very long ago, considered to be nothing but entertaining pieces of fiction...

#### IV - The Wild (But Oh So Entertaining) Gizmos

These are, of course, our favourites. Weapons based on the flimsiest scraps of science or simply the fertile imagination of the author, but that promise spectacular destruction up to the galactic level – and more.

One would be hard pressed to find a more lasting cliché in science fiction than the **Ray Gun**. Generally sporting a great many fins, blinking knobs and transparent disks, those hand held weapons are liable to shoot every conceivable type of ray, no matter how ludicrous. Heat rays, freeze rays and paralysis rays are amongst the favourites, but there are plenty of devolving rays, infanto rays and moroniser rays around.

This being an enlighten age, we do not see them quite as often in stores as in the past, but between the



*Cosmic Ray-Gun. Illustration by Louis Bruchiss for Mechanix Illustrated, March 1947.*



1930s and 1960s the **toymakers** produced a bewildering assortment of scifi weapons. They come in a great variety of sizes and colours, and I often suspect that the only reason we have not yet been invaded by aliens is that they have not realized that these things are really harmless.



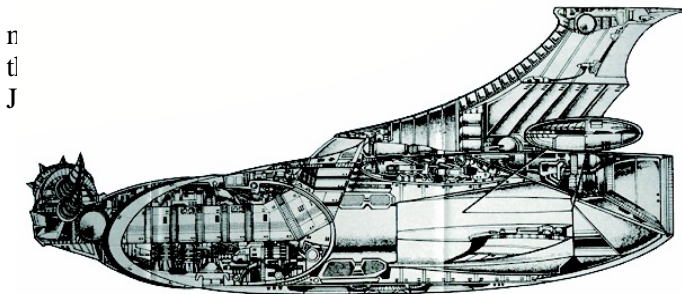
The great classic in this category is probably the **Disintegrator**, which dates back at least to the 1929 strip *Buck Rogers in the 25<sup>th</sup> Century*, itself based on Philip Francis Nowlan's short story *Armageddon – 2419 AD*, published the year before.

Aim, press the trigger and there is nothing left of the target but – at most – a small pile of dust or ashes. I doubt very much that such a device will ever be available. Not only is the physics behind it very fuzzy, but the Forensic Investigators Union and the Mortician Association would probably both lobby very strongly against it!



*Neutron Ray Gun, by Chief-E Manufacturing, circa 1957.*

A close second is the **Blaster**, but it tends to be a rather messy weapon, as some Jedi Knights are fond to say. While the latter's **Lightsabers** do seem to cauterise wounds when they lop off appendages, their victims apparently fail to see the elegance behind them.



*Godorak/Grandizer (GoNagai Studios, 1975 - 77).*

an. They come in all shapes – some of them superlatively weird – and are worthy of an article of their own. Many of you will remember the *Goldorak* series and its **fulguropoings**, **cornofulgurs**, **planitrons** and other strange weapons

Edgar Rice Burroughs came up with the idea of a **Magnetic Tower** to attract enemy planes in *The Warlord of Mars* in 1913, but the concept has been copied several times since then, sometimes almost seriously. It could indeed work in theory, but any electro magnet powerful enough to pull

aircrafts out of the sky would also tear apart the metal out of any nearby city that such a contraption is supposed to protect.

Somewhat more serious was Larry Niven's *Soft Weapon* (1967), a Swiss Army Knife sort of device capable of assuming several shapes and functions, including that of a total matter to energy converter. This short story was also adapted as an animated *Star Trek* episode under the title *The Slaver Weapon*. The rendering turned out to be not ridiculous or cheesy at



*Magnetic Tower, illustration from Thrilling Science Fiction Adventures, Issue 15, Spring 1970. Reprint of a much older article, probably from the early 1940's.*

all, something of a rarity for Saturday Morning cartoon weapons, which are usually on the garish side.



*The Slaver Weapon, Animated Star Trek (Paramount, 1973).*



*Seeds of Doom, 1985*

Cartoon weapons also have the immense advantage of not having to contend with the laws of physics, which is why things such as the *Galactic Guardians* (1985) **Seeds of Doom** can grow to world cracking size when properly stimulated (where

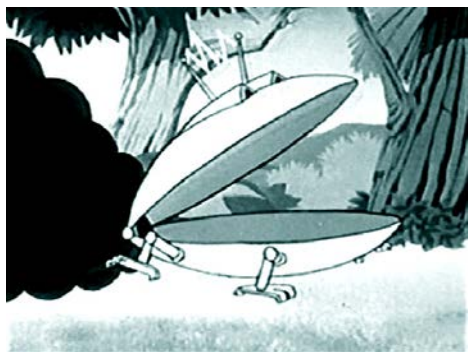
in heck did the mass come from?).

They can be entertaining, too, like the slot machine style **Backroom Weapon** of *Silverhawks* (1986), which can blow up a planet if the proper symbols come up (but only after you have paid a hefty fee for each try).



*The Backroom, 1986*





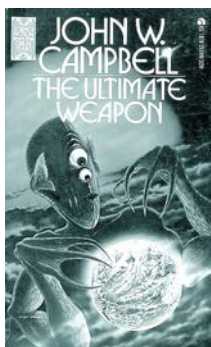
Oxyvac, *Rocket Robin Hood*, Trillium Productions, 1966.

Even if you did not watch it when it first came out in the 1960's, you may have heard of the Canadian made *Rocket Robin Hood* series. Utterly corny, especially in its first seasons, it had strange weapons galore, like **Multi-**

**Purpose Arrows** and the **Electro-Quarterstaff**. One of my favourites was the *Warlord of Saturn's* **Oxyvac**, an all-swallowing crab-like robot towing an enormous bag where it could store the entire oxygen content of a small planetoid's atmosphere.

For some of the weapons mentioned in this article, whether serious or frivolous, are indeed very powerful. They would however at least leave a few survivors around to invent something deadlier. Not so the **Planet Blasters**, unless you can escape in a spaceship. *Star Wars'* (1977) **Deathstar**, for all its fame, is hardly the first such device to be imagined. Remember the **Alpha-Omega Bomb** from the movie *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1969)? Or the **Planet Killer** from the original *Star Trek* episode *The Doomsday Machine* (1967)? And who could possibly forget Marvin's **Illudium Pew-36 Explosive Space Modulator** from *Hare-Way to the Stars* (1958)?

Even earlier, the Golden Age of science-fiction produced plenty of planet busting weapons, often invented by some eccentric scientist working in his basement.



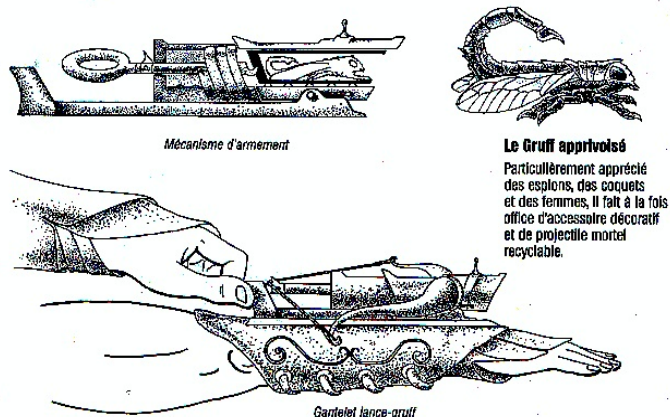
The specialist in that field is without a doubt E.E. "Doc" Smith, whose famous *Skylark* and *Lensmen* series of the 1930s featured weapons ranging from **ultra hard battle axes** used to split armoured space suits, to **drilling force tubes** used to pierce enemy force fields, to **heavily armoured mobile planets** used as projectiles against evil worlds.

For the benefit of people who would find this display of devastating technology a bit of a turn off, let us mention a few of the more romantic **living weapons** found here and there in genre literature and media.

The Oms in the animated feature *La planète sauvage*, settle their differences with **duelling creatures** strapped to their chests.

The *Valerian* graphic novel series, by Christin and

Mézière, has brought us, among others, the **Gruff Thrower**; the sharp-tongued **klamip** and the **schniarfeur**, a perpetually angry creature that spits a corrosive liquid.



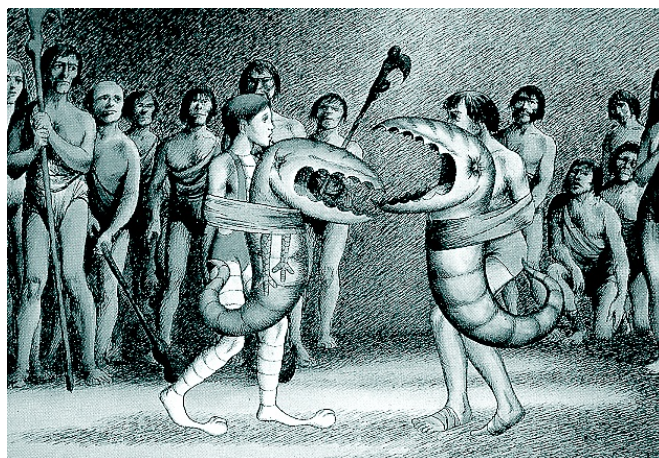
Gruff Thrower, illustration from *Les Habitants du Ciel*, Sargaud, 1991. First introduced in *Le pays sans étoiles*.

For some reason, perhaps because it is more ecologically sound, aliens who try to invade Japan are very fond of using **giant monsters**. Three headed **Ghidorah** is probably the most famous of those, but by no means the only one.

Enough carnage for you? If I know fans at all, I would say probably not, but we have only so much space available... Even if we wanted to restrain ourselves only to landmark sci-fi weapons, it would take a far

thicker volume than our club can afford to publish!

In our last instalment, we shall cover some of the more interesting genre war vehicles that I have come across over the years.



*La planète sauvage* (*Fantastic Planet*, Franco-Czech Production, 1973



## THE PHONE MESSAGE

Josée Bellemare

The telephone rings, Jackie Tyler goes to answer.



“Hello”

“Hello, is this the home of Rose Tyler?”

“Yes, but she’s not here at the moment.”

“You must be Mrs Tyler, Rose’s mother.”

“Yes but Rose isn’t here right now.”

“Must be out travelling with the Doctor.”

“You know about the Doctor?”

“I’m sorry, I forgot to introduce myself. I’m Captain

Jack Harkness, I travelled with Rose and the Doctor for a while. I’ve been trying to get back in touch with them.”

“And you called here? Why?”

“Well I know that Rose calls you often and that they drop in for a visit every now and then, so I thought I’d take a chance.”

“Well your timing is off I’m afraid. She called yesterday. Hang on a minute, how do I know you’re telling me the truth? For all I know you could be some alien trying to kill the Doctor.”

“If you have any doubts, ask Mickey about me, we met in Cardiff when he came to give Rose her passport.”

A knock at the door. “Mrs Tyler, it’s Mickey, can I come in?”

“Hold on Mickey, I’ll be right there.” She yells over her shoulder. “Just a minute Captain, we’re about to learn the truth.” She puts the phone down and goes to the door.

“Mickey, perfect timing, do you know a Captain Jack Harkness?”

“Yeah, met the bloke in Cardiff when I went to see Rose. Why?”

“He’s on the phone, looking for Rose and the Doctor.”

Jackie picks up the phone.

“Alright Captain, Mickey’s right next to me so let’s see if you’re telling the truth.”

“Fair enough, why don’t you ask me some questions that Mickey would know the answer to.”

She turns to Mickey. “I need to ask him something you would know.”

“What names did I call him when I walked in the Tardis?”

“I heard that. He called me Jumping Jack Flash and Captain of the innuendo squad. He also called the Doctor Big Ears.”

Jackie giggles and relays the information.

“Yeah, that’s right. Who were we trying to stop?”

Again, Jackie does the relay.

“The mayor of Cardiff City. She was planning to blow up the city with a fake nuclear plant project.”

“She what!?!?”

“It’s okay, we stopped her. So, now that I’ve passed the test, can we get back to Rose and the Doctor?”

“Like I said earlier, she called yesterday. It seems the Doctor had an accident and almost died. He’s better now but apparently he looks completely different.”

“Regeneration”

“Yeah, that’s what she called it, even sounds different too. Rose said he speaks with a Scottish accent now. They’re supposed to come for a visit at Christmas.”

“That’s good to know. Last time I saw them was a very difficult situation. It’s a miracle I’m alive. They probably think I died during the attack. Would you be so kind and give them a message. I’m alive and well and living in Cardiff. I even have a job and my life is very exciting. Let me give you my cell phone number...”

*Note: This story takes place shortly after Parting of the Ways but before Christmas Invasion. I have no idea what’s going to happen in Torchwood but I took a guess.*



## A “King Kong” Christmas

Keith Braithwaite

Over the Christmas season, I rediscovered my passion for *King Kong*. Among the gifts under my tree were a number of



*Kong* items, including the freshly released two-disc DVD edition of the original 1933 film. I promptly slid this gem into my player, eager to enjoy not only a pristine copy of the landmark motion picture, but the special features included.

Attached to the film is a commentary track by special effects veteran Ken Ralston and master stop-motion animator Ray Harryhausen, who knows a thing or two about the movie magic

that was employed to bring Kong and the dinosaurian denizens of his Skull Island home to life on screen. (Harryhausen credits *King Kong* with setting him upon his career path.) Their fannish enthusiasm for the enduring fantasy/adventure is evident as the two talk shop, offering a unique knowledge of the film's technical processes. Old recordings of interviews with *Kong* co-producer/director Merian C. Cooper and actress Fay Wray are woven in as an added treat.

Of particular interest is a seven-part documentary on RKO's famous Production 601, the highlight of which, for me, was the absorbing segment detailing *Kong* 2005 director Peter Jackson's resurrection of the fabled “lost spider pit sequence” cut from the original film. In an exercise only an avid *Kong* fan can fully appreciate, Jackson assembles a team that, working from vintage pre-production sketches, archival still photos, and the original screenplay, sets about recreating the missing sequence, a surviving print of which has yet to be discovered. The animation models and miniature sets used in the 1933 production are skillfully replicated and Jackson's people wrap themselves around the filmmaking techniques of the day to produce a best guess at what the several minutes of excised action might have looked like. Great stuff for *Kong* fanatics!

A companion disc also enjoyed was the *Kong* sequel *Son of Kong*.

I followed the classic *Kong* material with a marathon viewing of *Peter Jackson's Production Diaries* (another Christmas gift). This package collects the series of mini

“featurettes” on the making of the new *Kong* Jackson and crew produced for online distribution while shooting the film in New Zealand. *Diaries* includes a bonus feature outlining the creation of one of the remake's most thrilling scenes, the titular giant ape's defense of Ann Darrow from a trio of threatening Vastatosaurs.

Upon setting down the remote, I perused a number of *Kong*-related books I'd either received as Christmas gifts or picked up myself on Boxing Day. These include a coffee-table tome on the making of Jackson's *Kong* and David Brin's collection of non-fiction *Kong* essays. The Brin-edited book makes for some interesting reading, exploring such angles as the gigantic ape's stature as an icon of global culture, the technical artistry of both the prototype and the 2005 interpretation, the failings of the disappointing 1976 De Laurentiis remake, and an analysis of *Kong* through a Freudian prism.

But the highlight of my *Kong* Christmas was the first show on opening day of Peter Jackson's blockbuster remake. So awed was I by the experience, I returned to see the film three more times over the holidays.

The timeless tale of the great Beast and his Beauty is as compellingly told as ever under the deft guidance of Oscar-winning director Jackson, who has struck the perfect balance of engaging, character-driven storytelling and bold, over-the-top action. This is a film in which modern visual effects magic is, for once, properly brought to bear in service of the story.



Deviating little from the original script, Jackson respects—enhances, in fact—the classic's character development and narrative structure. His affection for the '33 version is unmistakable and *Kong* fans will enjoy the numerous delightful nods to the original he has included.

Jackson has delivered a visually stunning *Kong* for the 21st century—his beautifully shot, emotional finale is pure cinematic poetry—while paying homage in virtually every frame to the pioneering work of fantasy film that is the Cooper/Schoedsack/O'Brien picture. This glorious remake is entirely deserving of the high praise it has earned from audiences, reviewers, and *Kong* purists, honouring, as it does, the beloved original without supplanting it.

**King Kong 2005**

Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre

Having the latest remake of this most famous monster movie directed by the man who gave us the cinematographic version of the Lord of the Rings certainly was auspicious. At least, there was little worry that Kong would turn out to be a robot, female, gay or any combination thereof.

Like most remakes, this one had to take into consideration the fact that many viewers already knew the plot. In this case, even people who have never actually seen the original movie – and who were not even born then – know it backwards and upside down! There are usually two ways for a director to approach this problem: either keep only the general outline of the story, as was done with the 1976 version, or try to be as faithful as possible to at least the spirit of the original. Peter Jackson chose the latter, almost with a vengeance.

In order to understand what I mean, you should definitely view the 1933 version before you go see the 2005 one. Not only is it still an excellent movie in its own right, but you will be able to much better appreciate the latest remake. While you're at it, do buy or rent the lesser known *Son of Kong*, a sequel produced the very same year as the original movie (Hollywood's habit of milking good ideas to the last drop did not start yesterday!). Several characters and plot elements from that somewhat lighter second film made it to the 21st Century remake, to good effect. I especially liked the way Skull Island ended up dotted with ancient cyclopean ruins.

The major difference in the script concerns the way the various characters are depicted. Without being though as nail, the female lead is not quite as helpless as her predecessor. The in-movie director and the actor are both very different. Even the members of the ship's crew have more texture, and we get to know them a little before they succumb one after the other to the island's many perils (seventeen deaths, many of them rather high on the unpleasantness scale, not counting the natives...).

But even with those changes, the new version is still very faithful to the classic, and many of the most famous scenes are almost identical, only with better photography and effects. Even the now politically incorrect depiction of the natives has been cleverly recycled as a proper '30s style ballet opening for the presentation of chained Kong on stage!

This almost religious respect for the past even extends to lost footage. Remember when Kong shakes down the fleeing rescue party off a log bridge above a deep chasm? The original



Publicity shot from  
<http://www.kingkongmovie.com/>

movie included a sequence in which the people survive the fall, but are devoured by giant bugs, spiders and scorpions at the bottom. This was actually shot and animated, but it was felt that the scene distracted from the story and it was removed before release. Sadly, hardly any trace of this work remains, for it was not customary to document movies in those days. The modern re-creation of that lost scene is indeed well made, but the editor should have heeded his predecessor's opinion and followed the same path.

For this is not a perfect movie and I, for one, did find a few faults in it. For one thing, it is too long, and would have been more enjoyable had it been at least half an hour shorter. The director obviously forgot that modern movie houses no longer provide interludes during which you can relieve your bladder! In the original movie, we got to meet the star of the show – Kong – barely minutes after the opening credits; but in the new one, it takes well over an hour. Yes, the period setting does need to be explained to modern audiences, and giving a bit more texture to the characters is not a bad thing, but I think it was way overdone.

As strange as it may seem, the amazingly fast and fluid animation, while technically flawless, also ranks amongst my pet peeves. In the very first appearance of Kong, for instance, I found the creature moving much too fast for a being that large. Somehow, it spoils the effect, and the 1933 version of the same scene was much more impressive.

I was willing to suspend disbelief long enough to accept that the female lead could avoid catching her death in freezing temperature (because Naomi Watts looked darn good in that flimsy dress), but seeing a twenty-five foot gorilla skating in Central Park and not breaking the perfect sheet of ice was somewhat ludicrous. The scene on top of the Empire State Building also drags too much and could stand a few minutes shave. I know we have become accustomed to the army being the bad guy, but the reckless way the soldiers shoot at Kong, with total disregard for the safety of the civilians, is a bit hard to swallow, as is the sauropod stampede scene earlier on.

Bottom line? All in all a well done remake, which respects and even in part enhances the original, but it would have been even better without a few annoying add-ons. Anybody wishing to do yet another movie on the topic in, say, twenty or thirty years from now, will definitely have a tough act to follow. ●

## Underworld – Evolution (2006)

Reviewed by Fernster



Publicity shot from  
<http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/underworld/evolution/>

Ho-hum storyline about two different clans of inhuman monsters (Vampires & Werewolves) locked in a blood thirsty war of extermination. In this sequel to Underworld, our hero (?) Selene must face the oldest members of both clans – The Corvinus brothers – founders of both the Vampires and Lycans

(werewolves) clans.

Selene must find the secrets that has locked both tribes in a war that has lasted hundreds of years.

This movie had some really nice special effects, and Kate Beckinsale really looks good in spandex, but overall the movie was only ok. The story moved along in spurts (no pun intended) of action and dull moments. Len Wiseman's flashback to the ancient past almost seems a waste of time and in the end only adds confusion to the storyline.

I was disappointed by this movie – I was expecting a lot more from Len Wiseman. I recommend that you wait for the DVD on this one... 6.0/10 ●

## The Great Canadian Wrestling Expo

David James

The Great Canadian Wrestling Expo was held at the Oshawa Civic Auditorium on November 4th, 5th and 6th, 2005. There was wrestling matches, autograph signing, a charity auction, a screening room, a dealers room, meet and greet and more. So....why would we care?....well.....on Sunday November 6, 2005.....Star Wars vs Star Trek - featuring members of the IFT, KAG/KANADA and the 501st Squadron.

KAG and the 501st will be raising money for the Sick Kids Hospital all weekend for the event. The concept is that the 501st Squadron will take a wrestler dressed as a Jedi to the ring and the Klingons will be dragging a wrestler dressed as a Federation officer (Next Generation uniform) to the ring. Mind you a Klingon warrior would have been a worthier opponent and not a weakling human. The winner will be chosen by the wrestling fans via two boxes marked Star Wars and Star Trek. The fans are to deposit cash in the box of their choice and the box with the most money will be the winner. The fans as well as the 501st and the Klingons will only know after the wrestling match on who won the challenge.

I smell a fix. Hold on, my assistant is passing some news to me .....WHAT!!!! Wrestling matches are fake and not real? Man these Humans are devious, just like the Ferengi. At least the money goes to the Sick Children's Hospital. Anyhow, I will be participating as a Klingon warrior and if the Federation officer loses, there will be consequences that I will be unable to control.

I first learned of this event at Toronto Trek 19 from a gentleman named David who owns a company called Wyldstar. This year he didn't have his usual table in the dealers room. Instead, he was at a table promoting the Great Canadian Wrestling Expo with two lovely female wrestlers. At the time, the two ladies were not sure what a Klingon looked like, so I left to change into my uniform. Afterwards, I returned to the table and Dave reintroduced me to the ladies who didn't recognized me. They loved the uniform and wanted me to pose with them for photographs. I did and received one of the photos, autographed of course. Dave

asked if I could participate for the charity event and I informed him that if time permits I will e-mail him a few months later. I did e-mail him to say that I will attend.

### Friday November 04, 2005.

I arrived at the Oshawa Civic Auditorium and checked in with Dave from Wyldstar. Proceeded to check the area, locker room and my fellow Klingons as well as the competition (members of the 501st). After a couple of hours, we were guided to our hotel where our rooms were free courtesy of the Expo.

### Saturday November 05, 2005.

Drove down to the auditorium and changed into my uniform with the two other warriors. These warriors are a married couple who can be seen on the commercials on Space. Once we had changed, we started right away to solicit change from the Humans before the 501st. Met a few of the wrestlers also Ed the Sock with his co-host Liana K. I posed with Ed for a photograph and had him and Liana sign my can of Moxie that they had tried earlier. Of course Ed being Ed the Sock had a few comments to say about Moxie but I refuse to mark them down in this report.

### Sunday November 05, 2005.

Once again in my uniform to solicit money from the Human wrestling fans. This time, I wore two pairs of socks since the auditorium still has ice underneath the plywood floor and boy do the feet get cold when your there all day. Today, we Klingons hid the Star Wars box and left a ransom note but we gave it back before the Expo opened for the day. Dave informed us that at the moment, the Klingons are ahead of the 501st Squadron in donations. So most of the day was spent hassling the Humans for change so we can stay ahead of the 501st. We all, of course posed for photos, talked to the news people and gave autographs to the kids who wanted their program books signed.

Just before the charity event, three more Klingons arrived led by Col. Krikor zantai jechwl', Crimson Knight Fleet Commander/KAG. (aka Krikor). For the event, we Klingons dragged our prisoner to the ring and threw him in.



Then the 501st brought their prisoner into the ring. During the match, the Jedi tried to use his mind tricks to get the Federation officer to leave, but he was strong enough to overcome this trick. Especially after all the poking we Klingons did to him with our pain sticks the day before the match. Since the mind tricks didn't work, the Jedi was forced to use the Force, throwing our prisoner around the ring without touching him. This went on for awhile but once again our prisoner overcame the Force and managed to pin the Jedi down for the count.

THE KLINGONS WON THE CHALLENGE!!!!

As for the money. Saturday - Klingons \$98.50 501st - \$64.80

Sunday - Klingons \$48.70 501st - \$60.24

Grand total which will be going to the Toronto's Sick Children's Hospital is \$ 2'72.24.

We Klingons came, had fun and conquered for the glory of the Empire.

Qapla!!

Commander Maelgwn vestai Y Ddraig Goch KAD

Military Governor of Quebec KAG/ KANADA.

This transmission ends now!! ●

## ***MonSFFA*ndom**

**Keith Braithwaite**

***Appearing in each issue of Warp, "MonSFFA*ndom" collects those news and activities reports published over the last few months in Impulse, MonSFFA's monthly news bulletin.**

*In this brief edition of "MonSFFA*ndom," we've collated items published in the December 2005 and January 2006 issues of Impulse.

*To members past and present, and to all friends of the club, was extended in December's Impulse an invitation to MonSFFA's traditional Christmas dinner and party, scheduled for Saturday evening, December 3. Wishes for "the very best of the season" were conveyed to all.*

*The issue also ran a report on the club's final meeting of 2005:*

### **November MonSFFA Meeting**

The last MonSFFA meeting of 2005 took place on Sunday afternoon, November 20. Some 25 club members were in attendance. The agenda featured two presentations, the first on the future as imagined by previous generations and the second on Christmas shopping in Montreal for the avid SF/F fan.

Sylvain St-Pierre put up illustrative slides as he spoke of the wonderful future envisioned by our parents and grandparents, a tomorrow then that is now our today. But the future didn't quite materialise as was supposed.

Sylvain observed that predicting the world of tomorrow is, at best, hit-and-miss. While most conjecture on the future proves considerably off the mark, there are always those predictions that can only be said to have been remarkably prophetic. Sylvain offered the example of the common telephone answering machine, a bulky prototype of which was sketched in a vintage magazine spread touting the coming technological break-through of a telephone that answers calls on its own. The electric lawnmower was anticipated, too, in a do-it-yourself feature showing how to adapt a push-mower for automated use by attaching a small electric motor.

As depicted in the pages of such magazines as *Mechanix Illustrated*, prognosticators of the early and mid-20th century divined a bevy of amazing inventions that were to have been part of our present day world, including that

ubiquitous icon of futurology, the flying car. Another concept augured, that of interchangeable airline passenger transportation modules, struck Sylvain's audience as akin to fictional sci-fi aircraft *Thunderbird 2*.

Among the many weapons of war envisioned was the underwater tank. To be deployed from a battleship offshore, these tanks would manoeuvre, undetected, along the sea floor, finally emerging from the surf on an enemy beach, catching defenders unawares. Also foreseen was a space-based weapons system designed to intercept incoming ballistic missiles. This defence plan was described in a feature article that predated by decades the so-called "Star Wars" system considered by the Reagan administration in the 1980s.

Tamu Townsend was up for the second half of the meeting, providing members a guide to SF/F Christmas shopping in Montreal. Showing photos she'd snapped of some of the more interesting merchandise offered, Tamu listed a number of local retailers and detailed their respective specialties—books, comics, DVDs, toys and action figures, animé, high-end collectibles, games. She tipped her fellow MonSFFen as to sales specials upcoming and opined that these shops were almost certain to have that special something for the SF/F fan on your holiday shopping list.

Expect friendly, helpful service, Tamu stated, as these establishments not only cater specifically to SF/F enthusiasts, but are staffed by fans.

Among the retailers Tamu covered:

\***Boite Noire**, three locations: 4450 St-Denis, Montréal (514-287-1249), 380 Laurier O., Montréal (514-277-6979), and 42 McGill, Montréal (514-844-8727); Web site: [www.boitenoire.com](http://www.boitenoire.com)

\***Capitaine Québec**, 1837 Ste-Catherine O., Montréal; 514-939-9970

\***Cosmix**, 931 Décarie, St-Laurent; 514-744-9494; e-mail: [collectibles@cosmix.ca](mailto:collectibles@cosmix.ca)

\***Le Valet D’Couer**, 4408 St-Denis, Montréal; 514-499-9970

\***Legends Action Figures**, 7104 St-Hubert, Montréal; 514-277-1867; Web site: [www.legendsaf.com](http://www.legendsaf.com)

\***Librairie Millennium**, 451 Marie-Anne E., Montréal; 514-284-0358; e-mail: [heroes@cam.org](mailto:heroes@cam.org); Web site: [www.libmillenium.com](http://www.libmillenium.com)

\***Lunivers & Cie**, 5250 St-Denis, Montréal; 514-278-2787; Web site: [luniveretcie.com](http://luniveretcie.com)

\***Mélange Magique**, 1928 Ste-Catherine O., Montréal; Web site: [www.themagicalblend.com](http://www.themagicalblend.com)

Note that Legends, Mélange Magique, and Millenium offer discounts under the club’s discount program to card-carrying MonSFFA members.

*Looking ahead to the coming year, December’s issue published the 2006 meeting schedule:*

### 2006 MonSFFA Meeting Dates

MonSFFA holds 10 programmed meetings annually on an approximately monthly schedule. These meetings are held on Sundays. We gather in the St-François room of the Days Inn hotel (1005 Guy Street, downtown Montreal) from 1:00-5:00PM. Some meetings include a morning session, during which one of the club’s special interest groups, or SIGs, convene, generally from 10:30AM-noon.

The club has confirmed the following 2006 meeting dates:

January 22	June 11
February 19	August 20
March 26	September 17
April 23	October 22
May 28	November 19

We’ve scheduled MonSFFA’s annual summer barbecue for Sunday, July 30. Should rain threaten, the following Sunday, August 6, has been reserved as an alternate date.

Our 2006 Christmas dinner and party will take place on Saturday evening, December 9.

*The issue concluded with notice of the upcoming annual club elections and details of MonSFFA’s electoral procedures:*

### 2006 Club Elections

The club’s selection of its 2006 Executive Committee will take place during the first 15 minutes or so of our January 22 meeting. All full club members are encouraged to participate in this process.

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.

Any full MonSFFA member in good standing who is responsibly and reliably able to carry out the duties of office may run for any one of the Executive posts. Candidates may nominate themselves or accept nomination from another full member in good standing. Nominations are received by the chief returning officer, or CRO, up until shortly before the commencement of voting on election day.

All full MonSFFA members in good standing are eligible to cast a ballot. Members are asked to be present at the designated place and time in order to exercise their right to vote. Proxy voting is *not* permitted.

*January’s Impulse opened the New Year with coverage of the club’s Christmas revelry:*

### Christmas Celebrations Close MonSFFA’s 2005 Activities

MonSFFA closed 2005 with its traditional Christmas dinner and party, welcoming some 20 members and friends to the club’s annual celebration of the season. The evening—Saturday, December 3—opened with dinner at Reuben’s Deli, downtown, after which the group made its way to the familiar Park Place Bar on Mackay street.

There MonSFFA’s revellers gathered for an evening of drinks, music, conversation, and, as always, *pool*. The bar’s backroom pool table was quickly commandeered as an impromptu tournament began. The sharp crack of cue strokes accented the festive din until closing time, at about 3:30AM, when the last ball was sunk and the club’s 2005 Christmas party capped another successful year of MonSFFA activities.

We are pleased to report that we collected at the party several grocery bags worth of non-perishable food, along with a number of children’s toys, for donation to local charity.

Our thanks to Debbie and Heather, our perennial Park Place hostesses, as well as to Mark Burakoff, who arranged for the dinner at Reuben’s, and Keith Braithwaite, who set up the Park Place party, provided the evening’s soundtrack, and saw to our collection for charity.

*The issue included news of the club’s film division having had a good Christmas:*

### MonSFFilms Chalks Up Christmas Sales

Several MonSFFilms titles are now available for viewing in Quicktime format via MonSFFA’s Web site ([www.MonSFFA.com](http://www.MonSFFA.com)). Shortly after club president and MonSFFA Webmaster Berny Reischl put up these online versions of *Beavra*, *MooseMan*, and other of our award-winning fan films, we began recording on the site a respectable number of hits re our films. We are thrilled to report that just before Christmas, we received online requests for the purchase of numerous DVD copies of our films!

Wrote one buyer: “I loved your film *MooseMan*, which I saw at the Fantasia film festival....I loved *MooseMan* so much, I decided that it would only be fair to pay real money

to be able to see it again.”

Another was sold on *Beavra*, unseen: “...I’m going to trust the film’s reputation and buy it...”

We were, of course, *very* happy to fill these orders, amounting to over \$200!

Our DVDs were destined, we were told, to households across Canada as Christmas gifts.

Cool!

*Before wrapping up with a reiteration of the election item that appeared in December’s Impulse, The January issue of the club’s news bulletin included the following important reminder to members:*

### Reminder: Renew Club Membership on Time!

The holidays are over and as we all get back up to speed, MonSFFA takes a moment to remind club members of the importance of renewing their memberships *on time*. Steady cash flow facilitates the smooth operation of the club.

Those members whose annual fees became due in the last couple month may be forgiven, of course, for letting slip their renewals in the midst of the hectic end-of-year and holiday season. Not to fret, we’ll be pleased to process your MonSFFA membership renewals today.

Our yearly dues remain unchanged at \$25, which works out to *only* about \$2 per month! ●

## The Last Words!

The Fernster

Another Warp Magazine edition and another The Last Words. Try your hand on the following movie last words. Name the character who spoke these last words and the movie’s name.

This being the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of The Last Words, your opinion will be welcomed! Please send your comments or suggestions to: <fernster23@hotmail.com>. Thanks!

### The Last Words # 3

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) “Well..... I’m back! ” (2 pts)  | 4) “Hey! You on the other side let her go, because for..... for her, I’ll cross over and than you’ll be sorry!” (5 Pts) |
| 2) “So David went to sleep too and for the first time in his life, he went to that place where dreams are born.” (3 Pts) |   |
| 3) “HA! HA! Manufactured products....OH GOD NO...NO...NO...I’VE SLEPT TOO LONG! HA! HA! HA!” (5 Pts)                     | 5) “Player 2 has entered the game” “EDddddd”, “Yes! ” (5 Pts)   |

### Answers to Last Words # 3:

### Score Card:

0 - 2 You’re really in trouble...go back to bed...  
3 - 5 You’re still not ready for the big time...  
6 - 10 You’d better start going to the movies...  
11 - 15 Average movie-goer...  
16 - 20 Top notch movie freak! You scare me...  
21+ Hey, you cheated!

1. Sam Gamgee – The Return of the King – LOTR  
2. Narrator – AI – Artificial Intelligence  
3. Nash – Army of Darkness – Director’s Cut  
(International Release Version)  
4. Hell Boy – Hell Boy the movie  
5. Video Game & Shaw – Shaw of the Dead

**Are you reading somebody else’s WARP? Join MonSFFA today! Send cheque or money order in the amount of 25\$ to:**

**MonSFFA, PO Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montréal, QC, H2X 4A7**

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