



Fantasia
Page 22

Summer 2007 ☀ Volume 21 ☀ 03

WARP 68

Josée Bellemare

Nikolai Krimp

Les Lupien

Barbara Silverman

Sylvain St-Pierre

MonSFFA's Executive:

Bernard Reischl
President

Keith Braithwaite
Vice-President

Sylvain St-Pierre
Treasurer

Appointed Positions:

PR, Membership, editor of *Impulse*
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

Jean-Pierre Normand

Godzilla brings his own special brand of
mayhem to Fantasia's festivities!

Write to us:

MonSFFA

PO Box 1186
Place du Parc
Montreal, QC,
H2X 4A7

www.monsffa.com

President:

president@monsffa.com

editor:

cathyp1@sympatico.ca



MonSFFA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

September 23



Programming is subject to change.

September 23, 2007

MonSFFA Garage Sale & Auction
& possible guest speaker

October 21, 2007

Myths, Gods, and Legends of Ancient Times
NB: This meeting may be moved up to Con*Cept, October 12-13-14.

October 21



November 18, 2007

WorldCon In Nippon, Anticipation, and Local Con Roundup

Fan Films

December 8, 2007

**MonSFFA's 20th Anniversary
Dinner & Dance**

Days Hotel, 6:00 P.M.

All-You-Can-Eat Buffet, Cash Bar
Raffles & Door Prizes!

DJ: Andrew Gurudata

*MonSFFA has reserved a room block at the
special rate of 70\$ + taxes.*

Call the Days Hotel (514) 938-4611.

Tickets on sale now, 35\$
(40\$ at the door)



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.

TABLE of CONTENTS

Summer 2007 • Vol. 21 • 03



FEATURE ARTICLES

The Sound of Thunder / 5
A Moment's Insight / 6
Preparing for Nippon, Parts 3 & 4 / 9
The Last Mage: The Dragon's Mouth / 12
TV Crossovers / 18

REVIEWS

Movies / 19

Shrek III / Chicken Little / Live Free or Die Hard

Books / 24

Deliverer / Temeraire: His Majesty's Dragon,
Throne of Jade, & Black Powder War / The Hobbit

Conventions & Events / 21

Anthrofest / Fantasia / C-ACE / Passion Médiéval

DEPARTMENTS

You've Got Mail / 3
SFF Sighting / 4
Upcoming Conventions & Events / 17
MonSFFA Discount Programme / 27
The MonSFFun Page / 28

MONSFANDOM

Meeting Reports: January to June / 24



Dear MonSFFen:

I've got Warp 67 here, and I'm way behind with a lot of things, so it's time to catch up and get with it. Besides issue 68 could arrive at any time...

My loc...I did go with Yvonne to Dallas for the 2007 ISDC, and we had a very good time. We worked for our memberships, mostly helping at registration and pre-registration. I got to meet Rusty Schweikart, former astronaut, and Dr. Steven Squyers, the lead scientists in charge of the Martian rovers. Also, we spoke to Ben Bova, having not seen him for many years. The space advocates came up with the programming, but fans from the Dallas and Houston areas actually ran the convention. It came across like a nice little convention in a space too big for it. Yvonne said that while Dallas was fun,

the past ISDCs in Washington and Los Angeles were much bigger and better supported by big corporations like NASA. There were two bids for the 2009 ISDC, from Orlando and Toronto. We will probably find out later in June what the decision will be.

Saw Lori Ajemian just the other night at our First Thursday pubnight. I hope the Klingon fonts I sent to Krikor worked out okay...(from K'Mon T'Pel-tu, your friendly letter-writing Klingon-Vulcan in Toronto...)

With George Dodds' translation of *La Fin du Monde: Le Déluge de Glace*, there is a lot interest lately in century-old novels...good to see. Right now, I am reading on my Palm Tungsten the eBook version of *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* by James deMille, called Canada's first SF novel. It was published in 1888.

Neither Yvonne nor I had any intentions of going to Polaris 21 this year...in spite of all the television series and movies it covers, we haven't seen any of them. There simply isn't anything there for us. However, we will now both be going. I will be working at the Sectarian Wave booth either Saturday or Sunday. Come around, and you can see what Sectarian Wave is...a nine-episode radio-style play, being termed an audio comic book, in a three-CD set. Yvonne will be spending some time at the Ad

Astra table. We are retired from working the convention at the committee level, but Yvonne will be joining the programming sub-committee to once again stage a track of space and science programming at the next Ad Astra, scheduled for the end of March 2008.

Finally, it's a little early, but happy 20th anniversary to the club. You've come a long way from MONSTA and Final Frontier, but you've got to start somewhere. Maybe an anniversary party at Polaris?

C'est tout for the moment. Polaris 21 is next month, so we'll see a lot of you there!

Yours,
Lloyd Penney

Hi, Lloyd!

It was nice seeing you and Yvonne at Polaris. Sectarian Wave sounds like fun. MonSFFA has an interest in audio projects, having already produced some of our own. It was some time ago, so maybe it's time to dust off the microphones and try participating in the Sectarian Wave project.

Glad to know Yvonne is on board for Ad Astra's science programming. She's done a great job of bringing in interesting speakers in the past.

I wish more people were interested in the history of our genre. While some of the really old stories are painful to read

now, many have withstood the test of time and are well worth the effort. Georges Dodds is now researching William Murray Graydon, one of the first successful pulp writers. I expect some really interesting stories for the coming issues of WARP.

About our 20th anniversary, time does fly when you are having fun. Seems like we only just celebrated our 10th a little while ago! But as you saw on page two, plans are underway for another celebratory party to be held in December at the Days Hotel. It's a bit of a distance to travel in winter, but I do hope you and Yvonne can make it down for the fete.

Yours in fandom,

Cathy



Dear Cathy,

I'm expecting microfilms of the Boston Globe from 1893-1900 where William Murray Graydon, arguably the first successful writer for the pulp magazines, published many of his earliest adventure stories. Many of his stories (1889-1900) graced the pages of the early Munsey's magazine and later The Argosy as it switched from 'slick' paper format to 'pulp' in mid 1896 – his popularity was somewhat responsible for the pulp format surviving commercially (the next non-Munsey magazine to publish on pulp

paper was around 1905).

A native of Harrisburg, PA, he moved to the UK around 1902, publishing >500 novel/novella length works along with a couple of hundred short stories between c. 1885 and 1935 – not to mention lots of stuff that was probably published without attribution in British 'story papers.' Soon after his move to England he apparently got into the habit of dictating novels to an early Dictaphone device, writing 2 or 3 novels simultaneously, and leaving the typing to a secretary. And as if he wasn't busy enough he had 3 children with his wife, another 6 with a mistress, and travelled extensively in Europe!

Anyways, when I get my hands on them, I'll send you a short story or two, something along the lines of:

Quest of the White Panther
The Rajah of Kolat's Trainer
The Rajah of Vancore's Menagerie
The Ringed Jaguar of Amazonas
The Sign of the Serpent
The Tharadeen
The Dacoit

Unlike his serialized novels, his short stories have never been reprinted. They are generally quite tasty and fairly free of the racist/sexist tropes of the era.

On a completely separate topic, you might find the following texts gleaned from 19th century magazines to be interesting:

http://www.geocities.com/ruritanian_muglug/

dime.html

If you thought heavy metal and rap music, along with violent video games, were the first things to drive teenagers to murder, suicide, gang crime and worse, then you've never heard of the dreaded "dime novel" – apparently one of Satan's most effective tools for corrupting youth in the 19th century.

All the best...

Georges T. Dodds

Hi, Georges!

I looked up the URL to the texts from the 19th century, and I am still laughing. I guess every generation has to find its own way to annoy their parents, and Satan will always be waiting for those sinful teens to fall into his lap. Strange how in hindsight the things that seemed so decadent then now seem so innocuous. Gives me hope that this generation of rappers and video game junkies will turn out at least as OK as we did.

I look forward to reading the Graydon stories. The titles sound quite intriguing. Nine children by two women? That's quite an adventure in itself!

Yours in fandom,

Cathy



SFF Sightings! Submitted by Georges Dodds

There's a fairly new bookstore near the Lionel-Groulx metro station. It's on the north side of St. Jacques a little west of Atwater. They have a fairly limited selection of SF and fantasy, but amongst that they have a large (for 35 years after they were issues) number of Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series books, in lovely pristine condition (some Lin Carter edited anthologies, 3 William Morris titles, at least 3 James Branch Cabell titles, one or two Lord Dunsany, at least one George MacDonald, Poul Anderson's "Hrolf Kraki's Saga."). They also have the four volume c. 1969 Avon reprinting of Talbot Mundy's "Tros of Samothrace" (one of the best historical adventure novels of the 20th century, and among the my 2 or 3 top favourites in all genres) along with "Om. The Secret of Ahbor Valley" and "The Nine Unknown" (also among Mundy's best). There are a few old science fiction titles, too, including some Harlan Ellison stuff. Certainly some prime reading...and they're priced quite reasonably (\$3-\$3.50 on average)

On the Internet:

An interesting article on the (non)- relevance of SF :

<http://discovermagazine.com/2007/aug/blinded-by-science>

THE SOUND OF THUNDER

Barbara Silverman

Thunder! Way off in the distance the rolling sound was barely noticeable. Gradually it approached, closer and closer, the rumbling building up to a deafening roar. The ground trembled and shook, threatening to send anything standing tall on terra firma crashing down. The air, saturated with dust, blinded all who tried to see. Then, through this curtain of tiny particles, the gray bodies of the elephant herd thundered onward, heading for the water flowing in the meadow beyond.

Elephants have had a long, and honoured history in Hindu mythology. The first of these mighty creatures was known as Airavana. A prepossessing white, four tusked, three-headed elephant ridden by the king of gods, Indra. The name Airavana, meaning 'arisen from the ocean', is derived from 'iravat' meaning 'possessing moisture'. It was believed that rain would fall when Indra rode Airavata.

According to one of the important secondary creation myths, Airavana emerged from the seas during the 'Churning of the Ocean', an event when the gods and the Danavas joined together to retrieve precious objects, and divine beings, for the benefit of mankind.

Mount Mandara became the churning rod. Vasuki, king of the Nagas (snakes) coiled around Mount Mandara to act as a rope, and Vishna, a tortoise, provided a base for the rod. Then with the gods holding Vasuki's tail, and the Danavas gripping the head, they churned the oceans allowing for the emergence of Airavana, Surabhi the cow of plenty, and Uchchaisravas or Surya's seven headed horse, and others.

According to legend, at one time elephants were able to fly, that is until they displeased Indra. Then as punishment he cut off their wings and turned many of them into the Himalayas, where they will remain for all eternity.

According to another tale, they were not only able to fly, but they could also change shape as clouds do, until the fateful day a flock landed in a tree under which an ascetic, Long Austerity, was busy teaching a group of pupils. Unfortunately, the weight of the elephants broke the branch, causing these huge animals to tumble down, killing several of the pupils. Austerity was so angry that he cursed the entire species, resulting in their loss of flying and shape changing abilities. From then on, they became known as the "clouds that walked the earth."

White elephants are still connected to clouds, most often associated with clouds heavy with rain. As bearers of water, fertility, and abundance, they are considered to be auspicious.

Another story concerning the origin of Airavata involves Brahma. The Diggaja elephants or "elephant of a quarter of the sky" refers to those that accompany the Dikpala. These Dikpalas, or Ashtadikpalas, are Verdic gods – guardians of the eight directions.

Evidently Brahma held two halves of an eggshell in each hand. From the right hand emerged Airavata and seven male elephants. The females emerged from the left-hand shell. The

eight pairs, all white with four tusks, became the Diggajas who watch the eight directions and support the earth.

The Hindu goddess Lakshmi was often linked to elephants as Gaja-Lakshmi meaning, "Lakshmi with the elephants," the Sanskrit term for elephant being "gaja." She was the goddess of wealth, light, wisdom, lotus flowers, and fortune. Lakshmi was also considered the secondary goddess of luck, beauty, courage, and fertility. Always depicted either sitting or standing on a lotus flower, she had four hands which always held a lotus flower.

As Gaja-Lakshmi, she is always shown with one or two elephants standing beside her. Water would be flowing over her from the trunks of these gajas. This depiction was meant to teach the philosophy that ceaseless effort, combined with the path of righteousness, wisdom, and purity, would lead to material and spiritual prosperity.

Elephants are symbols of fertility, strength, wisdom, and royalty. They are one of the most prominent animals in the Buddhist, Jaina, and Hindu mythology. Representations of elephants have been found on seals from Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. These seals date from c. 3000-1700 BCE.

Today in India, as in many other parts of the world, sanctuaries are being founded to protect and care for these unique animals. In 2006, the Rajasthan High Court declared that "elephants are equivalent to humans," a landmark decision, one that hopefully will lead to stronger laws protecting not only the elephants of India, but those elsewhere in the world.

Elephants have served mankind in a variety of ways. In myths, in circuses, as war machines, as providers of ivory, and as beasts of labour. Surely the time has come for us to allow them to live in the peace and security they deserve.

Remember the majestic Airavana when the sun is shining, and lazy clouds drift overhead. Take a walk outside, look up into the blue skies, and think of the elephants – mighty denizens of the earth which, according to legend, once flew with the clouds and now cause the earth to tremble with the sound of thunder. ☸



A Moment's Insight

Leslie Lupien

How do you listen to a man's voice, look into his eyes, watch his body language, and detect a problem that skilled interviewers with elaborate technological backup have missed? Edward Spletzer didn't know. But he had to try. A misjudgement of the man beside him could result in disaster for Spletzer's crew on an interstellar voyage.

He voiced a command to start the holoviewer. Its screen began to show how *Cosmic Destiny's* propulsion system would lance his magnificent ship to the neighbourhood of a nearby star. Simulated antimatter pellets sparkled like tiny diamonds under a strobe light in the superconducting channels to the engine.

"Beautiful," Joe Lancia, Spletzer's enigmatic new chef engineering officer, said.

"Awesome, rather, isn't it?" Spletzer asked. The question gave him a chance to watch Lancia rather than the screen.

Lancia sat very erect in the hard-backed lecture hall chair. The golden disk of the Solar Commonwealth shone over a breast pocket of his brand-new Interstellar Corps Uniform. "Yes, like the mission," he said, turning his face to Spletzer. A clean-featured, square-jawed face, with intelligent eyes. "When I first heard I had been selected to replace Chief Zenga, I turned somersaults. Literally."

Everything about Lancia seemed to reflect competence, self-assurance, reliability. Why had Katya Kwan, Spletzer's medical officer, planted such a grievous doubt in his mind about his new chief?

Both men turned to watch the screen. Lancia said, "I don't mean to pry, Commander, but Chief Zenga's dropping out was very strange. She was one of my teachers at the Corps Academy. She seemed so dedicated to the mission."

Spletzer pretended to watch the screen while he framed his answer. "Valerie Zenga decided, wisely I believe, that she did not feel comfortable enough with the other twelve members of our crew and me to face isolation with us for years." From the corner of his eye he tried to read Lancia's face.

Lancia nodded, but seemed too focussed on the screen to answer.

"When I taught you at the academy, I was impressed with your professional knowledge and dedication."

"And you aroused my enthusiasm," Lancia said.

"Oh, how?"

"I remember your exact words: 'In the twenty-third century we have got a handle on the ancient problems of our species – war, poverty, racism. We can relax as no generation ever has. But without a new challenge, we will stagnate. Interstellar travel meets the need'. You expressed my own conviction so cogently."

Disingenuous? Spletzer could find no suggestion of it in Lancia's voice, expression or manner. Damn Katya Kwan! But in years of association during previous assignments, he had never known her to be wrong about a person. And, as chief medical officer, she would be responsible for both the psychological and physical health of the crew during the voyage

to Alpha Centauri A's second planet and return.

When the holoviewer shut down, Spletzer invited Lancia to join him for lunch in the ship's new cafeteria. But he paid no attention to his food and did not invite further conversation. Instead, he reviewed once more in his mind how Kwan had described her introductory interview with their new chief on the day after Lancia's arrival on the Uranus Lagrange orbital station.

Spletzer had found Kwan busy with a hands-on inventory of her supplies in her clinic on the ship. "At it again?" he asked, smiling. "Aren't you satisfied with Rollo's inventory?"

"I don't trust an artificial intelligence with drudge work," Kwan said. "But you didn't come to ask about that."

Spletzer sat on a stool opposite her. "I understand you spent some time with our new chief? What's your impression of him?" Kwan dropped another packet of intelligent bandages into a ceramic holder without looking up. "He spent months in your class at the academy."

Spletzer sighed. "Captain . . . Katya, please don't."

She broke open a packet of intelligent bandages and began to count them silently. "All right. I asked Lancia why he was satisfied to spend so much time in a cushy administrative job Earthside."

"That didn't trouble any of the screeners in personnel. It doesn't trouble me. People change. What did Lancia say?"

"He told me that he used to see a career in the Solar Fleet only as a way to enjoy high status, a sinecure Earthside, and, well, easy women. Then gradually he recognized the emptiness and dishonesty of his life. So he went back to school, tough antimatter engineering studies, and volunteered for the Interstellar Corps."

"The screeners believed him. So do I," Spletzer told her. "That kind of anomie and renewal happens."

"But it's not common unless the subject falls under the influence of a stronger personality or some group indoctrination. You had access to Lancia's confidential personnel file. How much investigation did Fleet Internal Affairs do into his off-duty activities and associations?"

"It could do very little because he did or said nothing to arouse suspicion. The Fleet is very conscious of civil rights. And thank God for that, Katya," Spletzer told her. "Oh, he belonged to a couple of singles groups and for a while to a neo-Buddhist organization. That a problem for you?"

"No. But he tried so hard to convince me of his dedication. Too hard."

"That's subjective. Is there anything definite you don't like about him?"

Katya sat up very straight, meeting his eyes. "While he talked, I felt something that scared me."

"Felt something?"

"Don't ask me to be more definite. I can't." She paused, as if groping for words. "Sometimes a moment's insight is worth more than a life's experience."

"Intuition," Spletzer said. Then, after a while, "Intuition is often wrong. Life's experience should have taught you that."

Kwan looked down and dropped the packet into the ceramic holder.

"I've talked to every superior Lancia had in his Fleet assignments," Spletzer told her. "They all said about the same thing. Bright. Dependable. Easy to work with. A team player. And I saw how he worked his tail off at the academy to qualify for the mission."

"Glad to hear it" Kwan said dully.

Spletzer drew and let out a long breath of exasperation. "Captain, do you have anything more to tell me?" When she shook her head, he waited for some time while she went on with her donkey work, ignoring him. Then he said, "Thank you," and left.

The day after showing Lancia the virtual of the anti-matter propulsion system, Spletzer introduced him to several members of the crew and then took him to see Agnes Teitz, the ship's life support system engineer.

Teitz explained, with a little too much detail, the wonders of the artificial intelligence that covered one wall of the control room with banks of terminal screens and a row of reassuring green lights.

Spletzer's eyes glazed over. He feared that Lancia might show signs of boredom and offend Teitz, who would be his direct subordinate. "Agnes, can you summarize for the chief?"

"That's easy," Teitz said. "Rollo – it seems so human sometimes, we give it a nickname – will make sure all of our physical needs are met."

"Even wipe our asses?" Spletzer meant to be droll. He felt good. Lancia had interacted smoothly with other members of the crew.

Teitz laughed. "Want that programmed in?"

Lancia laughed heartily. "Please do."

Spletzer nudged Lancia's shoulder. "Makes you wonder if we should just send a few Rollos to another star system instead of expensive humans, doesn't it?"

Lancia's smile started at the corners of his mouth, revealed his fine teeth, and softened his eyes. "Makes you wonder, commander."

"Time for refreshments," Spletzer said.

They munched biscuits, sipped red berry wine from the orbital station's vineyards, and talked under the soft light of the ship's cafeteria. Spletzer kept the talk small until it dwindled into an awkward silence. Then Teitz spoke, "What you said about Rollo making us redundant, commander. A lot of people think so, and for them it's no joke. Some even say what we're doing is a criminal waste or sacrilege."

"Let them talk," Spletzer said. "Debate's ended. Two referendums."

"I ran into a lot of flak when I went Earthside on leave last week. Even from my family." Wine had reddened Teitz's cheeks, and her voice carried an edge. "My father said, 'Don't let yourself be sent on this fool's errand, Agnes. You want to risk your life to get to a dead world, take a look, and come

home? For what? Robots or androids could do the job better and cheaper. Just to keep you alive, the fools who run the Commonwealth will waste enormous resources that we need here. If whatever creator you believe in had wanted us out there, he would have made us different.'"

"Your father doesn't understand," Spletzer told her. "Some people talked like that two centuries ago when the first settlers went to live on Mars and the asteroids."

"Yes, and some died trying to stop the expeditions," Teitz said.

"Know what I think?" Lancia asked.

Spletzer wanted to steer the conversation somewhere else, but he said, "What, chief?"

Lancia smiled at Teitz and pushed his glass away. "They grow powerful berries on this station. Commander, I'm eager to take a look at the real propulsion system."

Spletzer followed Lancia along the crosswalk in the propulsion system's observation deck. He hated every step. The module was cramped, stuffy, and depressingly antiseptic. And his new chief seemed subdued as if sharing his mood, barely responding to Spletzer's attempts at casual conversation.

Spletzer tried again. "About Captain Teitz, I hope you didn't get the wrong impression. Her competence and emotional health are beyond question."

"I didn't get the wrong impression." Lancia stopped and pointed upward toward the two magnetic containers for antimatter pellets. "How full, commander?"

"About three quarters." Spletzer did not want to look up. The proximity of those containers added a new level to his unease.

"Sure about that?" A strange note of excitement in Lancia's voice. "Sure?"

"Of course. Why?"

"Because I'll be primarily responsible for any problems in the system," Lancia told him. He looked at Spletzer and frowned. "Feel all right, commander?"

"It's close in here. Seen enough, chief?"

"You're suffering," Lancia said. "I believe you're thinking about what those pellets could do if they escaped. Massive explosions and a flood of lethal gamma rays, I suppose. They would destroy the ship, kill the crew and probably a lot of other on the station, wouldn't they?"

"You know they can't escape," Spletzer said. "Now we'll both go topside. You move. I'll follow."

Lancia did not move. "No, commander."

"What?"

"Remember what Agnes Teitz said? I will tell you what I believe. Her father was absolutely right."

What the hell was Lancia getting at? "Right?"

"Yes. I believe in interstellar travel as a challenge, but not when it means depriving millions of people of a better quality of life. Not when it means sending humans out where the universe doesn't want them"

Was the man indulging in sick humour? Had he drunk too much red berry wine? Spletzer put a hand on Lancia's shoulder. Lancia brushed the hand aside.

Spletzer wondered if he had to physically overpower Lancia.

Could he even? He pushed himself nose to nose with the chief. "I'm ordering you topside, chief. Now."

"I love you, commander, but I must do this."

Spletzer did not see the blow to the jaw that stunned him, nor the second blow that knocked him off his feet.

Spletzer opened his eyes. The protective latticework on the side of the catwalk and the pressure on his shoulder and legs told him that he was lying on his side. His jaw felt dislocated. He flipped over on his back and pushed himself up on his elbows.

Lancia stood directly under the magnetic chamber holding the antimatter pellets. He held what appeared to be a military-issue high beam taser and was studying the bottom of the chamber.

"Lancia!" Spletzer howled. "No!"

Lancia turned and smiled. "This must be done, commander." He gripped the taser in both hands and raised it slowly.

An adrenaline rush put Spletzer on his feet, stiffened his wobbly legs, sent him running toward the chief. Lancia pointed the taser at a corner of the magnetic chamber, but seemed to have trouble finding the activation button.

Spletzer crouched and hit Lancia just above the knees. The lighter man teetered for a moment, then went down on his back with a thud. The taser skittered along the crosswalk. Spletzer followed the weapon. As he bent to pick it up, ignoring a spasm of pain in his legs, a shuffling sound waned him that the chief had regained his feet. He turned to see Lancia, his face contorted, bearing down upon him.

Spletzer raised the taser level with that face and pressed the activation button. The white-hot flash made him close his eyes. He heard a cry, and seconds later, a thump. He opened his eyes and looked upward.

The bottom of the magnetic chamber showed no trace of scorching. "Thank God!" Spletzer said. Only then did he look at the pitiful figure on the catwalk, the twisted limbs and burnt-off face.

"You're suffering intensely, Edward. I watched you while you testified." Katya Kwan said. She sat behind her desk in the niche that was meant to serve as her consulting area in the clinic on *Cosmic Destiny*. Spletzer slumped in a contour chair opposite her. They had just returned from the initial inquiry into Lancia's death at the Uranus Lagrange Station's administrative office.

"I appreciate your inviting me in," Spletzer said. He had to vent to relieve the pain, and Kwan was the only one to whom he dared unburden himself.

"You still can't accept what happened?" Kwan asked.

"No," he told her. "Poor Lancia. To kill him in the brutal way that I did. If only I'd had the art to see. But I panicked."

Kwan gasped. "Poor Lancia?"

"I could have found a way to subdue him, maybe using the taser as a club."

"Edward, you're still in shock. You can't think straight,"

Kwan said. "You didn't have time to find another way. Lancia would have blown up the ship, killed us all. You couldn't risk that. You had to act on instinct."

Spletzer shook his head wearily. "No, Katya, Lancia never intended to blow up the ship"

"But your testimony showed –"

"Something else. The presiding officer and I went over my testimony after the hearing. We both agreed on what it showed. Lancia tried hard to make me think he was going to blow up the ship. He had plenty of time to do it while I lay helpless. Minutes. But he didn't. He could have burned me down to keep me from interfering. But he didn't. Instead, he tricked me into killing him"

"Why? Was he insane?"

"No, diabolically clever. If Lancia had blown up the ship, public outrage would have been directed against the opponents of the mission. But try to visualize the lead in a news story that may have already arrived Earthside: 'The commander of *Cosmic Destiny* killed his chief engineering officer today.' That will raise all kinds of suspicion. The Directorate will have to launch a full investigation, open on holovision, to all the citizens of the Commonwealth."

"You will be cleared of wrong doing."

"Probably, in the end. But the opponents of the mission will field a team of legal experts to attack my credibility. Many people will not believe me, or choose not to believe me. The mission will be put under a cloud. And the investigation may go on for many months."

"Maybe," Kwan said. "But Lancia will have gained only a delay."

"The delay will reopen the controversy, maybe result in another referendum"

"Edward, this ship is going to the Alpha Centauri system eventually." Kwan said with evident conviction. "And you will be in the control room, in charge."

Spletzer sure hoped so, but he knew the tides of public opinion were unpredictable. To change the subject, he said, "Such misguided dedication"

"Fanaticism. Do you think he acted alone?"

"Internal Affairs can do a full field investigation now to find out. But does it matter?" They sat silently for a few moments, then Spletzer said, "One thing I need to know. Lancia slipped through the most elaborate screening, but you detected a problem right away. How do you do it?"

"Don't you dare laugh. I pay attention to what my body tells me. While Lancia talked, I began to sweat – profusely."

"Sweat?"

"Don't be so incredulous. I researched this kind of intuition. It goes way back, to experiments conducted by a physicist named Russell Targ at Stanford in 1974, to experiments at the University of Iowa College of Medicine in 1997, to –"

Spletzer held up his hands. "Enough. So I have an empath in my crew. Am I laughing?" ☼



Preparing for Nippon

Part san (Three)
Sylvain St-Pierre

After a considerable amount of research, I have managed to put together a post-Nippon tour I am satisfied with. The only packages I found were far from ideal, being expensive and not allowing me to see much of interest in the scant four days I had. My first stop will have a very fannish twist to it, so I will not be quitting the Worldcon cold turkey.

On the morning following the last day of the con, I intend to head off for DisneySea, about an hour away by express bus from my Yokohama hotel. Located right next to the Tokyo Disneyland, this theme park is unique to Japan and, if the material I found is any indication, quite an attractive place. The Disneyland park itself probably has some fascinating differences with the Magic Kingdoms of California and Florida, but I am a bit



DisneySea, a theme park is unique to Japan

short on time and will leave it for an eventual and hopeful return at a future date. I plan to sleep on site, there being some convenient (but expensive) “official” hotels nearby.



The Shinkansen

On the next day, I will take the Shinkansen – the so-called “Bullet Train” – to Kyoto, where I should arrive in early afternoon. From what I hear, that two and a half hour ride will in itself be one of the highlights of my trip.

The ancient capital of Japan until 1868, Kyoto has changed a lot since then, but has managed to retain many old temples and charming corners. I found a hotel right across from the main train station, which, according to friend Ann Methe who has visited the place, has been the site of a famous Gamera battle.



A ryokan, traditional Japanese Inn

If I am fortunate, I will avoid being crushed by giant monsters and will spend the next two days visiting a pleasant old city nearly as alien to a Westerner as the worlds of the Star Wars saga. For my last night, I have decided to fulfill an old dream and treat myself to a

ryokan, or traditional Japanese inn. While there are several in Kyoto, the one I found, the Yachiyo, is conveniently located at the foot of the hills near a subway station, which should insure that I will not be late for my return trip on



the following morning. The place is also apparently highly reputed for its food, and there is a deluxe gourmet dinner included in the price. It will be

served in my room on a low table while I sit cross-legged on a legless chair, wrapped in a yakuta, enjoying the view of the traditional garden through open sliding translucent screens. After which my futon will be unrolled and I will sleep on the tatamis, thinking that it's a damn shame I can't stay any longer.

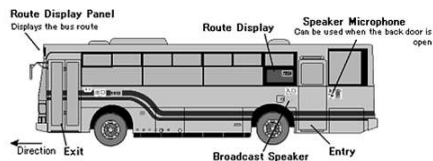
Or at least, that is the way I hope everything will turn out to be. Surfing the Web and reading the comments of various travellers, I have found out that the level of appreciation varies enormously from person to person for any single given place. While part of this is no doubt due to individual perception, I suspect that a lot of those older places have a wide variety of rooms under the same roof. If you are lucky, you get the freshly renovated one with a nice view and a heated toilet seat. If not, you end up with peeling wallpaper, a window overlooking the dumpster and one of those quaint Japanese commodes that look like a man's room urinal lying flat on the floor... .



This is why I try not to set my expectations too high when I travel, so I am less likely to be disappointed and stand a better chance of being pleasantly surprised. For this journey, I am fairly confident that things will be fine. Japan is reputed for being a safe and clean country, and I will probably be too dazzled to notice any slight inconvenience that I may encounter.

I think I have greatly reduced the likelihood of unpleasantness by thoroughly preparing my trip. Thanks to the Internet, I have exhaustive information on sites, transportation, prices and schedules from the moment I land to the final minutes of my stay, and alternate plans in case something goes wrong. I now know, for instance, that most municipal Japanese buses are to be boarded from the rear and exited from the front. By grabbing text from the Japanese versions of various Websites, I have made myself cards with the name, address and picture of the hotels where I intend to stay, so I can show them to non-English speaking taxi drivers or police officers in order to find my way if necessary.

While some might find this level of preparedness to be somewhat tedious



Japanese buses are boarded from the rear, exited from the front.

and excessive, even taking away some of the joy of spontaneous discovery, I still had a lot of fun doing it and consider this kind of research a savoury appetizer for things to come. I am quite sure that there will be no dearth of unexpected sightings on this trip.

I fully realize that I will only get a tiny glimpse of the interesting stuff to be seen in the Land of the Rising Sun, but all things are relative in life and I will find solace in the knowledge that even this little taste will be far more than most people - be they fans or mundanes - get to enjoy!

I promise I'll bring back plenty of pictures, and we already have a MonSFFA presentation on the topic scheduled for this Fall. ☼



Preparing for Nippon Part shi (four), Sylvain St-Pierre

My itinerary is laid out, all reservations are made, the paperwork is in order, my travelling gear has been selected, and even my recording tapes are already labelled. All that there is left to do is the actual trip. To tell the truth, I do feel some butterflies in my stomach! What kind of an experience will I get at Nippon? I am certainly not the only one asking this question.



Map of the Tokyo-Yokohama area

Based on the figures available on the official convention Web site as of June 24th, we can already estimate at least 2,077 warm bodies on site (this being Japan, there may be a few robots as well...).

Hardly a huge number for a modern Worldcon but, considering the location, still very decent. By comparison, the last two Aussiecons, held in English-speaking Melbourne in 1985 and 1999, had slightly less than 1,600 participants each. We are far from the 5,000 plus crowds that have become the norm in recent years, but it should still be more than the minimum critical mass required for fun ignition. It may even, in fact, be a very convivial event rather than just a huge gathering of anonymous fans.

Most interesting of all is going to be the make up of that crowd. Americans, by sheer strength of number and wealth, have always dominated the Worldcon, even when it was held outside of the United States. In all fairness, they created the event, and it also takes a particular frame of mind to put together, participate in and enjoy this sort of thing. Other countries have large populations speaking the same language, and often quite talented local genre writers and artists, but there are very few places in the world



The Nippon Mount Fuji logo

where the whimsical kind of serious silliness that is a SF&F convention can gather enough people to go on for any appreciable length of time.

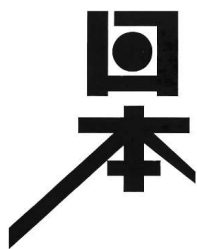
The closest thing we've had to a truly international Worldcon was, in my opinion, at The Hague in 1990. While the local Dutch genre lovers were heavily outnumbered, there were also many fans from Great Britain, Germany, France and other European countries. Their presence really brought a different flavour to the event and I, for one, greatly appreciated it.

Now, for the first time ever, the Worldcon is going to be held in a city with a completely different culture. The natives are still going to be a minority in their own land, but it will be a very sizable minority: Japanese members should account for a whopping 46% of all attendees!

Nippon 2007

Expected Attendance:

Japan:	966	
U.S.A.:	844	
Great Britain:	124	
Canada:	43	
Norway:	25	
Australia:	20	
Other countries:		
(less than 10 members each)	55	



Nippon's very own
kanji (ideogram)

Consider as well that the Japanese otaku sub-culture is strongly established; dynamic and quite vibrant in a geeky sort of way, and that the local genre industry is also solidly entrenched and well respected worldwide. This mix, properly stirred and baked, is going to make a great cake!

Of course, doomsayers might say that sushi-loving fans know little about baking, and that the whole thing will flop because of

inexperience, but I think that they would be wrong.

In fact, I am yet to hear a single negative comment about the whole thing, except perhaps some grumbling about it being too far and expensive to attend. I have researched this trip in great detail, and can categorically state that the cost factor has been grossly exaggerated (though hardly negligible...). Japan may have been overpriced ten years ago, but this is no longer true.

As for the fact that this is the very first Worldcon in Asia, the Nippon organisers made it very clear from the start of the bidding process that they would seek out experienced help to run the event. A quick peek at the current committee list does indeed show lots of non-Japanese sounding names, many of them quite familiar to regular Worldcon-goers.



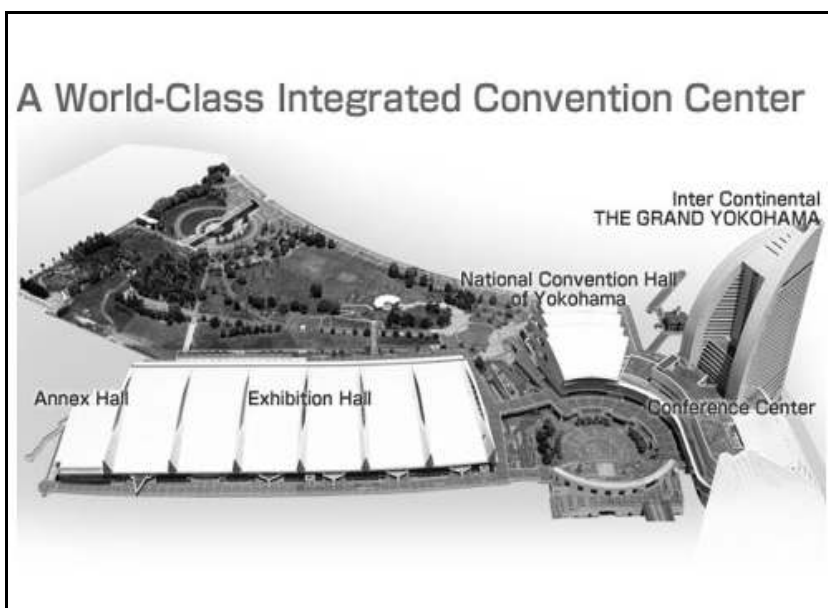
Chibi "Compressed" Nippon
Chairperson, Hiroaki Inoue

The facilities do look quite impressive and, wisely used, should make a nice setting. The places to visit outside of the convention are probably amongst the most awesome in the history of the event, at least from the gaijins' perspective, and we can only hope that people will not get so distracted that they will forget there is a con going on!

Of course, only time will tell. I am, however, very confident that this particular convention will go down in fannish text books as a good one. Either way, I will at least not have to wait very long to find out now.... ☺



Pacifico Convention Centre



The Last Mage: The Dragon's Mouth

Nikolai Krimp

***The story so far:** Jennifer Wells worked for a bio-hazard lab located deep inside a mountain just south of Seattle, Washington. Following a car accident during a mysterious storm, she awoke in the body of a young elf named Shannon. In the company of Shannon's friend, Roma, and a hobbit, Treymane, she finds herself caught up in events resulting from the finding of a box in the ruins of the "Cave of the Ancients" – Jenny's former laboratory. When the companions reached the safety of Shannon's home, they learned that they must now journey on to find Teagan, Shannon's aunt, and the only one likely to be able to explain what's been going on. A forced detour through the Shadow Forest results in their being captured by elves. Jenny convinces the council that she is indeed Shannon, but Kirin who has volunteered to be their escort demands the truth, and Jenny tells him who she really is and what she suspects is in the Demon Box – a biological weapon. The village comes under attack, the companions are given magical gifts and make their escape through a secret passage. When they finally reach their destination, Teagan informs them she has lost contact with Shannon, leaving her to conclude that Jenny will never be able to return to her own time. However, because Jenny is in Shannon's body, and Shannon was a mage, she is capable of magic. Teagan begins teaching her the skills she will need in the world which must now be her home. The companions set off to the Dragon's Mouth, hoping to destroy the Demon Box before it falls into the hands of Malodor.*

Chapter 7

As soon as they were out of sight of Teagan's place, they ran into a party of orcs. Luckily, they weren't seen. Giving the big, ugly creatures a wide berth they sneaked away safely, only to find that the forest was crawling with them. The party had planned to reach Twin Lakes by the evening, but with all the caution they took, the lake would not be reached until late the next day. It seemed that every time they turned one way, there were orcs blocking their way.

Out of the corner of her eye Shannon saw what she feared the most. High up in a tree sat a large raven.

"There!" she said as she pointed at the huge bird, "is our problem. I've seen it before, when we came into Teagan's place. It couldn't follow because only the pure in heart can enter her domain. The rest pass by without seeing any part of it. If we can rid ourselves of that menace, then we might escape."

She was about to try her newfound magic, when Duncan stopped her. "If you do that," Duncan began, "then you'll set every orc upon us. No, there must be another way."

Shannon then offered to shoot an arrow and kill it, but once more the old dwarf intervened. Finally Treymane pulled out his sling and loaded a pebble and fired. The stone found its target. Not enough to kill it but hard enough to stun it and make it fly off. Using the time to get away, the party slipped past a patrol and vanished deeper into the forest.

It was late in the day when they finally stopped for the night. Fearing detection from the orcs, no fire was lit. They ate their meal cold. Settling in for the night by a bubbling little brook, Shannon approached Duncan and asked him why he stopped her from killing the raven with an arrow.

"What if you had missed?" he answered. "Then the orcs would have seen it and made out where it came from and blocked us in. No, Treymane's way was the only one to give us time to get away. Even if it meant not being able to kill it."

"If it's so dangerous walking during the day," Shannon asked him, "why not use the darkness to reach the lake?"

"Because, my dear," he answered, "these woods are too dense to trek at night. Too much under-brush that would make noise as we stepped on it, giving away our position. If this were an old forest, we would stand a better chance at night, but it is not in the cards for us this night. Maybe tomorrow it'll go better."

This night two sentries were posted and everyone took their turn guarding the camp. No one spent a restful night, with the orcs patrolling all night. Twice they were awakened and had to move to another location just to avoid being discovered. They tried to stay near the brook for its sounds overpowered some of the snoring from the sleeping dwarfs.

Just before dawn, Blick and another dwarf who had shared the last watch awakened the party. They wanted to get a head start before the orcs began their prowling around looking for them. They doubled back turning south at first and then east. Here there were fewer of the creatures around, making it easier for the party to reach the lake.

An angry Malodor slammed his open hand onto the large oak desk that he was sitting at, almost knocking his crystal seeing ball from its perch in front of him. All day yesterday he had been co-ordinating his troops trying to box in the party. But by late afternoon when his pet raven was injured from the projectile fired by the hobbit, his eyes were closed. Now this morning his seeing was back, but the party had disappeared during the night. His pet flew over the last spot before its injury and headed north. All it could see were the orc patrols. So great was his anger that he wanted to lash out at anyone, even his own soldiers.

Suddenly a thought occurred to him. "No, they couldn't have," he murmured to himself. Did they double back and take another route? He turned his pet south and searched there.

High up just below the clouds, it soared in great circles like a hawk, searching for its prey. To the west was great orc activity. It seems that a group of the creatures had run into a band of dwarf soldiers and a battle had ensued. The dwarfs were fierce fighters, driving the orcs deep into the forest. The party wasn't here. Sending the great bird farther east, it didn't take long before his eyes set upon the party. They were making great progress for there weren't any of his patrols about. This would change as he sent word through a magical and unseen line to the nearest of his minions.

The hairs stood up on the back of Shannon's neck as she turned and looked skyward. There, way up high, flew the raven again. It was too high for an arrow or anything else that the party had. Treymane saw it at the same time and knew that it was up to him.

"Is it the same one?" he asked.

"Yes," Shannon answered. "And soon the orcs will be all over us, unless we can stop it."

The hobbit knew that the only way was to use one of the magic stones, for even an ordinary stone wouldn't make it that high. Nervously he took one of the stones and loaded the sling. Taking aim, he let it fly. The bird seemed to sense what was coming and tried to out-fly it. It dove and soared. It circled and looped, but all its efforts were in vain. The stone caught it and sent the black bird plummeting hundreds of feet to its death.

Now the party could make it to the lake in relative safety, if only they could stay away from the patrols.

But luck was not with them that day. Turning east off the main trail, they ran right into a large patrol of orcs. Fierce fighting erupted leaving two dwarfs and three orcs dead before the rest were captured. During the skirmish, Kirin grabbed Shannon and used his elf magic so that the two disappeared from plain sight. The party had been careless. They did not have any lookouts marching ahead of them.

The two followed the orcs with their captives, just staying out of sight and waiting for an opportunity to free their friends. Shannon looked around to see if another raven was close, but none was to be seen. This had been a chance meeting. The fighting had been so fierce that even the mighty orcs were tired. After an hour or so they stopped to make camp. Kirin and the girl knew that they would have to make their move to rescue their friends tonight, for tomorrow they might meet up with more orcs and then their chance of success would be next to none.

Backing away from the orc camp, the two doubled back to where the encounter was and collected as many weapons as they could carry. Apparently these creatures had little use for such light weapons. It seemed that the heavier the sword the mightier the swing and swifter the death of their opponents.

It was well after dark when the two returned to the camp with the weapons. Observing the camp for a while, Kirin decided on a very simple plan of rescue. The orcs were so over-confident with their victory that they had left only two guards to watch over them and their captives. The plan was to wait for the change of guards or until these fell asleep, then take them out and free their friends.

They waited and waited, but the guards weren't sleepy nor did they change. This posed a new problem. These two had very good hearing and investigated every sound. They would have to be killed together at the same time or one would give the alarm, but to use the bow and fire into the camp, which was the easiest route to go, could backfire on them. One of the orcs could fall onto another that was sleeping and wake the whole camp. No, a plan was needed to lure them away from their sleeping comrades.

Kirin moved towards the place where he laid down the dwarfs' weapons and put his hands to his mouth. From his lips came a chirping, whistling sound, a sound that Shannon had never heard before. The orcs' heads turned towards the sound. Then Kirin moved to another location and repeated the sound. Again the heads of the creatures turned following the sound. Then, like magic, a tiny soft light appeared just past the trees in the forest. The two guards cautiously made their way over to where the light was coming from. Kirin signaled Shannon to notch an arrow and take out the nearest orc when he was clear of the camp and he

would do the same with the other.

It was over in seconds and the two orcs lay dead just beyond the trees. While Shannon kept watch with her bow, Kirin slipped into the orc camp and with his knife began to cut loose the dwarfs. He whispered to them where they could find their weapons and wait there.

One of the dwarfs who was injured during the fighting moaned as the elf cut his bonds, disturbing the sleep of one of the creatures. The orc began to rise, but the elf was faster. With his knife he silenced the orcs, before he knew what was going on. The tip pierced its heart, killing it instantly.

One by one he freed the rest and the party left the snoring orcs no wiser as to what happened. It was then decided that they would travel only at night, sleeping during the day.

They marched most of the night putting as much distance as possible between them and the camp, doubling back periodically to throw anyone who was trying to follow them off their trail. Just before dawn the party stopped and tended the wounds of two of the dwarfs. One was bleeding profusely from a chest wound and would not last another day, but he elected to double back and throw the orcs who were sure to follow off their trail. After saying goodbye to his comrades, he stumbled back up the trail the way they had come. He knew he would die there, but it would show Malodor's minions the wrong way. The other's wound wasn't serious and was treated. He wouldn't be able to swing his battle-axe for a while, but that would not deter him from jumping right in on the action, if it came to that.

By late afternoon the party came to the edge of the forest. Cautiously peering out from behind the trees, Twin Lakes appeared just ahead of them, but there were also about fifty orcs mulling about; some near the woods and others down by the lake tending to a large campfire. From deeper in the forest came a loud commotion. Someone was doing an awful lot of yelling. Duncan, from his hiding place, turned towards the noise just in time to see a large buck jump out from the trees and into the arms of one of the biggest orcs the dwarf had ever seen. The animal tried to escape by kicking the orc with its hind legs, but this only angered the huge creature. With his large hands he grabbed the antlers of the deer and twisted its head around and back, snapping the neck and dropping the animal. The deer kicked about for a minute or so and then lay still. The orc then took his knife and cut its throat, letting the life-sustaining fluid drain from its body and soak into the sandy back of the lake. A roar went up as every orc came with his knife in his hand waiting for a turn to slice off a piece of meat. Some went and cooked their portion at the campfire while others just ate theirs raw.

Duncan turned to the others and put his finger to his lips and then beckoned them to follow him. As soon as they were out of hearing range, he stopped and gathered his party around him.

"There are too many orcs around for my liking," he said. "Not too far from here is an entrance to a passage known only to dwarfs. Many a time, during a losing battle, we would either take refuge, or escape our enemies using this secret tunnel. It's been abandoned for many years, so I don't know if it is safe or not. Anyway it beats staying here or walking the main highway, which seems to be filled with orcs."

Everyone agreed that that was their best option and fell in behind the old dwarf. Slowly and quietly they began a slow

assent into the hill country of Caldor. It was well after dark when they came to a river. No one saw it but they heard the raging water just ahead.

"How are we going to cross that?" asked Roma.

"Oh, that's the easy part," answered Blick. "Just up ahead is a hanging bridge that will lead us to the other side."

"How high is this bridge?" asked the hobbit.

"About...", Duncan started to say when Shannon stopped him. "I'm sure we would cross easier if we didn't know," she cut in.

Looking about to see if everyone agreed, Duncan said. "Well, let's not hang about for soon someone will pick up our trail and come looking for us. By that time I want to be as far away from here as possible."

When they reached the bridge, Othelo took his remaining three men and crossed first. As soon as they signalled that it was safe for the others, they too, crossed. For Shannon this crossing was harder than the old log they crossed while escaping from the Grey Dwarfs. She hated heights and stepping on a rope strung high above a canyon wasn't her idea of a fun outing. Though the rope was thick, it was wet and slippery. She tried to keep her eyes looking forward as Duncan had suggested, but every so often her foot would slip and she would peer into the black empty space between herself and the bottom somewhere below. Her hands gripped the two other ropes strung on either side of her till her knuckles turned white. This was all that kept her from falling into the ravine. Half-way across, a sudden gust of wind nearly knocked her off the bridge, and both her feet slipped from the main rope. Struggling to right herself, she managed to scramble back onto the rope and work her way to the other side and safety.

Once everyone was across, Duncan once more took the lead and followed the river east to the foothills of the Cragmores. Here out in the open they made camp. The old dwarf explained that as long as the posted guards stayed awake, they would see anyone coming, giving the party time enough to hide. Since Roma's and the hobbit's eyes were not made to see in the dark, they were allowed to sleep through the night. The rest took turns keeping watch during the rest of the night.

Shannon made sure that she had her watch at the same time as Kirin had. She had wanted to talk to him since they left Teagan's place. The two sat down back to back so each could see the part the other couldn't. Quietly Shannon started questioning him about his home in Maitland and anywhere else he had been. She was fascinated by all he told her. She made him promise that once this was over, he would show her all the places where he had been.

"But that could take years!" he exclaimed raising his voice just a little above a whisper.

"Well it doesn't look like I'm going anywhere soon," she answered back.

They continued to talk, listening to the gentle snoring of the dwarfs until it was time to wake the next pair of guards. She lay down next to her friend for warmth because their gear was lost during the encounter with the orcs and it was beginning to get cool at night. She hoped that it would be warmer once they were in the tunnel.

It was still dark out when a gentle hand woke her.

"Time to get going," Kirin whispered. "There is a patrol of orcs in the vicinity and we don't want them to know we're here."

The party assembled and trudged off into the night, silently slipping past the unsuspecting patrol camp not more than two hundred yards away from where they had been. They continued in silence up and down one hill after another until they came into a tiny valley. Here Duncan stopped and ordered Othelo and his men to check out the dell.

The dawn was just breaking when one of the dwarfs returned with the all-clear.

"Come," Duncan said. "We must hurry and enter the passage before it gets too light. We wouldn't want to give ourselves away. No sense having anyone follow us into the tunnel. It must remain a secret."

It was a short climb to the tunnel entrance and once inside they began to soak torches, which lay next to a small caldron of oil. Over the years the little pot of oil had begun to run dry and after only four torches were soaked, there was nothing left. So they lit and used only one at a time.

"There are places deeper inside where we can soak our torches," said the old dwarf. "And later on we will have no need for them at all."

The party walked in single file, for the passage was so narrow. They walked so long that Shannon lost all track of time. She didn't know if it was daylight or night time outside. She walked in perpetual darkness, until Duncan stopped.

"Here we will rest and sleep," he said. "Later we will continue."

Shannon approached the old dwarf and asked him why they didn't continue above ground.

"Because, my dear," he answered pointing to the low overhead ceiling, "up there we could be seen from miles around. We wouldn't stand a chance with so many orcs around, but down here we can make our way to Bellow's Falls without them at our heels."

They had used up three of the four torches. Now the hobbit, Roma and the two elves began to worry. Did they have enough light left to see them to wherever the dwarfs were leading them? Although Shannon somehow trusted Duncan's word, the others weren't so sure. Anyway, the elf girl was too tired to worry. She sat down next to Kirin and with her back to the stonewall fell asleep.

Chapter 8

When Shannon awoke again it was still pitch dark. For a moment she didn't know just where she was, but when someone lit the last remaining torch, it all came back to her. One by one, the party stood up and continued down the narrow passage. After a while Shannon noticed that the corridor descended ever so

slightly. The sweat on her face told her that the temperature in the tunnel was rising as they descended deeper underground. When they stopped to rest, she asked Blick who was standing next to her about the heat. He just smiled and told her not to worry and that all would be clear in a short while. Dropping back to speak with

Kirin, Shannon repeated what the dwarf had said to her.

"I think we're all right," he whispered to her. "After all, if they had wanted to do us harm, they could have done it long ago."

They continued for some time when Duncan stopped and doused the torch, sending them into blackness. No night had ever been so black as this. Even the elves' eyes took a while to adjust to the dark. After a few minutes Shannon and the others saw why Duncan had done what he did. Farther down the tunnel a tiny speck of light could be seen.

Everyone drew their weapons and advanced slowly towards the light.

At the end of the tunnel Duncan stopped them once more. Cautiously he poked his head out and looked around. Everything seemed to be as it should. Seeing it was safe, he and the rest entered a huge under-ground cavern.

"How come it's so bright in here?" asked Roma.

"As you can see," said the old dwarf pointing at the walls and ceiling, "the walls are set with glowstones and other luminous stones that shine on practically forever. It is another great feat of my people." His face beamed with pride as he spoke.

Once their eyes had adjusted to the brighter lighting, Shannon noticed that there was a large body of water in the middle of the huge cavern. Everyone ran to fill their water sacks for they were nearly depleted from all the running around in the forest. All that running made them thirsty.

When their water sacks were full, Roma asked if there was any way for her to bathe without having an audience. Duncan suggested that she go over to where there were some larger boulders on the shoreline, but he hinted that she shouldn't go alone. "You never know what's down here," he said.

"I'll go with you," said an eager Shannon, and the two went off in the direction of the stones.

One bathed as the other kept a sharp eye out for any movement farther out in the water. Hearing some commotion coming from where the men were, Shannon peeked around one of the large stones. It seemed that they too had the same idea for a quick refreshing swim. Then it was the elf girl's turn. The water was cool and quite refreshing, she thought. She was glad that Duncan had picked this route instead of above-ground where they would most likely be chased by those awful orcs. Maybe there wasn't anything to hunt here, but that made up for by the peacefulness.

After their swim they rejoined the men and the party began their slow trek towards the other end of the cavern.

Catching up with Duncan and Kirin, Shannon questioned the old dwarf again on how these glowstones differed from the first ones she had seen.

"Well," Duncan began, "these stones here were placed together with light crystals. Glowstones by themselves will slowly dim as time passes on because there is no other light source, but when these stones are placed together with the crystals they are enhanced. In other words the crystals throw back the light and the Glow Stones think it is another source of light. This way they can glow almost for an eternity."

Suddenly a yell went up. "KLAWDUTS!" yelled one of the dwarfs who had been walking in the rear.

"There's some in front of us too!" exclaimed Duncan. "Quick! Form a circle and draw your weapons!"

"What are they?" asked the hobbit.

"Cavern rats," answered Blink. "And there's hordes of them. We will have to fight them and kill as many as we can."

Shannon saw the rats as they slowly encircled the party. They were about two feet long with another two-foot long tail. No eyes, but long razor sharp teeth extruded from their mouths. They also walked on six legs, making it hard to bring them down by lopping off one or two of them. Their brownish fur was the perfect camouflage, making them hard to see in this light.

"Go for their heads!" she heard Duncan say. "They have very soft skulls and will be easy to kill, but don't let one bite you. They're not poisonous, but will make you sick and unable to travel for a few days. Stand as still as you can and they won't notice you."

Everyone froze. This seemed to confuse the rats. They knew their prey was there somewhere, but now it seemed to have vanished. The party seemed to be winning this war of nerves, when the hobbit moved his hand to load his sling. The lead rat reared its head and squeaked. This was the signal for the others to attack.

Roma and the hobbit fired their missiles at the pack attacking from the rear, while Shannon and Kirin fired their arrows at the pack who were blocking their path in front. She had never loaded and fired so fast in her life. The two had killed at least a dozen of these strange creatures, when she heard the old dwarf call for swords and blades. Dropping their bows and slings and drawing their blades, they met the onslaught of the rats.

As the rats jumped they were skewered on the sharp points of their knives, they used the swords to keep the rest at bay. The animals fell back, regrouped and attacked again; this time with more tenacity than before. It looked bad for the party as two of Othelo's men went down.

Just as the rats were gaining the upper hand and weakening the group, a loud high-pitched scream came from behind them. The furry ones scurried to hide out of sight. Now the party faced another of the cavern's dwellers. A large six foot hairy spider was slowly making its way over to the two fallen dwarfs. Shannon grabbed her bow and let an arrow fly straight at the spider, but it just bounced harmlessly to the side. Othelo and his remaining men ran to protect their fallen comrades while the rest of the party spread out hoping to attack the large creature from all sides.

Shannon shouldered her weapon and grabbed the Staff of the Sun, but Duncan stopped her. "Don't!" he said out loud. "You will bring the whole ceiling down on top of us."

Tucking the staff back in her belt, Shannon unsheathed her sword and joined the rest of the party. Every time one of them would get in close enough, the spider would fend off the attacker by kicking him or her with one its legs. No one got a clean swing at it. It kept pressing forward toward the two dwarfs on the ground. The party was losing and it looked like their fallen comrades would not see the sun or their family again, when an angry hobbit stepped forward and exclaimed, "Enough of this!" And levelled his sling at the spider that by now was not more than twenty feet from the injured men. "I'm sending you to the deepest part of the Underdark!" He didn't wait for anyone, but took aim and let loose a shiny magical stone. He hit it in the back of its head. The creature lurched forward and fell when its legs buckled. The party fell upon it and pierced its body with their swords until it lay lifeless in front of them.

Shannon turned to the hobbit and put her hand on his shoulder. "Thank you," was all she could muster for she was still shaking from the encounter.

"Let's get out of here," said Duncan. "Before those Klawduts come back."

They picked up the two dwarfs and left the scene as quickly as they could. After a while they slowed their pace, but kept on moving. They wanted to make the other tunnel before the rats or the spider's mate found them, for this time they might not be so lucky. Finally they stopped to rest. Here Shannon sat down with the hobbit and asked him why he chose to use another magical stone. He looked at her and said. "If I hadn't used it we would all be dead by now. That spider knew we were no match for it."

"Anyway, thank you again," she said. "I hope I can repay you some day."

They knew that the end of the cavern was close, for the ceiling began to angle down. From behind them another scream was heard, but this time along with many squeals from the large rats.

"Come, we must hurry," Duncan urged. "Once his or her mate picks up our trail, it won't take it long to catch up with us. Let's not waste any more time. The tunnel isn't far from here. Once we're inside, the creature cannot follow, for the way is much too narrow for it."

With renewed vigour, the party hastened to make it to the mouth of their escape route before they were all killed by the dead spider's mate.

Blick, much fleetier on his feet than the older Duncan, was the first one to reach the end of the cavern. There in front of him were not one opening, but three.

"Now what?" he asked the old dwarf, as the party arrived.

Duncan stood baffled in front of the openings. The last time he was here there had been only one passage. Thinking quickly, he sent Othelo into the passage on the left, Blick into right tunnel and he himself entered the one in the middle.

"The one which leads upwards is the correct one!" He hollered before losing sight of the other two.

The remainder of the party took up a defensive position, to protect their friends in the tunnels.

Othelo was about a hundred paces into the tunnel when it turned sharply downwards, almost making him lose his footing and tumble deeper into the passage. He knew that this was the wrong one and turned to leave. From farther down he heard a squeal arise. He doubled his efforts and returned to the party. Blick's tunnel, on the other hand, didn't slope down but stayed straight. He too returned quickly as he heard the giant rats heading towards him. As he exited the passage, he could hear the spider was gaining on them. He shook his head no and entered into the same tunnel that the old dwarf was in. This had to be the right one. The rest followed just in time, for the spider was about two hundred feet away and was heading straight for them. Behind the spider followed about another fifty or so of the giant rats. Suddenly the spider turned and grabbed the nearest rat, which had come too close. Piercing the rat's side with its pincers, it injected it with poison. The others fell back a way, leaving the spider to return to its chase of the party.

Inside the tunnel, the party found the floor very wet and slippery. They worked their way in for almost fifty feet, when the spider reached the mouth of the passage. Duncan returned with

the good and bad news.

"The good news," he began, "is that this is the right passage. The bad news is that it tunnels right under a river and the ceiling is about to give way. If that happens, we will all be killed, either by the water, that spider back there, or the rats. We must get past the leak before it happens."

Just then a splash hit the wall beside Othelo's head. The spider had spit some of its poison at the party hoping to hit someone and somehow catch the killer of its mate. The party scrambled deeper into the tunnel. It was slippery climbing and suddenly one of the least injured dwarfs lost his footing and fell. Othelo tried to grab his hand. It all happened so fast that the man slid by his friend and continued all the way back down towards the waiting mouth. He let out a short scream as the spider's pincers closed in on him injecting him with its poison. Blick, who was up front with Duncan, turned to go and help his friend, but was stopped by the old man.

"He is already dead," Duncan said with a sad tone. "You can not help him, but you can get yourself killed too if you go back."

With one more look back, they saw the spider beginning to spin a tight web across the entrance of the tunnel. From here they could only go forward. They marched on in total silence, with their fallen comrades in mind. Duncan thought to himself that when he arrived back home, he would have to tell the wives and families what had happened and how brave their men were in their share of this quest. But now he had an even bigger problem on his hands. He had to get his party past the leaking ceiling before it caved in completely.

It was slow going and no one wanted to stop for a rest. By now the wet ground showed signs of water running in small trickles back down to the mouth of the passage.

"It would be ironic," thought Shannon, "that the spider might be dining on their friend right now and when the river, up above, comes crashing through this tunnel, it would wash the hideous thing out into the lake, drowning it."

A wicked smile appeared on her face as they trudged on through the mud. Almost totally exhausted, the party kept up the pace. Now a little stream ran down the middle of the floor. Then the last torch burned out and Duncan said that they would have to continue in the dark. The dwarfs and the elves had no trouble making out the silhouettes of their friends, but the hobbit and Roma were not so fortunate. Each grabbed onto the one in front of him and followed blindly through the pitch-black tunnel, hoping to see daylight soon.

Farther up the tunnel, the sound of water gushing and splattering could be heard.

"We're close now," said Duncan. "Just a few more paces and we will be safe."

Just as the party began to pass under the leak, the ceiling started to dissolve. Everyone scurried to get past what was now a small waterfall. Everyone except the last of the injured dwarfs made it to safety. Suddenly the ceiling came down bringing the river right on top of the dwarf. Othelo stepped back to grab his friend and he too was pulled under the water and swept back down the slope. All the others could do was stare in horror at the sight of losing two more of their companions.

They stood there for a while grasping the situation when Blick uttered. "Let's get out of here, the rift in the ceiling is getting

bigger.”

Treymane was so frightened that he had forgotten to think how lucky he was to have been holding on to Blick instead of Othelo, because he too would be dead by now. Backing away from the water, the party reluctantly turned and continued. Everyone said a small prayer for their lost companions.

Duncan would report this cave-in once they made Bellow's Falls. He knew that within a year's time that cave would be completely filled with water, drowning any creature that continued to live down there. Also the river, downstream, would be at an all time low until the cave was filled.

It took another two days until the first sign of light could be seen coming from the mouth of the tunnel. They began to squint as they neared the opening. Finally Duncan told them to close their eyes and follow him, because the bright sunshine outside would hurt their eyes and could temporarily blind them. Each held on to the one in front of him and followed the old dwarf out into the open. Keeping their eyes shut, they turned their face up to the bright sky until their eyes stopped hurting. Then looking down one by one they opened them, allowing the light of day to enter their pupils for the first time in many days. It felt good to all to smell the grasses and shrubs again. Even the dirt smelled good to them.

It was still early morning when they emerged from the tunnel and they would still have a half day's march before reaching the foothill city of Bellow's Falls. Everyone marched along in silence; happy to be out of the tunnel, but saddened by the loss of their friends. Especially the dwarfs. They had started out as eight

but now were reduced to three. The lines on the old dwarf's face had deepened since they entered the cavern. Shannon hoped that once they reached the dwarf city, most of their sorrows would disappear even if it meant an all-nighter at an inn.

By mid morning they reached the main road. It seemed to perk everyone up. Conversations flared and every once in a while a joke flew out of someone's mouth. Even when they met a dwarf patrol, their enthusiasm didn't wane. Duncan and Blick spoke of the heroic events that took place in the cavern and of the brave deeds of their fallen comrades. Only Olaff, the last of Othelo's band, remained quiet. Shannon later found out that one of the dwarfs who died in the cave was his brother.

After saying goodbye to the patrol, the party continued until the peaks of the towers that defended the city came into view. At last they had arrived and Shannon was sure that a good and lengthy rest would be called for. She couldn't wait for a nice long bath and comfortable bed. The closer they got, the less Bellow's Falls looked like a city. It looked more like a fortress, with more soldiers roaming around than merchants or farmers. Even the huge gates were closed and this was just afternoon.

“Something's not right,” whispered the old dwarf to Blick. “The gates should be open.”

“Maybe with all this orc activity around, it was thought best to keep them closed,” Blick answered. “Listen! I can hear the sound of music coming from inside.”

This eased the minds of everyone. For they all could use a change in moods. As for Shannon, she still had her mind set on her bath. ☼

The Last Mage continues in WARP 68



Convention Listings with thanks to Lloyd Penny for laying the ground work

ROYALCON 2007, September 14-16, Gaming convention. Days Hotel, Montreal, QC.
<http://www.royalcon.ca>

CON*CEPT 2007, October 12-14, Days Hotel, Montreal, QC. SFF convention. Guests of Honour: Tanya Huff, Jean-Louis Trudel, David Weber, Jeremy Bulloch (Boba Fett), more TBA.
www.conceptsf.ca

ANTICIPATION (The Montreal Worldcon Bid)

<http://www.anticipationsf.ca/>
e-mail <info@anticipationsf.ca>
snail mail:

Anticipation
C.P. 505, Succursale NDG
Montréal, Québec
Canada
H4A 3P8

FAN eXpo, August 24-26, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, ON. Comics, gaming, horror, anime, and SF exposition. www.hobbystar.com

NIPPON 2007, August 30th - September 3rd, the 65th World Science Fiction Convention, Yokohama, Japan. <http://www.nippon2007.org>

WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION 2007, November 1-4, Saratoga, New York, <http://www.lastsfa.org/wfc2007>

ASTRONOMICON 11, November 9-11, Clarion Riverside Hotel, Rochester, NY. www.astronomicon.info

SMOFCON, December 7 - 9, Boston, Massachusetts.
<http://www.noreascon.org/smocon>

AD ASTRA 2008 March 28-30, Crowne Plaza Toronto Don Valley Hotel, Toronto, ON. SF convention. Guests: Howard Tayler, Rebecca Guay, Wayne Brown, more TBA. www.ad-astra.org

For more complete listings, see our website: www.monsffa.com

TV CROSSOVERS

Josée Bellemare

Monsiffa X ?

The gang walked into the store.

“Hi, Kreeger, what are you looking at?”

“It’s called *Beavra*. It’s about a giant beaver on a rampage.”

“A giant beaver? Is this one of Von Steinhauer’s movie monsters?”

“No! Don’t worry, Steinhauer had nothing to do with this. It’s not really a movie, it’s a trailer. A friend of mine sent it to me. It was produced by a Montreal science fiction club. They entered, and won, a video contest at a convention a few years ago. Since then it’s won several contests.”

“Is it any good?”

“It’s a tribute to monster movies of the fifties, Godzilla, to be precise. I’ve even heard rumours that there’s going to be a sequel called *Beavra Las Vegas*. This one would be more of a tribute to King Kong. I’m considering getting in touch with the producers, maybe working out some sort of deal.”

“As long as the Monster Warriors don’t have to fight that thing, I’m relieved.” ☼

Smallville X ?

On a Friday morning, in Oliver Queen’s apartment, Oliver was talking to Aquaman.

“A.C., I have a special assignment for you.”

“What do you want me to do boss?”

“I want you to represent Queen Industries at a charity event,”

“What!? You want me to go to some charity event? Why me?”

“A business emergency needs my attention here and the cause is one I thought would be close to your heart.”

“What’s that?”

“The Malibu chapter of the Surfrider Foundation is holding a fundraising carnival this weekend and I signed you up for the dunk tank.”

“Why didn’t you say so in the first place. I’m on my way.”

“The plane is waiting and you have a hotel reservation in your name for the weekend. The details are in this envelope.”

“See you Monday boss.”

Early Saturday morning A.C. was reporting to the carnival organizers.

“The dunk tank is on lot 37. It’s run by the Foundation for Oceanic Research.”

Just then a young lady came by. She was in her mid-twenties with blond hair and an athletic build.

“Sandra, just the right person. This is Arthur Curry, he’s the other fish for your tank. Show him the way would you.”

“Sure thing, Mr Henley. Follow me, Mr Curry. You and I will be splitting tank time, changing shifts every 2 hours. It’s very nice of you to help out like this.”

“No problem, anything to save the oceans. By the way, call me A.C.”

“Okay, A.C. it is. I know how you feel about the oceans. I grew up in the water. My mom jokes that I’m part fish. I get it from my dad.

Here we are, lot 37. Mom, Dad, this is A.C., he’s the volunteer from Queen Industries.”

A couple, both in their sixties came forward to shake A.C.’s hand.

“Welcome A.C., I’m doctor Elizabeth Merrill and this is my husband, Mark Harris. Glad to have you onboard.” ☼

Note: The Surfrider Foundation is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to the preservation and protection of oceans and beaches. Founded in 1984, it has over 50 000 members in chapters all around the world.

Bones X ?

In a large hotel, forensic specialists from all over were attending a conference.

In the Lobby, a young lady was speaking on the phone.

“So far the conference has been very informative. We’ll tell you all about it when we get back.”

“So, Sweetie, are you and Booth having fun?”

“Ange, we’re here to learn new techniques and discoveries in forensic sciences, not have fun.”

“Honey, you need to get a life. You’re in a luxury hotel, in a beautiful city with a great looking guy, of course you’re supposed to have fun.”

“I have to go, my panel will be starting soon. See you next week. Bye!”

In the conference room one of the organizers was introducing the panellists.

“On my right, from the Jeffersonian Institute, we have Doctor Temperance Brennan and on my left, From the Los Angeles Coroner’s office, now retired, Doctor Quincy. This panel is on the reconstruction and identification of a body based on skeletal remains.” ☼

Note: Dr Quincy doesn’t have a first name but in one episode we do see the initial R on a business card.

There was an episode where Quincy does reconstruct and identify the body of a shooting victim based on a single bone found by one of his students.

MOVIES

Shrek the Third

Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre



This latest installment of the Shrek franchise is a very good example of a good thing being stretched too thin. Thanks to further advances in 3-D rendering, this movie is even more visually life-like than the first two. There were some scenes that looked shot live, with actors wearing rubber masks! The story, however, was much weaker than those of the previous chapters, making the whole thing not quite as enjoyable.

I would even go as far as to say that raising realism to such a high level robs an animation movie of the dream-like quality that makes the genre fun to watch. In my opinion, Shrek II had just the right balance and if there is ever a fourth one in the series, I hope the producers will go back to that formula. ☹

Chicken Little

Reviewed by Mireille Dion

If you haven't yet seen Chicken Little, and you love sci-fi movies, then keep an eye out for this movie. Although the first half an hour is nothing more than a children's movie about a black sheep child, once the sky falls on his head the movie focusses almost exclusively on a science-fiction thematic, which is a riot for any one who has seen movies of the genre. From *War of the Worlds* to *Signs*, to any other alien-invading movie or TV series, the fun doesn't stop until the end credits start rolling. By the way, did you know that the aliens have a panic button aboard their ships? :)

Personally, I have never seen an alien arrival such as the second one shown in this movie. I just felt my jaw fall on my lap when it appeared on the screen and I couldn't think of anything but 'wow'. Talk about creativity, especially considering how done-to-death this basic idea has been throughout the past decades. If a similar idea has ever been used in a movie, or described in a book, please, let me know so that I'll know to whom the credit belongs

for that awe-inspiring idea.

Anyway, as a science-fiction lover, I knew that the movie was a spoof of the genre that was aimed at children, but I never thought that I would have this much fun watching it again last night. The animation is terrific, the characters are original yet parody well-known traits that we all love in different types of characters, and the aliens remain mysterious all the way to the end (wait till you find out what they really are). Speaking of the aliens, I simply adore how they designed the alien child, not to mention how he communicates.

As for the comedy of the movie, it is said that timing is everything in comedy, right? Well, I think the creative team of this movie has got the art of it down to perfection for this one. ☹



Live Free or Die Hard, or "In McClaine we Trust"

Reviewed by Mireille Dion

I saw it last night and I loved it!! I can't wait to add it to my Die Hard Collection. They brought back the McClaine I remembered, but also matched him with/against elements that we now see in the more modern bad guy movies (such as the ass-kicking, Japanese chick, the computer genius, the spider-man-like wall-jumper, the high-tech gadgets and tools, etc.) and they showed us how he handles them with his old tricks and usual attitudes.

It was quite spectacular as well, whoa Mama!! That is one movie you have to see BIG AND LOUD!!!! I winced, I held my breath, I laughed... I had a blast! and I really hope that our national computer systems are better set up than those hinted at in the movie... Oh, but the thought that it might happen gave me the chills... yet another element that brought me right 'into' the movie and not just in

front of a screen.



I think that was a stroke of genius when they matched him with a young computer hacker (who looks a lot like a young Keanu Reeves, hence yummy!) That was a great way to bring into play the modern technology while keeping his old methods of doing things (McClaine just couldn't do that computer stuff by himself... He'd destroy the computer instead). It was also a great tool to create occasions for the father-figure in him to come out, but not too much either. I really felt for him when he described what being a hero had brought him, yet that he would still be the hero once again... That's what defines him.

Oh, and of course, the conflict of generations was well-handled... and his daughter rocks! (like father, like daughter)

Another thing that I loved is that, unlike the first three movies

of the series, this one starts quickly and then doesn't let you down all the way to the end. It's a 2-hour long ride that is neither too short nor too long and it makes us youngsters feel a little bit like what it could be to be rescued and watched over by one of our old action-heroes, how we could react to seeing someone handle the situation the way only McClaine can. Hmm, at least, that's how I felt, but the character of Johnny Long has never heard of

McClaine before, so he doesn't play on that in any explicit way. Still, I had a lot of fun watching their tribulations, and my imagination enjoyed working with that fun!

Anyway, if you enjoyed the old movies of the series, be certain to check this one out!! It's good, old, action-hero entertainment that is given a spit of polish and an upgrade to boot.

Definitely worth a movie ticket. ☺

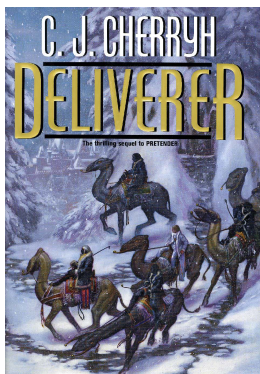
BOOKS

Reviewed by Cathy Palmer-Lister

Deliverer C.J. Cherryh Science Fiction, Daw, 2007

Help, I'm in love with Bren Cameron!

I've watched him grow from a highly qualified *paidhi*, worried sick and fretting that he might make mistakes that will plunge *atevi* and humans into another devastating war, to a strong, self-confident, Lord of the Heavens. But Bren is still a human in an alien world with huge responsibilities and duties that strain his loyalties, not to mention friendships he cannot acknowledge because the friends are *atevi*, with no understanding of words like *friendship*, and *like* is a word that applies to salads, or artwork.



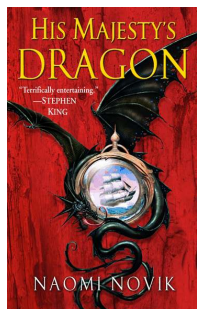
Deliverer is the third book of the third *Foreigner* trilogy. Tabini has recovered from the coup d'état, the mopping up is well underway, but Bren knows how very close the world has come to all-out civil war, not to mention possibly tipping the balance of power between the Western Association, the ship humans, and the Mospheiran humans. Now eight-year old Cajeri, heir to the throne, has entered the equation, and after two years on a space ship, he knows more about human technology than is good for anyone. His parents, well aware of the need to wean him off human contacts, are keeping him close so that he will form more appropriate associations. Bored out of his mind, Cajeri goes looking for excitement. His new *atevi* bodyguards have no idea how much mischief "the Young Gentleman" can get into, and Cajeri hasn't learned to be careful of what he wishes for.

The only disappointment is the jacket art by Donato. He is a great artist, easily one of the best, but this cover looks like something from his sketchbook in comparison to the previous covers by Michael Whelan and Stephen Youll. ☹

Temeraire: His Majesty's Dragon, Throne of Jade, Black Powder War

Naomi Niovik, Del Ray, 2006

Alternate History? Historical Fantasy? Military SF?

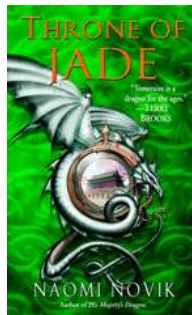


Wow! This is her first novel, and it's totally fabulous! *His Majesty's Dragon* is nominated for a best novel Hugo, as well as the Compton Crook Award for Best First Novel, the Locus Award for Best First Novel, and the Campbell Award for Best New Writer. And to publish three books in the same year! I surely do hope she doesn't run out of steam because I am already looking forward to the next book, *Empire of Ivory*.

Her writing style and command of English does justice to the period and the main character, an officer and a gentleman of the Napoleonic era. Her characters are believable, and we care when war and political intrigue take their toll of dragons and crew.

And her dragons are wonderful, unique creations: no magic, no mind reading, no ESP, but they are not just animals either, nor are they human in spite of having many human traits.

William Laurence is captain of a sailing ship which captures a French frigate during the Napoleonic War. To his utter astonishment, the ship's cargo consists of a single, large dragon's egg, and it's about to hatch. The dragon chooses Laurence to be

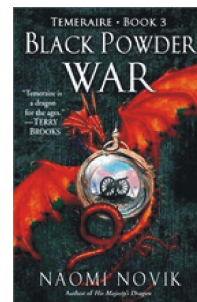


his companion, and as we come to learn more about Temeraire's breeding, his choice of an educated gentleman is quite sensible even as it ruins Laurence's reputation and job prospects. He and Temeraire are off to join the Aerial Corps, a critical component of the British fighting forces, but one held in contempt by society as its humans are often not from "good families" and have no "proper" upbringing. They don't know the half of it! Women in trousers? Dragons

training aviators? Laurence, a proper gentleman of a noble family, doesn't fit in, and it doesn't help that he is starting his new career ever so much older than other captains who start as young children.

England is not faring well against Napoleon's superior forces, and Laurence and Temeraire are rushed through an exhausting training course in the Scottish Highlands. A dragon needs a whole crew: aviators, riflemen, medics—for dragons and men alike—harness makers, herdsman, errand runners, and so on. His naval experience as an officer is a real advantage, but he has a lot to learn about dragons and aerial combat, and a lot of upper class prejudices to overcome.

Temeraire is a very unusual dragon. He



was a gift from the Chinese Emperor to the French Emperor, though no one can understand why the Chinese would give so precious an egg to Napoleon: they don't know him, they don't care about European politics, they have no interest in the war. The Chinese are shocked when they find out Temeraire is in harness, a beast of burden to a lowly captain, and horrors – being used as a war machine. They want him back. Lawrence and Temeraire are a team, neither willing to be separated from the

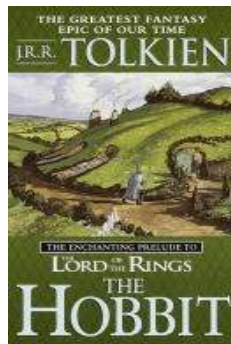
other, but a trip to China shows Temeraire what he has been missing, and Lawrence isn't sure he wants to deprive the dragon of his birthright. Meanwhile, Temeraire is doing a lot of Thinking, and his ideas are not going to be welcome in Laurence's society. ☼

To read excerpts from the *Temeraire* novels go to:

<<http://www.temeraire.org/index.cgi?pagetype=writing>>

The Hobbit

A Bedtime Story, fondly reviewed by the Fernster



Recently, I purchased at a used book store, a copy of *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien.

Now this was not my first purchase of this book, but I could not find my previous copy anywhere at home. Someone must have borrowed it from me – but I can't recall who? (On a personal note – Whoever it was, please return my book!).

So why was I buying a book that I have already read you may ask. In fact, my nephew Alexander, who was with me at the time, asked me that very question. I replied that I usually re-read this book every couple of years, and that I felt that it was time for me to read it again. He looked at me strangely for a moment and then said "But you already know the story and how it ends?" To which I replied, "Yes I do, but that still does not change the pleasure I get from reading a good story". He just shook his head in confusion and walked away! (Ah! Those younger generations, with their IPODS, Computers and TV, they just don't know what they are missing!)

Bilbo Baggins the Hobbit, Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, Gloin, and their fellow dwarves led by the proud dwarf Thorin and Gandalf the wizard. Reading about their adventures and their perilous trip through the Wilderlands, as they try to reach the Lonely

Mountain's Dwarven city. Now in ruins and the current lair of Smaug the Dragon with his fabulous treasure. Facing multiple dangers with Trolls, Goblins, and Giant Spiders along the way to gain the treasure they seek. One must also not forget to include the famous encounter between Bilbo and Gollum and the finding of a certain magical ring. What kid would not enjoy such a bedtime tale?

In fact, J.R.R. Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit* as a bedtime story for his son during the late 1930's. This is also the way that I enjoy read this book! Every night, I read between 10-15 pages before turning off the bedside light and drifting off to sleep. Yes, this is a bedtime story for the young ones, but then again, are we not all still young at heart? Who can resist the dream of finding a huge mountain of treasures and not trying to sneak away with some of it under the sleeping dragon's snout? Who can resist, hearing the elves singing their silly songs (and not laugh!), or hearing the ancient glories of the Dwarf cities? Tolkien was a master story teller and this book and his later work *The Lord of the Rings* proves this quite well.

So for those of you who have the chance, trying reading *The Hobbit* again. In fact, if you have small kids, take the time to read it to them as bedtime story. You'll probably enjoy the experience and so will your kids! ☼

CONVENTIONS / EVENTS

Anthrofest 2007

Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre

For its second try, this little Montreal furry convention went back to the Double Tree hotel on Sherbrooke Street. A good location, just the right size for the event and well located.

Anthrofest remains a relatively small affair, but it does cater to a rather specialized crowd. I registered early on Saturday afternoon and got membership number 104. Assuming that they started numbering at 1, it therefore looks like attendance is going to be a little higher than last year.

This time around, there was no art show and there were definitely not as many artists/dealers. There were however several more fursuiters; dedicated people indeed, for the air conditioning in the hotel was malfunctioning and it was already warm for those of us who were follicularly challenged.

I hope that they will at least break even this time, for it is a pleasant con, quite relaxed and informal. A excellent demonstration of the fact that you do not need to have huge crowds and star billing to have fun. ☼



Fantasia

Reviewed by Ann Methe, Jean-Pierre Normand

From July 5th to the 23rd, Fantasia 2007 sold over 81,000 tickets to fans of genre cinema. This year, a third theatre was added, allowing for an expanded program of Made in Quebec short films, as well as international short films and documentaries. While most of the films will only be available on DVD in video clubs or Chinatown, *Adam's Apples*, a Danish film by Anders Thomas Jensen, will be showing at the AMC Forum and Cinéma du Parc.

I saw 30 films at the festival, and I highly recommend the following films: from Russia, *Zero City*, *Amphibian Man* and *Cosmic Voyage*; from Hong Kong, *Isabella*, *A Battle Of Wits*, *Exiled* and the Shaw Brothers classics *One Armed Boxer* and *14 Amazons*. Japan's excellent *Death Note* and *Death Note: The Last Name*, based on the popular manga and *Arch Angels* are worth the effort to find.

Mark your calendars, the 12th edition will begin on July 3rd. 🍷



The Official Juried 2007 Awards

Best Film:

Memories of Matsuko – Tetsuya Nakashima Japan

Best Director:

Feng Xiaogong – *The Banquet*, China

Best Scenario:

Han Jae-rim - *The Show must Go On* South Korea

Best Cinematography:

Li Zhang China

Best Actor:

A Tie:

Song Kang-ho *The Show must Go On* South Korea

Ryu Deok-hwan *Like a Virgin* South Korea

Best Actress:

Mary McCormack *Right at Your Door* USA

Best Quebec Short Feature

(Award Includes a \$2500 Grant)

Flutter - Howie Shia (Quebec)

Special Jury Mention

Moi - Yan England (Quebec)

Special Jury Mention

The Photography of Claudine Sauv  & Fran ois Blouin's *Hotel* and Yan England's *Moi*

Best International Short Feature

Ex Aequo: *The Last 15* - Antonio Campos (USA)

Maquina - Gabe Ibanez (Spain)

Best Animated Short Feature

Everything Will Be OK - Don Hertzfeldt (USA)

Special Jury Mention

The Runt - Andreas Hykade (Germany)

Best Diy Short - Quebec

(Award Includes a \$1000 Grant and a Professional DVD Duplication from Magra Multi M dia)

L' cerv l  - Beno t Desjardins (Quebec)

See <http://www.fantasiafestival.com/2007/en/> for complete listings

The Popular Public Vote Has Very Different Choices:

Best Asian Film

Gold Prize: *13 Beloved* - Chookiat Sakweerakul (Thailand)

Silver Prize: *Exiled* - Johnnie To (Hong Kong)

Bronze Prize: Ex Aequo : *City of Violence* - Ryoo Seung-wan (South Korea)/*Memories of Matsuko* - Tetsuya Nakashima (Japan)

Best European / North - South American Film

Gold Prize: *Hatchet* - Adam Green (USA)

Silver Prize: *End of the Line* - Maurice Deveraux (Canada)

Bronze Prize: Ex Aequo : *Mulberry Street* - Jim Mickle (USA) / *The Signal* - David Bruckner, Dan Bush and Jacob Gentry (USA)

Best Animated / Stop Motion Film

Gold Prize: *Tekkon Kinkreet* - Michael Arias (Japan)

Silver Prize: *We Are the Strange* - M Dot Strange (USA)

Bronze Prize: *Aachi & Ssipak* - Joe Bum-jin (South Korea)

Most Groundbreaking Film

Gold Prize: *We Are the Strange* - M Dot Strange (USA)

Silver Prize: Exte: *Hair Extensions* - Sion Sono (Japan)

Exte: *Hair Extensions* - Sion Sono

Bronze Prize: *Memories of Matsuko* - Tetsuya Nakashima (Japan)

Best Documentary

Gold Prize: *King of Kong* - Seth Gordon (USA)

Silver Prize: *Your Mommy Kills Animals* - Curt Johnson (USA)

Bronze Prize: Ex Aequo : *Ghosts of City Soleil* - Asger Leth (Denmark/  ua) / *Zoo* - Robinson Devor (USA)

Best Short Film

Gold Prize: *The Fifth* - Ryan Levin (USA)

Silver Prize: *Angel* - Paul Hough (USA)

Bronze Prize: Ex Aequo: *Criticized* - Richard Gale (USA) / *The Morning After* - Daniel Knight (Australia)

Best Putain D'court!

(Award Includes a 500 Euros Grant)

Gratte-papier - Guillaume Martinez (France)



Ottawa Convention Draws to a Close Cathy Palmer-Lister

As I am myself a conchair, I have to admit I found attending the very last C-ACE convention really hard. We put so much of ourselves into running cons; “labour of love” barely begins to cover the commitment of time and effort, leading to the old joke about conchairs needing to be committed in more ways than one! It wasn’t easy, but somehow, in the organized chaos of the Ops room, I managed to find a few quiet moments to speak with Niall MacConnaill, chair of C-ACE. (I just about had to tie him down.)

The seeds for C-ACE were sowed back in the mid-nineties when fans having to travel to the States for anthro-themed conventions began asking, why can’t we have our own con here in Ottawa? But the fans were young, had no money, and no organizational skills. As Niall so eloquently put it: “Herding cat people is worse than herding cats.” This changed when Jeff Novotny moved in from Winnipeg.

Early in 2001, Niall heard from Greylocks that “the new guy” was talking about organizing a con – a much higher level of talk than talk about having a con. There had been other conventions in Ottawa, notably MapleCon, CanCom, and a series of relaxacons, but the long-term success rate was dismal, so Niall went off to convince Jeff that running cons in Ottawa was difficult to say the least, but to his own surprise, he wound up on the concom.

Jeff came from a business background, and Ottawa had a bank of experienced conrunners, so together they assembled a small but capable crew for the first C-ACE in 2002. Although the acronym stood for Canadian Anthro and Cartooning Expo, the con was heavily anthro as the animé community was not all that well organized at the time. This led to C-ACE being branded a furry con though it was never intended to be exclusively anthro. The first year was in a hotel described as being “interesting” in the Chinese proverb sense of the word. For starters, a lot of the mundanes sharing the hotel were “smokers”; one could get high on the smoke in the corridors, giving security something more to worry about than con badges.

For 2003, the name of the con was changed to Canadian Arts and Cartooning Expo, which better reflected the aspirations of the convention while keeping the acronym, but some anthro fans felt abandoned. I could tell that Niall felt very frustrated by the anthro community’s persistence in thinking that C-ACE should remain a furry con. “But it never was exclusively a furry con!” he says, several times in the conversation. C-ACE was always meant to be a meeting of creative minds, regardless of the flavour of fandom, but already dissension in the ranks was heralding the end.

In 2004, the convention saw a greater diversity of SF fandom. With growing confidence in themselves as conrunners, and the future of the con seemingly assured, C-ACE started acquiring “stuff”, art panels and related art show paraphernalia topping the list.

“2005 was the best year,” said Niall. The con moved to Best Western, a hotel that boasted microwaves in every room, a real boon to young, impecunious fans. Author Jo Walton and artist Cara Mitten were Guests of Honour. This was the first year the

con had an author guest, and the choice was truly inspired. Jo Walton’s *Tooth and Claw*, a book written from the point of view of dragons, had won the World Fantasy Award in 2004, and so she appealed to both the lit and anthro fans.

It was in 2006 that real trouble struck, and struck hard. The hotel was unavailable for C-ACE’s preferred time slot. Anthrocon, the World Con equivalent for furries, had to move from its site, which also forced a temporary change of dates, and unfortunately the weekend they chose was one of only two weekends that C-ACE Guest of Honour, Julie E Czerneda, was available. Disgruntled anthro fans, thinking that C-ACE organizers were deliberately trying to undercut Anthrocon, started their own convention in Montreal: Anthrofest made its debut that year at the Double Tree Hotel. Attendance at C-ACE dropped off.

Logistics and other organizational issues continued to dog the con in 2007. Costs were rising, attendance wasn’t. Finding a hotel that would accommodate larger numbers proved an impossible task, and so the con really couldn’t expand much in any case, but expansion was critical to survival. Caught in a catch-22, the organizers began to think of C-ACE 2007 as being the last one. The concom, frustrated by fan-politics, was burning out. The anthro fans wanted C-ACE to be a sort of Anthrocon North, but that was never C-ACE’s intention. The staff was torn between loyalty to the anthro fan base, but also wanting to draw creative fans from outside that world, especially the very talented animé artists. Furthermore, Niall was now the only one financially capable of bank-rolling the con, a situation which could not last forever. Even in years when he was not actually the chair of the con, Niall was the one who was going to end up with the bills, so taking a back seat was never really an option for him.

One would think that knowing 2007 was the last of a very fine convention, fans would flock to meet one last time, but that didn’t happen. Numbers were down, and the art show and panelling suffered from lack of participation. Maybe fans reacted to knowing this was the last one by thinking the con was falling apart, and so caused a self-fulfilling prophesy. They missed a good time! Guests of Honour, Fiona Patton and Loopy (Andrew Pidcock), were really great guests. The chocolate social was a chocoholic’s heaven.

Some of the concom are toying with the idea of a relaxacon, but right now they admit to being very tired indeed. But that hasn’t stopped other local cons, like Con*Cept, from picking off members to complement their own staffs! Experienced, dedicated smofs, like those of C-ACE, are hard to come by and already the vultures are circling. If Anticipation wins the World Con bid, we will need all the experienced staff we can get our hands – and paws – on. ☺

Related Links:

♣ C-ACE: <http://www.c-ace.org/index.html>

♣ Anthrocon: <http://anthrocon.org/>

♣ Anthrofest: <http://www.anthrofest.org/>

♣ WikiFur: http://furry.wikia.com/wiki/WikiFur_Furry_Central/800x600

A DAY AT THE FAIR

Josée Bellemare

May 3rd I did a little time travelling and went to the Salon de la Passion Médiévale. There I found the usual attractions I've come to expect: the dealers, the LARP displays, fighting demonstrations and musicians.

The dealers were varied, selling costumes, accessories of all kinds, toys and games not to mention some impressive swords and daggers. Representatives from several organisations were promoting events and activities, some lasting just one weekend, some going on all summer and fall.

Warriors from all around came to show their skill and compete as individuals and in teams. Everyone used latex weapons but

fought with great determination. Fair attendees could also borrow practice swords and test their own skill.

At regular intervals during the day, groups of musicians took to the stage to entertain the crowds and to try and sell their CDs.

Throughout the fair interesting creatures and characters could be seen, from little critters that sit on your shoulder to giant monsters. I even saw a few pirates but the most remarkable were Joan of Arc, the King of France and the rest of their party, all there to sign a peace treaty with the Duke of Burgundy.

All things considered a colourful and entertaining event.



MonSFFandom

Keith Braithwaite

Appearing in each issue of WARP, "MonSFFandom" collates abridged versions of the news and activities published in the past few months in Impulse, MonSFFA's monthly news bulletin.

January MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA has returned last year's Executive Committee to office for another year. At the beginning of the club's January 21 meeting, Chief Returning Officer Cathy Palmer-Lister officiated over the investiture by club members present of Berny Reischl, Keith Braithwaite, and Sylvain St-Pierre as, respectively, president, vice-president, and treasurer for 2007.

We are confident of another stellar year for the club as MonSFFA has never before seen an executive with so much fannish organizational experience. All three have been MonSFFA members since the club's earliest days and have contributed much since that time to the programming of our monthly meetings and other MonSFFA projects.

We applaud their return to office as our executive and wish them well as they prepare to shepherd the club through another year.

Keith Braithwaite then opened the discussion of fan fiction, first offering a delineation of the genre by stating that which is the generally accepted definition: fan fiction is a particular brand of unauthorized amateur writing based on a published work, or a television series or movie franchise. Fan fiction stories are set in the universe of an original work and employ characters created by the

original's author. Fanfic writers rework, embellish, or explore anew the source material, or "canon," upon which their stories are based, introducing to the universe in which they are writing their own characters, called in fanfic lingo "OC"'s, or "original characters." Keith noted that some definitions of fanfic include amateur level original fiction as well as authorized publications rooted in an original work.

While examples of what we might today term fan fiction date back centuries, it was the explosion of Star Trek-inspired, fan-penned stories which began appearing in Trek fanzines in the late 1960s and early '70s that got modern fan fiction started. Many of these early fanfic pieces revolved around rather adolescent romantic and/or sexual relationships between characters. Keith pointed out that an examination conducted of 1960s fan fiction culture revealed that some 83 percent of Star Trek fanzine editors and fan fiction authors were teenaged girls, no doubt the reason behind the preponderance of puerile romantic fantasies constituting much of fanfic at the time.

A controversial subdivision of the fan fiction genre, dubbed "slash," arose in the mid-1970s, depicting established canon characters as homosexual lovers often engaged in explicit sex, the most popular such pairing at the outset being that of Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock.

So-called “crossovers” followed, in which characters from two or more canons were brought together—Mulder and Scully might open an X-file on one Buffy Summers, for instance.

The arrival of the Internet saw fan fiction move away from fanzines as a means of distribution to Usenet and the like, and later, the World Wide Web. Today, literally millions of fanfic stories are archived on such Web sites as FanFiction.net.

The unique terminology of fan fiction was explored and Keith also touched on fanfic formats, from quick shorts of a few hundred words or less to multi-chaptered epics approaching novel length. Further, he outlined modern copyright law and some of the legal issues involved in publishing fanfic.

Following the mid-meeting break, MonSFFA members and fanfic authors Barbara Silverman and Josée Bellemare each read from one of their stories, spoke of their motivations in writing the tales, and of the feedback they’d received. Barbara’s *Star Trek: Voyager* story builds upon the relationship established in the television series between Janeway and Chakotay and she was encouraged by the positive online response her work has generated to date. Josée’s short *Doctor Who* piece was one of several Christmas-themed tales she had submitted for publication in *Warp*. In a stroke of perfect timing, MonSFFen were able to read these in issue 66 of the club’s fanzine, which, as it happened, had just been distributed to members present at this very meeting. In keeping with the afternoon’s topic, the issue also included a Christmas-themed fanfic by Fernando “Fern” Novo, a crossover—*Buffy the Vampire Slayer/Charmed*—by Josée again, and Mireille Dion’s informative article on fan fiction.

The meeting closed with an informal writer’s workshop, during which various outlines or excerpts of works-in-progress were read aloud and the authors offered advice on story development. Leslie Lupien received the input of his fellow MonSFFen on a first contact scenario he was having trouble bringing to a conclusion. Fern, meanwhile, presented an outline of the fanfic piece he had begun using one of the suggested titles we ran in our request for fan fiction in last month’s *Impulse*. Fern’s work-in-progress is entitled “The Instruments of Darkness.” The group also enjoyed Keith’s reading of a short *Beavra* fanfic, penned by his 10-year old son, Scott, in which our famous monster beaver battles a giant lobster named Lobstera. Finally, Wayne Glover introduced folks to a *Battlestar Galactica/Babylon 5* epic he has been enjoying, among other fanfic downloaded from FanFiction.net.

The usual thanks to the crew who put this meeting together with a special nod to all of our programming participants.

February MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA’s February 18 meeting offered first a quick game challenging members to identify from portrait photos projected on screen the actor or actress appearing in a sci-fi film or television series and shown in full alien character make-up in an accompanying picture. Fernando “Fern” Novo ran the game, with an assist from Berny Reischl.

Following the mid-meeting break, MonSFFA business was briefly discussed, notably recent unavoidable increases in the cost of operating the club. As there is much to talk about, here, the club opted to convene a BoA meeting on March 25 to further consider these recent budgetary developments and implement measures to address the situation.

The afternoon’s closing topic was dubbed “Law and Order.” Danny Sichel led this discussion of crime and punishment in SF/F. He entertainingly introduced his topic in the style of the *Law and Order* television show’s opening narration, complete with trademark musical punctuation (provided by the audience): SF/F literature is composed

of two separate but equally important parts, the authors who create the plots and the characters who live them out for the enjoyment of readers.

Danny, joined at the dais by Keith Braithwaite, had a lot of ground to cover with his chosen topic and the conversation thus jumped around some as panellists and audience strove to touch on as much as they could. Such characters as *Star Wars*’ Han Solo and Harry Harrison’s Slippery Jim DiGriz—the Stainless Steel Rat—were highlighted as roguish heroes, among several popular tropes of the genre. The concept of a galactic police force, it was noted, dates back to E. E. “Doc” Smith’s *Lensman* stories, which also featured an interstellar criminal cartel known as Boskone.

Fantasy tales, meanwhile, often portray thieves and assassins as accepted members of their imagined societies. Professional organizations—guilds—govern their conduct and the laws of the land include rules to regulate their activities. Danny recommended the Lord D’Arcy books, featuring a detective who brings something of a forensic approach to solving crimes committed in an alternate world of magic.

SF writers often explore crime and detective work from a scientific angle, detailing how a crime might be committed in the future, and how speculative science might be employed to solve that crime.

Punishment, it was observed, often involves the death penalty or some other distasteful sentence, in some cases for relatively innocuous crimes. The SF universe, it would seem, is a much harsher place than the real world, or at least our Western world, it was opined.

Our thanks to Fern, Berny, Danny, and Keith for providing this meeting’s programming. And thanks, also, to the usual suspects who helped to plan and run this, our February 2007 meeting.

Plans for 20th Anniversary Party Advance Among matters on the agenda at recent BoA’s and club meetings has been the club’s 20th anniversary/Christmas party, set for December 8. The consensus emerging from discussion of the event is that the party will take place at the familiar Days Hotel and include a buffet dinner. The party will welcome current and past members and, indeed, all friends of the club. A cash bar will be set up and a DJ will spin discs. Door prizes will be handed out and a raffle will be held during the course of the evening. Some kind of souvenir of the event is under consideration.

Hotel rooms will be available for those wishing to spend the night, a good idea for anyone driving in. MonSFFA has arranged for a special price of \$70 for a room, booking details to follow. Sharing a room with friends thus becomes quite economical.

A price of \$35 per person has been set to cover the meal and party. Tickets are to be produced and sold in the coming weeks and months. We will publish further details pertaining to this event as they become available.

March MonSFFA Meeting

The club’s March 25 meeting featured a successful bake sale fund-raiser while facilitating a swap meet at which MonSFFen traded or purchased SF/F collectibles from each other. Keith Braithwaite and Fernando “Fern” Novo provided the afternoon’s programming, offering a slideshow showcasing the super-cool aircraft, vehicles, props, and costumes designed for the many televised sci-fi adventures produced by Gerry Anderson in the 1960s and ’70s.

Alice Novo and Lindsay Brown set up and oversaw our bake sale table, which opened for business at the outset of the meeting and ran throughout. There were numerous sinfully delicious snacks on offer, including a plate of colourful and tasty “starbugs” (candy treats) and some “soylent brown” (fudge). Folk were quick to load up on the many goodies. We are pleased to report that the bake sale added

\$111.25 to the club's coffers, more than four times that typically raised at our usual snack table during a meeting.

Presently, Keith and Fern introduced their topic. The real stars of such iconic Gerry Anderson series as Thunderbirds, Captain Scarlet, and UFO were not the Tracy's or Captain Scarlet or Colonel Straker, but the many sleek airplanes and rockets, robust transport craft, and speedy multi-wheeled cars and trucks racing about in Anderson's fab future. Slides of pre-production sketches and stills of the wonderfully detailed models employed by the Anderson studio were screened and it was noted that often, design touches were borrowed from the real-world craft of the nascent space program of the time. That said, most of the designs were decidedly more cool looking than realistically functional. And this is what appealed most to the young, enthusiastic fans of Anderson's shows, who embraced the future imagined by Anderson and his team of designers precisely because that future was just so penultimately cool looking! After all, who wouldn't want to ride around in an SPV?

Future fashion as envisioned by the Anderson team was also examined; costume design on the shows was at the same time "futuristic" and a reflection of the mod London scene of the day. The shiny purple wigs and silver jumpsuits worn by the female Moonbase operatives in the UFO series were a signature look, as were the fishnet T-shirts sported by both male and female crew members aboard the ocean-going Skydiver. Memorable, too, were the brightly coloured jackets of Spectrum's personnel in the Captain Scarlet show. Each operative donned clothing coloured to match his code name—Captain Scarlet wore a bright red uniform, Captain Blue a sky blue vest, and so on.

After the mid-meeting break, members were free to circulate, nosh some more at the bake sale table, and peruse the display of sci-fi collectibles some had brought in to trade or sell. We begin our thank-you's re our March meeting with a nod to Alice and Lindsay for overseeing our first MonSFFA bake sale. We thank, too, all those MonSFFen who kindly contributed items to the bake sale, as well as those who partook of the snacks. Thanks, also, to Keith and Fern for providing this meeting's programming, and finally, our usual thanks to the usual suspects who regularly help to plan and run our events.

New MonSFFA Membership Fee Levels to be Introduced

After discussions with members, MonSFFA's executive is planning the introduction of several new membership fee levels with an eye toward increasing revenues.

First of all, take note that the standard \$25 yearly membership fee will remain available. Nothing changes, here. Our existing "piggyback" membership, so-called, will be replaced with a family membership at \$40 per year. Up to four people living at the same address will be able to join as a family. Each member of the household will receive an individual membership card and will be considered a full member of the club, entitled to vote on club matters and enjoy all associated privileges. The household as a single unit will receive the regular mailings of Warp and Impulse, each issue to be shared among the family members. This is pretty much the arrangement now in place re piggyback memberships, except that piggyback members do not enjoy voting rights and some other privileges of full membership.

Soon to become available, a six month membership designed to accommodate newcomers who wish to give the club a try. This six-month membership will cost \$15. Finally, a platinum membership will be introduced at \$35 per year. Similar to Con•Cept's "Friends of the Con" option, this platinum membership will add value to our standard membership. Details of exactly what extras will be included are under consideration as of this writing. The time line for the

introduction of MonSFFA's new membership fee schedule is also under consideration.

April MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA's well-attended April 22 meeting was devoted to Stargate SG-1, the longest running American sci-fi television series in history. Panellists Phil Simard, Theresa Penalba, and Wayne Glover hosted an appreciation and discussion of the popular show, which was based on the 1996 film Stargate.

Our panellists described the series as top-notch sci-fi entertainment and it was put forth that the show's central deceit, that of a gateway through which one could travel instantaneously to distant worlds, provided the show's writers with countless opportunities for engaging stories. This, offered the panel, was one of the strengths of Stargate SG-1—the show compares favourably to the original Star Trek in this respect—resulting in many excellent episodes over the 10-season life of the series. SG-1 deserves to be ranked among the best sci-fi series ever broadcast.

An animated audience quickly joined in the conversation, commenting on the remarks of the panellists, tossing in their own opinions, and listing favourite SG-1 episodes and moments. The show appeals to many tastes, it was opined, offering stories of exploration and discovery, space opera, military adventure, tales of intrigue, humanity, and more.

The panel cited other pluses, including the show's strongly defined and well-written main protagonists, a sardonic sense of humour, a solid group of supporting characters, and a great cast.

Barbara Silverman was up following the mid-meeting break with a brief presentation on the ancient mythologies and historical locales from which Stargate's creators drew.

Most obvious is ancient Egyptian culture, the motifs of which were extensively tapped for both the Stargate film and subsequent TV series. Some of the character names and locales in the Stargate universe were culled from the ancients. Apophis, for instance, the lead villain of SG-1, derives his moniker from the Greek name for Apep, an evil demon in Egyptian mythology. And his Goa'uld queen, Amonet, was named for the Egyptian goddess Amunet (sometimes spelled "Amonet").

Naqahdah, which the show's fans will recognize as the fictional material from which the stargate was constructed, is in history the name of an ancient Egyptian town and a pre-dynastic Egyptian culture (spelled "Naqada" in both cases), explained Barbara.

The planet Abydos, meanwhile, home of SG-1 team member Daniel Jackson's wife, Sha're, was no doubt named after the ancient Egyptian town situated along the river Nile. Perhaps, speculated Barbara, when weaving the sad story of Jackson and Sha're—she becomes human host to the Goa'uld, Amonet—Stargate's writers were partly inspired by the tragic tale of Greek mythology's doomed lovers Hero and Leander, the latter hailing from another town called Abydos in what is today Turkey.

Augmenting the afternoon's programming was a display of Stargate SG-1 collectibles, including DVDs, books, photographs, scale model kits, and detailed replicas of some of the props used on the show.

Our SG-1 presentations and discussion were bookended by screenings of a couple of episodes of the new Doctor Who spinoff, Torchwood.

A nod of thanks to our panellists, Phil Simard, Theresa Penalba, Wayne Glover, and Barbara Silverman. And, our thanks, as always, to the usual suspects who regularly help to plan and run our events.

Disney Exhibit Field Trip

In lieu of a regular meeting in May, the club opted for a field trip to

the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts to take in “Once Upon a Time: Walt Disney,” a collection of artwork assembled from the archives of the renowned Disney Studios. This remarkable showcase of art focussed on the “sources of inspiration for the Disney Studios” and included, among the many Disney works, examples of some of the works of art that inspired the studio’s celebrated artists and animators. The outing took place on Saturday, May 26; some dozen of our group were in attendance.

Disney and animation enthusiasts stood in awe of the original design sketches, storyboards, sculptures, background plates, and animation cells on display from such Disney masterpieces as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937), Fantasia (1940), Bambi (1942), Cinderella (1950), Sleeping Beauty (1959), and One Hundred and One Dalmatians (1961). The exhibition tied the works of such 19th- and early 20th-century illustrators as Gustave Doré and Beatrix Potter to the Disney works they inspired. Marianne Stokes’ interpretation of Snow White, for example, coupled with her painting of the beautiful Mélisande, provided the template for Disney’s Snow White while the line from John Atkinson Grimshaw’s oil painting Iris, depicting a delicate winged woodland fairie, to Disney’s Tinker Bell is clear. Franz von Stuck’s dramatic oil paintings of mythological fauns and centaurs were among the works that sparked the imaginations of the Disney artists developing the “Pastoral Symphony” sequence in Fantasia. Walt Disney himself collected the work of Heinrich Kley and the German artist’s dancing hippos and elephants directly influenced Fantasia’s “Dance of the Hours.” Honoré Daumier’s illustrations of anthropomorphized animals, too, were a source of inspiration for many of Disney’s artists, who greatly admired Daumier.

Early film also inspired the Disney artists, including the works of Charlie Chaplin and the stop-motion animation of Willis O’Brien featured in the movies Lost World and King Kong. Projectors had been set up side by side running a loop of clips from a sampling of such films next to the Disney shorts that drew inspiration from them. German expressionist cinema was of particular influence; titles such as The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Faust, Nosferatu, and seminal silent SF film Metropolis were of note.

Screened as part of the exhibition was a most interesting cinematic collaboration between the Disney Studios and surrealist painter Salvador Dalí, the 1946 short Destino. Dalí’s pre-production sketches and production backgrounds were also on view. We thank club president Berny Reischl for organizing this field trip.

“MonSFFA Idols” Sing at June Club Meeting

The club’s June 10 meeting was devoted to the recording of vocal tracks for “Beavra Las Vegas,” a filk song based on the tune “Viva Las Vegas,” popularized by Elvis Presley. *Beavra* creator Keith

Braithwaite penned lyrics for the song, which is to be featured in a short film of the same name, the planned sequel to the club’s award-winning fan film, *Beavra*. Some 15 folk were on hand for the fun.

Keith began by distributing lyric sheets to the group and explaining what was required of the vocalists in terms of style. He then played a demo recording of the song he had made to illustrate approximately what he was looking for, albeit a rather more polished version. Sébastien Mineau, meanwhile, tapped as recording engineer, began setting up his equipment. Three “MonSFFA Idols” had cast aside any anxiety and stepped up, ready to take a crack at singing lead vocal. While they took a few minutes to familiarize themselves with the lyrics, Keith lent a hand to Sébastien as the makeshift recording studio was assembled and sound tests run.

Once everything was set, the recording sessions began, with each vocalist laying down several takes. Charles Mohapel was first up, followed by Fernando Novo and Marc Durocher. All made a game effort but seemed to have trouble with the metre demanded by the karaoke track serving as the music bed for the piece. The song’s bridge also proved difficult for a couple of our singers. Keith, having composed the lyrics and rehearsed the number in advance of this session in order to record the demo he’d played earlier, was comfortable enough with the song to lay down a couple of takes himself. After a few hours work, enough audio had been recorded to start putting together a viable lead vocal track.

Several of the girls in the room were then recruited to provide separate background vocal tracks.

From all of this recorded material, the final product will be stitched together. As a teaser, Sébastien was able to quickly put together a rough cut and play it back for the group before the close of the meeting.

The group also found time to discuss the club’s two current fan film projects, *Timeline* and *Beavra Las Vegas*, and the various pre-production tasks these require of our MonSFFilms crew. It was decided to move the more technically ambitious and time-consuming *Timeline* project to the back burner in favour of prepping and shooting *Beavra Las Vegas*.

A big thank-you to our vocalists and recording engineer, and, as always, a nod of appreciation to the usual suspects who regularly help to plan and run our meetings and events.

Polaris 21

MonSFFA was present at Polaris—formerly Toronto Trek—21 earlier this month. The club promoted itself from behind a table (courtesy Berny Reischl and Mark Burakoff) just outside the dealers’ room. We are pleased to report that we sold off the last of our stock of *Beavra* DVDs, earning the club a few more needed dollars.

Use your MonSFFA membership card and save at these fine stores!

LEGENDS ACTION FIGURES: 10% off all merchandise (7104 St-Hubert)
<http://www.legendSACTIONfigures.com>

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

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

Legends



The Face behind the Mask # 3
The Fernster

The Vulcan Women – Part 1

Hi! In this issue we look at the cool Vulcan Women of the Star Trek universe. So go head and try this challenge – guess who the actresses behind the mask are!

We'll start with an easy one – The original TV series - T'Pol!



A

A – T'Pol
B – T'Pol



B



C

C – T'Pol
D – T'Pol



D



1

1 - Celia Lovsky
2 - Jolene Blalock



2

3 - Joanna Cassidy
4 - Kim Cattrall



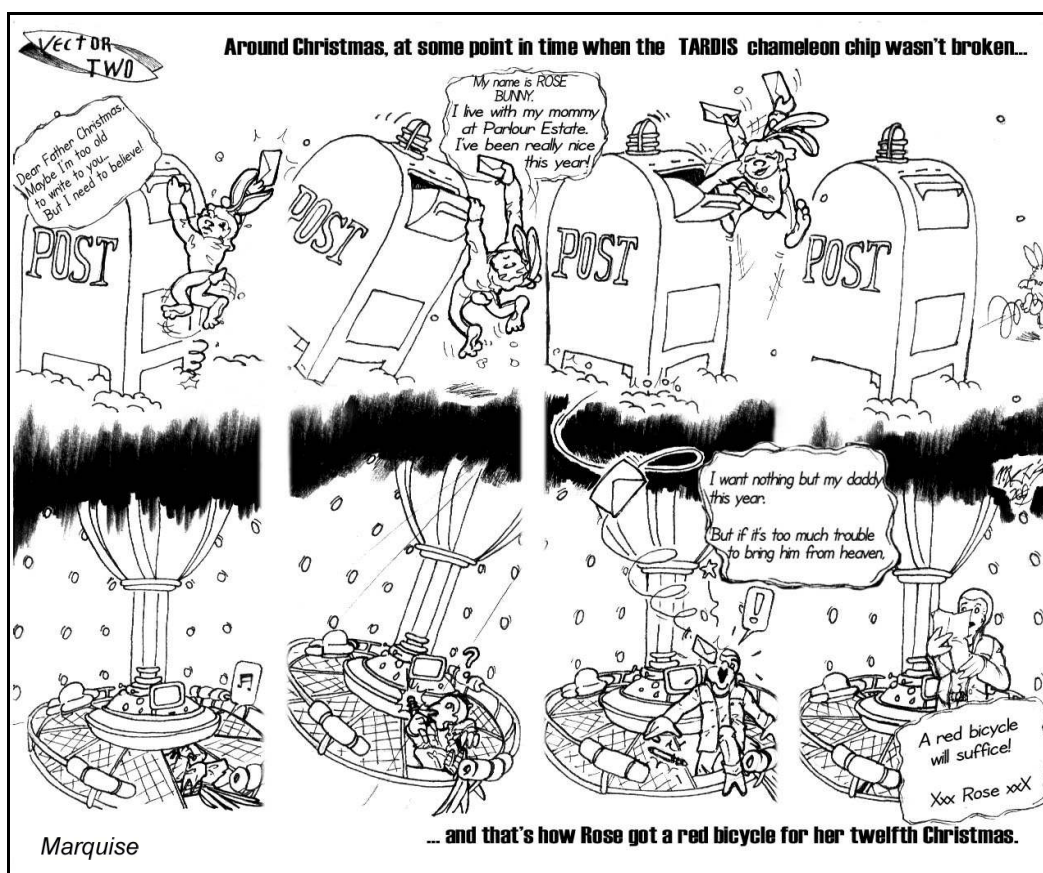
3



4

Answers:

A=1, B=3, C=4, D=2



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
