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*MonSEFFen Survive Polaris Inferno
Three Times!*



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

Editor of WARP
Cathy Palmer-Lister

Board of Advisors (BoA)

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

On the Cover

After the fire alarm went off for the third time in the wee hours of the morning, an enterprising dealer started selling buttons reading, "I survived the Polaris Inferno – 3 Times!" See pages 14-15
Photographs by Sylvain St-Pierre & Cathy Palmer-Lister

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MonSFFA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Programming is subject to change, check our website for latest developments.

To alleviate at least SOME of the confusion caused by the publication delay, this is the calendar of events for 2009, even though the rest of WARP 71 is dated Fall/Winter of 2008. Your editor apologises for the inconvenience.

JANUARY 18

Landing the Phoenix: Meet the pair of Montrealers who built a full-scale replica of NASA's Phoenix Lander for the Canadian Space Agency, a partner in the recently completed Phoenix Mars Mission, and hear the story of how they landed the job, plus the details of construction. *Guest Speakers: David Shuman & Paul Simard*

Elections: MonSFFen select their Executive for the coming year.

Giving Good Panel: A how-to guide on presenting a topic and moderating a panel discussion. *Keith Braithwaite, Maureen Whitelaw, Cathy Palmer-Lister*

FEBRUARY 22

Fly Me To The Moon: We mark the anniversary of the 1969 moon landing with an historical overview of the event, plus a look at moon mythology and some of the many lunar adventures in sci-fi cinema and television.
Keith Braithwaite, Theresa Penalba, Cathy Palmer-Lister

Saviours of the Universe: Sci-Fi's Hottest Hunks – MonSFFA's women flip through the sci-fi equivalent of the annual fireman's calendar while exploring the manly attributes of the genre's most handsome heroes. *Josée Bellemare, Alice Novo*



It's a Small World After All: We explore the Lilliputian worlds of SF/F in such examples as Gulliver's Travels, Land of the Giants, Honey, I Shrank the Kids, and Fantastic Voyage. *Keith Braithwaite, Danny Sichel*

Magnification Factor 3: Players are challenged to identify iconic sci-fi images that have been greatly magnified. Gamemaster: *Berny Reischl*

APRIL 19

What's Cooking? The Cuisine of SF/F: A presentation on food in SF/F.
Sylvain St-Pierre

Easter Egg-Decorating Contest: In conjunction with the above presentation, we are holding an Easter egg-decorating contest. Prior to the meeting, MonSFFen are encouraged to apply an SF/F theme to their creative decoration of an Easter egg and bring the finished result in to the meeting for all to see. Entries will be judged by the group and a prize awarded for the most popular. Decorators may work with a real or artificial egg. *Overseen by Mark Burakoff*

DVD Easter Eggs: We'll unveil some of the more interesting "Easter eggs" (special hidden extras) to be found on sci-fi DVDs. *Berny Reischl*

MAY 10

In lieu of a regular meeting this month, we plan to attend as a group a Sunday afternoon screening of the new **Star Trek** movie, scheduled to open at this time.

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Dear MonSFFen:

Got the e-mail, entered the codewords, downloaded the .pdf, and finally, I have Warp 70. Hope this will save the club time, and most of all, money.

When I saw Scott Braithwaite on the cover, that was a reminder that even though I've known so many of you for so long, some of you actually might have kids (sheepish grin). I hope Scott's picked up his dad's interests in science fiction and space. I'd like to think that we're not all nerds and geeks in our kids' eyes. Dare I say Fandom: the Next Generation?

It has been a while since issue 69, but real life gets in the way of fannish activities. My own work status has been

fluid...I just finished six months at Southern Graphic Systems, and was laid off for lack of work just a few days ago as I write. I am still waiting to find out about the amount of space I will have for the fanzine lounge, and it looks like Yvonne will be working treasury.

Interesting essay on the year 2000 from the year 1838. I would wonder where this most northwestern state of Angoria would be? Alaska? Given the old idea of Manifest Destiny, British Columbia, maybe?

Great story, Scott...I wonder what else our little MonSFFettes have in store for future issues? (If this was still MonSTA, we could call them little MonSTers...)

It is very rare that I can say that I have the books reviewed in the book review column, and this is one of those times. I had lost track of the Niven Ringworld series, and recently bought a used copy of *Ringworld's Children*, thinking it was the third, and not the fourth, book in the series. *The Scientific Adventures of Baron Munchausen* by Hugo Gernsback and Edison's *Conquest of Mars* by Garrett P. Serviss are difficult, slow reads, and certainly indicative of the times, but they are worth reading, if only to show that SF has come a long way

since. Rob Godwin and Apogee Books have produced some very high-quality paperbacks to keep those stories around for some time to come.

The rest of the issue is catch-up on meetings since the end of 2007, and good to see the club busy and vital. Were you able to find a cheaper meeting place? I know that some clubs will rent a church hall for meetings, or simply gather in a private home. A hotel meeting room is best, especially for special presentations like movies and other video, but as you say the financial realities are what they are. However, with this financial recession happening, some hotels may be getting desperate for business, so keep monitoring the downtown hotels, and their prices may drop to match your budget.

All done for this time around. Ad Astra 2009 arrives in about three weeks, and I hope you all will be there. It's the first convention of the season here, and we'll be busy with programming, a steampunk tea, a fan table and various other events there. Take care, and spring is almost here.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney

Hi, Lloyd!

As always, so good to hear from you again. I see that you are on the ballot for the Auroras! So is one of our members, Keith Braithwaite, for editing *Impulse*. (WARP is not eligible because I am on the committee.) Scott seems to have inherited his father's love of sf and writing. I'm hoping to get more stories out of him and other youngsters. They are the future of the club!

I look forward to the fanzine lounge at Anticipation. It's interesting to see the variety of fan publications available. Guy Lillian is coming to Anticipation, and I'm sure he'll be bringing it loads of papyrus. He and several other fan editors gave an excellent panel at Denvention. I hope there will be a similar panel at Anticipation.

We did look around for cheaper digs, but none were really suitable for us. We continue to meet at the Days Hotel, but from time to time we schedule events elsewhere to cut costs. That WARP was delayed nearly a year helped our bank balance, though that wasn't the reason for the delay. Age is catching up with me!

I will be at Ad Astra with Yolande. Con*Cept is sponsoring the consuite for Saturday afternoon. I'm rather nervous about it, never having run a consuite before.

So I guess we meet up next at Ad Astra!

Yours in fandom,
Cathy



Cathy,

Not exactly science fiction or fantasy, but one of the elements that led to them. This new site in Austria has 120 extremely rare Gothic novels available online in image form, which seem to be freely downloadable (you have to go to the end of each document to access the 2nd, 3rd, 4th volumes of multi-volume books—some of which run >1500 pages! There aren't direct links on the page below). It takes awhile to load some of the documents and the window may appear frozen, but the documents eventually show up.

[http://aleph.uibk.ac.at/edocs/Gothic Novels/Inhalt.html](http://aleph.uibk.ac.at/edocs/Gothic_Novels/Inhalt.html)

Regards,

Georges

Hi, Georges!

Isn't the Internet wonderful? It's a little ironic in a way that the technology

which brought so much change to our society is perhaps the best tool at our disposal to preserve treasures of the past.

Such delightful titles! *The animated skeleton*, *The mysterious hand*; or, *subterranean horrors!*, *Santa-Maria*; or, *the mysterious pregnancy*, *Love, mystery and misery!* And I had to laugh at *The mysterious husband*, by Mary Meeke and *The mysterious wife*, by the same, improbably named, author.

I started reading *Deeds of darkness*; or, *the unnatural uncle: a tale of the 16th century*; including interesting memoirs and was just into the second volume when the text vanished. Heeding your warning, I waited and waited, but the pages remained blank. I may never find out what became of the unfortunate Josephine, nor the true identity of Antonio, who bears a strange likeness to the portrait in Josephine's room at her evil uncle's castle.

Thanks for the link to the past!

Yours in fandom,
Cathy



SFF Sightings!

MonSFFan, Jean-Pierre Normand, has had his book "Science Fiction Illustrations" published! Congratulations, Jean-Pierre:

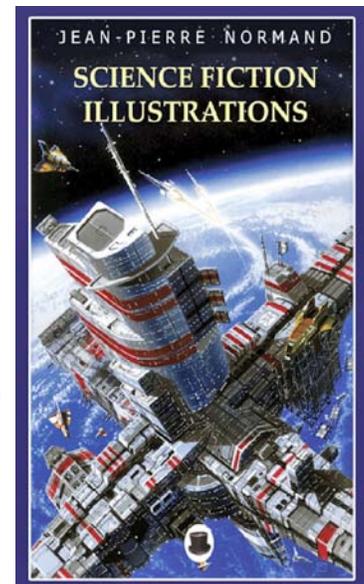
US\$ 12.95, 5.5x8.5 tpb, 60 pages

ISBN-10: 1-934543-79-5

ISBN-13: 978-1-934543-79-9

Sighted on the Blackcoat Press Website:

Jean-Pierre Normand is a professional illustrator, specializing in science fiction and fantasy for the past 30 years. Over two hundred book and magazine covers featuring his work has been published in Canada and the United States. He generally work in ink and liquid acrylic, applied with brush and air-brush on illustration board or canvas. His work has been shown at various conventions and other exhibits, winning several awards, notably the Aurora for artistic achievement in Canada in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001 and 2004. His work was published in *Spectrum*, *the best in contemporary fantasy art*, and appeared on the covers of *Asimov's Science Fiction*, *Analog*, *On Spec*, and *Science Fiction Chronicle*. ☆



MonSFFAn, Georges Dodds, has been researching the roots of science fiction, notably the origins of the apeman and more recently, the Gothic novel. Here, he presents his translation of a story by Léo d'Hampol, 1910, "Le Missing Link." Nos Loisirs No. 44, p. 1411-1415 (30 oct. 1910).

***A doctor is summoned to treat a mysterious patient whose face he is not allowed to see.
Is the patient man or ape?***

THE MISSING LINK

Through the tinted windows of my work quarters, I distractedly watched the large trees stripped of their leaves, shaken roughly by the wind. The sky was menacing: large brick-hued clouds ran across a clear, bright, almost blinding background. The silence was almost complete. From time to time, however, the sound of steps was heard, muffled by the road's brown dirt. A shadow passed quickly, then all returned to the torpor of a hushed landscape.

I had spent the night with a patient, an old man who feared the hereafter... and I was exhausted, completely exhausted, my legs were heavy, my head nodded. I diverted my eyes, stung by the unbearable glare of the winter sun piercing through the screen of clouds.

Mechanically, I scanned the newspaper which my butler had tossed, fully open, on the desk before which I was sitting. In what possible manner could the news I had just come across in the society pages interest me? Nonetheless, I reread it twice. It concerned a duel, after a quarrel amongst a circle of friends, between Mr. de Videmar and Count Ladislas Wosky. I was unacquainted with the latter; the other, Mr. de Videmar, I had crossed paths with years ago. He was simply mad about duels, and almost always successful. Like our military leaders, he had fought great hosts... of pretty eyes, blue ones, black ones, grey ones and violet...

How long ago that was!

The wind rose, the big trees' branches creaked plaintively, exposing their winter scars to the white sun. I listened... for what? I was not sure... I sensed someone was coming.

Often at night, I was prone to strange premonitions which unsettled my scientific training. My ears rang, so this time again, I believed it to be an auditory hallucination. Not at all, the bell at the gate has sounded its long, desolate peal. Someone had rung at my door.

I was in a state I would qualify as one of telepathic receptivity. I was waiting for someone, before the bell rang my ears had perceived the sound of steps, I stood up trembling. At the garden gate, I saw the shadow of a human form stretch out. An old man was waiting for someone to answer his call. My butler would open the door.

The visitor, who refused to give his name, yet insisted on seeing 'the doctor' was allowed in. Framed in the doorway, he stepped forward, wan, trembling, prey to a most violent

excitement.

I designated a chair, which he failed to sit in. He waited impatiently for my butler to leave and the door to close behind him. We were alone.

My life experience, study of society, and strong common sense had taught me to quickly recognize someone's social standing. However, in the present case, my empirical science failed me. Who was the man before me? The future would tell.

The individual, straight as a picket, appeared to be roughly sixty years of age. There was snow on the roof and an abundant mass of hair spread over the collar of his vest. The face was pleasant, somewhat haughty, but his manners were timid, almost embarrassed.

His eyes scanned suspiciously around him. Finally upon my assurance that he could speak without fear, he decided to say:

"Doctor, I have at home a wounded individual whose condition is worrisome... come right away. The case is the result of an accident." He emphasized the last word of his incoherent utterance.

"No problem, if it isn't too far from here," I replied in a somewhat disillusioned manner.

Why so mysterious?

The old man pondered for a few seconds, then, with sudden resolution, continued:

"I am not permitted to tell you who you will be treating. I cannot even tell you where the injured has been taken."

"This whole story sounds like something out of a dime novel," I exclaimed with a somewhat forced good humour.

"Please God it were so, but it is sad reality."

"However, for me to reach the one who sends you, you must give me their address, unless as in the novels I alluded to, you blindfold me."

The old man did not seem to notice the irony of my comments; but pronounced himself gravely:

"I won't blindfold you, but I will take the precautions I was instructed to. You will have to submit to them."

Though I remained polite, I frowned, annoyed at my interlocutor's enigmatic attitude. "And if I accept your conditions?"

"Then my friend will pay any fee you care to ask for, we won't haggle."

I indicated by a gesture that I was not a man to take

advantage of a situation. The old man did not seem to notice, saying in a lugubrious tone which sent a shiver down my spine:

"You must, should you choose to accompany me, swear not to attempt to uncover the mystery which envelops this entire affair."

"I swear!" I quickly replied.

"Then let's go...a carriage awaits us some hundred meters from here, I will drive."

"I'll follow you."

In less time than it takes to state, I slipped into my overcoat, put on my fur hat, and took up my cane. The old man was already outside when I caught up with him.

The road stretched out monotonously straight only to sink into the horizon, allowing me to immediately pick out the parked carriage my guide had mentioned.

We walked without exchanging a word. Having arrived near the carriage, I noticed that one of the horses had been tied to a tree by the road.

The old man ordered:

"Get in!"

So imperious had become his voice, that I hesitated. I attributed this tone to his eagerness to return to his friend and quite willingly settled into the carriage. I had barely sat down when I was plunged into complete darkness. Most likely thick blinds had been lowered from the outside. While I was not the least bit frightened, instinctively I wished to get out, but the doors resisted my efforts. I was a prisoner. Besides, in truth, these excessive precautions were nothing unusual, I had been duly warned.

The carriage sped off. The road was long, and by design, hesitant and seemingly random. I understood that one was trying to confuse me, in case my sense of direction was particularly well developed.

After a period of time, which I would estimate at an hour and a half, the carriage stopped, the blinds went up as if by magic, and before me, grey and morose, notwithstanding the melancholy caresses of the January sun was the featureless landscape which extends across all of Paris' suburbs.

Where was I? Between you and me, I could not have cared less, dominated as I was by a natural curiosity which rendered me impatient in my wait for further developments in this adventure.

My guide opened the carriage's left-hand door, and most politely, this time, begged me to step down. I jumped to the ground and waited until he was ready to tell me where we were going, for I could not see any residence nearby.

He tied his horse to a tree, which led me to think that we

still had some walking to do before reaching our destination. My predictions were confirmed; the old man asked me to follow him along a narrow path enclosed on either side by a quickset hedge.

This path penetrating into the darkness by degrees, led to a modest looking cottage, a residence admirably suited to cover up a crime or mask an adventure.

The cottage was located in the middle of a large wall-enclosed garden, a rather ordinary-looking gate allowing one a glimpse of the full property within, and particularly of how messy it was.

Before going in, the old man stated quietly, albeit not without betraying some deeper feelings:

"I forgot to mention that the injured person, not wishing to be recognized, will have his head covered with a thick veil. You will limit yourself to examining the wound he received full in the chest."

"But," I began, "to come to a firm diagnosis it is indispensable..."

"I disagree," the old man abruptly interrupted, who took offense every time something did not go his way. "There's still time to pull out, to say no!"

I gave up.

Sighing and shrugging my shoulders I said, "I understand, I will do whatever it is you wish. Only by a sense of professional duty did I make such a valid observation." The stranger ignored me and opened the gate, crossed the porch and signaled me to stop.

"Wait for me here for a couple of seconds, I will come back and get you."

I took advantage of the fact that I was alone to more carefully look over the property that sheltered the mysterious patient. My survey was quite short, as the old man returned almost immediately.

"You may come now."

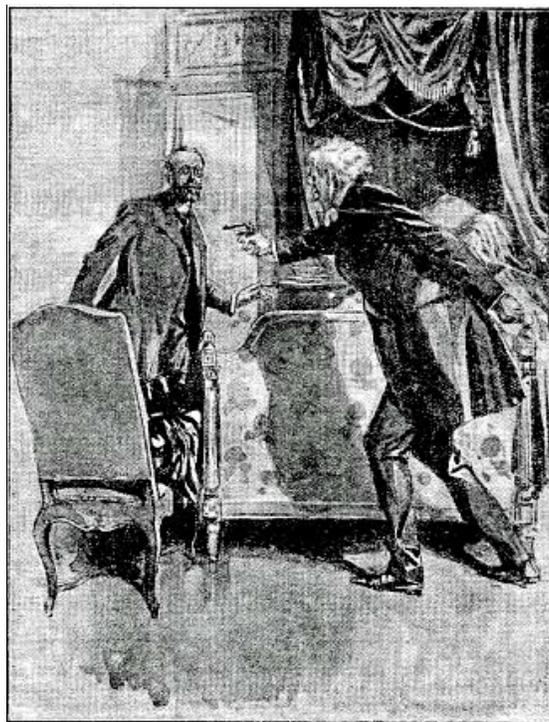
I followed my guide, who having crossed the vestibule, climbed a rather steep staircase leading to the room. To the left, an open door; we had arrived.

In a spacious and soberly decorated room, on a four-poster bed thickly enveloped in cretonne drapes, a creature was moaning. I say *creature*

because I could not as yet see the injured person who had called for my expertise. The red sheet which covered him outlined a human form. It was all I could see of it.

I drew closer.

Even though I had been warned, I could not refrain from responding with surprise: the injured person had his head wrapped up in a thick shawl... it was impossible to see his features, only the



"Wretch!" he howled, "is this how you respect your solemn vow? You take advantage of my weakness to uncover my secret, but you will not leave here alive, this house will be your grave!"

hairy chest, abnormally large and powerful, could be seen, with a deep red wound gaping, resembling lips prepared to cry out. It was from a sword thrust, of this there was no doubt.

The injured person moaned softly as I probed the wound and nodded my head. There was no use deluding oneself, the wound was fatal.

Did he read in my features the inexorable end? Whatever the case may be, the old man was now livid, his hands convulsively shaking. He stumbled, overcome with grief, before collapsing into a chair.

Rather than going to his aid, I returned to the patient's bed, and naturally threw off the cover which hid the lower half of the body. My loud cry was answered by an angry outburst. The old man was in front of me, wild and threatening, a revolver in his hand pointed at my chest.

"Wretch!" he howled, "is this how you respect your solemn vow? You take advantage of my weakness to uncover my secret, but you will not leave here alive, this house will be your grave!"

And as I tried to protest, he added, even more vehemently:

"I wished to have a colleague's opinion, for I too am a doctor, but I have no use for you now."

And still threatening me, he added.

"Walk in front of me. At the rear of the vestibule through which you came here, there is a staircase which leads to a cell where you will be at leisure to consider the dangers of not reining in one's imprudent curiosity. Make no attempt to resist, you understand. Do not attempt to escape, I will show no pity. I will gun you down like a mad dog."

I don't claim to be any braver than my fellows, but I must admit that I was little afeared by these wild threats. Rather, I was overcome with thoughts brought on by the events I had witnessed. Reasonable prudence led me to obey my captor. Without turning around, I went down the steep staircase I had climbed before, with unfeigned calmness, still under the threat of the revolver whose barrel followed my every move. I found the cell and entered without putting up the least resistance.

Behind me the clash of metal on metal indicated that some large bolts had been drawn in order to prevent my escape. Notwithstanding the gravity of the situation, I could not help but smile when I considered that in a moment I would perhaps be called upon to undertake, for a brief moment, one of the most interesting endeavours of *Mei prigoni*: escape.

My prison was dark, receiving its only light through a vent covered with narrow steel bars. I ran headlong into a short step-ladder. The cell was less sinister than I had been expecting, one could at least sit down. For a moment I forgot where I was, to ponder what I had seen: those powerful hairy and oddly developed pectorals, and the lower extremities...this patient had never walked upright, it would have been impossible. His skin was indeed that of a human, but his anatomy was that of an ape. It was some sort of monster whose features I had been barred from seeing. What a fearful mystery! Given the strange circumstances, perhaps I was the victim of a hoax, but no, I don't think so. Besides, if the old man's anger was any indication...I remained confused. This was all very nice, but I must escape this wasp's nest. I was strong and limber and little disposed to end my days in this cell.

My colleague had forgotten that I carried a small surgery kit

on me, which could serve as well for a burglar as a doctor. The bars were nothing to fear, an athlete could easily have broken them, but I was content to dig them out.

With even greater precaution, I put myself to the task. The cracked plaster broke off and fell to the floor with a reassuring ease. Within an hour, if nothing came to interrupt me, my work would be done. I worked tirelessly, without a sound to disturb me. Night fell. I waited for the darkness to be complete. It was unlikely that I had been simply abandoned; my jailer must have been keeping watch, ready to shoot if I stuck out the tip of my nose.

By the glow of a match, I looked at my watch: eight o'clock. Night had indeed come — dark night, complicit night.

Would the vent be large enough? Could I get through? I was anxious. The time came to begin my escape. I climbed up the step-ladder, pulling myself through by the strength of my wrists...my head was through, I waited, waited for the bullet which would punish my temerity...nothing...my body was through now...Did the pebbles crunch beneath my footsteps? No, I guess not. I was just about over the wall when a door opened, there was a sound of hasty steps. Oh well! I jumped down quickly as a shot rang out. I had been shot at, but felt no pain, I had not been hit. I ran, someone speeding along behind me. I continued to run — the dark trees dancing in the dark sky — another shot, farther this time. I dropped exhausted. I perked up my ears, nothing, complete silence — he had lost my trail.

I got hold of myself, my strength returning bit by bit. I walked, notwithstanding my fatigue, I walked on and on. Suddenly I saw a glimmer of light, a vehicle's headlights — a vegetable farmer's truck.

I tried to steady my voice.

"Hey pal! Where in blazes am I?"

"On the road to Poissy," he answered rudely.

I have often asked myself whether I should have reported this adventure to the police, but my professional scruples prevented me from doing so. I was assaulted, that is true, but should I speak up about it? Besides, would anybody believe me? The best thing is to forget about it.

I have returned to my usual occupations.

This morning not being so busy, I am looking as usual through the tinted window panes of my quarters, the white snowflakes falling haphazardly, turning my garden's flowerbeds to a cottony white.

Someone rings at the gate.

It is Dr. Debert, an old school friend who practices in Versailles. When he crosses the Vésinet, he never fails to come and visit me.

We are chatting of trivial things, when he suddenly exclaims:

"Ah! I forgot to relate a most interesting thing I did...I was, a few days ago, witness at a duel, a serious duel, my dear man, between your old enemy Mr. de Videmar and a Polish gentleman."

"Well! I saw that in the newspaper, but your name was not mentioned."

"Could be, the press has indeed not made much of it since de Videmar's adversary, count Ladislav Wolsky is a strange individual, enigmatic a profoundly distasteful. The count was struck fully in the chest."

My ears perked up. Debert continued:

"The wound seemed serious, but oddly enough the wounded man and one of the witnesses, a haughty and unpleasant-looking old man, refused my care.

"Go on," I said breathlessly.

"What's wrong with you?"

"For God's sake, go on!"

"I spoke again of this to Videmar, who seemed only mildly surprised and who passed on rather strange information regarding Wolsky. It seems this Polish count had mouldered for some time in a Siberian prison, where he would have contracted a deforming type of rheumatism, which required him to almost always lie down or sit. However, he has a reputation as a swordsman which somewhat belied the condition which should rather have kept him bedridden."

"How is he physically?" I blurted out, prey to unutterable emotions.

"The count is ugly; of a simian ugliness. The forehead is low and retreating, the bright eyes lost in bushy eyebrows, the exceedingly narrow razor-cut lips thrust forward in a queer prognathism. Overall he is massive, almost repugnant. The quarrel arose over a dropped glove. The count, no doubt to mock de Videmar, who is rather myopic, got down on hands and knees to find it. Videmar, who did not take well to the joke, wished to punish the Polish man, and without the intervention of several friends the scene would have degenerated into fisticuffs.

As Debert spoke, a veil was torn aside. I understood and was terrified.

"Do you not know the name of the old man who was his witness?"

"It was spoken before me... wait."

"Was it not Bronzkowitch?"

"That's it!"

"Well then, your count Ladislas, the Polish aristocrat who crossed swords with Videmar... is not a man."

Debert's eyes opened particularly wide.

"No, it is not a man... it is a monster... or rather, an individual which stands between the ape and man."

"You're crazy!"

"No, I'm quite sane. I remember



But where is the house? I can only see ruins... We get inside the wall, nothing is left, a few unstable walls... some calcinated beams. The old man kept his secret...

something told me in confidence by a Russian colleague regarding the son of one of his friends, doctor Bronzkowitch. The latter, a great admirer of Lamarck, Huxley, Darwin and Hækel, was passionately involved in discovering the 'missing link,' – the link missing between the ape and man; he sought it frenetically, madly!

"Then, Nature, as if she wished to avenge herself of this man who sought to expose her most intimate secrets, recreated in a child which the brilliant doctor's wife bore, the archetype of the link Darwin had searched for.

"The friend who told me all this, described to me in such a manner that I would be hard pressed to duplicate, the horror of the situation. Bronzkowitch dedicated his life and his wealth to make a man out of his ape. Thankfully, like the missing link, even if an upright stance was painful to him, he only stood up long enough to mislead those around him, and he was capable of articulate speech. It is

frightening! Do you understand now the story of the Siberian prison, why the centre of attention was always tired, sitting or lying down – because he was only comfortable on all fours.

"If you aren't yet convinced, the story I'm going to tell you will dissipate your doubts," and immediately I gave him a complete account of my adventure.

When I was finished, Debert, who was deep in thought, said to me:

"We must get to the bottom of this affair."

Thanks to my recollections, I was able to find the path I had followed in escaping the homicidal bullets. Here was the wall I climbed over... in the wet soil one can still see signs of my footsteps, and those of another, those of the old man, desperate to see me dead.

But where is the house? I can only see ruins... We get inside the wall, nothing is left, a few unstable walls... some calcinated beams. The old man kept his secret, blew himself up with his son, the ape-man.

Debert and I look at one another.

"It is a shame," he muttered, "what a lovely presentation we could have made to the Academy of Sciences. ☆

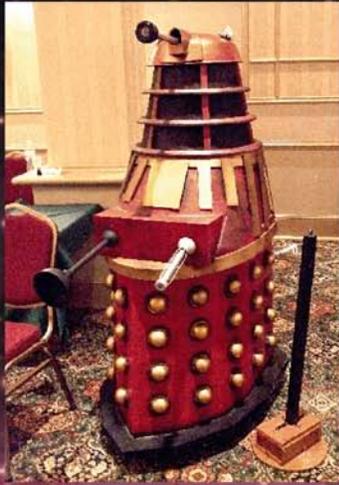




THROUGH THE LENS!

C. Palmer-Lister, Bernard Reischl, Sylvain St-Pierre, and a Zombie from Keith Braithwaite







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The first alarm went off at the crack of dawn, though some MonSFFen swear it was earlier...



The second time, we posed for pictures with the trucks; the third time, we went for breakfast— paid for by the hotel!



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. Along the way, they take a welcome break at Bellow's Falls, which is celebrating the Hunter's Festival. That night, the company secretly leaves the town, again using the tunnels, this time bolstered by the addition of twenty of Blick's personal guard. We pick up the story again just as Duncan and Shannon have apparently disappeared into thin air.

Chapter 11

Duncan and the elf girl landed rather solidly on the rough-hewn ground. After slowly picking themselves up and looking around, they realized that they were no longer in the passageway that led from the vast cavern. Here, they found themselves in another large cave. Not as big as the previous one, but large enough to house the entire party. Shannon made a move towards the wall, which had just spit them out, when the old dwarf grabbed her arm and pulled her back.

"We have been teleported here and we don't know that we'll get back to where we started. We may land up somewhere else and never be found," Duncan advised. "Let's stay right here and wait to see if the others come or we can go, but leave something from each of us here. The others may be close and arriving soon."

"We can't just sit around here waiting for rescue that may never come," said Shannon. "It might even be that whoever tries to rescue us may land up elsewhere."

"You may be right," agreed the old dwarf.

Checking their packs to see if anything was broken, Duncan pulled out a broken lantern. When he landed on the ground his backpack cushioned his fall, breaking the lamp. "This should tell them that we passed through here," he said holding a few shards of broken glass in his hand. Though his canisters of oil were intact, his lamp was all but useless. Shannon's lamp was the only one left. They lit it and spotted the only passage leading out from the cave. They left behind a piece of cloth, which belonged to Shannon and a small dagger that her mother had given to her before Shannon left Storr. With a stone that they found lying about, Duncan scratched an arrow onto the stone wall, indicating the way that they had gone. Then Duncan picked up the lamp and led the way into the darkened tunnel.

Most of the group had been gathered in the main cavern

when the young dwarf scampered out into the open, half frightened to death. To stop his incoherent babbling, one of the other dwarfs slapped him hard across the face. This seemed to bring him back to reality. Still shaking, he explained as best he could about the flash and sudden disappearance of Duncan and the elf girl. Just then Blick exited his tunnel. Upon hearing what had happened, he agreed with Kirin and the rest that they should go after them.

They entered the tunnel slowly and carefully, for the young dwarf could not remember the exact spot where his friends vanished. Then he remembered. He had dropped his backpack and left his friend at the spot where the two had disappeared, so he could run faster for help. More torches were lit so they wouldn't stumble around, for this passage was dark.

As they approached the area, they found the other dwarf waiting and holding Tallar's backpack. Blick then called for two volunteers to pass through the portal and see what was on the other side. Then one was to return and report. If none returned everyone would pass through, increasing the odds that one would find their two missing friends. A few minutes later Tallar's friend, a dwarf named McCrom, stepped forward. Stepping up beside him was the young dwarf, who by now had regained his warrior attitude. With their weapons ready and a final look back at their friends, the two stepped through the portal. There was a brief, blinding flash and the two were gone. Now the wait began.

"We must be deep inside the mountain," explained Duncan, "for the heat is becoming unbearable."

"Can you tell where we are?" asked Shannon.

"I'm afraid not," answered the dwarf. "Not until I've seen more of this place."

They walked until they were too tired to continue, so in one of the larger passageways they lay down for a while. Duncan took

first watch and woke Shannon a few hours later. When they had rested enough, they continued. The trek was hot and very taxing, but they kept it up until they reached another large cavern. Here, they rested for the night. They ate some of the by now stale cheese and drank from the only waterskin they had. They would have to find a source of fresh water by tomorrow so, until then, they would have to ration what little bit they had left.

Tallar and McCrom picked themselves up off the ground and looked around. It didn't take them long to find the broken shards of the lamp, along with the piece of cloth and the dagger, left behind by Duncan and Shannon. They also found the arrow mark, scratched into the wall, to indicate the direction that they went.

"One of us must try to return and tell the others that we have found our friends," said McCrom.

"You can go back," Tallar offered. "I will stay and wait for the others in case you don't make it back."

The older dwarf knew that Tallar was frightened and wasn't about to argue with him. McCrom wondered why Duncan and the elf girl hadn't tried to step back into the portal to make their way back. Maybe the portal didn't take anyone back. Now he began to worry too, but he also knew that he had to try or their friends might be lost forever. So picking up his weapon, he stepped back into the portal and vanished. Tallar waited and waited, but no one came. He wanted to leave, but he knew that Blick would somehow come for him sooner or later. Besides, roaming these tunnels alone could be dangerous so he decided that it was best to stay and wait.

Suddenly the light of the portal increased and out fell McCrom. Picking himself up quickly he moved out from in front of the gateway, just as another dwarf came through. One by one they emerged, until everybody was there.

"What took you so long, McCrom?" asked Tallar.

"It seems that the way home, is not as direct as in coming here," answered his friend. "I had to pass through several magical doors until I was back with Blick and the others, but I am here now."

Relieved that his friend was all right, Tallar addressed Blick. "Sir, it seems that the two went down this passage."

"Well then," spoke Blick, "lead the way."

Pleased that Blick had such confidence in him, the fear left him as he took up his position at the front of the group, next to McCrom. And on Blick's orders he led the troop into the tunnel with the hope of catching up to the other two.

Shannon was already awake when Duncan called to her. It had been his watch, but the elf girl hadn't been able to sleep, so she just lay there and rested, until it was time to rise. They ate a small amount of bread and drank the last of the water before heading out into the next passage. As they walked Shannon began to question the dwarf about Teagan.

"What is she like?" she asked.

"Your aunt?" he asked thoughtfully. "She is a very powerful

mage, one that commands real power. Not many could stand against her. I remember the final fight at the Tower of Tophet. She and a small band of elves, including Ruffus, Treymane's uncle, took on a demon's army of battle-hardened orcs. They fought their way into the lowest section and confronted Drastilus, Appolygon's right hand creature, defeating him and shattering the portal. Had she failed, we would not be here today. And then, on the other hand, I've seen her as gentle as a butterfly."

"But she doesn't seem so powerful," interrupted the girl.

"Looks are deceiving," answered the dwarf. "She may have lost some of her power as she grew older, but I still wouldn't recommend pitting your magic against hers." Then stopping and looking directly into her eyes, he continued. "When the time is right, I'm sure you will understand your powers and hers. You will become just as powerful, if not more, when she gives you all of hers."

"When is that supposed to happen?" Shannon asked.

"When the time comes, Teagan will reveal all to you, but not before."

They continued their march through the dark tunnel, lit only by their small lamp. The shadows created from its flame danced and bounced freely from wall to wall, creating an eerie sight like shadow demons dancing to and fro.

Shannon was quietly humming to herself when she suddenly ran into the dwarf's back. Duncan had stopped suddenly. She was about to say something, but the dwarf put his finger in front of his lips to command silence. Quickly he extinguished the lamp. Now the elf girl could see why Duncan was so concerned. Up ahead, deeper in the tunnel a tiny shimmer of light could be seen.

Drawing their weapons, the two proceeded towards the light. As the light grew brighter, Duncan stopped again. "There is another cave up ahead and it has some sort of light. It could be natural, or man-made, or it could also be a trap. Stay close to me and be as quiet as you can."

Shannon needed no prompting from the dwarf on this matter. This was his world, not hers. Stepping out from the dark corridor, Shannon felt a slight tingle. She had gotten used to the box and the sensation that it gave her, but this was different. The tingling was more intense. Shannon whispered what she felt to the dwarf who acknowledged her with a nod of his head.

"Have you noticed that the temperature has dropped slightly?" Duncan whispered the question.

Shannon didn't answer. Her eyes darted from one crevice to another, expecting at any moment something to dart out at them. Farther and farther they crept into the large cave. Though they saw nothing, the sensation that Shannon felt kept increasing. Then she remembered Teagan's words when she was in training. "Force the feeling back to where it started from, or else it will drive you crazy."

Stopping and closing her eyes, Shannon concentrated on pushing the sensation back into a little corner of her mind. It didn't go away completely, but enough so that she could concentrate on what was up ahead.

Blick and the rest of the group had kept up a hard pace as they entered the first cave. Precious time was wasted searching for evidence of their two missing friends.

"I'm afraid that Duncan and Shannon are one whole day ahead of us," Blick stated. "Therefore we will force march half the night and sleep the last half. Only this way can we catch up with them."

Minutes later the party continued towards the other end and another tunnel. Blick had his best tracker with a torch up front to make sure that they didn't lose their friend's tracks in the dust. Who knew how many different tunnels there could be and trekking down the wrong one could lose their friends forever. "What if Shannon and Duncan walked into another teleportal?" the hobbit asked.

"Then we will follow," answered Blick.

The troop fell silent. All that was heard was the sound of leather soled boots slapping the rough stone floor.

Following the left wall, Duncan and the elf girl silently crept forward. Eyes straining to see the other side of the cavern, Duncan stopped again. Putting a cupped hand to one of his ears, he turned to the elf and said. "I think I hear the sound of rushing water, just up ahead."

Shannon agreed, as they continued.

"This feeling is getting stronger as we near that sound," she whispered. "Whatever or whoever is causing it, is getting closer."

Cautiously, they approached what turned out to be an underground river. Duncan knelt down and put his hand into the water. "It's icy cold!" he stated, rubbing his cold hand with his other one to warm it up again. "It seems to come from high up in the Craggs. That's why the temperature is lower here than in the tunnels back there," pointing in the direction from where they came.

Filling their waterskin, they stopped for a bite to eat and when they were finished, the old dwarf suggested that they find some way to cross the river.

"Maybe there's a shallower spot farther downstream, where we can cross," suggested Shannon.

Relighting their lamp, the two began to search the bank of the river for a safe way to the other side. A short time later, they came to a spot where some rocks jutted out from the frigid, fast running water. Stepping carefully, so as not to slip on the wet slimy stones, the two crossed over to the other side. As Shannon stepped onto solid ground the tingling sensation returned. This time it was strong and she had a hard time trying to cope with it. Looking back at the river, where they had just crossed, Shannon saw the stones that let them cross over, disappear under the waterline.

"Come let's get out of here," said Duncan. "Something doesn't feel right. Those stones were there and then they disappeared as if by magic. I've never seen or heard of these things before, so we'd better hurry."

"I'm afraid," Shannon said, trying to shake that eerie feeling from her, "that there will be more strange things happening, before we finish our task."

Putting as much distance as possible between them and the river, the two headed towards the black spot in the far wall. They had to find another tunnel that would lead to the outside.

Kirin was beginning to become concerned at the speed their two companions were travelling. He and the rest of the party had force marched for the better part of two days, sleeping only a few hours here and there. They should have caught up to them by now as they entered the third large cavern. Here they too had noticed that the temperature had cooled down.

"I smell water," Blick stated. "It's still a good day's march, but it's there."

"How could he smell water?" Treymane asked the elf.

"It is a little bit more damp here," said Kirin, "not this dry heat. Maybe that's what he feels."

"Hurrmph." was the only thing the hobbit answered.

They rested at the mouth of the cavern and drank some of their water before trudging on. The troop also followed one wall, keeping their backs to it in case there were to be any trouble.

Suddenly Blick called a halt. He cupped his ears and listened. Treymane, watching the young dwarf, did the same and sure enough, he too could hear the faint sound of rushing water up ahead.

"It is a good sign," said Blick. "At least we can fill our waterskins."

So with renewed vigour, the rescue party rose and headed for the river.

Shannon was happy that this tunnel was much wider than the last. Now they could walk side by side and chat. But the sensation didn't relinquish its hold. When she spoke to Duncan about this, he became concerned.

"It hasn't grown weaker?" he asked.

"No," Shannon answered. "In fact it seems to be getting stronger."

"So then, whatever is causing it still lies ahead of us," Duncan concluded. "From here on, no more talking and keep your ears open for any strange sound."

Eating while they walked, they didn't stop to rest until they found a small alcove in which they could be hidden from view from either end of the tunnel. Feeling fairly safe, Duncan told Shannon that they could rest here a while.

After a brief rest, they continued down the winding corridor, until the tunnel opened up into another cavern. As they were about to step out into the open, something caught Duncan's attention. On the ground, along the left wall, not too far from the opening, he could see someone lying. The form wasn't moving. The old dwarf drew his warhammer and moved towards the prone figure on the ground, but Shannon stopped him. "That feeling of mine has just hit the ceiling. I sense danger."

"It could be that he was hit with a magic spell," Duncan

argued. "Maybe that's what you are feeling, because whoever that is doesn't seem to be alive."

"I don't know," answered Shannon. "But we won't know if we stand around here and do nothing."

The two moved over to where the person was lying. Duncan nudged him with his foot. A soft groan escaped the lips of the bedraggled old man.

"Are you alright?" Duncan asked. "What happened?"

"Water!" cried the old man, as the words escaped his dry and cracked lips. "Please give me water."

Duncan took his metal flagon, which always hung by his side, and filled it with water. He then helped the man to drink. Coughing and sputtering some of the water, the old man managed to swallow most of it.

"What happened to you?" Duncan asked him again.

Speaking just above a whisper, the old man tried to explain.

"I was attacked by something evil," he said. "The vile thing must have thought I was dead and left me here. I would have died, if you two hadn't come along."

"Who are you?" asked Shannon.

"Torin, Jacob Torin is the name," he spoke slowly. "I was exploring these caves, looking for treasure, when I happened upon a stranger. He ate my food and drank my ale and then attacked me. Even though I was well armed and quite handy with my sword, the stranger overpowered me. He threw me against the wall and I fell unconscious. Thinking me dead, he left. Took all my findings and weapons with him."

"All right," Duncan said, as he helped prop up the old man into a sitting position. "You just get some rest, while my friend and I check around to see if that stranger isn't lurking around."

The old man closed his eyes as the two friends began to search in a large semi-circle, trying to find a trail that led away from the old man, each time widening the hunt. When they were sure that they were out of hearing range of the old man, Shannon spoke.

"Something isn't right," she said. "I can feel it."

"I know," answered Duncan. "There aren't any tracks about except for those of our own. Even as we entered the cave, I didn't see any. So where was this fight and how did the victor leave, without leaving any tracks. If his enemy was a demon, you can be sure that he would be dead and not lying there for someone to find."

"Then we'd better be on our toes and sleep with one eye open from now on," Shannon suggested.

When they returned to the old man, they told him that they couldn't find any trace of whoever attacked him. They reassured him that they would do their best to protect him. A tiny smile crossed Jacob's face as he turned away from them. At the same time his eyes briefly glowed red. "Soon, you'll have them. Soon," he thought.

At that time, the rest of the group had bedded down for a half night's sleep. They had found the river, but the water was too

cold to swim across, so after they had rested, the party would have to find a way to cross.

Treymane sat quietly fumbling with his new weapon, thinking about Shannon. He had become quite fond of her, even though her feelings didn't match his. Smiling to himself, he pledged himself to her protection. That is, if she wanted it.

Kirin too, felt a loss. He enjoyed being with Shannon and she with him. He promised himself that he wouldn't leave her side if and when they were together again.

Blick, on the other hand, paced the ground, mumbling to himself. He had made a promise to Duncan and Teagan that he would watch out for the elf girl and he had failed. How could he ever face the old woman again, if Shannon were lost to the caves and tunnels of the Craggs? As the group slept, Blick continued to pace and think. Something was bothering him. Suddenly it struck him. They should have passed the secret entrance leading to the Tower of Tophet by now. They had been walking for nearly three days and hadn't come across it yet. That meant only one thing. They were not in the same mountain range. Or at least not in the same area. Could it be that the teleport was put there to throw them off-course? He walked over to where Kirin and the hobbit were sitting and spoke to them.

"We have to catch up with Shannon and Duncan as quickly as possible," he said. "I don't think we are going in the right direction. Someone wanted us to go this way. Think! We haven't run into anyone since we teleported three days ago."

"You may be right," Kirin broke in. "And Shannon may be in trouble as we speak."

Blick called the rest of the men together and told them of his thoughts. They all agreed to cut short their rest and find a way across the river. Runners were dispatched to check out the bank of the river, to find out if there was a shallow enough spot for them to cross safely. In the meantime the rest looked over their gear to make sure everything was intact and secured in case they had to swim across.

A cheer went up, as one of the runners returned with the news that a crossing had been found.

Jacob's eyes flew open. He could sense them coming. They have found a way across even though the stones, which had aided the two earlier, had not reappeared. He knew that they were about a half a day behind. Pretending to be in pain he pulled himself up into a sitting position.

"You shouldn't move," Shannon said looking quite concerned.

"No! No!" he answered back. "We must leave. There is danger if we stay here."

"What danger?" asked Duncan. "I haven't seen a soul since we entered these forsaken tunnels. And how do you know that there is danger?"

"I come from a village deep within the Wildlands," Jacob said, lying through his teeth. "I am the Shaman of my tribe. I can feel impending danger. Don't ask me how, I just do. Come, help

me up and let's get out of here."

Not wanting to raise the suspicions of the old man, Shannon and Duncan helped him to his feet and left the area. Shannon noticed how quickly Jacob began to regain his strength. In a short time, the old man went from hanging on the girl's free shoulder, to walking on his own. The old dwarf too had noticed the stranger's remarkable improvement.

As they approached the river, Shannon asked Jacob if this was the same river they had crossed back in the previous cave.

"Yes," he answered. "From here, always keep to the left of the river. That is the way out of these tunnels." He felt nothing for the two friends as he gave them this information, for he knew that they would soon both be dead and no one would ever find their bodies. Telling them the truth would make his job easier by gaining their confidence. He had been sent here to aid Malodor in securing the box. He himself could not touch it, for it was protected by a magic spell, but he was there to make sure that none of Shannon's friends would ever find her or the box. And he would wait here until the dark druid himself appeared to retrieve it.

"We must hurry," Jacob urged. "When we reach the end of this cave, take the tunnel on the left. That's the way out."

The three hurried as fast as they could, almost dragging the old man with them.

When they reached the end of the cave, they entered the tunnel on the left which they followed until they reached a larger chamber filled with stone walls. Jacob explained that the dwarfs of long ago were the ones who built these walls, to confuse their enemies. Over time, most of the maze had fallen into ruin and finding your way out of it, was much easier than it used to be. Keeping to the left as the old man had instructed, they left the chamber of walls and entered into yet another darkened tunnel. They kept up this gruelling pace until they felt that the old man needed some rest.

At the same time, Blick and his party entered the vast cavern. Here the river confronted them again. They searched and finally found a way to cross. Although the river here wasn't shallow enough to walk across; it was the narrowest part they found. Tying one end of a rope around the waist the heaviest dwarf and the other end around himself, Blick jumped into the icy water and hastily swam to the other side. Still shivering bitterly from the cold water, he managed to tie his end of the rope around a large boulder, embedded firmly in the ground. One by one each made their way across, hanging by their hands and legs, just inches above the rushing river. Each one knew that if they lost their grip and fell into the swift, icy water, the current would soon carry the poor soul to his or her death.

Soon all were safe and on the other side.

"We will all rest here for a short while," Blick said. "Then I'll send out some of my men to find our friends' tracks. Once they are found, we will continue our pursuit."

It was a long time before one of the trackers returned with

the news that they had picked up the trail left behind by Shannon and Duncan. He also informed the young dwarf that another set of tracks was found beside those of Duncan and the elf girl. This concerned Kirin and Roma, for they didn't quite know what to make of it. Did they find someone in the cavern, or had they been surprised and taken prisoner by someone or something? They wasted no time in striking out after their friends.

Shannon and the other two had been walking for most of the time stopping only for brief periods to rest and take in some food. Jacob seemed to be getting stronger as time passed. This worried Shannon. She would speak with Duncan as soon as she could. She tried to fall back a few paces to warn the old dwarf of her suspicions, but the constant urging from Jacob made communications with the dwarf almost impossible. The old man was either telling them to move faster or dropped back to ask if either of them needed help.

They were almost exhausted when they came to a larger tunnel that split off in two directions.

"Take the one on your left," the old man advised them. "There is a safe place not too far from here. Once there we can all get a long and well-deserved rest without anyone sneaking up on us."

"You seem to know this place very well," said Duncan.

Smiling down at the dwarf, Jacob said, "I've spent many years down in these tunnels. I've searched for treasure all these years and never found any." Then taking the lead he added, "I even searched for the fabled Ice Dragon's treasure, but it must be buried so deep within these here mountains that it will take another lifetime before I find it."

Duncan's eyes opened wide at the old man's words. He suddenly realized where they were. They were nowhere near the Tower of Tophet. They were farther north of it. The teleport had taken them into the northern reaches of the Crag.

The two watched the old man's gnarled hands running over the almost smooth granite walls until he touched a loose stone. When he pressed it, a portion of the wall disappeared into darkness. The old man urged them to enter. Once inside he turned to them and said. "I will backtrack to see if anyone is still following." Seeing the worried faces in front of him he quickly added, "Do not worry. You saved my life and now I will try to do the same. I will close the door behind me as I leave. Keep your lamp lit, for it will be dark until I return." He then left the small chamber and reached for the stone in the wall and the door closed.

Blick and the party were making good progress although they didn't know it, nor were they aware of a demon waiting just outside a chamber that imprisoned their friends. Still they pressed on. They had entered the chamber of walls and found the exit. They were now deep within the last tunnel, where death was waiting just up ahead.

Taller and McCrom were leading the party and were some thirty paces in front when the flickering light from their torch fell

upon a dark figure blocking their path. Not knowing what to make of the object just outside their reach, McCrom grasped his warhammer and drew his shield in front of him. Taller, holding the torch, just held on to his battle-ax.

Suddenly the dark figure rose up in front of them. It filled the entire tunnel. The two stopped dead in their tracks, as the demon's eyes glowed a blood-red. Then it attacked. A shriek that almost blew out the dwarf's eardrums alerted the others. Treymane quickly found and loaded a special magical stone and readied himself for the fight to come. Roma also knew that the sound coming from deep inside the tunnel wasn't human. She too readied her bow with a magical arrow. The two pushed forward in front of the others. They knew that they stood a better chance against this menace than the rest. Now, Roma wished that Shannon were here to help.

For a moment, the two friends were relieved that the old man was gone, but then a new fear arose. What if he never returns? What if this was a trap? For some time they searched for another way out, but found none. After a while they gave up and rested, waiting for the old man to return. They waited and waited, but he never came back.

"How are we going to get out?" asked Shannon.

"Don't worry," reassured Duncan. "I know we'll find a way out of here. Even if we have to dig our way out."

"And how do you propose we dig through this solid rock, when we have no tools?" asked Shannon.

"We will find a way out," Duncan reassured her again, patting his warhammer. "Look, if this is a trap and our friend knows how to hide in here, don't you think that he would leave himself an escape route?"

This made sense to Shannon. Nobody would hide themselves in here unless there was a way out. They then renewed their efforts and searched the other walls.

Jacob sat outside the room smiling to himself. "This was too easy," he thought. He half expected to have to fight, killing the girl and the dwarf, but now he could leave it up to Malodor. He couldn't wait to get back to that other plane he loved so much. He would send the message to the dark druid soon, but for now he would just gloat, as most demons would do after catching what was considered a formidable prey. Yes, he had plenty of time.

He just sat there resting, letting his mind wander, totally unaware of a new danger fast approaching from deep within the tunnel.

The prickly sensation made the hairs on the back of Shannon's neck stand up straight. She knew that Jacob, or whoever he was, was about to attack someone coming down the tunnel. She had no idea that it was her friends who were in danger.

"Have you ever fired a bow?" she asked Duncan.

"Yes," answered the dwarf. "Why?"

"Jacob is not human," Shannon began. "His magic is too

strong for just a Shaman. I just felt his magic through these walls and it's a lot stronger than he said it was."

Frantically searching the other walls for some sort of lever or latch, the dwarf tripped a release stone and part of the back wall opened before them. Grabbing their equipment they left their prison and stepped out into a tunnel. They soon found themselves back at the mouth of the tunnel they had been in earlier. Shannon could hear the eerie laughter of Jacob's voice and the scream of someone in his or her death throes. Duncan and the elf launched themselves into the tunnel, trying to get to the melee as quickly as possible.

Duncan grabbed the elf's arm and pulled her back hard just before she ran into the demon.

"STOP!" Shannon screamed.

The demon turned slowly and when he saw her, he laughed.

"I see you found your way out," he growled. "No matter, when I'm finished here, there will be no one left."

He turned back to McCrom who was on the floor trying to protect himself with his shield. His warhammer lay on the ground where he had dropped it when Tallar fell to the demon. Just then the hobbit and Roma came into the light with their weapons ready. They fired. Another scream escaped from Jacob's lips. Only this time, it was a scream of pain. Horrible pain. Then another scream, as another magical arrow from Duncan's bow found its mark. He hadn't counted on magical weapons. He never thought that these people had any. He would have to strike quickly and decisively, before they could weaken him even more. Then another stone and two more arrows hit him. He went down to his knees. Using the wall to steady himself, the demon tried to stand. Another missile hit him sending him to the tunnel floor. Now he was screaming in such pain that everyone's eardrums were about to burst. Shannon was amazed that the creature wouldn't die.

Acting out of sheer desperation, Shannon held the Staff of the Sun above her head and ran up to the demon.

"DIE!" she screamed, as she brought the staff down across his shoulders.

A roar that almost collapsed the tunnel was heard coming from the demon as flames engulfed him. Everyone fell back into the tunnel as the blue flame slowly and painfully consumed Jacob.

Only when the flames died out, did they dare to venture near the spot where the demon had fallen. The magic stones and arrows had disappeared in the flames. Treymane had given up another ten years of his life to save his friends. Roma and Duncan each had fired three magical arrows. Now with only a few arrows left, the party was reunited. But not without the loss of Tallar.

After wrapping the dead dwarf in a blanket, the party continued down the tunnel past the wall where Shannon and Duncan had been imprisoned by Jacob and into another darkened tunnel.

"How much further?" asked the hobbit.

"I don't know," answered Shannon. "But Jacob did say to stay left in the tunnels."

"How can you believe a demon?" asked Roma.

“Because he had no reason to lie,” answered the elf girl. “He had planned to kill us all, so telling the truth wouldn’t have mattered. What he didn’t count on was the magic that we possessed. That was his downfall.”

“Teagan will be proud of you when she hears that you killed a demon from the netherworld,” Duncan said with a grin from ear to ear. He too, was proud of her. She had saved everyone. For if Shannon had run away, they all would be dead back there in the tunnel.

They kept on walking, putting as much distance as they could between them and the dead incubus.

The next day they were still in the same tunnel, but by noon it opened up into another vast cavern. The river was there in the middle of the huge chamber. Here they rested and ate. They were now rationing their food, trying to stretch it as far as possible.

Blick sent out two men to scout the cave and find an exit. He and the others had noticed that the temperature had dropped during the day and wanted to camp here for the night. It would be the first night that they would need a blanket to keep warm.

Hours later the scouts returned with the news that the exit led to a stairwell leading down into the mountain. Blick gathered the group around him and told them of his thoughts about where they were.

“I think that we are somewhere north of the Tower of Tophet,” he stated.

“What makes you think that?” asked Shannon.

“For one thing,” Blick answered, “we should have passed the secret entrance to the tower and we haven’t seen it so far. Second, the air is getting colder as we trek through these tunnels. Remember when we first started, it was warm and now we need a blanket to keep ourselves warm. Just how far north I can’t say, until we reach the outside. Tonight we will spend the night here, where it’s still bearable and in the morning, we will try to find a way to the outside.”

Guards were posted and the rest slept until they were awakened the next day. Once more, waterskins were filled and the last bit of food was eaten. They would have to find a fresh supply within the next two or three days, or face starvation.

Everyone was in good spirits as they broke camp and headed towards the tunnel stairwell.

“It’ll be good to have the sun beating down on our faces again,” said Roma. “I can’t see how these dwarfs can live without it. I love the green forests, with its animals. Even if some of them are perilous.”

“Don’t get your hopes up too high,” whispered Blick. “If we are where I think we are, we may be in more trouble than back there.” He pointed with his head. “The cold may be more

hazardous than the tunnels without sunlight.”

Smiling at Roma, he ran up ahead to talk to the men guiding them to the stairwell. Shannon saw them nod and break into a trot leaving the rest to catch up more slowly.

“I’ve sent them ahead to enter the stairwell,” he said to Kirin who eyed him rather suspiciously. “We don’t want any more surprises.”

They had walked about half a day, when Blick called for a rest. From here, one could see a dark hole in the wall, indicating another tunnel. By now the temperature had dropped drastically and those who had cloaks, put them on. The rest wore their sleeping blankets to keep them warm. By the time they reached the stairs, they could see their own breath hanging in front of their faces in the cold, crisp air.

The steps, though large enough, were wet and slippery. The river rushing past them made such a roaring noise that talking was impossible. Slowly, one by one, taking one step at a time, they descended down into the mountain. There would be no rest here, for everything was wet. Even the walls were slippery and one’s hand would slide right off. At one point the river turned into the mountain and disappeared, but the stairs continued. Here ice from the splashing waters had begun to form, making the descent even more perilous. Blick suggested that they should tie some cloth around the soles of their boots, for leather and ice made for some hazardous conditions. Maybe even life threatening. Some of the dwarfs went on ahead breaking the ice with their warhammers. This helped somewhat, but still, they couldn’t run or turn fast without taking the express route to the bottom.

Finally, they reached the bottom where Blick’s advanced guard was waiting. Just up ahead was an opening where sunlight could be seen shining into the stairwell. With spirits lifted, everyone made a beeline for the mouth of the cave. Exiting the dark tunnel, they all stopped. In front of them was the sight that Blick had feared they would see. As far as the eye could see, a blanket of white snow covered the ground. A vast snow-covered plain lay ahead of them. Shannon was about to step down into the snow, when Kirin stepped in front, stopping her.

“That is not the way,” he said.

“Then which way?” she asked.

“That way,” Kirin answered, pointing to the mountains. “The plain is part of the wild lands. You don’t want to go there.”

Shannon knew better than to argue. She also knew that he was right. This was his world and not hers. They stayed for a short time, at the mouth of the tunnel until they had a better bearing from the sun and then set out in a southwesterly direction.

★



The Last Mage continues in WARP 72

Science Fiction can do all sorts of things with Time, but in the Real World, time's arrow moves only in one direction, and in its relentless passage, sweeps away even the best of us – the fans and creators alike. In this issue, we celebrate the life of the foremost SF fan, Forrest J Ackerman.

Forrest J. Ackerman

The most famous sci-fi fan in the world, Forrest J Ackerman, who is said to have coined the very term “sci-fi,” died of heart failure at his home in Los Angeles on December 4, 2008. He was 92. He was married to Wendy “Wendy” Wahrman, who died in 1990. The couple had no children.



*Forrest J Ackerman at the very first World Con, 1939, wearing a costume inspired by his favourite movie, **Things to Come**.*

4SJ, or the Ackermmonster, or 4e, but most often F o r r y , was possessed of an insatiable appetite for all things science fiction, fantasy, and horror. His legacy includes an unparalleled m e m o r a b i l i a c o l l e c t i o n accumulated over a lifetime—more than 300,000 books, magazines, posters, costumes, models, and film props once housed

in a former home dubbed the Ackermansion, to which many thousands of genre fans have made the pilgrimage. Ackerman sold the house a few years ago to help pay for the increasing cost of his medical care.

Born in Los Angeles in 1916, Ackerman's interest in the genre was kindled in the early to mid-1920s. The collecting bug took hold upon his discovery of *Amazing Stories* and other science fiction magazines. His favourite film was Fritz Lang's 1927 silent masterpiece, *Metropolis*.

“He was the world's biggest fan,” horror writer Stephen King said of Ackerman. “If you had been to his house, you wouldn't doubt it.” An enthusiast, a collector, rather than a creator, according to King, Ackerman was nevertheless greatly influential in propelling the popularity of science

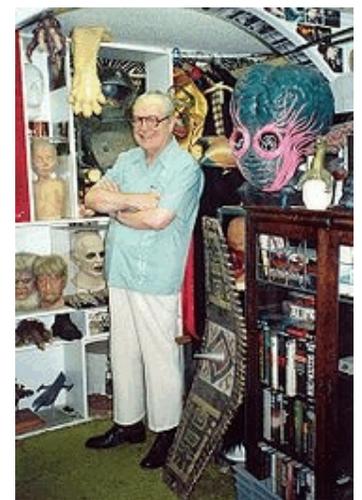
fiction, fantasy, and horror through his definitive fan magazine *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, which the unrepentant punster wrote and edited from the late 1950s to the early 1980s. The publication, illustrated with black and white stills from Ackerman's collection, ignited the imaginations of a younger generation of fans that included such future genre stars as King, Steven Spielberg, Peter Jackson, Tim Burton, and George Lucas.

After a stint in the army during World War II, Ackerman founded a literary agency and represented a great many genre writers over the years, including such notables as Ray Bradbury, H.P. Lovecraft, and controversial Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard. Ackerman himself wrote some 50 short stories and appeared as an extra in numerous sci-fi films. In the 1960s, he organised for the U.S. market the translation into English of the German *Perry Rhodan* stories, the longest running science fiction series in history. Wife Wendy, who spoke German, did most of the translation.

The creator of the comic book character Vampirella, Ackerman was inducted into the Horror Hall of Fame in 1990. Actor Robert “Freddy Krueger” Englund introduced him at the investment ceremony as “the Hugh Hefner of horror.” Among other honours conferred was a Hugo Award in 1953 as the leading fan personality.

Ackerman was the first to attend a convention in costume, thus inaugurating

what has become a fine fannish tradition. Montrealers had opportunity to meet the man in person a decade ago; he was the Fan Guest of Honour at ConCept/Boréal 1998. He recalled that a radio announcer's use of the term “hi-fi” in 1954 occasioned him to come up with the term “sci-fi.” ☆



Forry, in his Ackermansion

CAPTAIN JACK'S CHRISTMAS

It had been a slow week at Torchwood and the staff was sitting around listening to Christmas carols on the radio. The conversation came around to everyone's personal favourite Christmas song. It was then that Jack wandered in. The titles put out were pretty much what you might expect: White Christmas by Bing Crosby, The Christmas Song by Nat King Cole, Carol of the Bells and a surprise selection, Little Saint Nick by the Beach Boys but it was Jack that really surprised everyone.

"My favourite is Snoopy's Christmas."

"I know that one: Snoopy takes his plane up on Christmas Eve and runs into the Red Baron. When Snoopy's plane gets engine trouble, instead of shooting him down, the Red Baron forces him to land and they share a drink before going their separate ways."

"That's the one. Only it wasn't champagne we shared it was brandy."

Jack was about to leave for his office when Ianto blocked the door.

"Not so fast, Sir."

"Yeah, you're not getting out of it this time. You've dropped the names of some pretty celebrities you claim to have known but sharing drinks with the Red Baron on Christmas Eve? This time we want details."

Seeing he wasn't getting out of this one so easily, Jack sat down and started to tell his story.

"Not much to tell really. It was December 1916. I was piloting a Sopwith Camel, trying to get back to friendly skies when I saw another plane coming up behind me. I recognised the markings as belonging to the Red Baron.

When snow began to fall, both our engines started to

act up and we were both forced to land in some farmer's field. Like the song says, we both heard the church bells from the village below.

Manfred, that's his first name by the way, and I took shelter in a barn and spent the next few hours toasting Christmas and each other. Just before dawn the snow let up and we went our own way. I never saw him again: he was shot down over Belgium in July 1917.

Years later, I was at a New Year's Eve party, sharing a drink with Charles Shultz. I told him the story, saying the pilot was my father, and he used it in his strip. The song came along in the sixties."

"And nobody knows about this historical event? You could have been famous!"

"This was after my time with The Doctor. I don't age the way normal humans do and I can't die. The last thing I needed was the whole world taking a close look at my life.

OK people, time to get back to work."

The next day, December 24th, after everyone had left to spend Christmas with their families, Jack went back to his office and on his desk was a gift. The card just said 'Merry Christmas' and inside the bag was a bottle of brandy and a figurine of Snoopy as a WWI flying ace, piloting his dog house.

☆



A STAR TREK CHRISTMAS

The Andorian sat down across the table from the Vulcan.

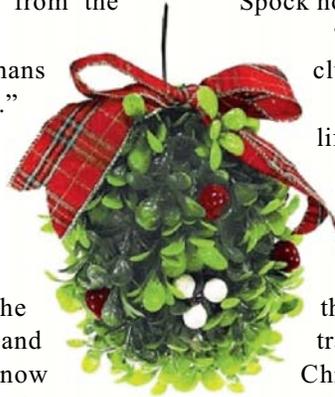
"Mr Spock, you have worked with these humans for many years. I was hoping you could help me."

"I will do my best. How can I be of assistance?"

"I believe I have just been propositioned by a female crewmember."

"Please elaborate."

"As you know, in Andorian society, it is the female that does the advances in a relationship and just a few moments ago a female ensign I do not know came up to me, said mistletoe, kissed me on the cheek and left the room giggling. What am I supposed to make of that?"



Spock nodded in understanding.

"Where you by chance standing under a clump of greenery, hung from the ceiling?"

"I believe there was some form of plant life over my head. What does that have to do with my situation?"

"Everything. As you may be aware, the humans will be celebrating one of their holidays soon. Kissing under the mistletoe, the green plant you saw, is one of the many traditions associated with the holiday called Christmas. When two people, usually a man and a woman, meet under this plant they are expected to kiss. It is considered a show of good will and affection.

While some couples use mistletoe as an excuse to

indulge in amorous behaviour, in your case, a kiss on the cheek, it is considered merely as a friendly gesture without any lasting consequences.

If this behaviour disturbs you, I recommend you avoid standing under it. If you wish to learn more about Christmas and it's traditions, I'm sure you will find what you need in the ship's library."

"Thank you Mr Spock, you have been a great help. What about you? What is your reaction to kissing under the mistletoe?"

"I avoid it at all costs."



Reality Check: No, you really don't want to live there...

Joe Aspler

For those who would like to live in a medieval, alternate history, or low-tech society

Part III: Modern cataract surgery – better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick!

Readers may remember the 1986 film *The Name of the Rose*, based on Umberto Eco's novel. The film starred Sean Connery as an intellectual monk trying to solve a murder in a monastery in 1327.

include the environment, age, heredity, and injuries to the eye (among others).

Cataract surgery has been known since ancient times. A skilful surgeon would displace the lens (without anaesthetic, of course), allowing vision to be restored with the help of very thick eyeglasses. The operation could just as easily cause total blindness or death from infection.

Now to the 21st century. Early last year, I noticed that my distance vision was deteriorating. My ophthalmologist informed me that I was developing cataracts in both eyes – in my case, due to heredity. Late last year, my optometrist informed me that new eyeglasses would not longer help. So off I went for cataract surgery.

The success rate is very high (at least 99%). The only real side effect for me is that I am no longer incredibly myopic, and the new correction in my eyeglasses is very mild. That means that I have lost an ability that is very useful for a photographer and printing specialist. I once could examine slides, negatives, and prints by putting them about 1" from my eye. Now, I have to use a magnifying glass, like everyone else.

Today, a cataract operation takes about 20 minutes, under local anaesthetic. A replacement lens made from a synthetic plastic is inserted through a small incision in the cornea. The natural lens of the eye is first disintegrated by an ultrasonic probe and the pieces are removed. So modern cataract surgery is still, in its own way, a poke in the eye with a sharp stick.

But better today than in the Middle Ages!



Removing cataracts, the old-fashioned way.

One of the villains is the monastery's blind librarian. He looks at the world through eyes whose lenses have turned white. Early physicians named the condition a "cataract", since it was likened to looking through a waterfall. Deterioration of the natural, clear crystalline protein of the lens of the eye is a common condition in the elderly (or not so elderly) today. Causes for cataracts

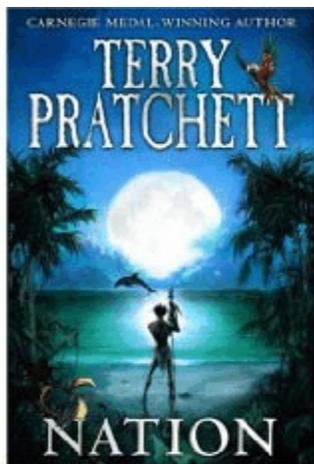


BOOKS

Reviewed Cathy Palmer-Lister

**Nation, by Terry Pratchett
Random House, 2008**

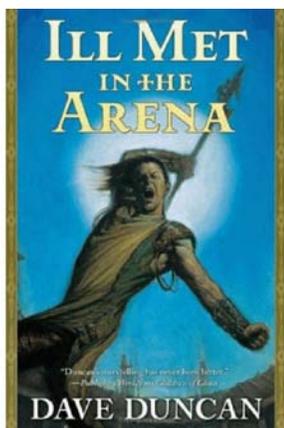
In a world that's quite a bit like ours in Darwin's time (except for a few significant details!), on a small archipelago in the Great Southern Pelagic Ocean, Mau is making his way home from the Boys' Island. When he arrives, he will be a man, and the whole Nation will celebrate his coming of age.



On a ship called the Sweet Judy, which in spite of a good and decent captain, has a crew that is anything but sweet, Daphne is on her way to another small island where her father is keeping the flag flying for the Empire. A Tsunami sweeps away Mau's Nation, and hurls the Sweet Judy off course and well into the trees of the same island. Two very young people find themselves alone, bereft of family, friends, community. Communication is difficult, misunderstandings nearly fatal,

but the two start to build a new Nation.

Building a Nation is a pretty ambitious endeavour, especially when you are building it from flotsam and jetsam, and having to defend it from Raiders, Pirates, and all the while the spirits of the Grandfathers are screaming in your ear: YOU MUST RESTORE THE GOD ANCHORS! YOU MUST SING THE MORNING CHANTS! AND WHERE IS OUR BEER?!



**Ill Met in the Arena
by Dave Duncan
TOR, 2008**

The noble class of Aureity breeds children for psychic powers. Young males compete in the Arena to show off their skills in hopes of being offered employment and possibly marriage to a noblewomen. Women are rulers of this world, for only women can read minds, and knowledge is power.

A noblewoman has put a Doom on Quirt. Although no longer a young man, he is competing in the games again under an alias to work his way into Humate's circle. Humate is perhaps one of the strongest minds ever to compete, but Quirt has many tricks up his sleeve, and he has a score to settle with that family. And there's a lady's hand to win, besides!

**Riders of the Storm
by Julie E. Czerneda
DAW, 2008**

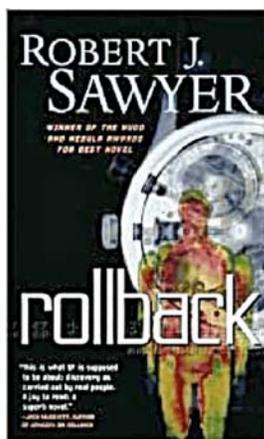


The second book in the Stratification series, *Riders of the Storm* sees Miri's people out on the road again. They find refuge in an abandoned, ruined village. Who destroyed it, why? Aryl is young and inexperienced, but she has a Talent that puts her at the head of her Clan, such as it is, since they were exiled. There are three sentient species on this planet, Aryl's Om'Ray, the Tikitik, and the Oud. There is a

balance between the three, or so it is claimed by the Tikitik and Oud, but mostly the Agreement seems to be about balance between two species at the cost of the third.

Into this precarious "balance" come Humans who are digging into the past, with the encouragement of the Oud. And there's Enris, an Om'Ray from another Clan seeking a mate. The ruined village, Sona, is suddenly a popular destination for other displaced Om'Ray. Aryl has rather too much responsibility thrust upon her for such a young woman who's not yet even a Chosen.

**Rollback by Robert J. Sawyer
TOR, 2007**



A message comes from the stars, but it's encrypted. Dr. Halifax had interpreted the first message from the Dracons, so naturally, all eyes turn to her, but she's eighty-seven, now. A wealthy industrialist offers her a rollback, a very expensive procedure which will rejuvenate her, but Sarah won't accept unless the procedure is also offered to her husband, Don. In a cruel twist of fate, the rollback works for Don, but not for Sarah. As Sarah races against time to decipher the message which seems to have been

personally directed to her, the couple struggle to deal with a 60-year age difference. ☆

Answers to women behind the masks (from pages 39 & 40)

5: A-3, B-4, C-2, D-1

#6: A-3, B-2, C-4, D-1

REVIEWS OF MOVIES, TELEVISION, DVDS

Wall-E

Reviewed by Mireille Dion



All in all, I quite enjoyed the movie, although it wasn't quite what I thought it would be once in space. I thought it would be a little less childish and a little more subtle, but it wasn't the case. The messages are big and loud on the screen, and Wall-E and Eva reminded me a lot of naive children.

That being said, though, it was still a good entertainment with its top-notch animation, its particular vision of the future and the rocambolesque misadventures of the robots. Those were particularly unpredictable, which added to my viewing pleasure. There were a few comical situations as well, but mostly, it was just a very touching, very human and moral tale that I hope, will leave its mark on the mind of the people it hopes to influence.

All in all, it is a very creative and delightful movie that is totally worth being seen on the silver screen, but more on the special-prices nights than for the full price of a ticket. ☆

Hellboy II - The Golden Army

Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre

Like many people, I never went to see the first Hellboy flick when it was on the big screen. I bought the DVD because it was reasonably priced and was astonished to see how good a movie it was. So, I went to see Hellboy II, and am happy to report that it is just as great.

Good plot, great characters, superb special effects. Everything you need to enjoy a couple of hours in style. The general consensus amongst fans is that the director's insistence on being faithful to the original comic book has much to do with the movie's success, and I would tend to agree.

Even if you do not know the characters' background, you cannot help but to smile at such scenes as the stroll through the



The Tooth Fairy

Troll Market, in which the non-human heroes are delighted to finally find a place where they blend in and nobody pays attention to them!

I especially liked the movie for its inclusion of monsters that are not run-of-the-mill. The tooth fairies, for instance, are nasty little creatures that can devour a human whole, starting with the teeth (shudder). The elves living in an abandoned factory also make for great eye candy, and the Golden Army of the sub-title is truly a magnificent – if deadly – sight to behold. I predict that the DVD

for this one will do equally well. ☆

Star Wars – The Clone Wars

Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre



When I saw the preview for this movie, I got the impression that it was going to a fancied-up version of the Clone Wars cartoon series. Not so. While the story does occur in the same time period, between Episodes II and III, the plot is entirely original and not bad at all.

The most striking feature of this animated movie is the style chosen. With modern computer generated imagery, it is now possible to produce scenes that are hard to tell from live action. The producers opted instead for a very refined – almost abstract – look. All the characters are instantly recognizable, but they – most of them at least – have a very striking aspect.

The action is as fast paced as in the live action movies and, for those who like such stuff, there are plenty of battle scenes. There is a bit of occasional comedy thrown in, but I think that they overdid it with the dumb battle droid jokes.

So, another style entirely, but still a worthy addition to the saga in my opinion. ☆

Laughing at Star Wars

Two spoofs reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre

In the thirty-plus years since the first movie of the Star Wars saga has been released, the total amount of parodies has been such that, taken together, they probably outweigh the original material. Some of it is even available on DVD now; and here are two of them.

Blue Harvest

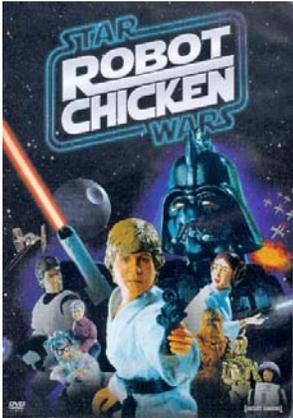
A *Family Guy* spoof, it features the cast of the animated comedy show as characters from *Episode IV: A New Hope*. The writers and conceptors of the show had a great admiration for the movie, and tried to be as faithful to it as possible. For this reason, the whole thing is not nearly as funny as it could have been.

Some of the scenes, especially those involving spaceships, are so well done that they almost look rotoscoped over the live footage. A bit of this might have been acceptable as a tribute, but I think they lost sight of the fact that they were supposed to be producing a spoof and went overboard. The jokes are typical *Family Guy* stuff, meaning that they lean a bit too much towards the crude and the gross for my taste. I was quite disappointed, and do not recommend buying this DVD unless you are a huge fan of the



series.

The authors now regret having chosen the name *Blue Harvest* (the shooting title of *Return of the Jedi*), because they are planning to make a sequel and it would have made a more appropriate title.



Robot Chicken Star Wars Special

Despite having won an Emmy Award, this series is less well known, possibly because it has not been shown in Prime Time. The Star Wars Special is definitely hilarious – at least for me – and is of high artistic quality. Using traditional stop motion techniques, a number of vignettes were produced, drawing on all the movies of the saga for inspiration.

While a bit uneven, most of the sketches are quite funny and instantly recognizable. The final number, “Empire on Ice”, is a riot and has great lyrics. The “making off” segment of the DVD is fascinating and a must to view, showing how quite believable miniature sets can be built with ordinary items. Well worth the ten bucks or so of the cover price.

☆

Starship Troopers 3: Marauder Reviewed by Sébastien Mineau

Starship Troopers 3: Marauder is all what the second installment of the series should have been.

The story actually picks up a few years after the end of the first movie with friendly character Johnny Rico. Now based on a remote planet, the bugs are still waging a destructive war against human kind. For some reason, the Sky Marshall (President of the Federation if you will) decides to drop in for a visit on the front line.

Sky Marshall Anoke and a few members of his crew, barely escape the front line only to end up trapped on a desert planet populated by, you guessed it, bugs.

That’s when Rico and his friend in the higher echelons of the federation decide to launch an un-authorized rescue operation.

I’ll save you the punch line because *Starship Troopers 3: Marauder* is actually not a bad movie at all, definitely worth seeing if you appreciated the first movie. You can also witness Jolene Blalock (who used to be a Vulcan on *Enterprise*) actually demonstrate emotions.

This is definitely worth a buy, rent if you’re not certain and for those who didn’t particularly enjoy the first movie, wait until it shows on TV.

But I had a fun time watching the movie. It’s that kind of movie that you can watch without necessarily needing the whole



background story and, yes, you can actually skip the second movie and go straight to the third if you feel like having a movie night.

Enjoy watching it and keep your hopes down if you’re a fan of the original novel, that way you won’t be disappointed. ☆



Knight Rider Reviewed by Mireille Dion

I love it, I love it, I love it!

Of course, I agree that this show is no *Fringe* or *Heroes*, and that not all 80s ideas should be brought back to life, but *KR* is not amongst those; it certainly is much better than last year’s attempt to revive *Bionic Woman*, or the boring attempt to reinvent *Flash Gordon*, and it definitely measures up to the successful returns of *Die Hard*, *Terminator*, and *Transformers*. In fact, this new *KR* series is like giving a welcomed second breath to one of the coolest concepts of the 80’s while also giving it a high-tech edge that is perfectly adapted to the computerized world we live in. In fact, I would even say that now is, in fact, the perfect time to play with that franchise as the world of technology we live in is, even more than in the 80’s, practically limitless for a computer like *Kitt*.

And what of the car itself? Cool doesn’t even begin to cover how I feel whenever we are inside the car, watching several screens on the windshield, or all the tricks that the car has under its hood. Okay, like many viewers, I’m still not sure about the ‘combat mode’ thing, but other than that, the new capabilities are so much better than anything the 80s could come up with. I especially love the application of nanotechnology to the concept; talk about a high-tech twist!

As for the lone rider, well, he isn’t so lonely anymore, which is more realistic for the era we live in, and his constant interactions with colleagues, his ex-girlfriend and a supercomputer give several different layers to the series. I definitely enjoy what is being done with the characters and the humour is what I expect from a show that doesn’t take itself too seriously. I know that some don’t like the characterizations, but personally, I have a lot of fun watching this old teenager interact with high-technology and women, while being a very capable fighter who doesn’t remember his mysterious past. He is very charismatic and human, and as far as I’m concerned, when not fighting, he is a guy just like many guys I cross path with on my way to work.

That is, of course, until we delve into his black ops past. Then, the serious tone of the series begins, and I really can’t wait to see how *Kitt* will help him uncover his past memories. All in all, kuddos to the whole team for doing such a great entertaining job and I look forward to many, many years of *KR* fun and adventures! I mean, if *Smallville* could last eight years while beating around the bush with a flying hero that still can’t fly after seven seasons, surely a high-tech, transformable, intelligent talking car and his relatively light-hearted former black-ops driver, the ex-future girlfriend and a whole crew of new helpers can do at least this much, if not more.

☆

UPCOMING MOVIES

Compiled by Fernster, Dec. 2008
(Movie opening dates may change)

Jan 23, 2009, Underworld: Rise of the Lycans: In the Dark Ages, a young Lycan named Lucian emerges as a powerful leader who rallies the werewolves to rise up against Viktor, the cruel vampire king who has enslaved them.

Feb 6, 2009, Fanboys: Four "Star Wars" fanboys from the Midwest drive across the country to honour the wish of their dying friend: to see the yet-unreleased "Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace" in its most optimal setting, George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch.

Feb 6, 2009, Push: Push burrows deep into the deadly world of psychic espionage where artificially enhanced paranormal operatives have the ability to move objects with their minds, see the future, create new realities and kill without ever touching their victims. Against this setting, a young man and a teenage girl take on a clandestine agency in a race against time that will determine the future of civilization.

March 6, 2009, Watchmen:

Watchmen is set in an alternate 1985 America in which costumed superheroes are part of the fabric of everyday society, and the "Doomsday Clock" which charts the USA's tension with the Soviet Union is permanently set at five minutes to midnight.

March 13, 2009, Race to Witch

Mountain: For years, stories have circulated about Witch Mountain, a secret place in the middle of the Nevada desert, known for unexplained phenomena and strange sightings. When a Las Vegas cab driver finds two teens with supernatural powers in his cab, he suddenly finds himself in the middle of an adventure he can't explain.

March 20, 2009, The Box: Norma and Arthur Lewis, a suburban couple with a young child, receive a simple wooden box as a gift, which bears fatal and irrevocable consequences. A mysterious stranger delivers the message that the box promises to bestow upon its owner \$1 million with the press of a button. But, pressing this button will simultaneously cause the death of another human being somewhere in the world...

April 3, 2009, The Wolf Man:

Larry Talbot travels from America to his ancestral homeland where he is bitten by a werewolf. Then, when the moon turns full again, Talbot himself transforms into a rabid half-man/half-beast monster.

April 8, 2009, Dragonball: The story begins with Goku, who seeks out upon his adoptive grandfather Grandpa Gohan's dying request to find the great Master Roshi and gather all seven Dragon Balls.

May 1, 2009, X-Men Origins:

Wolverine: Explores the claw-wielding character Wolverine's violent and romantic past, and his complex relationship with Victor Creed and the ominous Weapon X program, as well as his encounters with other mutants.

May 8, 2009, Star Trek:

Cast: Zachary Quinto, Chris Pine, Winona Ryder, Simon Pegg, Jennifer Morrison, Karl Urban, Eric Bana, Zoe Saldana, John Cho, Anton Yelchin, Bruce Greenwood, Leonard Nimoy, Clifton Collins Jr., Chris Hemsworth, Ben Cross

May 22, 2009, Avatar: In the future, Jake, a paraplegic war veteran, is brought to another planet, Pandora, which is inhabited by the Na'vi, a humanoid race with their own language and culture. Those from

Earth find themselves at odds with each other and the local culture.

May 22, 2009, Night at the Museum 2: Battle of the Smithsonian: TBD

May 22, 2009, Terminator

Salvation: Set in post-apocalyptic 2018, John Connor is the man fated to lead the human resistance against Skynet and its army of Terminators. But the future Connor was raised to believe in is altered in part by the appearance of Marcus Wright, a stranger whose last memory is of being on death row. Connor must decide whether Marcus has been sent from the future, or rescued from the past.

June 26, 2009, Transformers:

Revenge of the Fallen: Sequel to the Transformer Movie - TBD

July 17, 2009, Land of the Lost:

Will Ferrel stars as has-been scientist Dr. Rick Marshall, sucked into one and spat back through time. Way back. Now, Marshall has no weapons, few skills and questionable smarts to survive in an alternate universe full of marauding dinosaurs and fantastic creatures from beyond our world – a place of spectacular sights and super-scaled comedy known as the Land of the Lost.

July 17, 2009, Harry Potter and

the Half-Blood Prince: Lord Voldemort is tightening his grip on both the Muggle and Wizard worlds and Hogwarts is no longer the safe haven it once was. Harry suspects that dangers may even lie within the castle, but Dumbledore is more intent upon preparing him for the final battle that he knows is fast approaching.



Appearing in each issue of *Warp*, “MonSFFandom” collates abridged versions of the news and activities reports published over the last few months in *Impulse*, MonSFFA’s approximately monthly news bulletin.

Warp’s production delays throughout 2008 have put us a tad behind so we’ve been catching up on a little over a year’s worth of MonSFFActivities. Last issue’s (Warp 70) installment of “MonSFFandom” got us to about mid-2008. With this issue’s installment, we’ll cover the remainder of 2008 and dive into early 2009, which should just about bring us up to date. As is our practice, we’ll present the MonSFFA meeting reports in chronological order but hold these for last. Let’s begin with the report on the club’s field trip to the Biodome that opened July 2008’s issue of Impulse:



Biodome Field Trip

Photos by Sylvain St-Pierre & Cathy Palmer-Lister

Over a dozen MonSFFen and friends convened at the gates of the Montreal Biodome on Sunday morning, June 22, for an excursion to the indoor zoological park, this in place of a June meeting. Just shy, unfortunately, of the 20-people minimum required, we were thus unable to avail ourselves of a group discount on admission. Missed it by that much, as Maxwell Smart might have noted. But we nonetheless enjoyed a fascinating field trip.



The Biodome features a wide variety of exotic wildlife housed in four distinct environments recreated in exacting detail. The first and largest is a tropical rainforest in which numerous colourful birds and agile monkeys populate the trees that line the pathway snaking through the exhibit, affording visitors many wonderful photographic opportunities. Further along, a waterfall feeds a small river populated by a number of caimans and other jungle denizens, who bask in the steamy, sweltering heat that realistically duplicates a torrid ecosystem. Also on show in a series of aquariums and terrariums are tropical fish, snakes, lizards, and frogs.

The two Canadian forest environments feature familiar

wildlife such as the beaver, otter, porcupine, and lynx. A huge aquarium holding numerous species of large fish well known to anglers, like the sturgeon, proves to be a simulated northern lake surrounded by cliffs when viewed from another vantage point, replete with various species of water fowl swimming about or circling overhead.



The Arctic and Antarctic section includes numerous terns, puffins, and such bird life, including a bevy of playful penguins whose antics both above and below the water can be viewed by delighted guests.

The day also included a stroll through the nearby Insectarium, complete with the opportunity to sample various chocolate covered crawlies, and the vast Botanical Gardens, a world-class horticultural exhibit.

A good time was had by all.



The July Impulse also briefly noted that MonSFFen Barbara Silverman and Sean Peatman, randomly selected from a pool of Biodome field trip-participants, won complimentary passes to the local premiere of the sci-fi flick Hancock.

Following up on an item in the May-June Impulse, a memo was run reminding club members to put forward to MonSFFA’s Executive any suggestions they might have regarding the club’s participation in the coming Montreal-hosted 67th Worldcon. Also, MonSFFolk who had recently relocated on or about Montreal’s traditional July 1st moving day were reminded to advise the club of their address changes.

Finally, a note about the usual summer slow-down re club services was included:

MonSFFA headquarters reminds you that club services tend

to slow down some during the summer months. It may take a tiny bit longer than usual to process your membership renewal, for example, or update the club Web site, but rest assured that we haven't forgotten. We're just taking it easy, enjoying the vacation season like everyone else.

The August issue outlined plans for that month's club meeting:

Fancraft Demos at August Meeting

MonSFFA's August 24 meeting will largely be devoted to a number of demonstrations of what we have termed "fancraft"... , meaning fannish craft projects. As longtime members will know, we have programmed our August meetings thusly for a couple of years, now, providing MonSFFen with the opportunity to observe the creative talents of fellow club members as applied to SF/F-themed craft projects and learn "how-to" in an informal workshop setting.

This year as in previous years, stations will be set up around the room at which folk may try their hand at a number of crafts, or simply observe as techniques are demonstrated. In addition to the handful of workshops we've scheduled, we're opening the meeting widely to any and all, inviting members and friends to bring in examples of their own SF/F fancraft and share their particular hobby with others. Everyone is welcome to run a demo, should they wish—please supply the necessary materials and tools—or simply contribute a few items to a display of fancraft projects. The idea is to share your hobby with your fellow MonSFFen. We hope to showcase a wide variety of imaginative crafting—scale modelling, miniature-painting, woodcraft, origami, scrapbooking, needlepoint, costuming, creative photography, digital graphics, and more—all under the thematic umbrella of science fiction and fantasy....

Notice of an important Board of Advisors meeting scheduled along with the August fancraft workshops followed:

Call to BoA Meeting

The club's Executive have scheduled a Board of Advisors (BoA) meeting for the morning session of our August 24 gathering, said meeting to begin at 11:00AM and run until about 12:30PM. Numerous important issues are on the agenda, including finances and fundraising, an update on the club's ongoing search for a new meeting hall, programming of future meetings, and member participation in outside-of-meeting activities. All members are encouraged to attend; the Executive wants *your* input.

The issue also covered the club's recently held summer barbecue:

MonSFFA BBQ 2008

With showers forecast, Sunday, July 20, the day of this year's club barbecue, was typical of the rather wet summer we've been experiencing. But the rain held off until late afternoon and so we were able to enjoy a dry



Charles Mohapel

MonSFFA barbecue.

The patch of meadow we have adopted for our barbecue these past few years proved unavailable to us this year. Upon arrival, we discovered that the stage for an outdoor music concert had been set up on the very spot. So, we migrated some hundred yards or so further into the sprawling Parc Angrignon grounds to settle near a patch of trees along the shore of a small, artificial lake, where the young children present delighted at the appearance of a graceful heron.



Keith turns 50!

Charles Mohapel

Turn-out was healthy despite the overcast skies and MonSFFolk and friends gathered to partake in a relaxing afternoon of football and frisbee, among other activities. While the adults engaged in casual conversation and grilled burgers or hotdogs, the kids explored the surrounding terrain, played on the swings and slides in an adjoining park, and later, took turns at the controls of an RC aeroplane. That there wasn't much of a breeze failed to discourage the youngsters, who ran back and forth across the field in their repeated attempts to launch a kite skyward.

Having enjoyed a most pleasant afternoon in the park, the group packed up and headed for home at about 4:00PM, just as the rain began to fall, too late to spoil the fun.

Our thanks to club president Berny Reischl for organising the event.

August's Impulse closed with a sidebar feature offering a succinct condemnation of the just released X-Files 2 movie, finding the story to be "disjointed" and lacking in "any particularly compelling element." In the same vein, other such box-office let-downs as The Phantom Menace and the 1998 American remake of Godzilla were given a quick panning, as well.

The next issue of Impulse was dated September-October 2008 and led with a preview of the soon-to-unfold Con•Cept convention:

Con•Cept 2008

This year's edition of Con•Cept will unfold at the usual Days Hotel locale, 1005 Guy Street, downtown (same hotel at which MonSFFA meets), over the October 17-19 weekend. Scheduled guests include award-winning author David Brin (*Earth*, the *Uplift* books, *Kiln People*) and actress Samantha Ferris (*The 4400*, *Supernatural*, *Smallville*, *Battlestar Galactica*).

MonSFFA will, of course, be in attendance. This club founded Con•Cept and has either run the convention or helped and supported the event since day one. (Next year, by the way, will mark Con•Cept's 20th anniversary.)

Con•Cept has always succeeded in appealing to as many interests within SF/F fandom as possible. With a gregarious mix of guest appearances, discussion panels, workshops, fan film screenings, and hallway debates, along with convention staples like the dealers' room, art show, con suite, masquerade, and dance, this con delivers a *great* SF/F party for all.

At the door cost of admission is an even \$50; the premium

Friends-of-Con•Cept option, which includes a few special extras, will run you \$60....

Club members were informed of October's less-than-usual level of MonSFFanac:

No Regular Meeting or Impulse Next Month

Please note that because a meeting hall is not available to us next month, we will not hold an October meeting. As such, and as a cost-saving measure, *Impulse* will not publish next month.

But MonSFFen will nevertheless have opportunity to get together! In lieu of a meeting, we are organising a group outing—an afternoon of bowling at a downtown location—the details of which will be announced on the club Web site next month. Further, we expect that many of our members will be attending Con•Cept 2008....

MonSFFA's next regular meeting is scheduled for Sunday, November 16.

Among the brief notes run in the issue was a repeat of the club Executive's request for input from the membership regarding MonSFFA's participation in Anticipation, the coming Worldcon. Announced was a special raffle, "instituted at club meetings to help raise the funds needed to finance" MonSFFA's activities at the con.

The September-October issue capped with a list of suggestions recently gleaned from members for 2009 meeting programming. MonSFFen were asked to let the Executive know which of the subjects most interested them, including as potential panellists. Among the topics listed were contemporary trends in SF/F writing, alien invasion scenarios in SF literature and on screen, different forms of government as depicted in SF/F, zombies, and rejected or unrealised SF/F TV show pilots and short-lived series.

A lengthy report on September's club meeting took up most of the November issue of Impulse, pushing coverage of Con•Cept 2008 and the club's October bowling outing to the following month. But there was room enough for a brief note about planning for the club's 2008 Christmas Dinner and Party:

Planning for Club's Annual Christmas Dinner and Party

We've scheduled Saturday evening, December 6th, as the date of MonSFFA's annual Christmas Dinner and Party this year. During the BoA session at the club's November 16 meeting, we'll finalise plans as to exactly where we'll dine and party. An announcement will follow in December's *Impulse* and on the MonSFFA Web site....

And with the release of December's Impulse came that announcement:

2008 MonSFFA Christmas Dinner and Party

Plans for MonSFFA's annual Christmas Dinner and Party have been finalised. Note that while we had originally discussed, at our November 16 BoA meeting, booking the Mr. Steer restaurant on Ste-Catherine for dinner, that establishment cannot accommodate us on the December 6 date we requested and so we have substituted the Nickels Bar and Grill Restaurant in Alexis Nihon Plaza (Atwater Metro). Seating is limited to 24, however, so it'll be first come, first serve. We ask that members contact club president Berny Reischl by e-mail (president@monsffa.com) to

advise him of their intention to attend. Should folk be unable to join us for dinner, we hope you'll be able to meet us afterwards at our familiar watering hole, the Park Place Bar, for the party.

Date, times, and other details are provided in the events column, left.

We take this opportunity to wish all of our members and friends the very best of the season.

Sad news followed; Montreal's own Emru Townsend had lost his battle with leukemia. We included this excerpt in last issue's "MonSFFandom" as part of Impulse's overall coverage of Emru's battle with the disease last year and his campaign for greater public awareness regarding "registering to be a bone-marrow and stem-cell donor." The contact information his sister, Tamu, provided so that folk could learn about becoming a donor bears repeating:

Hema Quebec

<http://www.hema-quebec.qc.ca>

Canada Blood Services

<http://onematch.ca/registry>

National Marrow Donor Program (US)

<http://www.marrow.org>

National Blood Service ?UK)

<https://secure.blood.co.uk/bonemarrow.asp>

The December issue also reviewed Con•Cept 2008...

Con•Cept Throws Another Great Sci-Fi Party

Photos by Charles Mohapel



David Brin

Con•Cept is always a fun sci-fi party and the 2008 edition of the long-running general-interest SF/F convention was true to that maxim. Con•Cept 2008 took place at the event's familiar Days Hotel locale in downtown Montreal over the October 17-19 weekend.

Enthusiastic fans welcomed headlining guests David Brin, the award-winning author of *Earth*, the *Uplift* books, and *Kiln People*; local genre star Yves Menard, former literary editor of Quebec's SF magazine, *Solaris*, and award-winning author of 14 books and



Samantha Ferris

over 40 stories in both French and English; and actress Samantha Ferris, featured in the genre television series *The 4400*, *Supernatural*,



Yves Menard

Smallville, and *Battlestar Galactica*, among others. Filling out the guest roster and providing entertaining panel content were such special guests as Toronto-based TV and radio personality, and "Canada's ultimate fangirl," Liana K; science guest Stéphane Dumas, who is active in the SETI project; and co-MC's Larry Stewart and Alain

Ducharme.

Panel programming was strong and most of the panels were lively—always a plus—and very well attended. And the layout of the convention floor at the Days Hotel allows for what has become something of a unique characteristic of Con•Cept, spirited hallway discussions and debates between panels that practically constitute another panel track. Meanwhile, Con•Cept's fan film screenings—another noteworthy feature of this con—continue to entertain with inventive, original, and sometimes racy sci-fi and horror shorts and features produced on paltry budgets by budding filmmakers. Cool!



Peggi Warner
Lalonde

Alain Ducharme

Larry Stewart

MonSFFA was, of course, in attendance throughout the weekend, set up at a promotional table in the dealer's room taking memberships and selling back issues of *Warp* and several of our fan film DVDs. We thank those club members who helped staff our table.

Con•Cept's dogged concom (many of whom happen to be MonSFFolk, including long-serving chair Cathy Palmer-Lister) and tireless crew of volunteers are to be congratulated on a job well done, particularly in light of the fact that the con continues to be understaffed, a perennial problem that could jeopardise future editions of the event. Unfortunately, too, unconfirmed registration numbers suggest that attendance might have been down a little this year over recent years and the con may thus come up a few hundred dollars short of operating expenses. But regardless, what we take away from Con•Cept 2008 is that it was a whole lot of fun. And we look forward to Con•Cept 2009, which will mark the con's 20th anniversary.

...and, briefly, MonSFFA's afternoon bowling outing:

As function space was unavailable to us in October, the club booked an afternoon outing in lieu of a meeting. A dozen or so MonSFFen convened at the downtown AMC Forum Sports Bar Bowling Alley (in the old forum) on October 26 for an afternoon of conversation, food and drink, and bowling. A good time was had by all and the group wrapped up the afternoon with coffee and dessert across the street at Nickels. Our thanks to Berny Reischl for organising this outing.

The issue noted that the club anticipated receiving complimentary passes to the local premiere IMAX screening of the new sci-fi movie The Day the Earth Stood Still, and that these passes would be "distributed to randomly selected MonSFFA members." Later, most of those who attended judged the film rather less engaging than the 1951 original, though everyone thought the new CGI version of Gort was pretty cool.

In closing, MonSFFA's meeting and events dates for 2009

were listed.

The January 2009 issue of Impulse began with word of MonSFFA's 2009 elections and a primer on the club's election procedures:

2009 Club Elections

The first order of business as the club kicks off 2009 will be the selection of MonSFFA's Executive Committee for the coming year. We will do so at our first event of this new year, January 18's club meeting. All MonSFFA members in good standing are encouraged to participate.

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

Our sitting Executive members are: Berny Reischl, president; Keith Braithwaite, vice-president; and Sylvain St-Pierre, treasurer.

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

All MonSFFA members in good standing are eligible to cast a ballot. Members are asked to be present at the designated place and time in order to exercise their right to vote. Proxy voting is *not* permitted, except under special circumstances and by approval of the CRO.

We can skip into the future a bit to tell you that MonSFFA's 2008 Executive was returned to office for 2009 with the addition of a second vice-president, Lindsay Brown. Congratulations to all the successful candidates.

The January issue also recapped the club's Christmas Dinner/Party:

Club's 2008 Christmas Dinner/Party

MonSFFA closed 2008 with its traditional Christmas Dinner/Party, held on the evening of December 6.

We began with dinner at the Nickels Bar and Grill Restaurant in Alexis Nihon Plaza before repairing to our familiar seasonal watering hole, the downtown Park Place Bar, where we enjoyed an evening of music, lively conversation, libations and, as always, pool. The bar's backroom pool table welcomed a succession of MonSFFen over the course of the evening who played with varying degrees of skill, a few finding that a couple of beers actually improved their game!

Several genre DVDs, books and other nifty prize items were put up for raffle to raise a sack of lucre for both the club's general operating fund and our planned Anticipation room party later this year. The group also collected a healthy stack of toys and non-perishable food items for donation to Sun Youth's annual Christmas Basket Drive.

A good time was had by all and we trust that MonSFFA's members, friends, and their families delighted in a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

We'd like to thank, in particular, club president Berny Reischl

and vice-president Keith Braithwaite, who between them arranged for the dinner, set up the Park Place party, provided the evening's music, and saw to our collection for charity. Thanks, as well, to those MonSFFen who helped with the raffle. And finally, thanks to the staff of the Park Place, our most welcoming and long-time party hosts.

An item was devoted to the passing of both a fannish and a "feline" legend:

World's Most Famous Sci-Fi Fan Passes Away; Catwoman Actress Dies

The most famous sci-fi fan in the world, Forrest J Ackerman, who is said to have coined the very term "sci-fi," died of heart failure at his home in Los Angeles last month. He was 92.

4SJ, or Forry, was possessed of an insatiable appetite for all things science fiction and horror. His legacy includes an unparalleled memorabilia collection accumulated over a lifetime—more than 300,000 books, magazines, posters, costumes, models and film props once housed in a former home dubbed the Ackermansion, to which thousands of SF fans have made the pilgrimage.

Ackerman served as literary agent to a great many genre writers over the years, including such notables as Ray Bradbury, H.P. Lovecraft, and controversial Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard. Ackerman himself wrote some 50 short stories and appeared as an extra in countless sci-fi films. He created the comic book character Vampirella and his definitive fan magazine, *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, which he wrote and edited from the late 1950s to the early 1980s, ignited the imaginations a younger generation of science fiction and horror fans that included such future genre stars as Stephen King, Steven Spielberg, and George Lucas.

Also dead, at age 81, is sensuous singer and actress Eartha Kitt, one of three women who played Catwoman on the campy 1960s-era *Batman* TV show. Kitt, whose sultry rendition of the Christmas number "Santa Baby" is among the classic holiday tunes heard every December, succumbed to cancer on Christmas day.

Again providing the dates for 2009's MonSFFA meetings and events, January's Impulse closed by adding details of the coming year's activities:

MonSFFA's 2009 Meetings and Events Schedule

Details of MonSFFA's 2009 meetings and events schedule, as worked out at the BoA meeting of November 16, are as follows:

January 18

- Club Elections
- Giving Good Panel
- Landing the Phoenix

February 22

• Fly Me To The Moon: this summer will mark the 40th anniversary of the first manned moon landing. We offer an historical overview of the Apollo 11 mission, plus a look at moon mythology and some of the many lunar adventures in sci-fi cinema and television.

- Saviours of the Universe—Sci-Fi's Hottest Hunks:

MonSFFA's women flip through the SF/F equivalent of the annual fireman's calendar while exploring the manly attributes of the genre's most handsome heroes.

March 22

• It's a Small World After All: we explore the Lilliputian worlds of SF/F in such examples as *Gulliver's Travels* and *Land of the Giants*.

• Game—Magnification Factor 3: players are challenged to identify iconic sci-fi images that have been greatly magnified.

April 19

• What's Cooking?—The Cuisine of SF/F: a presentation on food in SF/F.

• Easter Egg-Decorating Contest: in conjunction with the above presentation, we are holding an Easter egg-decorating contest. Prior to the meeting, MonSFFen are encouraged to apply an SF/F theme to their creative decoration of an Easter egg and bring the finished result in to the meeting for all to see. Entries will be judged by the group and a prize awarded for the most popular. Decorators may work with a real or artificial egg.

• DVD Easter Eggs: we'll reveal some of the more interesting so-called "Easter eggs" (special hidden extras) to be found on sci-fi DVDs.

May 24

In lieu of a regular meeting this month, we plan to attend as a group a Sunday-afternoon screening of the new *Star Trek* movie, scheduled to open at this time.

June 14

• Role-Playing Games in the 21st Century: we outline the fun to be had playing sci-fi role-playing games and examine the many changes that have been introduced to the RPG universe in recent years.

• Scooby-Doo, How Old Are You?: we'll snack on the popular cartoon adventures of Scooby-Doo and his mystery-solving pals, who embarked on their first of many SF/F-ish cases 40 years ago.

July 26

MonSFFA's Annual Summer Barbecue this year will be held, as is our custom, in Parc Angrignon. Should inclement weather prevail, we have scheduled the following Sunday, August 2, as an alternate date.

August 6-10

Anticipation, the 67th World Science Fiction Convention, will unfold here in Montreal over this extended weekend. MonSFFA will, of course, be present; we plan to host a room party and on the convention floor, mount a display offering an historical overview of MonSFFA and Montreal fandom.

August 23

Programming to be announced.

September 20

• Best Sci-Fi Movies Never Made: we explore a selection of potentially great genre films proposed but, ultimately, never produced, as well as a few endlessly stuck, it seems, "in development." We'll also make a list of genre films we'd like to see produced.

• Next on This Channel...: we explore some of the proposed sci-fi television series that failed to make it past a pilot, or were quickly cancelled after but a handful of episodes.

October 25

• Afternoon of the Living Dead: we dissect the zombie story in genre literature and film.

• Fund-Raising Auction/Garage Sale: MonSFFA's annual fund-raiser; support your club by purchasing SF/F books, comics, toys and other cool collectibles. Bargain prices!

November 22

• The Write Stuff: a discussion of trends in SF/F writing. What's hot, what's not, both in professional circles and in online fanfic? We'll highlight the most original and exciting new fiction.

• Game—The Word is Given: players must identify the SF/F book, film, or television show attached to a randomly selected character, place name, or term.

December 5

MonSFFA's Annual Christmas Dinner/Party. Details to announced.

Note that all programming is subject to change. We'll update members on any changes to this schedule in *Impulse* and on the club's Web site.

And so we arrive at the last part of this installment of "MonSFFA's Annual Christmas Dinner/Party," Impulse's reports on the four final club meetings of 2008—May, August, September, and November:

May MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA's May 25 meeting featured, first, an exercise in designing a superhero and supervillain. Club vice-president Keith Braithwaite put on his artist's hat for the occasion, sketching said supers based on input from his audience. A video camera trained on Keith's sketchpad as he worked provided a live feed to a television monitor so that folk could see the comic book characters developing from their suggestions.

Keith spoke of common superhero clichés, such as the acquiring of super powers by means of some scientific experiment or accident, and including that of basing a character on some kind of animal motif—Batman, Hawkman, Spider-Man, Wolverine. The group leaped on this notion, selecting the skunk as inspiration for their superhero!

"Skunkman"—a working name—was to have the ability to somehow manipulate smell. After some discussion, it was decided that he would carry on his utility belt a series of compressed-gas canisters, each containing vapour of a different scent, and that these would be hooked up to a wrist-mounted nozzle which he would wield like a gun against the forces of evil.

The working name Skunkman, however, did not particularly appeal to the group and a number of proposals for a cooler name ensued. These included The Whiff, The Fume, Captain Polecat, simply The Skunk, and the monogram which seemed most popular with the group, The Gray Gasser (suggesting a gray, Batman-like costume, perhaps).

An origin story was quickly concocted but not set in stone. Employed at a perfume company, chemist Gordon Palmer (a name derived from those of club members Gordon Morrow and Cathy

Palmer-Lister) is injured in a laboratory accident, costing him his sense of smell. Just how and why this leads to his becoming the superhero described remained unclear, however, and the issue was set aside for further deliberation another day.

Costume design was tackled next as the group pondered that most important consideration of superhero fashion: cape or no cape? The group went with a cape, tapered and decorated with twin stripes to suggest a skunk's tail. Other costume elements included a cowl and gas mask-like goggles.

The same creative process was repeated to come up with a nemesis for this champion of aroma.

Nabbed robbing the cash register at the club at which she worked as a Playboy Bunny, Miranda Morrison (this name derived from those of *Simpletons' Life* co-stars Miranda Feenstra and Maery Morrison) was fired and reduced to working as a cleaning lady to make ends meet. Here, this orphaned girl from the wrong side of the tracks discovered that she possesses an unusual power, the ability to manipulate dust, dirt, and slime into deadly weapons. And so was conceived that provocatively-costumed empress of embezzlement, The Dust Bunny!

The second half of the meeting was dedicated to a game hosted by MonSFFA president Berny Reischl, who began by showing the audience an image of a science fiction movie poster that had been obfuscated by means of a pixelation filter. Berny had programmed his laptop to depixelate the image within a few moments of its appearing on screen and folk were challenged to identify the movie represented before the picture was returned to clarity. Another poster quickly followed, then another, and still others in uninterrupted succession.

A cacophony of rapid-fire, often wild and decidedly erroneous guesses were shouted out loud as the sci-fi, as well as fantasy and horror posters appeared in steady sequence, leaving the audience but a few seconds on each for their guesswork.

All in all, a rather fun meeting. We thank in particular our presenters, Keith Braithwaite and Berny Reischl, for their efforts.

August Meeting Devoted to Fancraft

For the third year running, the club devoted its August meeting, held on the 24th this year, to a number of hands-on fancraft workshops. The creative talents of MonSFFA were evident as numerous SF/F-themed crafts were on display. Folk had the opportunity to learn about each or try their hand at any of the crafts for which a workshop had been set up.

Sci-fi needlepoint, origami, and creative snack-making were among the hobbies featured this year, the snack-making providing a tasty demonstration of how to make an SF/F snack item using everyday confections like jelly beans, marshmallows, and cookies. A number of appetising aliens, mouth-watering monsters, and scrumptious spaceships ensued with a *Doctor Who*-themed treat winning kudos as the most artistic and appealing at day's end. Members were encouraged to employ what they'd learned here to the benefit of the fund-raising snack table MonSFFA sets up at all regular meetings.

Meanwhile, at the scale modelling station, two of the club's youngest members were busily painting their plastic Snap-Tite kits of prehistoric beasts using a technique called dry brushing, thus named because so modicum is the quantity of paint applied that the paintbrush is practically dry. This approach produces subtle blends

of colour and is the perfect method of giving molded plastic scales or fur an authentic look. The technique is commonly utilised to realistically “weather” spacecraft, aircraft, and vehicle models and can be used, as well, for figure-painting or prop-making. A number of uni-coloured, dollar-store plastic toy animals were on hand so that people could have a go at dry brushing and a resulting rat later made the rounds of the creative snack-making table!

At another station, a demonstration of computer-generated photo-art was underway. Working with such software as Adobe Photoshop, the step-by-step process of retouching, combining, and tweaking photographs to create a digital illustration was revealed for all to see on a large monitor. The next cover of our club fanzine, *Warp*, is to feature a product of this workshop.

Perhaps the most unusual and fascinating demonstration of the day was the recycling of spent cartridges to fashion prop or souvenir bullets. Several people inquired as to a silver bullet, lest they encounter a werewolf on the way home from the meeting. Without the necessary gunpowder and primer caps to produce live rounds, of course, these bullets were just for show and completely harmless.

We thank the many crafters in the club for sharing their hobbies with fellow MonSFFen on this day.

September Club Meeting



Display table, photo by C. Mohapel

MonSFFA's September 21 meeting focussed first on spaceship design, then briefly on the upcoming Con•Cept SF/F convention, and finally, on the sexy sirens of sci-fi.

Keith Braithwaite, Wayne Glover, and Dominique Durocher kicked off with a look at some of the many spaceships of science fiction. Keith began with a few examples of the two most common design types featured in science fiction films of the 1950s and early 1960s, the rocket and the flying saucer.

The smooth-hulled, shiny metal rockets of such classic films as *Destination Moon* and *Rocketship X-M* were largely patterned after the real German V-2 rocket in use near the end of World War II. The V-2 and similar models provided the template for the fictional rocketships of sci-fi cinema during the mid-20th century. Hollywood ran with the design, fitting ever more elaborate stabiliser fins and wings to the craft, culminating in such nifty though improbable vehicles as those featured in *Spaceways* or *The First Spaceship on Venus*.

While *Forbidden Planet*'s extraordinary C57-D space cruiser was an Earth ship, most saucer-shaped designs of this period were reserved for alien craft, perhaps because the various flying saucers of sci-fi film were inspired by the numerous reported sightings of UFOs at the time, often described as saucer-shaped. The silvery hubcaps spinning through sci-fi skies included those appearing in *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, and *This Island Earth*.

Keith screened a selection of clips from these and other movies, showing some of the best-known rockets and saucers in

motion.

Wayne focused on the more varied and recent spaceship designs featured in such fare as *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and *Battlestar Galactica*. The intricately detailed superstructures of these craft, sporting hull plates, snaking conduits, exhaust vents, and all manner of exposed machinery, take after the look of the spaceship *Discovery*, created for the seminal SF film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Wayne offered a size-comparison chart of some of the genre's most famous spacecraft, including the numerous versions of the *Enterprise*, the original and new *Galactica*, and *Star Wars*' *Millennium Falcon*, the triangular Star Destroyers, and the moon-sized *Death Star*.

Dominique closed the presentation with a look at some of the real spacecraft blueprinted and built for NASA and the Russian space program, treating the group to some dramatic documentary footage of launches, crashes, and the test flights of experimental craft. He noted that Hollywood regularly features fictional variations of real spacecraft in the movies, like the space shuttles in *Armageddon*.

Following the mid-meeting break, Cathy Palmer-Lister took 10 minutes to quickly highlight for MonSFFen the upcoming Con•Cept 2008 SF/F convention and encourage folk to attend the event.



Keith and Berny, photo by C. Mohapel

Keith was up again to wrap up the afternoon's programming with a slideshow of sci-fi's sexiest screen sirens and a discussion and the many reasons male fans in particular are drawn to these femme fatales.

Clearly, the physical attractiveness of the actresses playing the roles figures considerably, particularly in the case of a young sci-fi fan entering his teenage years and beginning to take an interest in girls. Keith noted that the marketers of sci-fi take full advantage of this youngster, invariably splashing illustrations of beautiful, buxom, scantily-dressed women on sci-fi magazine and book covers, exciting in the young lad more than just a thirst for space-faring adventure stories. And it's no accident that the women cast in genre movies or television series come with fashion-model looks.

The total hotness of so many of screen sci-fi's characters, be they male or female, taps into the same idealisation—physically, of course, but otherwise, as well—of heroes and heroines throughout history. Comic book superheroines like Supergirl and Wonder Woman, Keith opined, with their impossibly perfect physiques and striking beauty, are drawn that way for the very same reasons that the ancient Greeks carved impossibly perfect and strikingly beautiful statues of their heroes and heroines. These characters are all bigger-than-life fantasies, representations of what we perceive to be the best, most honourable, and desirable attributes of the human race. And we wish we could either be that someone, better than ourselves, or attract the attentions of that someone. In other words, we want to be or we want to bed the hero or heroine.

It was offered that a character grabs one's attention and holds it only if that character is a well-written, engaging sort. A good character needs more than good looks. True, but with regard to

visual storytelling, it doesn't hurt—in fact, it probably helps—if that character is represented by a physically attractive individual. Why would we idealise our heroes and heroines emotionally, intellectually, but not physically? That the vampire slayer and the invincible cheerleader are smokin' hot blondes, or the pistol-packin' tomb raider and the sword-wielding barbarian princess tall, dark-haired knock-outs with legs up to here, or the resourceful FBI agent and the lesbian witch smouldering red-heads open to new things, only adds to the whole bigger-than-life fantasy.

We thank our presenters Keith, Wayne, Dominique, and Cathy, along with all those club members who helped to plan and run this, our September meeting.

November MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA's last regular meeting of 2008 took place on November 16, beginning with a pre-lunch Board of Advisors parley that focused primarily on planning next year's meetings and other activities....

Cathy Palmer-Lister provided the afternoon's featured programming, giving a talk on star myths, the ancient stories spun around the night skies. She chose to focus not on the commonly known Greek and Roman legends attached to the familiar constellations above, but rather on lesser known tales, including several North and South American aboriginal myths. The actors in

these stories were often animals like the bear or birds like the robin and bluejay. Cathy noted that the night sky provided seasonal markers for the planting and later, harvesting of crops, for instance, and certain stories devised around prominent stars served to impart such knowledge to each generation. Life lessons were also taught through sky stories.

Following the mid-meeting break, the group was invited to take part in a sort of time capsule project. Club president Berny Reischl sat all members present down in front of his camcorder and asked them to voice forecasts as to MonSFFA, Montreal, and indeed, the world at large five years hence. He videotaped everyone's predictions with the intention of burning the recordings to a DVD to be viewed at MonSFFA's Christmas party in 2013. How good are science fiction fans at predicting the future? As regards our group at least, we'll know in five years.

Time allowed for a bit more work on next year's programming before the meeting closed and folk adjourned to dinner at a nearby restaurant.

We thank Cathy and Berny for their contributions, as well as all who took part and all who helped to plan and run our November meeting.



AWARDS Presented in 2008, and the winners were...

C. Palmer-Lister

The Hugos

<http://www.thehugoawards.org/>

Novel: The Yiddish Policemen's Union by Michael Chabon

Novella: "All Seated on the Ground" by Connie Willis
(Asimov's Dec. 2007; Subterranean Press)

Novellette: "The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate" by Ted Chiang
(Subterranean Press; F&SF Sept. 2007)

Short Story: "Tideline" by Elizabeth Bear (Asimov's June 2007)

Non-fiction Book: Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction by Jeff Prucher

Dramatic Presentation, Long Form: Stardust Written by Jane Goldman and Matthew Vaughn, Based on the novel by Neil Gaiman Directed by Matthew Vaughn (Paramount Pictures)

Dramatic Presentation, Short Form: Doctor Who "Blink" Written by Steven Moffat Directed by Hettie Macdonald (BBC)

Professional Editor, Long Form: David Hartwell

Professional Editor, Short Form: Gordon Van Gelder (F&SF)

Professional Artist: Stephan Martiniere

Semiprozine: Locus, edited by Charles N. Brown, Kirsten Gong-Wong, & Liza Groen Trombi

Fanzine: File 770

Fan Writer: John Scalzi

Fan Artist: Brad Foster

Campbell Award: Mary Robinette Kowal



The Auroras

<http://www.prixaurorawards.ca>

Long-form Work (English): The New Moon's Arms, Nalo Hopkinson (Warner)

Meilleur Livre (français): Cimetière du musée, Diane Boudreau (du Phoenix)

Short-form Work (English): Like Water in the Desert, Hayden Trenholm (Challenging Destiny #24)

Meilleure Nouvelle (Français): Sur la plage des épaves, Laurent MacAllister (Solaris 164)

Work in English (Other): Under Cover of Darkness, Julie E. Czerneda & Jana Paniccia editors (DAW)

Meilleur Ouvrage Français (Autre): pas de prix

Artistic Achievement /Accomplissement Artistique:

Lar deSouza, On Spec Winter 2007, Parsec, Spring/Summer 2007

Fan Achievement (Fanzine) /Accomplissement Fanique (Fanzine):

No Award/ pas de prix

Fan Achievement (Organizational) / Accomplissement Fanique

(Organization): Penny Lipman, masquerades

Fan Achievement (Other) /

Accomplissement Fanique (Autre):

Paul Bobbit, editor, The Voyageur



The Constellation Awards

<http://constellations.tcon.ca>



TV CATEGORIES:

- 1. Best Male Performance:** David Tennant, Doctor Who (“Human Nature/The Family of Blood”)
- 2. Best Female Performance:** Carey Mulligan, Doctor Who (“Blink”)
- 3. Best Series:** Doctor Who

MOVIE CATEGORIES

- 4. Best Male Performance:** Will Smith, “I Am Legend”
- 5. Best Female Performance:** Emma Watson, “Harry Potter & The Order Of The Phoenix”
- 6. Best Movie:** Transformers

OTHER CATEGORIES

- 7. Best Technical Accomplishment:** Transformation Effects, “Transformers” (ILM)
- 8. Best Script:** Supernatural, “What Is And What Should Never Be” (Raelle Tucker)
- 9. Outstanding Canadian Contribution:** Tanya Huff (Writer/Creative Consultant, “Blood Ties”)

What are the Hugos, Auroras, Constellations?

The Hugos, Auroras, and Constellations are trophies awarded for excellence in SFF. The most prestigious is the Hugo. Named for Hugo Gernsback, they were first presented in 1953, and then annually since 1955.

The Aurora Awards are the Canadian equivalent to the Hugo Award. It had a modest start in 1980 with a single award to A. E. van Vogt, for lifetime contribution to SF, and now is up to 10 categories, with more to be added in the near future.

The Constellation Awards are the new kids on the block, having only been awarded since 2007. They are awarded for excellence in science fiction movies and television shows.

Who awards them?

All three awards are given by not-for-profit, fan-run, organizations.

The Hugos are awarded by the current World Science Fiction Convention, which this year is Anticipation in Montreal. The Auroras are awarded by Canvention, which this year is also hosted by Anticipation. The Constellations are awarded by the TCON Promotional Society which organizes the annual Polaris convention, formerly T-Trek).

Can I vote?

Yes, indeed, you SHOULD vote! These awards are presented on behalf of all fans of SF, so be sure to have your voice heard!

However, the nomination periods for the Hugo and Aurora Awards are now closed. Both awards will be presented at Anticipation, the 67th World Con, right here in Montreal!! You must be a member, supporting or attending, of Anticipation to vote for the Hugos. However, for the Auroras, if you are not a member of Anticipation you can still vote for a nominal fee of 5\$, or 5,50\$ if you vote on line. Please visit the official web sites shown above for more information, and also the website of Anticipation, <http://www.anticipationsf.ca>. At this time, the ballots are being prepared, and will be on-line shortly.

Nominations for the Constellations have just opened. Information on how to nominate your favourite shows and performers can be found here: <http://constellations.tcon.ca/nom.shtml>.

In all three cases, voting can be done quickly and relatively painlessly, on line.

How do I find out who won?

The best way to find out who won is to attend the award ceremonies. Obviously, you must be a member of the hosting convention. This year, if you are a member of Anticipation, be sure to attend Hugo and Aurora ceremonies. Many MonSFFen attend Polaris, so don't miss the Constellations.

The next best way to learn who won, is to turn on your computer or check your tweets. The news hits the electrons within seconds of the presentations. Locus Magazine gives award presentations excellent coverage, <http://www.locusmag.com/>. ☆

Just as I was ready to pub the ish, both the Aurora and Hugo ballots went on line.
Please go to :
<http://anticipationsf.ca/English/Hugos> & <http://www.prixaurorawards.ca/>

Answers to MARch Attacks
from page 40
A-5, B-3, C-4, D-1, E-2

The MonSFFun Pages

Because there was no MonSFFun page in WARP 70, we double your fun in WARP 71!

The Face behind the Mask # 5, The Fernster

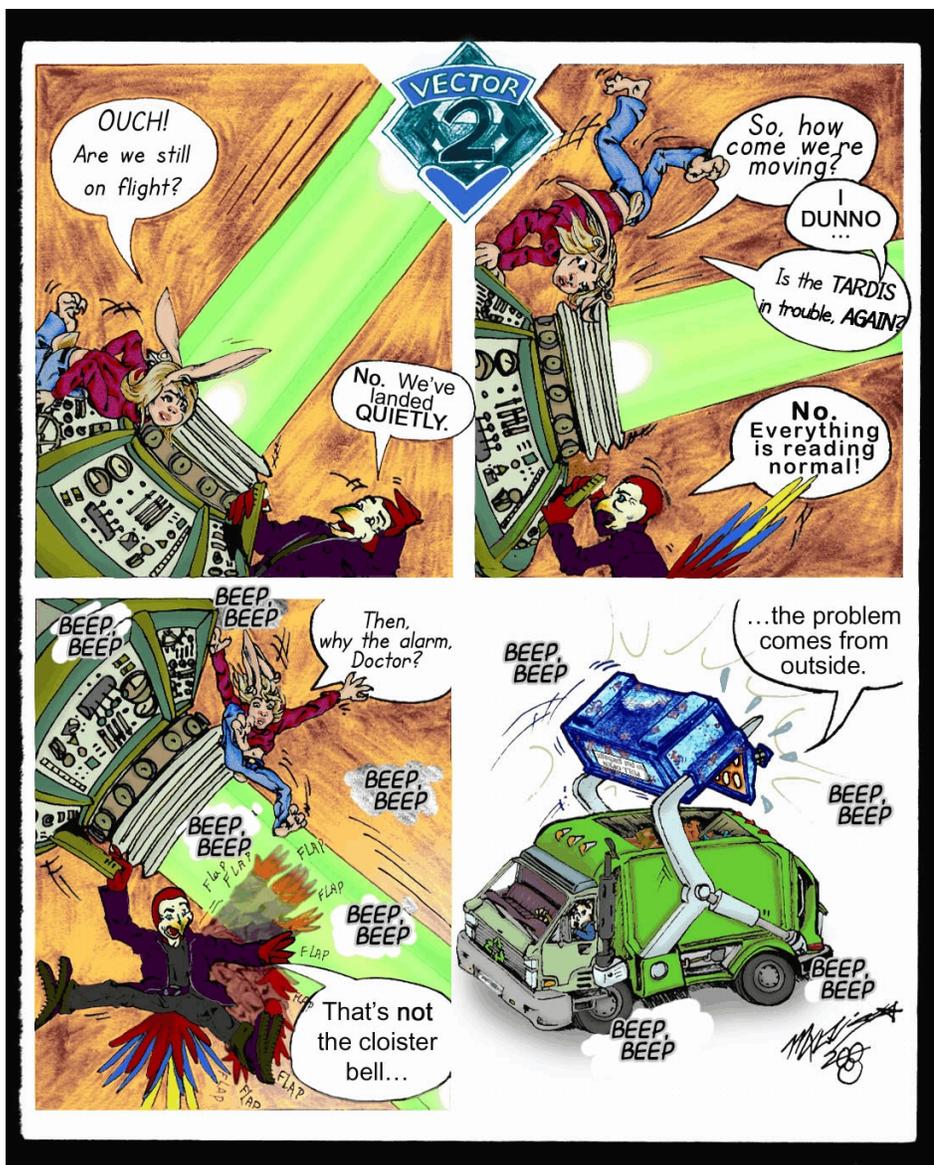
The Vulcan Women, Part 2

Answers Page 26

Four more cool Vulcan women! Guess who the actresses behind the masks are!



A Saavic B Sakonna C Admiral Sitak D T'Pol (young) 1 Zara Zediker 2 Bertila Damas 3 Kristie Alley 4 Ericka Klein



Vector 2, by Marquise Boies

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**MARch Attacks – Part I
Fernster**

With the coming of March, I decide to have a bit of fun....with movies about MARS. Here are a few movie storylines about Martian movies.

Try to match them with the Movie Titles.



- A) Flight to Mars (1951)
- B) Planet of Blood (1966)
- C) Devil Girl from Mars (1954)
- D) Total Recall (1990)
- E) Invaders from Mars (1986)



- 1) Douglas Quaid is haunted by the same dream every night about a journey to Mars. He hopes to find out more about this dream and buys a vacation at Recall Inc. where they sell implanted memories. Unfortunately, something goes wrong with the memory implantation and he remembers being a secret agent fighting against an evil Mars administrator, Coohagen. So the story begins and what follows is a roller coaster ride until the climax of the movie.
- 2) In this remake of the classic 50s film, a boy tries to stop an invasion of his town by aliens who take over the minds of his parents, his least-liked schoolteacher, and other townspeople. With the aid of the school nurse the boy enlists the help of the U.S. army.
- 3) An expedition to Mars finds a crashed alien space ship. They bring back the only survivor; a green skinned, glowing eyed, bloodsucking, female alien who preys on the crew members.
- 4) Not the kind of girl you really want to get involved with: pouty, leather-clad alien bitch Patricia Laffa journeys to Earth in a giant spaceship (accompanied by the obligatory killer robot) to bring back men for breeding purposes.
- 5) A team of scientists and a newspaper reporter fly to Mars only to find that Martians look identical to humans. Mars is running low on an important natural resource called Corium (whatever that is), so the Martians plan to steal the Earthmen's rocket and conquer Earth. Fortunately, a sympathetic Martian underground helps the Earthmen foil the dastardly plan.

Answers Page 38

The Face behind the Mask # 6, Fernster

The Klingon Women, Part 2

Answers Page 26

Here is another bevy of Klingon beauties from the Star Trek universe. It's all in the eye of the beholder I'm told...Their beauty is only skin deep or in this case as thick as the makeup! So go ahead and try this challenge!

Who are the actresses behind the masks?



- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|------------|----------------|---------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| A Mara | B K'Ehleyr | C Lady Sirella | D Kurak | 1 Tricia O'Neal | 2 Shannon Cochan | 3 Susan Howard | 4 Suzie Plakson |
|--------|------------|----------------|---------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|

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