

WARP 72



*MonSFFen Celebrate Spring!
2009.*

More eggcellent fun on page 25

MonSFFA's Executive:

Bernard Reischl
President

Keith Braithwaite & Lindsay Brown
Vice-Presidents

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!

Cover: Eggsploring the Great Unknown, © Bernard Reischl, 2009. The new movie Enterprise mesh was created by Ricky Wallace and is used with his permission. Silly cover idea is from one too many late nights working on silly stuff for the club. Images were created in Bryce 6, Cinema 4D and composited together in Photoshop CS3.

We welcome LoCs & trade zines! Write to us:

MonSFFA
c/o Sylvain St-Pierre
4456 Boul. Ste-Rose
Laval, Québec, Canada
H7R 1Y6

www.monsffa.com

President:
president@monsffa.com

editor:
cathypl@sympatico.ca



MonSFFA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

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

JUNE 14

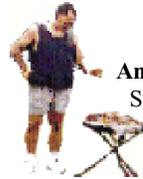
Role-Playing Games in the 21st Century: Sci-fi role-playing games and changes that have been introduced recently to the RPG universe. *Christopher Hammock*



Scooby-Do! It's been 40 years since Scooby and friends embarked on their first Sfish adventure. That's a lot of Scooby Snacks!. *Theresa Penalba, Josée Bellemare*

JULY 26

Annual Summer Barbecue in Parc Angrignon.
Sunday, August 2, if rained out. *Berny Reischl*



AUGUST 6 - 10

Anticipation, the 67th World Science Fiction: MonSFFA plans to host a room party and on the convention floor, mount a display offering an historical overview of MonSFFA and Montreal fandom.



AUGUST 23

At this time we are undecided as to whether we will book a meeting so soon after the above Worldcon. We may schedule a club field trip instead. Stay tuned.

SEPTEMBER 20

Best Sci-Fi Movies Never Made: 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.
Keith Braithwaite, Leslie Lupien



Next on This Channel: Proposed sci-fi television series that failed to make it past a pilot, or were quickly cancelled, leaving us hanging. *Keith Braithwaite, Marquise Boies*



OCTOBER 18

Afternoon of the Living Dead: We dissect the zombie story in genre literature and film. *Keith Braithwaite, Danny Sichel*



Fund-Raising Auction/Garage Sale

NOVEMBER 22

The Write Stuff: Discussion of trends in SF/F writing; what's hot, what's not, both in professional circles and in online fanfic, highlighting the most original new fiction along with the most hackneyed clichés and overused plot devices. *Leslie Lupien (m) and guest panellists: Jean-Louis Trudel, Mark Shainblum, Claude Lalumière*



The Word is Given: Game in which players must identify the SF/F book, film, or television show attached to a randomly selected character, place name, or term describing a thing or concept. *Gamemaster: Keith Braithwaite*



DECEMBER 5

MonSFFA's Annual Christmas Dinner/Party

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

TABLE of CONTENTS

Spring 2009 • Vol. 23 • 01



FEATURE ARTICLES

TAFF Comes to Canada / 5
We Shall Not See their Like Again / 6
MonSFFan tributes to Forrest J Ackerman
& Charles H. Schneer
The Last Mage: The Dragon's Mouth / 9
Message in a Bottle / 14

REVIEWS

Books / 16
The Graveyard Book / Conspirator /
Turn Coat / The Vorkosigan Companion

On Screen / 17

Digger / Monsters vs Aliens / Star Trek
Upcoming Movies

Conventions & Events / 19

OVMF / Passion Médiéval

DEPARTMENTS

You've Got Mail / 3
MonSFFA Discount Programme / 28
The MonSFFun Pages / 26
SFF Sightings / 28

MONSFANDOM

Meeting Reports: January to May / 21



May 16, 2009
Dear MonSFFen:

I finally overcame my own fumbings with downloading the newest issue in .pdf format, and getting the password to work, and voila, I have issue 71 of Warp here. I will get the letter done right now.

The cover...I got the button, too. You never know if someone is having a good time pulling the fire alarm, but this will always be a part of conventions held at hotels. I am sure the firemen weren't happy with these false alarms, but I hope they got a kick out of the costumes they saw.

I've just finished writing a huge commentary on the new Star Trek movie

to Sandi Marie at OSFS, and I liked the movie, even though I found some problems with changes in the established timeline, the Spock/Uhura relationship, so much more, but it was a fun adventure, and box office (and DVD sales afterwards) should be spectacular. Many OSFS members wrote their own reviews; let's hope MonSFFA members can do the same.

Me...still job hunting. Yvonne's found a full-time job with Masonite Doors, a real feat in these bad economic times. Ad Astra was a great time for us, and next weekend, we will be at Anime North, working the Ad Astra table and taking part in the Full Steam Ahead steampunk fashion show. It worked wonderfully well at Ad Astra, and now to see how a whole new audience at Anime North likes it.

Congratulations to Jean-Pierre Normand on his book. There aren't enough books like this around for sale, and this is something I tried to get into the dealers' room at Ad Astra all the years I ran it.

Polaris 22...ah, there we are in full Hawaiian on page 12, chatting with Rob Godwin, publisher of Apogee Books. We had a good time there, and we're looking forward to Polaris 23, in just a couple of months.

Good story from Nikolai Krimp

continuing, and good for Georges Dodds for his translation work. Would there be a market for such works, Georges, translations of these stories into English and into a paperback or hardcover?

We all met Forry Ackerman the year he was at Con*Cept, but I met him at a couple of Worldcons, in Baltimore at the 1983 Worldcon, and again in Los Angeles in 2006. He and Ray Bradbury were among the reasons we wanted to go to LAcon IV, and I will always remember getting one of Forry's books autographed, and firmly shaking his hand, and saying thank you. He is missed in LA fandom, and I hope LASFS have some honours in mind to keep him in fandom's memory. His collection is being auctioned off in sections, and the proceeds from the auction are far larger than was expected. It's a shame that the whole collection couldn't be put into another SF museum, but some treasures of SF movie making are seeing the light of day for the first time in many years.

Joe Aspler writes about a subject near but not so dear to my heart...cataract surgery. I have a cataract developing in my right eye, a side effect of the retinal reattachment surgery I had a few years ago now. As you write, Joe, having a cataract years ago would be on the fast track to eventual blindness, but now, such surgery

is quite easy. I don't exactly look forward to it, but when I have to get it done, it won't be the traumatic event it used to be.

Some of you have been friended by me via my Facebook page, and I have been nattering on about doing voicework. The latest project is a fan film based on He-Man and the Masters of the Universe, which seems to have an active fandom all its own. I've finished my own taping, and will have six voices in the film, including Man-At-Arms, King Randor and Skeletor. Joining me in voicing the film will be Liana Kerzner, who provides the voice of Queen Marlena, I believe. Once producer John Atkin gives me the heads up on when it will be available online, I will let you all know.

Hope everyone's enjoying their long weekend, and now I can fire this off to you. Work continues on the fanzine lounge, and if they club has any paper issues of Warp they might like to get rid of, let me know. The lounge is the place for it. Take care, and see you at Anime North or Polaris.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney

Hi, Lloyd!

So glad you got the passwords working. It is a bit of a nuisance, but ☸WARP is a privilege of membership so we do need to have some control on its distribution. It's still available for trade with other zines, and members can still request paper copies. So far, most seem very pleased with the on-line version which has all the hotlinks and other bells and whistles. I've been asked if we would consider "extra content" in on-line versions, and that is a point to consider, especially for photos of events. We might also be uploading back issues, but I had a look at my archived files and was dismayed to find some have gone wild on me, probably the result of being copied and backed up, and copied again, just once too often.

The new Trek movie was well-liked here. In general, members felt giving the series a whole new time-line instead of trying to create a prequel to events in TOS was probably the best route. Sure, not everyone was thrilled, but mucking around with TOS continuity was likely to draw even more ire from the purists. Consider the fate of Enterprise which kept tossing in

aliens and events that did not make sense in the context of the what was supposed to have happened next in TOS.

Forry is going to be missed. I'm planning a tribute to him for this edition of WARP. It's too bad his collection is being broken up. Some of our members have had the privilege of visiting the Forry Mansion. I sooo envy them!

Glad to hear that Yvonne has found a job, and your voice work sounds very interesting. I want to hear all about it!

See you at Polaris! Let's hope we get to sleep in this time!

Yours in fandom,

Cathy



We've got a new friend! Thanks to Lloyd for the introductions! E-mail correspondence is sometimes awkward to reproduce, but I'll give it a try. ☺

Hi Lloyd,

As you're aware, I'm really eager for this year's TransAtlantic Fan Fund trip to have a strong Canadian component. Much as I want to meet up with friends from the USA and connect with fans new to me south of the border, the fact that the worldcon is in Montreal gives TAFF an extra spin this year.

Over on LiveJournal, I notice you've mentioned Cathy Palmer-Lister and the Montreal SFF Association fanzine Warp and also Sandi Marie McLaughlin of the Ottawa SF Society's OFSF Statement. I'd be very grateful if you could forward this e-mail to them both so that I could make contact with these groups ahead of my journey. Currently, the only fixed dates on my TAFF trip are the worldcon itself (arriving Wednesday, leaving Tuesday) and I want to take this opportunity to create a bridge between European and Canadian fandom, not just the usual USA link.

Thanks for all your help.

Kind regards,

Steve

Hi, Steve!

(And thanks, Lloyd, for putting us in touch.)

*I am editor of WARP, MonSFFA's zine, and also the chair of Con*Cept, Montreal's annual SFF convention.*

I will, of course, be at Anticipation!

*With a bit of luck, Con*Cept and MonSFFA will have fan tables and a room party, so we could meet up there. I'm not into the cell phone with text messages and so forth, but I do check the voodoo boards regularly.*

Do you have a zine? And if so, will you be at the faneds panel and lunch?

Cathy

I'm currently between personal zines, although Martin Tudor and I have relaunched the newszine *Critical Wave* (original run: 1987-96) and there is a collection of my earlier fanzine writing available.

<http://efanzines.com/AreYou/index.htm>

<http://efanzines.com/Wave/index.htm>

I was wondering whether it's worth my arriving prior to Anticipation and maybe hanging out with local fans before the event (if not in Montreal, Toronto?). Any thoughts? Also, would it be worth my dropping the local newsletters/ groupzines a (very) brief introduction to TAFF and yours truly, as I suspect it has a higher profile in the USA?

All very best

– Steve

A few more e-mails flew back and forth, the upshot of this being that Steve will indeed be in Montreal before the con, staying with MonSFFen Ann and Jean-Pierre. Hopefully, we'll have the opportunity to introduce him to Montreal fandom. Plans are in the works for a possible get-together at Dunn's.

Steve has written an introduction to TAFF for us which appears on page 5.



Hi Cathy,

Firstly, belated congratulations to MonSFFA on celebrating its twentieth birthday. The Birmingham SF Group hits forty in 2011, but its longevity is fairly unusual: most British sf gatherings tend to implode within a decade, other than university societies. (I had the pleasure of visiting Exeter University's convention Microcon in 1981 and 1982, then returned as a guest speaker in 2008 and 2009; needless to say, the committee had changed in the intervening

quarter-century).

Regarding the report on the March meeting in Warp #70, I really must take issue with the reference to the original Star Trek featuring "low budget effects work". Au contraire: Howard Anderson and his colleagues produced state-of-the-art sfx for the mid-1960s, as is instantly apparent when those episodes are judged alongside contemporaneous telefantasy (Lost in

Space, Doctor Who). As for the current revamp, I have grave misgivings about the replacement of original footage with CGI'd sequences, but I guess I'm a purist (plus, I've been a fan of the show since 1969, and I resent people tinkering with my memories).

All best,

– Steve

Hi, Steve!

Do read our reviews of the new Star Trek movie, p.18. Wondering what you think of it!

Yours in fandom,

Cathy

TAFF COMES TO CANADA!



The Trans-Atlantic FanFund, also known as TAFF, was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular members of science fiction fandom familiar to fans on both sides of the ocean, across the Atlantic. Steve Green of Solihull, UK (near Birmingham) is the winner of this year's TAFF.

As many members of MonSFFA will be aware by now, I'll be travelling to your fair city and attending the 67th world science fiction convention as this year's delegate from the TransAtlantic Fan Fund. That said, it's perfectly understandable if many of Warp's readers have no idea what I'm talking about: after all, thanks to various twists of fate, this is the first time during TAFF's 55-year history that a European ambassador has been sent to Canada.

The concept of a sponsored voyage across the Big Pond dates back to 1952, when a collection was taken up to send Ireland's own Walt Willis to TASFiC in Chicago. The trip – chronicled in Walt's *The Harp Stateside* – proved so popular, a formal structure was already in place by 1954.

Of course, Canada had already hosted its first worldcon back in 1948, the first Torcon, so it wasn't available as a destination until Torcon II in 1973, only that coincided with an eastbound trip to the UK. When the worldcon landed in Winnipeg in 1994, it would also have been an eastbound flight, only no race was held that year. The same occurred with Toronto in 2003, when TAFF packed Seattle's own Randy Byers off to various locations in England.

And so we get to this year's journey, when TAFF finally lands in Canada. My plan is arrive the weekend before Anticipation, and I've been generously offered crash space by Ann Methé and Jean-Pierre Normand (although I really hope other members of MonSFFA will volunteer to take me off their hands for a few hours: as well as – hopefully – being reasonably good company, I've been involved in the sf subculture for more than thirty years and will be writing up my various encounters with Montreal

fandom for my eventual trip report).

I'm really excited about this opportunity to meet Canadian fans (although I know at least one of them – Randy Reichardt – since we first exchanged fanzines back in 1977) and I hope to get you equally excited about TAFF as well. After all, next year is a westbound race and there'll be plenty of fans at Odyssey 2010 in London eager to greet an ambassador from North America.



Photo by Jean Weber

For further information on the history of the TransAtlantic Fan Fund, visit <http://taff.org.uk/>.

For further information on yours truly, you can check out my recent fanthology at:

<http://efanzines.com/AreYou/index.htm>

or my partial archive at:

<http://shadowlibrary.blogspot.com/>.

Those on LiveJournal are also invited to join the discussion group for this year's trip at:

<http://community.livejournal.com/taff2009/>.

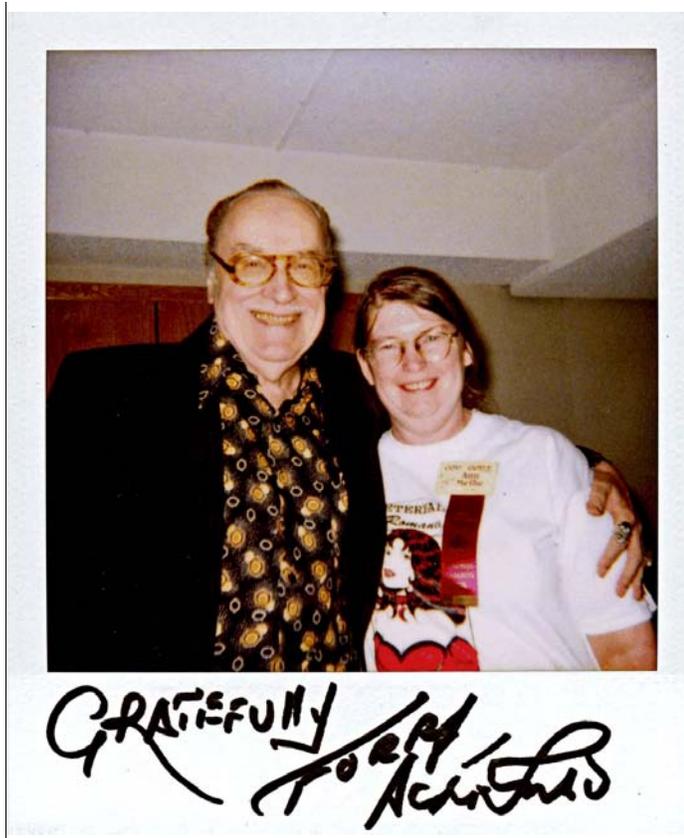
See you in August!

At the time of this writing, plans were being made to have a welcoming gathering for Steve at Dunn's Downtown. Stay tuned! Details will appear on our website. ❀

We shall not see their like again...

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 film producer, Charles H. Schneer, but first, let's take a look at the tributes sent to WARP in response to the obituary for Forrest J Ackerman by Keith Braithwaite that appeared in WARP 71.



Con*Cept 1998: Fan Guest of Honour,
Forry with conchair, Ann Methe.



Tribute to Forry, Marquise Boies



Jean-Pierre Normand with Forry
who dropped in to see Jean-Pierre's collection.
In the background, some of JPN's art work.

Michel Prevost, Alain Essiembre, René Marchand and I, in coordination with the Complexe Desjardins, put on an exhibition which was entitled “*From Yesterday to Tomorrow: Science Fiction Through the Years*” in September of 1997. This exhibition was a dream by 4 lovers of science fiction and without a lot of planning, hard work, dedication, generosity from Forry, the fans, and the Complexe Desjardins, this would have never come together. Alain Essiembre went to the Ackermansion to select material on behalf of our group. It was a surreal experience unpacking the items and it was a personal thrill to be holding one of the original filming models from the film “*War of the Worlds*”.

– *Bernard Reischl*



Michel Prévost, unpacking the items on loan from Forry.



Wonder what they thought at the border...

Charles H. Schneer Keith Braithwaite

Film producer Charles H. Schneer passed away in Boca Raton, Florida, on January 21 at the age of 88. He had been ill for several years.

Schneer is best known for his collaboration with stop-motion animation and special effects wizard Ray Harryhausen on a dozen science fiction and fantasy films produced over three decades, including the classic fantasy adventures *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958) and *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963). Harryhausen’s friend and agent, Arnold Kunert, described Schneer as a booster of fantasy films, like



Ray Harryhausen with Charles Schneer, 1977

Harryhausen, at a time when such fare was not taken seriously by studios. Schneer believed in Harryhausen’s talent. The stop-motion master himself has praised his long-time partner as the unsung hero of their films, a meticulous planner who knew how to bring a picture in on budget and had a knack for knowing what would and would not work. He was not the typical producer who would “sit back with a big fat cigar,” said Harryhausen of Schneer. “Charles was much more active than that, a truly creative producer. We formulated the stories together, and he dealt with the actors and I dealt with the special effects. It was real teamwork.”

Born in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1920, Schneer began his career at Columbia Pictures and during World War II, worked with the likes of Hollywood names John Ford and John Huston producing training films for the U. S. Army Signal Corps.



Among the 25 or so films Schneer produced during his career was *Hellcats of the Navy* (1957), starring Ronald Reagan and Nancy Davis (as she was then billed), the only film in which the future U.S. president and first lady appeared together. In 1960 Schneer

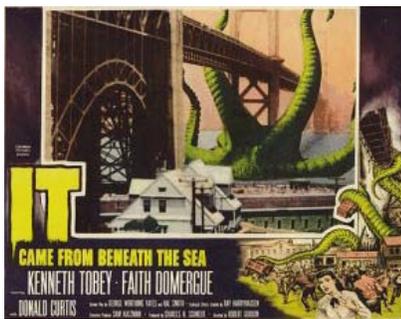
both settled in London, England, and released *I Aim at the Stars*, a film about the life of German rocket scientist Wernher von Braun, who that same year began work at NASA. The film caused some discord in the British capital, which had been a target of the



German rocket scientist Wernher von Braun (in white shirt) with Charles H. Schneer, to his left.

von Braun-designed V-2 rocket during WWII. It was suggested that the film should have been called *I Aim at the Stars*, but *Sometimes Hit London*.

The Schneer/Harryhausen partnership began when Schneer approached Harryhausen with an idea for a giant-monster movie that became *It Came from Beneath the Sea* (1955). Schneer tackled the project with the skills he'd picked up at Columbia after the war working in the studio's low-budget production unit under the legendary Sam Katzman, who taught him how to produce an entertaining movie on a shoestring budget.

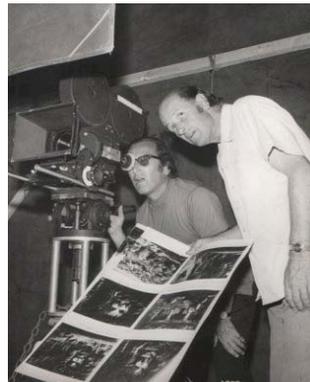


It was just that kind of budget that famously resulted in Harryhausen's animated giant octopus sporting six rather than eight tentacles — two fewer tentacles to animate meant less time and money spent. But the thrill of the creature's attack on San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge was not diminished any for lack of a couple tentacles.

Schneer and Harryhausen followed in rapid succession with *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* (1956), sparked by Schneer's interest in the flying saucer reports of the time, and *20 Million Miles to Earth* (1957). These movies saw the duo earn a reputation for turning out low-budget, high-quality sci-fi films.

1958's release of the definitive fantasy adventure *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* gave name to Harryhausen's animation technique: Dynamation.

Schneer and Harryhausen had been searching for a catchy tag to hang on Harryhausen's dimensional animation process and the name came to Schneer one morning while driving to the studio in



Schneer and Harryhausen, 1973

his Dynaflo transmission-equipped Buick.

With *7th Voyage*, the two decided to move away from science fiction and explore the worlds of myth, fable, and fairy tale in their subsequent projects, revisiting the SF genre only on occasion. Their final film together was *Clash of the Titans* (1981), after which both retired from filmmaking.



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. We pick up the story again just as the companions finally emerge from the tunnels, but their joy is tempered by the sight of a vast plain – totally blanketed in snow.

Chapter 12

Slamming his fist onto the dark ebony carved table at which he was seated, as his magic mirror went dark, Malodor called his captain to stand before him.

"It seems that we have misjudged the daughter of Annabelle Pennifeather," he growled. "She has eluded us once more. This time I want results," his voice grew louder, "I want her and the rest of her party, ... dead! They are not to reach the Dragon's Mouth."

"As you command," said the Captain of the druid's personal guard. "Where will I find them?" he asked.

"They are just south of the Three Hills," replied the druid. "They must pass the Tower of Tophet and that is where you will lay a trap for them."

Turning his gaze back to the now dark mirror, in a low voice he spoke, "And there, Shannon, is where you will die."

He knew that the party would have to pass very near the tower and with a few hundred orcs waiting, the elf girl and her friends wouldn't stand a chance. Smiling, he sat back in his large upholstered chair and clasped his hands together. "Soon the box will be in my hands," he thought to himself, "and then the world will be mine to command."

"We are about three days northeast of the Teufel's Tahl," said Blick as his scout returned after climbing one of the higher peaks. "The route will bring us fairly close to the dark tower. There we may run into some orcs, or other evil things. We will stay close together, with our weapons in hand. Also, no talking above a whisper. These mountains can carry sound great distances. We will spend the rest of the day and night here in the cave. It will shelter us from the cold and in the morning, at first light, we will set out."

Blick sent his most experienced scout up into the pass as soon

as the first light of day appeared on the eastern horizon, then the rest followed in single file. The freshly fallen snow covered mountain, made the trail just as slippery as the tunnel steps. Great caution was taken that no one slipped off and fell down into the rocky ravine below.

The morning passed into afternoon before Blick called a halt, as they reached a wide plateau. The party was getting very hungry. Their food had run out while they were still in the tunnel. Now the young dwarf sent forth some of his men in search of food, while others scouted around for some firewood under the snow.

By the time the hunters returned with a half-dozen large hares in their backpacks, there was enough wood to keep them warm for a whole night.

"I think it is best to spend the night here," Blick suggested. "Tomorrow we will be closer to the tower and the chance of being detected by an orc patrol will be greatly increased. We will let the fire burn until dusk and after that, we must let it go out so it won't be seen up here in these mountains."

The party ate their fill and the two remaining rabbits were set aside for the trip. Who could know when the next time would be that their luck would be so good as to provide them with such a splendid meal? Then they prepared to spend the night out in the open. They huddled together, close to one another and up against the side of the mountain for warmth and protection from the icy cold wind. The clouded sky prevented the extreme cold from reaching this far south but they were high up in the Craggs and it was cold enough to make sleeping quite uncomfortable. A few times during the night Shannon and her friends arose and walked around to keep from freezing. Rubbing themselves until their limbs warmed, they then crouched back down among the others and slept another few hours.

Shannon was glad when the first streaks of light lit the eastern

sky. It had begun to snow in the early part of the morning and everyone stood up shaking the fresh, cold, white powder from their cloaks and blankets. A small fire was built from the remaining wood and tea was brewed. After a hot drink and a small amount of meat was consumed, the party continued on its way.

The newly fallen snow made the trail even more hazardous and twice the leader walked right off the trail. Had it not been for Duncan's idea to tie the lead man to a long rope, the dwarf would have fallen to his death. The first time there was concern for their comrade hanging some fifty feet below the trail, but on the second fall they just laughed and hauled him back up. At that point Duncan suggested they change the lead man, for this one was trying to commit suicide. Everyone laughed as they pulled the snow-covered dwarf to the safety of the trail and his friends.

The rest of the day was uneventful and by the time they stopped for the night, the falling snow had turned into a blizzard. They would spend this night on the narrow trail, with no fire to warm them. They ate the rest of the meat from the rabbits and drank some cold water.

Blick passed a message down the line, for there was no room on the trail to gather together. "Tomorrow noon, we will enter the valley near the dark tower," he said. "Here is where we will be in greatest danger from an attack. Get as much rest as you can and have your weapons ready."

That night everyone paired off and pulled their cloaks and blankets over them, creating small shelters. Sixteen little snowmen squatted rigid on the narrow trail. Under the homemade tents, lamps were lit for warmth and no one cared whether the light could be seen or not. The snow that fell covered them completely, preventing prying eyes from seeing the faint glow coming from under the covers.

During the night, the snowstorm increased in its intensity and by morning the trail was so dangerous to travel that a decision was made to change directions and enter a smaller valley, farther to the north of the tower. This would lengthen their journey by one full day. Everyone agreed and by late afternoon, the scout led them into the little valley.

Here they found animal tracks and small shrubs that resembled trees. Immediately, the hunters set out to trap a few rabbits or squirrels. The rest gathered up firewood that would be needed for the evening's meal. Not long after the fire was started, the three hunters returned, dragging a large animal behind them. They had been lucky and killed a mountain goat, which had wandered right into their path. One mighty blow from a warhammer knocked the goat to its knees and then another from a battle-ax separated its head from its body, leaving it quite dead. Tonight everyone would eat their fill and there would be plenty left over to carry with them. So the need for hunting was suspended for a few days.

That night everyone huddled around the fire that they kept

going all night. They figured that they were far enough north of the tower to chance it. The heat from the flame was so comforting that no one really slept that night for fear that the life-giving warmth would disappear.

"Enter!" Malodor ordered as the Captain of the Guard knocked on the studded oak door. "What news have you for me?" he commanded.

"Word has reached me that the party has not entered the valley so far," he replied. "An army is lying in wait for them, but it seems that they never reached that far south."

"Could it be that they froze to death?" Malodor wondered hopefully.

"Shall I keep the men there for a while longer, or shall I recall them?" asked the seven-foot tall orc captain.

"No!" answered the dark druid sharply. "Send them north. I want proof of their death and I want that little box delivered to me here!"

"As you command," said the captain as he snapped to attention and backed out of the room, closing the door and leaving the druid to ponder his potential victory.

Smiling to himself, Malodor walked over and opened a bottle of red wine and filled himself a goblet full. Standing in front of a full-length mirror, he toasted himself.

"Soon," he whispered to himself, "Soon."

The mood in the camp, was one of a happier tone, since the goat was carved up and hungry stomachs were filled. The dwarfs, who never drank tea, now welcomed the hot beverage as it took the chill from their bodies. Their mood was almost festive but a word of warning from Duncan quieted their spirits somewhat, when he spoke of the possibility of an orc patrol picking up on their boisterous voices.

Over the next five days they marched up one narrow mountain trail and down another, until the evening of the fifth day, they came within sight of the valley known as The Teufel's Tahl (The Devil's Valley). They had been lucky and hadn't run into any orcs since leaving the tunnel near the Three Hills, but that was about to end. Down in the valley, near the entrance of the Tahl, was camped a patrol of orcs. There didn't seem to be a way to skirt around them this time, for there was only one trail that led to their objective and that led right through the camped creatures below.

Retreating back up the valley and out of hearing range of the orcs, the party sat down to plan their next move. They mapped out every idea that they could think of in the snow. A frontal assault was out of the question. There could be more than the six or seven orcs camped there that they had seen. Finding another route wasn't feasible either, for there wasn't another way except for the one dead ahead of them. Then one of the dwarfs suggested that a small group create a diversion, drawing the orcs away from their

camp, allowing the rest to enter the Tahl.

“You know,” said Blick, “this just might work. The only problem is that the ones who draw the creatures away from their camp might not survive, but it is a good plan.”

The young dwarf now asked for three volunteers. Looking at one another the dwarfs contemplated, until the first stepped forward. Then the second and third stood beside the first. Blick laid out the plan. When it was completely dark, the three would set out. They would take the route that would lead them farther north of the camped orcs. Making just enough noise to attract their attention, the three were to lead the creatures as far away from the mouth of the valley as possible. Then the rest of the party would make a dash for the entrance. Taking only their weapons and cloaks, the three set out.

The dwarfs crept silently through the snow and were soon out of sight of the rest. They followed the contours of the mountain as they skirted the orc camp. Though the snow here was not as deep as higher up in the Craggs, there was a sufficient amount to slow their progress. They kept their silence until they had reached the next rise. There they began to sing rather joyously attracting the attention of the orc encampment. Suddenly one of the creatures rose and shouted, “IT’S THEM!” Grabbing their weapons, the six who were sitting around the fire started out after the dwarfs.

Blick was just about to give the order to move out, when from below the path appeared another dozen or so orcs, who joined their comrades in the chase. Once the creatures were far enough away, the party stepped out onto the path and made a beeline for the mouth of the Tahl.

They were a few hundred feet from their goal, when a shout rang out from one of the orcs. The party had been spotted and all the orcs turned and chased after Shannon and her friends, leaving the three dwarfs alone. Duncan, being the oldest huffed and puffed as he ran. Only the fear of being caught by those ugly creatures kept him going. Just as he was about to give up and face his enemy, hands grabbed one of his arms and half carried and half dragged him along. The entrance, which had seemed so near before, now still looked like it was miles away. They had misjudged the distance in the dark.

Running along, Shannon glanced towards the mountain and saw the three dwarfs coming down and trying to flank their pursuers, but the orc captain was not as stupid as most. He had anticipated the move and sent six of his men back to meet the charging dwarfs. Then he and the rest of his men continued their pursuit of the party.

Shannon and the rest were almost at the mouth of the valley when the noise of battle started. No one stopped. They kept on running as fast as they could. As they neared the valley, the path narrowed and now could be easily defended by only a few

warriors. Just a little further inside the valley, they would make their stand. Readying their weapons, they entered the Tahl, with the orcs not more than two hundred paces behind them. The band kept on running until they reached the narrow trail. Here they stopped and turned to face their enemy. To their surprise, there was no one behind them. The orcs had never entered the valley. Back down the path and outside the valley, a few shouts could still be heard, but any sound of battle had long been silenced. The party knew that their friends had laid down their lives, so that the rest could flee to safety.

It was a clear night and the almost-full moon lit their path, as they turned and moved deeper into the Tahl. The weather also grew a lot warmer and more humid. Shedding their cloaks and blankets, the party sought out a good spot next to a small stream and made camp. Treymane, wanting to try his luck at fishing, went down to the water’s edge and bathed some fresh dug up worms. Blick sent two of his men out into the forest, which grew dense on both sides of the stream, to hunt for food. The rest made themselves comfortable in front of a small fire and talked about the next portion of their journey.

“Why is this place called The Teufel’s Tahl?” asked Shannon.

“People say that if you enter this place and a storm comes up, you may never reach the other end,” replied Kirin. “They say the valley is possessed by demons.”

A few hours later, the two hunters returned empty handed. The hobbit also had no luck at the stream. Strangely it seemed that there was no life of any kind in this lush green valley.

“This place is empty,” Shannon heard one of the hunters tell Blick. “Nothing lives here.”

“I think we should all get some sleep,” Blick said, standing and moving away from the light of the fire. “I’ll post the guards for the night. Tomorrow we have a long and dangerous stretch ahead of us.”

Shannon was glad to be sleeping on a soft bed of ferns instead of the cold snow that awaited them outside the valley. Covering herself with her cloak, she fell asleep and didn’t wake up until dawn. She awoke to a hot and sub tropical, cloudless day. Already the heat from the morning sun began to mix with the cooler air from the cold mountain stream, creating a dense fog. By the time they broke camp, the whole area was shrouded in a fine mist, floating up to ten feet off the ground. Slowly the sun was blotted out and the haze covered the entire forest, slowing their progress. At one point the fog became so thick that Shannon couldn’t see the person in front of her. It was all they could do, to keep the sound of the mountain stream on their right and hope that it would lead them straight through the valley.

By noon, the heat had increased to such an extent that those wearing leather armour shed it and attached it to their backpacks. The fog, which had them moving about blindly, slowly began to

lift. Now the forest began to show itself. Shannon had never seen such a lush, green forest in her life, not even in the coastal range back in her time. It was a true rain forest through which they were marching. Suddenly, the beautiful green weald ended. Ahead of them lay a brown, bleak, featureless plain. Here, their path turned towards the protective mountains, which sheltered the valley. Looking up the side of the mountain, one saw the trail disappear into the lower, hanging clouds.

"We better not waste too much time here on the valley floor," said Duncan, looking towards the western end of the valley. "There's a storm brewing and I'd like it better if I were above the clouds, where it is a lot safer."

Couldn't we go back into the forest and wait out the storm?" asked Shannon.

"I don't think you would want to be down here, when it blows in," replied Blick. "Legend says that at one time the entire valley was lush with green trees. Slowly, the lightning from these storms has burned it away, bit by bit, until all that is left is what we just passed through. No, we will be safer above the storm, than under it."

Off in the distance to the west, a low rumbling was heard. Shannon stood as if frozen to the ground. Turning her head, she saw an orange sky slowly making its way into the valley. Everyone understood its meaning. Get up the slope and above the coming storm, before it's too late. Shannon could not move. She stood there transfixed by the scene unfolding in front of her. This was the plain in her dreams, where the black knight and his ebony steed, with eyes like glowing embers, charged her. She would have stayed there and let the incoming tempest slay her, had it not been for Kirin, who had to pull her by the arm until they reached the foot of the mountain.

"This isn't just any ordinary storm," Shannon spoke, just above a whisper, "it has come for me. It wasn't a dream that I've been having," she continued, "but was a vision. I'm supposed to die here."

Blick, seeing the fear in her eyes, quickly shouted orders to begin climbing.

The first hundred feet were the hardest, for the loose stones, covering the ascending path, made progress slow and hazardous. Slowly and sometimes on hands and knees, picking their way so as not to lose their footing, they ascended the side of the mountain until the party reached a narrow, steep, stone staircase. By this time the storm was well into the valley and the thunderclaps were felt close by. Only the lightning was still miles away.

The dwarfs kept up a steady pace and for the first part of the climb made good progress. But now the steps changed to a steep and slippery path which entered into the lower clouds.

"We should be above the storm shortly," Blick called back, as he kept up the frantic pace. He too, began to realize that this was

no ordinary storm. The clouds that they had entered didn't seem just right. Their orange colour was the first he had ever seen. They should have been full of mist, but these clouds were dry and smelled of death. If you could know what death really smelled like. Stopping to catch his breath, he ordered two of his men to climb on ahead and find some sort of shelter to protect them from this storm.

Glad for the moment's rest, Duncan, wheezing from the forced climb, took one look around and urged Blick to continue. He too knew that this was no common storm. The old dwarf sensed the danger when he sniffed the bitter air.

By now the storm was slowly closing in around them. Finding suitable shelter was the only thought on their minds. Blick had hoped that the two men farther up the trail would have found something by now and would be on their way back with the good news.

Suddenly a bolt of lightning struck the side of the mountain, shaking its very foundation. Seconds later the thunderclap was heard, followed by a scream that slowly faded as it reached the bottom of the valley floor. They all knew that one, or both, of Blick's men had fallen. Looking back through the soupy, orange mist, Shannon could see the fear in Roma's eyes as she caught up with the elf girl.

"I hope we find some shelter soon," said the tall brunette, "for I don't want to be caught out here on the face of the mountain. In all my years, I've never seen anything like this."

Another flash of lightning struck just behind them, followed by a deafening clap of a thunderbolt. This time the ones at the rear of the party pushed forward, almost sending Roma over the edge. She would have been the storm's next victim, had Shannon not grabbed her arm and steadied her. They continued their climb while the storm raged around them. Bolts of lightning struck above them, showering them with rocks that exploded out from the side of the mountain. Then when things couldn't possibly get worse, Blick called for the party to stop. Just ahead of them the path ended. A bolt of lightning had struck the narrow trail, destroying their only hope of escape. Desperately the young dwarf searched high and low for another route, but found none. The mountain was too sheer to climb straight up, nor was going back an option. Stranded and full of despair, the group crouched down, making themselves as small a target for the lightning as possible. The party settled down to wait out the storm.

One bolt struck just below the path, jarring loose a few of the larger rocks that made up the path. Then tragedy struck again. From behind, a bolt struck right on the pathway. Another scream was heard as a dwarf fell to his death. This time the smell of burned flesh also hung heavy in the mist. All Shannon could see was the fearful look on Duncan's face as he nudged closer to the party. The elf then realized that the two men behind the old dwarf

were gone.

All hope was lost and everybody knew that their journey would end here on the side of the mountain when, from the trail ahead, Blick heard a voice shouting above the roar of the storm. It was one of Blick's men, returning from scouting for a shelter. Blick called to Kirin, who was carrying a length of coiled rope around his shoulder. Tossing one end of the rope to the dwarf, Blick braced himself against the side of the rise and allowed Kirin to climb over to where the other dwarf waited. Kirin grasped the rope with one hand and with the other he found cracks and crevices onto which he could gain a safe hold. Slowly, he inched his way across, finding narrow footholds and protruding rocks wherever he could. With lightning dancing all around him, he made his way some twenty feet across to the other dwarf.

One by one they all made their way to safety on the other side. Once everyone was safely across the scout took the lead and led the party to the tiny cave that he had found. The cave wasn't much more than a large alcove, but it was big enough to keep the rain out. The party huddled against the back wall for protection from the bolts of lightning that pounded the sides of the mountain. Over, below and around the entrance of the cave it struck.

The storm raged on for hours. Never moving. It hovered near the mouth of the cave and everyone wondered if it was ever going to stop, or continue until all of them were dead. Then came a lull and the tempest seemed to have gone on down the valley towards the forest in which they had spent the night before. The scout stood up and walked to the entrance and peered out. He turned with a smile on his face, when the unthinkable happened. A bolt of lightning with a clap of thunder struck just inside the cave, engulfing the dwarf in a ball of fire. Turning, he screamed in pain and ran out of the cave, leaping off the edge of the pathway plummeting him to the bottom where death awaited him. No one moved. The horror struck deep. Twenty men had died since they left Bellow's Falls.

Shannon cried, for her friends were dying all around her. Who was next? Roma? Kirin? She herself? What had started out on such a happy note had ended up in tragedy.

"It was a strange thing that Tabor did," Duncan said, breaking the long silence, "turning and jumping off the ledge like that. Usually when someone is struck by lightning, they die on the spot where they were struck. Not run fully ablaze."

The group was so shocked that no one had really thought about what had just happened. But everyone agreed that this was no ordinary storm. It had waited for them. Trying to lure them

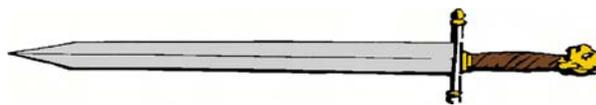
from the safety of the cave and then striking them down. It was agreed that no one would venture near the opening of the cave until they were certain that the storm had completely played itself out.

As time passed the sky grew dark, but still the storm raged. One by one the members of the party fell asleep from exhaustion, waking only when a bolt of lightning struck near the mouth of the cave. During the night the tempest intensified, striking every few seconds. It was determined to drive the party from the cave. One bolt struck the top of the entrance sending rocks and pebbles the size of fists deeper into the cave. Another bolt struck the same area, breaking away a part of the ceiling. Frightened, as the air inside the cave became electrified, the party lay down on the floor of the cave and made themselves as small as they could. This went on all through the night and most of the next day.

By the time the storm moved on, the afternoon had turned to evening. Too tired from the lack of sleep to continue, it was agreed that they spend another night in the cave and leave with the first signs of light in the morning. With no wood to light a fire to dry themselves, the group huddled together for warmth and spent the night in the damp little cave.

The next morning, they left the safety of the cave when there was sufficient light to see the trail. They were surprised to find the ledge, which led down the mountain completely gone. The lightning bolts had struck everywhere. Huge holes had been gouged out of the side of the slope. It looked like a great battle had been fought up here on the side of the mountain. Parts of the pathway leading up the slope were still intact and the coil of rope had to be used on many occasions, to keep the party from falling to their death.

The low rumble of thunder could still be heard at the extreme eastern end of the Tahl, as the group finally climbed out of the soup-thick clouds. The path now ran parallel, but still several hundred feet below the snow line. The air, this high up, was crisp and the party had to cover themselves once more with their capes and blankets. This time no one complained about the cold; they were just happy to be out of danger from the storm. They continued to make good time and marched all day until the early evening when they came to another small cave. Eager to get some sleep, they hung a couple of blankets at the mouth of the tiny cave to keep the wind out. Then huddling together, they crouched in one corner and fell asleep.



The Last Mage continues in WARP 73

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Alice Novo
December 2005

There it was floating at the edge of the ship, a green bottle, label pulled off and icky residue on it. It didn't look like much different from the bottle she had found last weekend, unless you considered it looked older and more pitted and there seemed to be paper inside it. Odd, she didn't think folk still did the message in the bottle bit anymore. Well, the lunch break was coming soon and what the heck; she might as well have a good laugh.

Sarah picked the bottle, stuck it into the specimen case to be decontaminated with the rest of her finds. She was stuck with pick up duty better known as PU duty, since she had come to words with the Captain. It really was her friend's fault that she was in this trouble but hey, good friendships are hard to come by in spaceships and, well, she did owe Judy a favour.

Judy happened to be waiting for Sarah by the cafeteria door, waving hi when she saw her friend. "Hey Sarah, thanks again for the PU, one more black mark on my file and the Captain will kiss my butt goodbye." said Judy.

"No problem, look what I found outside, there's a message inside." Sarah waved the bottle in front of Judy's face. "I didn't open it yet, need something to open it. You still got that fancy laser knife you got in the cereal box last week? Pass it here; we'll give it a try." With that, Sarah using the laser knife, sliced the bottle below the neck and pulled the papers out, there was more pages than it first appeared.

Sarah started to read. It was hard in the dim light since it seemed to be written by hand and the ink had faded. She was also surprised by the paper which was so thin she could almost see through it. She hadn't seen anything like it, unless it was at the Museum back on earth when she was a kid. Nowadays all they had was the computer pads, but she liked the feel of the paper. Sarah smelled the pages and they had a lovely scent to them. Roses, yes that was the scent she smelled.

"Oh come Judy, smell this, it smells like roses!" Sarah shoved the papers towards Judy's nose and poor Judy started to sneeze like it was going out of style. "Hey stop that, you know I'm allergic to flowers." yelled Judy. "What are the pages about?" she asked.

Sarah replied, "I'm not sure, it seems to be a message or a story of some sort. Come on, I'm starving, I'll read it later."

Later that evening, Sarah took out the pages and sat down to read them. Judy was out with Mel, so she knew she had no interruptions in view. There were over a dozen pages to read, and Sarah was happy to see that only the first couples were more faded than the rest. She took the first page and started to read it.

-Tuesday the third of February 2026.

Hey this letter is almost 200 years old, wait'll I tell Judy, thought Sarah as she took another sniff of the scented pages.

This is day two of my journey on the good ship Marie-Celeste; I still say they should have changed the name. Charlie swears his father told him that the name was one of a long ago ship that everyone on that ship disappeared suddenly, the food was still cooking when the ship was found. My dad told me not to listen to Charlie so much, since he has a vivid imagination. I can't wait until we reach Paradise. They say the terraformers have almost finished and that we'll be able to start planting when we get there.

The ship is carrying three hundred people, loads of families, so there will be plenty of kids to go to school with. You'd figure they would wait until we got to the planet before bringing kids, but they say, this way the kids will be ready in ten years to start the next generation on the planet before more ships arrive. The next ship is due fifteen years after we land. Oh! I've got to put this diary away, the Captain just announced we'll be going to sleep the long sleep in a short while, I've got to go and find dad. See you in ten years.

-Thursday the fifth of September 2030, something woke our part of the ship up. Dad and I went out to see why we woke up so early, but we found ourselves alone with ten other people. The berths are all empty all over the ship and the life-pods are gone. We can't get into the Captain's berth. His room is locked, so dad and a few other men went out to look for some tools to open the lock. I hope they hurry, I'm starting to get hungry and dad told me not to leave our room. Charlie says that his dad told him that they think the Captain is dead because the computer doesn't seem to be working and everyone knows only the Captain can access the computer in times of crisis. I hope that's not true, since if the Captain is dead and only he can work it, what are we going to do? I'm sleepy; you'd think that after sleeping four years, I'd be wide awake. I'll take a nap until dad gets back.

-Friday the sixth of September 2030, something's wrong, dad's not back. I went out looking for him and only found Charlie and his sister. Seems all the grownups have gone. We went to see if they managed to get the Captain's door open and we found they had...

Charlie's sister yelled when we saw the Captain, he seems to have died in his sleep or at least we hope he did. The computer seems to be working but we only know how to get to the games. Anyway, we're all hungry so we went to see what we could get to eat. I wish dad was here, Carrie keeps crying for her mom and we don't know what to tell her.



-Two or three days later, I think, I can't remember. Carrie still cries before going to sleep but a look from Charlie shuts her up fast. We're all hungry and food dispensers seem to only give us liquids. Doesn't matter what we ask, we get the fizzy strawberry drink Charlie asked for first. Nothing else works, not hamburger, hotdogs, fries. Heck, we even tried the healthy stuff – broccoli, spinach, liver, yeech, carrots, nope, nothing but strawberry fizz. Charlie says the parents left us. I don't think my dad would. I know he loves me and wouldn't want to leave me. Something bad must have happened to him. Charlie decides what we do. This morning we're suppose to go and visit the lower floors and see what we can find. I don't really want to go but Charlie has already beaten us twice and I'm scared of him now. I wish dad was here. Well, at least I still got you.

__ Today, I've lost count of the days. We found the garden floor a couple of days after my last entry. There we found food. We have fruit trees and some vegetables that Charlie found seeds for. Okay I didn't like salads before, but it's better than not eating anything.

Charlie says the carrots should start sprouting soon and we're to wait till they are two centimeters long before eating some of them. Can you believe it, orange trees and apple trees were brought in pots and the hydrobots take care of them? Charlie says this was so the folks would have fresh fruits that first year and hopefully the land would be fertile enough to accept our trees and our seeds without too much trouble. I don't care for the reason but I'm sure glad we found them when we did; I think I ate about twenty apples the first day and did I pay for it that night. Charlie wants us to wait a few days and then we get to go to the higher floors and see if we find someone.

__ Today. I have to start a calendar soon. I have no idea how many days have gone by. Carrie is sick and Charlie has gone looking for the medbot. He thinks he remembers which floor it's on, his dad had shown it to him but he saw so much that first day he's not sure where it was. I hope he comes back, Carrie's really hot and shivering. I wish dad was here, he'd know what to do.

__ Six days later. I keep a running tab of days now. Carrie died two days ago. She wouldn't drink anything and couldn't keep down the stuff she did eat. I haven't seen Charlie since he's left for the medbot. I'm leaving him a letter next to Carrie. I covered her, the best I could, but there's a funny smell and I want to go back to the Captain's computer. I want to try and reach anybody on the ship, but I think they are all gone. Maybe this is just a bad

nightmare and I'm still sleeping the long sleep. Got to go and get me some more fruit and see if the carrots are ready now. I wish Charlie was here, I don't like being alone.

__ First of October. I've decided that at least a month has gone by since we woke up so today is the first, give or take a few days. This way I'll know at least what month it is.

Never heard from Charlie again or anyone else for that matter. Been to the Captain's quarters and didn't find the password to get to the communication section. Have decided to use the bottle I found in the Captain's room and send these sheets in it. I'm going to try to send it out the same door we came in when we arrived; I saw how they closed it, so I guess I can open it. Anyway, I'm tired of not doing anything. I'm sending the information I have about this ship and hopefully someone can come and get me.

Ship: Marie-Céleste

Destination: Paradise, 10 years of sleep long travel time.

My name is Rose Briggs, I'm 11 years old.

Please help me.

Sarah didn't know what to think. Was it just a story created by this Rose Briggs for the fun of it or was there something to the story? She looked up the *Marie Celeste* and did find two ships named that. There wasn't much in way of information but there were rumors about both ships. Should she take this to the Captain, or forget it? No, the story sounded true and Sarah wanted to know if Rose had been rescued.

End of part one.

Author's note: This story was started way back when Keith had a panel on a group writing project. Problem was, I could never figure out how to end it. So I'm asking for suggestions on how to end it and in the next Warp, I'll finish the story.

HELP! and **THANK-YOU** says Alice.

Alice can be reached at: alicenovo@hotmail.com





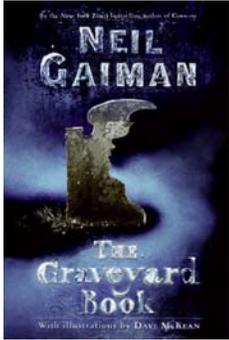
Answers to The Faces behind the Masks

A=5, B=7, C=10, D=9, E=8
F=4, G=3, H=2, I=1, J=6

Answers to MARch Attacks

A=3, B=2, C=5, D=1, E=4

BOOKS
Cathy's Picks



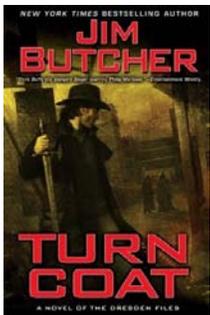
The Graveyard Book, by Neil Gaiman
Harper Collins, 2008

Controversial winner of the prestigious John Newbery Medal for children's literature, *The Graveyard Book* begins with the murder of a toddler's parents and older sister. Kids' books aren't what they used to be! Shockingly, The man Jack's target was in fact the toddler, but the little fellow has made a habit of escaping his crib and this time,

finding the front door wide open, he has toddled off up the hill and right into the centuries old graveyard. The ghost of his frantic mother begs the locals to protect her baby, and after a lengthy debate, the child is given the Freedom of the Graveyard, an honour never before bestowed on anyone alive, unless you count Silas, and he isn't really alive, just not quite dead.

The Owens, a childless couple while they lived, undertake to raise him as their own, and Silas – being the only one able to leave the graveyard – brings him food. "It is going to take more than just a couple of good-hearted souls to raise this child. It will," said Silas, "take a graveyard." Built over a Celtic tumulus, the graveyard is home to some ten thousand souls, though only about 300 are still "active". Nobody Owens, Bod for short, is educated by the best of them, and protected so long as he never leaves.

But he won't be a child forever, and then what?? Outside, the Jacks are still looking for him, and inside, there are horrors Bod's guardians are blissfully unaware of.



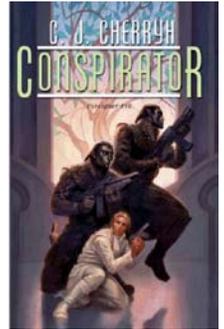
Turn Coat, by Jim Butcher
ROC, 2009

Morgan, the White Council Warden who's been hounding Harry Dresden for years, suddenly shows up on his doorstep, gasping, "The Wardens are coming. Hide me. Please." Harry, who is himself a Warden now, in spite of Morgan's past efforts to have him executed, carries him into his home. Well, the man was burned, stabbed, and

bleeding to death, what else could he do? Morgan needs a doctor, but that is clearly not an option, so Harry calls in his friend, Butters, the medical examiner, "Think of this as a preventive autopsy."

Harry knows Morgan would never betray the Council, never break the Laws of Magic, and no one knows better than Harry what it feels like to have the Wardens after you for something you haven't done. He is going to find the traitor who has framed Morgan. The usual mayhem follows. Hardly great literature, but oh, so much fun!

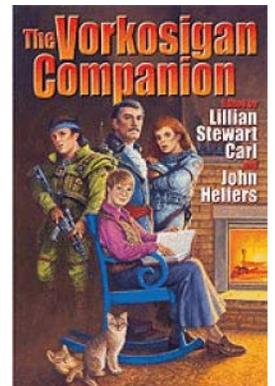
Conspirator, by C.J. Cherryh
DAW, 2009



The first in a new Foreigner series finds the Western Association settling down after civil war and the Atevi nobles preparing for the upcoming legislative session. Bren has been temporarily housed in the Atageini apartment, but Lord Tatiseigi will be needing it when he arrives to attend the legislature. Bren's apartment has been usurped by a clan of dubious loyalty, and not even Tabini has yet found a way to finesse their removal. He cannot easily stay in a hotel, security would be a nightmare for all involved from his staff to the lesser families who would be put out of *their* lodgings. Bren's solution to the conundrum is to pay a long-overdue visit to his estate on the coast. The peace and quiet will be good for him, and he has policies to develop regarding new technology some Atevi would like introduced.

But his brother comes to visit, which is wonderful, except that there are still some unresolved issues between them, and he brings Barbara and she seems hell-bent on embarrassing him in his own home. Then Cajeyri, Tabini's son and heir, slips his guardians and hitches a train ride to Bren's estate. A routine social call to a neighbouring estate erupts into violence. Bren needs all his wits about him as he finds himself negotiating for peace, and in the process setting up new alliances in an already politically volatile world. Not to mention dealing with his family problems, Cajeyri's problems, and the very thorny issue of cell phones.

The Vorkosigan Companion
Edited by Lillian Stewart Carl
& John Helfers, Baen, 2008



A must-have for fans of Lois McMaster Bujold's Vorkosigan series, this book features maps, genealogies, timelines, glossary of names, places, and things, book summaries, and so on. But more valuable (to me, anyway) is the insight into Bujold's creative process which comes through in her own contributions: *Putting it Together – Life, the Vorkosiverse, and Everything*, and *Publishing, Writing, and Authoring – Three Different Things*.

My only disappointment is that it is limited to the Vorkosigan universe; I'd have liked a from-behind-the-scenes look at the worlds of *Chalion* and *The Sharing Knife*, too.



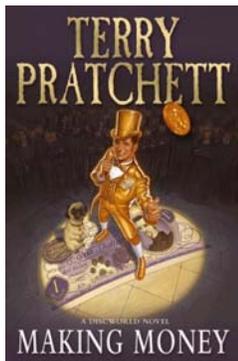
Making Money, by Terry Pratchett

Doubleday, 2007

Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre

As you may know, famous author Terry Pratchett is battling Alzheimer's Disease. This has slowed down his output a bit, but certainly has not taken anything away from its quality. This particular book adds a new member to the already vast population of the Discworld universe: Moist von Lipwing, a flamboyant Postmaster General with a mysterious past and new ideas about the economy. Strange and silly notions, like replacing the sacrosanct gold coin with paper money!

At 474 pages it is a hefty novel, but –in true Pratchett style–



never boring, full of side forays into the strange quirks of a world where werewolf police, troll mafia and undead accountants are considered perfectly normal, and where you could bump into Death's granddaughter around a street corner. The series is now over a quarter of a century old, and it is interesting to see that each subsequent instalment takes the passage of time into account. The city of Ankh-Morpork, for example, has evolved from a medieval setting to an almost Victorian one over the years, and some characters, like the Patrician, are showing their age.

The reading of this book is made all the more pleasant with the knowledge that some of the weirder plot elements, like a water-driven economic prediction device, are based on actual historical models from our own world. It will truly be a sad day when the last book is published.



BIG SCREEN, SMALLER SCREEN, MONITOR SCREEN



Digger

Sylvain St-Pierre

There are countless Web comics available on the Internet. They cover every style imaginable (and quite a few unimaginable ones) and their quality ranges from the dismal to the sublime.

Digger, which I discovered but recently, is quite high on the scale, both artistically and storywise. Written and drawn by Ursula Vernon, it is in black and

white only, but makes such a skillful use of those two tones that it has received an award for it. It takes its title from the main character, Digger-of-Unnecessarily-Convolutd-Tunnels, a female wombat from a universe where this particular race is sentient and renowned for its mining and engineering skills. The supporting cast is both large and colourful, including such characters as a talking statue of the elephant god Ganesh, a mysterious Shadow Child, a tribe of sentient hyenas, a couple of ghosts and some vampire squash.

This comic has somewhat more text than average, but it is quite clever prose, with a healthy dose of irony thrown in, well worth the few minutes more it will take you to read. The story started in February 2007 and is still updated twice a week at <http://www.diggercomic.com/>.



Monsters Vs. Aliens

Sylvain St-Pierre

From just a cute novelty to the current jaw popping crop, computer animation has come a long way since its beginnings. This recent release shows that the genre is finally mature. Technically flawless, it also boasts a good story (provided that you are a fan of the '50s monster movies). I saw the 3D version, and especially liked the way it makes the viewer feel like diving in the middle of the action, like an invisible mutant fly or something...

In a nutshell, the U.S. Government has been keeping monsters locked up for many years in case they could eventually prove useful. Sure enough, the arrival of a megalomaniacal alien makes it necessary to release them. What follows is a fast paced, spectacular and very funny battle between Good and Silliness. For this movie is definitely a comedy, and quite an amusing one too. I would definitely like to see another one like it.



Star Trek: The Future Begins

Sylvain St-Pierre



Either you have seen the movie, and do not need it described; or you haven't (yet), and do not wish the surprise spoiled. Suffice to say that I was greatly relieved

that it turned out to be a great flick. And God knows that with the given premises, compounded by brand new actors and the previous movies' record, the potential for a cosmic groaner was immense!

But no, the story was more than half way plausible, the sets and props (with the exception of the Enterprise engine room) were great, the acting surprisingly good, and the nods to the classical series were all in good taste. More than their actual physical resemblance with the original cast, it was the way the actors caught their future selves' mannerisms that impressed me the most. In some cases – Karl Urban doing McCoy in particular – it was downright spooky. This demonstrates that movie directors should resist the impulse of trying to reinvent the great classics. By all means, do make sequels, but keep the things that made the original great.



Star Trek

and the (very justified) picking of nits

Marc Durocher

Alright, so it was well directed, well edited, well acted, the characterizations were right on and the dialogue was crisp. And now for everything that was wrong with the fracking thing (and be glad Brian Ekers isn't writing this – there wouldn't be room in the zine).

It would be easy to ignore the usual mishandling of time travel paradoxes if it weren't for the fact that the plot revolves around time travel. For example, Nero's converted mining vessel ends up 150 years before Romulus prime goes nova (more later). He then waits 25 years for "old" Spock to show up and during that time does not once think of warning his people that their star will go nova in a century or so and they should behave accordingly, thus saving his race and his family and obviating the need for vengeance. Even if Nero hadn't thought of this, you'd think at least one member of his crew would have done so, thus saving that person's family. Of course that would mean that the writers would have to find some other way to turn the young crew of NCC-1701 into the heroes they would eventually become, presumably one that made sense.

Now about that nova! Spock's solution to Romulus Prime going nova leaves a lot to be desired. Toss the Red Matter into the centre of the star thus creating a gravitational singularity that snuffs it out. What we're left with is a planet that immediately turns into an ice cube (no star – no heat source) speeding madly towards the black hole left by the singularity. If it's powerful enough to suck in the star's mass (remember, it's going nova — which means its "normal" mass has increased exponentially) then it's powerful enough to suck in the matter revolving around the



With apologies to William Goldman, author of *The Princess Bride*.

star. You know, planets, moons, asteroids, comets, spacecraft &c. This is NOT an improvement. Also regular stars just don't suddenly go boom. This is a process that happens over a long enough period of time for the system's inhabitants to get plenty of warning and, if they have the advanced space travel that we assume was shared by the Romulans, the Federation, the Klingons, the Cardassians &c, begin evacuation procedures. Boom goes the plot!

And now for the real absurdities. Let's begin with the habitual one, other than the time travel contradictions already mentioned (I'll mention others later). A justification is found to staff not just the fleet flagship but almost every ship in the fleet with academy undergrads. Makes me wonder just how quickly they rushed the students at Anapolis through the system after Pearl Harbour. As to the specific absurdity, Nero on one converted mining vessel, using conventional weapons rather than the hi-jacked Red Matter, destroys a Federation fleet and a Klingon fleet. The Romulans must have abandoned conscription to let Nero go civilian on them.

Now for the time travel paradox I promised. At the end of the story the undergrads man their Enterprise and "old" Spock finds a planet suitable for colonization by the surviving Vulcans. So why not just warn the Romulans about the nova coming in a century or so with the same results mentioned above? So much for Vulcan logic.

One of the things I remember about the original series was the number of stories written by established science fiction authors — people with names like Gerold, Ellison, Sturgeon etc.

They would have avoided most of the mistakes mentioned above and would have still been entertaining. I give the current vessel three missions before it flounders.

A good day to die is a better day to live



Upcoming Movie Listing Spring/Summer 2009

(Release Dates can change without notice)

Compiled by the Fernster

June 5, 2009, **Land of the Lost: Space-time vortexes suck!**

Will Ferrell 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.

Sucked alongside him for the adventure are crack-smart research assistant Holly (Anna Friel) and a redneck survivalist (Danny McBride) named Will. Chased by T-Rex and stalked by painfully slow reptiles known as Sleestaks, Marshall, Will and Holly must rely on their only ally - a primate called Chaka (Jorma Taccone) to navigate out of the hybrid dimension. Escape from this routine expedition gone awry and they're heroes. Get stuck, and they'll be permanent refugees in the Land of the Lost.

June 24, 2009, Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (in conventional theatres and IMAX) : In the highly-anticipated

Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen, debuting June 24, 2009, Sam Witwicky (Shia LaBeouf) again joins with the Autobots® against their sworn enemies, the Decepticons®. Michael Bay directs from a screenplay by Ehren Kruger & Roberto Orci & Alex Kurtzman.

July 17, 2009, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (In conventional theaters and IMAX) Voldemort is tightening his grip on both the Muggle and wizarding 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. Together they work to find the key to unlock Voldemort's defenses and, to this end, Dumbledore recruits his old friend and colleague, the well-connected and unsuspecting bon vivant Professor Horace Slughorn, whom he believes holds crucial information. Meanwhile, the students are under attack from a very different adversary as teenage hormones rage across the ramparts.

Harry finds himself more and more drawn to Ginny, but so is Dean Thomas. And Lavender Brown has decided that Ron is the one for her, only she hadn't counted on Romilda Vane's chocolates! And then there's Hermione, simmering with jealousy but determined not to show her feelings. As romance blossoms, one student remains aloof. He is determined to make his mark, albeit a dark one. Love is in the air, but tragedy lies ahead and Hogwarts may never be the same again.

July 31, 2009, Aliens in the Attic: Originally titled *They Came from Upstairs*. The plot revolves around a group of teens who team up to defend their Maine vacation home from aliens who have invaded via the upstairs.

August 14, 2009, District 9: *District 9* depicts a fictional world where extraterrestrials have become refugees in South Africa.

August 14, 2009, The Time Traveler's Wife: Eric Bana (*Munich*) and Rachel McAdams (*Wedding Crashers*, *The Notebook*) star in the drama *The Time Traveler's Wife*, based on the bestselling novel by Audrey Niffenegger. In the film, Bana portrays a man with a time-traveling gene who manages to appear and re-appear at different times in the life of his one true love (McAdams).

September 4, 2009, Pandorum: From the creators of the *Resident Evil* film franchise comes *Pandorum*, a terrifying thriller in which two crew members wake up on an abandoned spacecraft with no idea who they are, how long they've been asleep, or what their mission is. The two soon discover they're actually not alone, and the reality of their situation is more horrifying than they could have imagined.

September 9, 2009, 9: Student Academy Award winner Shane Acker directs the animated fantasy epic "9," a feature-length expansion of his short film of the same name. Produced by Tim

Burton, Timur Bekmambetov, and Jim Lemley, the surreal tale takes place in a world parallel to our own, a post-apocalyptic fantasy in which a band of courageous rag dolls battles for the survival of civilization.

September 11, 2009, Daybreakers: In the year 2017, a plague has transformed most every human into vampires. Faced with a dwindling blood supply, the dominant plots their survival; meanwhile, a researcher (Hawke) works with a covert band of vamps on a way to save the human race.

September 18, 2009 (limited) Splice: Clive and Elsa are superstars of the genetic engineering world. They specialize in splicing together DNA from different animals to create fantastical new hybrids. The charismatic couple wants to use human DNA in a new hybrid – something that could yield astronomical medical benefits. The pharmaceutical company that funds their research, however, is more interested in exploiting their earlier triumphs for easier, short-term profit. Clive and Elsa secretly conduct their own experiment. The result is Dren: an amazing creature who exhibits an array of unexpected developments, both physical and intellectual. Dren exceeds their wildest dreams... and, ultimately, their most terrifying nightmare.

September 25, 2009, Surrogates: FBI agents (Bruce Willis and Radha Mitchell) investigate the mysterious murder of a college student linked to the man who helped create a high-tech surrogate phenomenon that allows people to purchase unflawed robotic versions of themselves – fit, good looking remotely controlled machines that ultimately assume their life roles – enabling people to experience life vicariously from the comfort and safety of their own homes. The murder spawns a quest for answers: in a world of masks, who's real and who can you trust?





EVENTS

OVMF: The Music of Harry Potter C. Palmer-Lister

On Saturday, the 20th of June, I met fellow MonSFFan Dom Durocher at the Oscar Peterson Concert Hall for an engaging evening of Harry Potter film music. Also in the audience was another MonSFFan, Sébastien Mineau and a couple of his friends from l'Alliance Impériale who were appropriately attired in Hogwarts school uniforms.

L'Orchestre à Vents de Musiques de Films (OVMF) is a very professional sounding amateur orchestra which features wind and percussion instruments. Founded in October of 2000 with 11 members, they now count nearly 50 talented musicians, many of them quite young. Indeed, the whole orchestra projects a youthful and informal attitude. In happy contrast to the symphonic orchestras, they appeared dressed in white shirts, jeans, and were cheered on by an audience with an obviously high proportion of relatives. Founding member, Jocelyn Leblanc, is the very competent musical director who also composes all the scores for the orchestra, there being few film scores available commercially,

and those are for full orchestras. The Harry Potter concert was a bit unusual in that it was centred on one film series; usually they choose numbers from various sources to suit a theme, most recently the oceans: Hawaii 5-O, Hook, Stargate Atlantis, etc.

Pascal Forget was the MC for the evening, so you can imagine there was some silliness between numbers. He had prepared fun little trivia quizzes to encourage interaction with the fans. In one skit, he had a fan taste various substances which were clues to Harry Potter references they had to guess. One, the butter beer (ice cream, beer, brown sugar, nutmeg...) became a running joke through the rest of the show.

The music was mostly by John Williams, though there was also a selection of music from the video games.

I quite enjoyed the evening, even though I am not a fan of Harry Potter and never saw the movies. I'll probably go to the next one, which IIRC has cop shows for a theme. 

Salon de la Passion Médiévale et Historique
Josée Bellemare

As every spring, sponsors held the Salon de la Passion Médiévale et Historique. In the past it had been held at the Montreal Hippodrome but since that location is no longer available, this year they moved to the Centre Pierre-Charbonneau.

Overall, this new location didn't work. The lobby hosted the live action role playing groups with plenty of room but the dealers in the auditorium were way too crowded. The air was stuffy and there was very little manoeuvring room.

Another problem was food. There was only one food outlet with very little sitting room. If you got hungry, your best bet was a bag of chips and a soft drink from a vending machine.

Don't get me wrong, it wasn't all bad.

The storytelling corner was greatly appreciated by the kids and the highlight of the fair was Anne Robillard and her troop signing autographs.

They had a beautiful background and people dressed as characters from the Chevaliers D'Emeraude books willingly posed for pictures with the fair goers.

The weather was uncertain but that didn't stop the fans. By the time I left, the line to go in was several hundred long and growing.



JANUARY

MonSFFA opened its 2009 schedule with a meeting on January 18 featuring, right off the top, guest speakers David Shuman and Paul Simard, two local space buffs who found themselves contracted by the Canadian Space Agency to build a replica of NASA's Phoenix Lander. The CSA was a partner in the



David and Paul with model of the Phoenix.

recently completed Phoenix Mars Mission, an unmanned exploration of Mars' polar terrain.

David and Paul were tasked with building a full-scale replica of the mission's lander that could be used for publicity and exhibition purposes. Their finished model was on display at the downtown Planetarium for a time last year, and more recently, at the Old Port.

Offering a slideshow illustrating their progress as they pieced together what in the end proved a most impressive mock-up of the lander, the two detailed the construction of their scratch-built model and spoke of the problems they encountered and overcame. They described the materials applied to the job, largely wood, metal, plastic and assorted workshop scraps, but at times, unique finds like the legs of a large telescope's tripod, which were employed to fashion the vehicle's landing struts. With access to his father's garage, Paul focussed on large components, like the body of the lander, while David worked in his apartment studio on the smaller details, like the equipment packages mounted topside.

The pair had access to the actual blueprints for parts of the lander, but much of their effort relied on photographs of the prototype and educated guesswork. The end result is all the more remarkable in that their replica lander was completed in only three weeks! CSA officials were so pleased with the model that David and Paul may well expect to be contracted for other such projects in future.

Raffle prizes won during the mid-meeting break included a lavishly illustrated coffee-table book on Mars.

Following the break, Cathy Palmer-Lister, acting as Chief Returning Officer, oversaw the election of the club's Executive for the coming year.... Returned to office for another term were President Berny Reischl, Vice-President Keith Braithwaite, and Treasurer Sylvain St-Pierre. Joining them is Lindsay Brown, who was elected as an additional VP to help with an expected increase in organizational chores during this, Montreal fandom's Worldcon year. The assembled membership offered the 2009 Executive Committee congratulations and best wishes regarding the job ahead.

Berny then took a quick few minutes to screen for the group the video time capsule he had shot and edited at the end of last

year, in which MonSFFen made on-camera predictions as to things five years hence. The DVD he produced will be tucked away and screened again only in 2013, a date in accordance with the end of the world, if the Mayan calendar is to be believed.

A panel on the art of giving a panel capped the afternoon. Keith, Cathy, and Maureen Whitelaw sat at the head table and opened a discussion of the "do"'s and "don't"'s of giving good panel.

Advice offered included: keep things concise; avoid an endless list of examples in illustration of a point when one or two will suffice; and, know your material and be prepared to explain and defend your positions in a debate. It was suggested that preparing a little more material than you expect to use is a good idea, just in case you find yourself running fast.

Invite audience participation in a debate. Control of the discussion must be maintained, however. Do so by establishing a speaking order, encouraging audience members to keep their questions and comments brief, and when necessary, refocusing the group should the discussion wander too far off topic.

Augment your presentation with visuals. Audiences like to see as well as hear what you are talking about. Offering a PowerPoint presentation or screening various video clips in support of your subject makes it all far more interesting for the audience. But don't fret if you are not equipped to do so. Even simply holding up a copy of the book you're discussing, or a series of photographs, provides an element of the visual.

For taking part in our January 18 meeting, we thank very much our guest speakers and panellists. Thanks, also, to those members who helped to plan and run this meeting.

Last Year on the Job for MonSFFA's President, Con*Cept's Chair

Both MonSFFA's president and Con*Cept's chair have recently announced that 2009 will be their last year of service as leaders of their respective organizations.

At MonSFFA's January 18 meeting, long-serving club president Berny Reischl took the occasion of his election to another term as the club's chief executive...to announce that he will step down at the end of this year. Berny is MonSFFA's fifth and longest-serving president, having held the position for twice the time of any of his predecessors. It's been a good, long run but it's just time for a change at the top, says Berny, who feels that remaining too long on the job risks burn-out, which would hardly benefit the club.

Cathy Palmer-Lister cited fatigue and a dearth of free time to devote to Con*Cept as her reasons for departing the post she has held since the convention was rebooted in 2001 under MonSFFA. Cathy also believes that Con*Cept, indeed any organization, should regularly refresh its leadership in order to capitalize on new ideas and methods, and remain vital.

While we can fully understand Berny and Cathy's reasoning, we will nevertheless surely miss their dedication and guidance come next year.

FEBRUARY

MonSFFA's February meeting was held on the 22nd. The room was full for first, a retrospective of the Apollo 11 moon landing, and then, a slideshow on the tastiest hunks in sci-fi cinema and television.

In advance of the scheduled 1:00PM start of the meeting, an episode of the superb television miniseries *From the Earth to the Moon* was screened. Dramatizing the events surrounding the Apollo 11 mission of July 1969, this episode warmed the group up for a detailed presentation on NASA's historic first manned lunar landing.



Photo by B. Reischl

Keith Braithwaite and Theresa Penalba gave the presentation, beginning with commentary on how the events of that astounding summer 40 years ago galvanized a generation of children born at the dawn of the space age. For many, astronaut Neil Armstrong's "giant leap for mankind" proved a catalyst, sparking a lifelong interest in space. And in science fiction! Apollo 11 was the actualization

of all those fictional adventures about rocketships flying to and exploring the moon that science fiction fans had, for years, been reading in paperback and watching in movie theatres. An undertaking unparalleled in human history, the Apollo 11 moon landing was, momentarily and quite literally, science fiction become science fact.

That *men* walked on the moon, it was emphasized, setting foot on another world for the first time, having travelled farther from home than anyone ever had, was a significant part of what excited people about the Apollo program. It was our pioneering spirit, inquisitive nature, human urge to explore new domains that electrified interest in Apollo 11 all around the globe, from scientists and engineers to everyday folk. The space program has not since been as exhilarating.



Photo by B. Reischl

Keith and Theresa continued with an outline of the event that opened the space age in late 1957, the Soviet Union's orbiting of the first manmade satellite, *Sputnik 1*, which resulted in a "space race" between the Russians and the Americans. While the Russians initially led, the Americans soon caught up and with the Apollo program, surpassed their rivals. Apollo 11 was the realization of the goal President John F. Kennedy had set for his nation of "landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to Earth."

Our two panellists profiled Apollo 11's crew and gave details of the launch, flight to the moon, powered descent to and landing on the lunar surface, and the historic EVA. An excerpt from the documentary film *In the Shadow of the Moon* was screened, featuring both black and white TV and colour film clips of the touch-down and moon walk.

Cathy Palmer-Lister was invited to speak for a moment on moon mythology before the group was treated to authentic NASA footage of the Lunar Module's descent and landing, unfolding in

real time and culminating in Armstrong's confirmation that the *Eagle* had landed.



A few plastic scale models of the Apollo spacecraft were on display for folk to inspect, courtesy Wayne Glover, along with various souvenirs of the event, including vintage

copies of local newspapers trumpeting the news.

Following the mid-meeting break, Josée Bellemare and Alice Novo stepped up to present their slideshow on sci-fi's hottest heartthrobs. As images of handsome actors flashed across the screen, discussion of the characters each played on a sci-fi television series or in a movie focussed on what made them so very attractive to female fans, aside from their square-jawed, broad-shouldered physical attributes.

The girls, it seems, fantasize about these heroic characters coming to their rescue, and then falling for them. In the case of those heroes on some sort of quest, the ladies' hope is that it is they who are the object of said quest. Another take involves the military or quasi-military man – don't ya just *love* a fella in uniform? – arriving to protect the women from some otherworldly threat and finding a feisty female who can take care of herself just fine, thank you very much, and fight off the nasty aliens or monsters or demons alongside her beau!

The TV shows *Smallville* and *Stargate SG-1* were singled out as particularly plentiful in pretty boys.

Thanks to our February-meeting panellists, as well as those MonSFFen who helped to plan and run the meeting.

Complimentary passes to movie premieres

Several MonSFFen enjoyed complimentary passes to the Montreal premieres of *Underworld: Rise of the Lycans* and the comedy *Pink Panther 2* courtesy our good friends at Promo Avenue."

Condolences

MonSFFA extends its condolences to long-time club member Maureen Whitelaw, whose dear mother recently passed away.

Update: MonSFFA Meeting Programming

Confirmed is the shuffling of our **Sci-Fi Garage Sale/Auction/Bake Sale fund-raiser** from October's meeting to August's. Help support your club by purchasing SF/F books, comics, magazines, VHS tapes and DVDs, posters, toys and other cool collectibles. Bargain prices! Donations of items to this fund-raiser are most welcome; just bring 'em in to a club meeting or event in advance of August. The bake sale portion of our fund-raiser will offer a menu of tasty SF/F-themed snacks.

And, we'll open the August meeting with a lively game of Sci-Fi Pictionary, in which players must identify an SF/F character, vehicle, title, or phrase based solely on the quick sketches made on an easel by a teammate. No words allowed!

The October meeting, now set for the 18th will feature in the fund-raiser's former slot what we expect will be a most amusing game: "Who's Who" will defy MonSFFen to identify their fellow club members from childhood photographs.

October's planned exploration of zombie stories remains in place off the top of the meeting.

MARCH

World Con in Montreal

In order to help finance the club's activities at this summer's Worldcon, a "**Super Fund-Raising Raffle**" has been initiated, offering as prizes several premium collectibles valued at between \$25 and \$100. Tickets are \$5 each and may be purchased at club events until the winning stubs are drawn at Polaris 23 in Toronto on July 12. Participants are eligible to win one or more of the prizes; winners may collect their prizes either at Polaris on the 12th or at MonSFFA's barbecue in Montreal on July 26. Prizes may alternately be shipped at the expense of the winner.

MonSFFA has decided on a **room party** as our major promotional event during Anticipation, the 2009 Worldcon, in August. ConCept will co-host the event with us. We plan to hold the party the Friday evening of the con. Various fund-raising operations are currently underway to help offset the hefty costs involved. Our theme is hockey and the club is asking members for loans of hockey equipment and paraphernalia with which to decorate the room. We're looking in particular for a portable goal net and a tabletop hockey game. We're also looking for volunteers to help set up and run the party; one need not be attending the convention to serve as a party volunteer.

In addition to our room party, MonSFFA has been asked by Anticipation to mount a **static display** at the Worldcon outlining the history of the club and Montreal fandom in general. We'll be displaying back issues of *Warp* and other items from the club's archives. To augment this material, we are asking members to loan us old photos, fanzines, promotional flyers and such relating to MonSTA, MonSFFA, ConCept, or Montreal fandom in general. Please bring your contributions to our historical display in to a MonSFFA meeting soon. Please also identify as yours the items you lend; they will be returned to you with much thanks after the Worldcon.

MonSFFA is introducing a rewards program for members who help with the planning and running of club activities. Coupons will be awarded to said members throughout the remainder of the year and at the club's Christmas party, these coupons can be converted into tickets for a special "rewards raffle."

MonSFFen Get Small at March Meeting

MonSFFA's March meeting was held on the 22nd and drew a healthy crowd for an exploration of Lilliputian worlds in SF, followed by a challenging visual game....

Keith Braithwaite and Danny Sichel led off with their presentation on and discussion of science fiction stories involving microcosmic adventures, including Jonathan Swift's seminal *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), from which we derive the term Lilliputian to describe the very small. The tiny worlds of such

stories, or the miniature protagonists adventuring in a relatively giant world, are often simply fantastical devices employed by an author to satirize or otherwise comment on social or political issues.

The idea of human miniaturization, though fraught with problems of scientific logic, nevertheless remains fascinating to genre writers and filmmakers, serving to explore things from a decidedly different perspective. Stories like *Adventures of a Micro-Man* (Edwin Pallander, 1902) or *Lost Men in the Grass* (Donald Suddaby, 1940) are vehicles for the observation of the small-scale wonders of the natural world, often accompanied by moralizing on the part of the author. Adventures like Richard Matheson's *The Shrinking Man* (1956), from which was derived the classic sci-fi film *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957), are principally tales of survival featuring suddenly monstrous insects and other perils. And the similarity of our solar system to the model of the atom prompted the idea of worlds within worlds. This theme is explored in stories like *The Microcosmic Buccaneers* (Harl Vincent, 1929), "A Matter of Size" (Harry Bates, 1934), *Surface Tension* (James Blish, 1952), and of course, the Dr. Suess children's classic *Horton Hears a Who!* (1954).

The presentation touched on such mythological micro-creatures and staples of fantasy literature as fairies and gnomes, as well as the child-sized dwarves and hobbits of *Lord of the Rings*. Also, clips from such movies as *Dr. Cyclops* (1940) and *Fantastic Voyage* (1966) were screened.

Following the mid-meeting break, Berny Reischl ran a game in which a variety of images were shown, greatly magnified, and folk challenged to identify the SF/F film or TV series from which they were lifted. Lots of fun!

Thanks to Keith, Danny, and Berny, for the afternoon's programming, as well as to those MonSFFen who helped to plan and run this meeting.

A Board of Advisors meeting was held during the morning slot; updates to 2009 meeting programming were finalized and new initiatives discussed.

APRIL

Aurora Award nomination for *Impulse* editor Keith Braithwaite:

We are pleased to report that Keith Braithwaite has been nominated for an Aurora Award for his efforts as *Impulse*'s editor. The Auroras are Canada's awards for achievements in the SF/F field. Voting is underway online and by standard post; the voting deadline is July 15, 2009. The Auroras this year will be handed out at Anticipation. We encourage MonSFFen to support one of our own. Surf to the Aurora Web site for more details: www.prixaurorawards.ca

Sci-Fi Food and Easter Eggs on Menu at April Club Meeting

MonSFFA's April 19 meeting began with Sylvain St-Pierre's exhaustively researched presentation on food in science fiction and fantasy, from futuristic farming techniques and genetically modified crops to exotic alien cuisine and synthetic meals. The production and consumption of food in SF/F runs the gamut, envisioned by such diverse authors as Jules Verne, Harry Harrison, Isaac

Asimov, Douglas Adams, Terry Pratchett, and cartoonist Matt Groening. Strange alien diets include the many dishes introduced in the *Star Trek* oeuvre, for example, while the *Dan Dare* comic strips featured food pills and Charlton Heston discovered to his chagrin the secret ingredient in Soylent Green. Clifford D. Simak's wood-eating aliens in *The Visitors* seem not so far fetched when compared to Matter-Eating Lad, a DC Comics superhero hailing from a planet the inhabitants of which can eat anything! Or Kevin O'Donnell, Jr.'s Actuni, a creature that feeds fruit growing out of itself to an organism living inside of it.

Sylvain also included a look at the various miracle kitchens of tomorrow promoted by the appliance manufacturers of the 1940s and '50s, as well as such real-world futuristic foodstuff as the consumables that fly aboard NASA spacecraft. Some fruits and nectars enjoyed in the ancient world are said to have magical properties, according to Greek, Roman, and other mythologies, the audience learned.

Sylvain capped his presentation with a quick look at, essentially, toilets of the future. Waste disposal and recycling systems, both real and imagined, after all, are a by-product of food consumption. The modern Japanese toilet sports a control panel that looks like it belongs on the bridge of the starship *Enterprise*, where as famously noted by fans of the TV show, there appear to be no facilities.

The mid-meeting break saw our previously announced Easter egg decorating contest judged. Weeks prior to the April meeting, folk had been challenged to decorate an Easter egg in an SF/F theme and bring the result in to the meeting for all to see. There were well over a dozen wonderfully colourful, imaginative entries on display. Cathy Palmer-Lister and Keith Braithwaite ended up tied for first place after the votes were tallied while young Erin Braithwaite received a craftsmanship award for her *Star Wars*-themed "Easter on Endor" diorama. (Page 25)

Then it was on to Easter eggs of a different kind. Berny Reischl was up to finish the afternoon's programming with a sampling of some of the more interesting and amusing so-called "Easter eggs" to be found imbedded in movie and television-series DVDs. These are hidden extras included as unlisted bonus material. Often comedic in nature, they include rehearsal footage, bloopers, on-set practical jokes, and brief interviews with cast and crew members.

Berny screened a number of Easter eggs for the group, including the cast breaking up on camera at the sudden arrival of Spider-Man during the filming of an action sequence for *X-Men*, and the low-tech sock-puppet version of the movie included with the deluxe edition of *The Incredibles*!

We thank Sylvain, Berny, and all who helped to plan and run the April meeting.

MAY

No Impulse in May

Because the movie outing we've organized in place of a May

meeting was scheduled early in the month, *Impulse* did not publish a May 2009 issue.

MonSFFen Boldly Trek to New Flick

Sans a regular club meeting last month, a large contingent of MonSFFen instead made their way to the downtown Cinema Banque Scotia for a matinée screening of the much anticipated new *Star Trek* film.

Known for his TV successes *Lost* and more recently, *Fringe*, director J. J. Abrams helmed the rebooted *Star Trek*. And if the post-screening comments of our ardent group of Trekkers are any barometer, he has succeeded in resuscitating a once-stellar sci-fi franchise that had become, in recent years, moribund. Abrams' idea of returning to the roots of *Star Trek* proved to be the right call. After all, Kirk, Spock, McCoy, and the others were always rather more engaging characters than any of their successors. And Abrams even managed to technically maintain the original show's canon, jealously guarded by die-hard fans.

Though a few MonSFFen expressed minor quibbles with the film – no one much liked what the set designers had done with Engineering – by and large, the group was impressed. Plenty of action, lots of cool visuals, a cameo by Leonard Nimoy, but most importantly, a terrific new cast channelling uncannily in some cases the actors who first embodied the familiar characters of the original series. Our group really appreciated the many knowing nods to the original and those familiar and favourite characters.

After the show, some of the gang sat down for coffee and further discussion of the movie. A most enjoyable afternoon was had by all.

Our thanks to Berny Reischl for organizing the outing.

Warp Moves Online

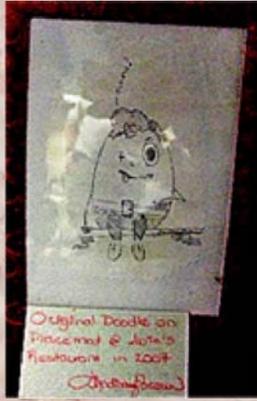
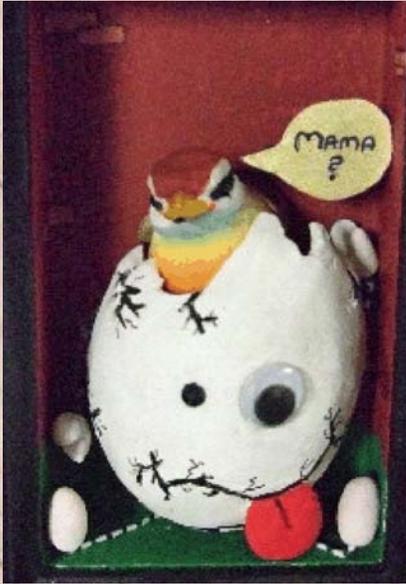
Our move to put *Warp* online appears to have dodged any major glitches. A few initial minor technical problems were quickly addressed and everything seems to now be running smoothly. The idea is to deliver *Warp* to members as a .pdf, accessible by password from the club's web site.

An issue-specific password is to be supplied to all members in good standing with each edition of *Warp* released, allowing online access to the 'zine. Printed copies will remain available by request for those who prefer the traditional magazine format, and will be delivered at a meeting or club event closely following the online release. In other words, all members get the online version and may, in addition, order a printed copy, which will be delivered to them either by hand at the next available opportunity, or, if necessary, via standard post.

We expect many MonSFFen will be entirely satisfied with the electronic version of *Warp* and thus we hope to reduce production costs by printing only the exact number of paper copies requested, and mailing costs by delivering said copies by hand.

Back issues of the 'zine will be available on the club's site, as well.





Original Doodle on Placement @ Jota's Restaurant in 2009
Chris Brown



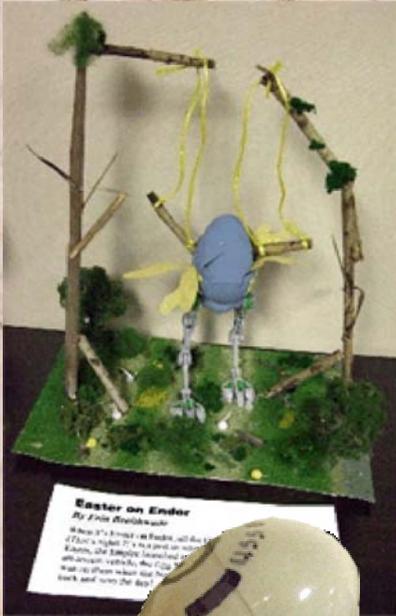
Eggrise
By Keith Braithwaite



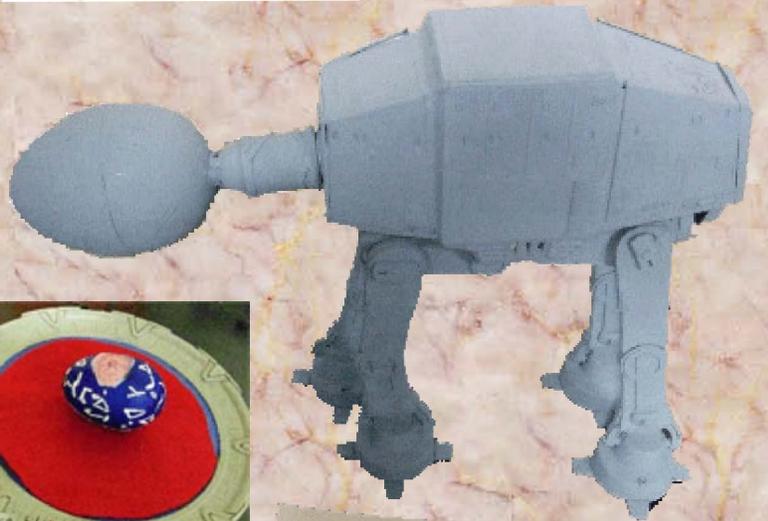
Flips over to see the surprise in the egg



Mr. Spock
By Scott Braithwaite



Easter on Enter
By Eric Braithwaite



AT-ET (All Terrain Egg Transport)
By Scott Braithwaite



tribute to
Dan & Steve



**The Face behind the Mask # 7
The Fernster**



A B C D E F G H I J



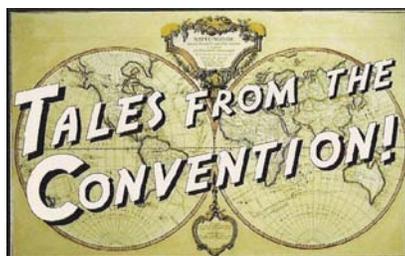
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Pretty Alien Women to Dream About! Guess who is behind the makeup!

Answers on page 15

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| A – Larell | F – Nebari Hubero | 1 – Kelly Preston | _____ | 6 – Lisa Hensley | _____ |
| B – Dureena Nafeer | G – Gem | 2 – Kelly Curtis | _____ | 7 – Carrie Dobro | _____ |
| C – Leeta | H – Miss Sarda | 3 – Kathryn Hays | _____ | 8 – Gigi Edgley | _____ |
| D – Lorana | I – Chirk | 4 – Kate Beahan | _____ | 9 – Darlene Vogel | _____ |
| E – Chiana | J – Matala | 5 – Bridget Ann White | _____ | 10 – Chase Masterson | _____ |

**THE WEEKEND WE BROKE THE BED
Lloyd Penney**



About 15 years ago now, Yvonne and I were guesting at Pinekone 1 in Ottawa, at a fancy hotel in the downtown area. It was kind of tradition for the FanGoHs at Ottawa conventions to run a room party at the con on

Friday night, so who were we to break with tradition?

We arrived at the convention, and we had a prime room, Rm. 2001. What better room to be in? The flyers we posted said that our room party was in room 2001! (Dontcha love it?)

We packed the room, had a great time...room never have enough places to sit, so sitting on the bed was a necessity. Let's see, there was me, and Yvonne, and Karen Wehrstein, and Shirley Meier, and I can't remember who else...

It was getting close to midnight, when something shifted beneath us, and then there was the scream of bending metal... and then, one corner of the bed hit the floor, and so did I. Once we realized what had happened, miGhod, we laughed... They broke the bed frame! In the middle of a party, yet! Yeah, explain that one.

After wiping away some tears, we had to get a little serious, and figure out what we could use to prop the bed up. After all, we'd have to sleep in it eventually. A quick check of the room's drawers revealed a couple of phone books, plus one of Mr. Gideon's free samples, and the bed was upright and stable again! A cheer, and back to party, and afterwards, we got at least a few hours of sleep. A very successful good time.

The next morning, once we arose, we realized we'd need to let the hotel know what happened.

"Front desk..."

"Hello, this is Lloyd Penney in room 2001...we're going to need a repair here. The leg bent right off the bed frame."

"I beg your pardon?"

"The bed frame is broken, and we'd like to get it fixed."

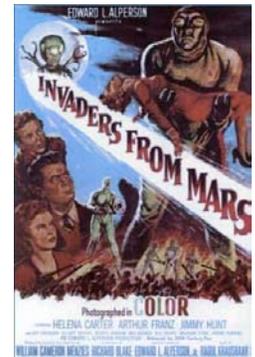
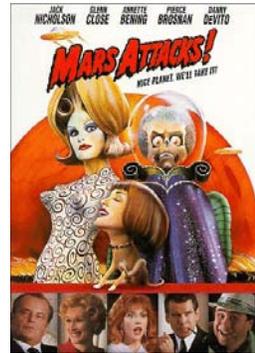
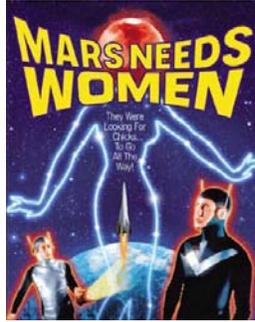
"Yes, sir (snort), we'll get on it right away (choke)." After the call, I said to Yvonne that I thought they might have been laughing; I guess it was their turn.

We enjoyed the day at the convention, and came back to our room to find workmen actually replacing the bed's frame. There were a few knowing smiles, a chuckle and a snicker here and there, but you know, there are some stories beyond the help of any explanation, and this was one of them. ❀

MARch Attacks – Part II

By Fernster

Here we are again, with more fun for MARch Attacks. Those kooky movies about Mars and the little green men... Try to match them with the movie titles. *Answers on page 15*



- A) The Angry Red Planet (1959) B) Mars Needs Women (1967) C) Rocketship X-M (1950) D) Mars Attacks! (1996) E) Invaders from Mars (1953)

- 1) Martians rocket across space and invade Earth. Humanity is corralled and subjugated in horrible conditions. Atrocious acts of brutal violence are witnessed. Slaving bug-eyed monsters are sighted pillaging the countryside. But have no fear! Eventually, the people of Earth defeat the Martians.
- 2) The title says it all. Tommy Kirk leads his fellow Martians on an interplanetary quest for females. Yvonne 'Batgirl' Craig is a scientist chosen by the invaders.
- 3) A group of astronauts land on Mars. They then have to put up with continual battles against aliens, a giant amoeba, and the dreaded Rat-Bat-Spider thing.
- 4) Little David MacLean has a problem--all the adults in town begin acting strangely shortly after he sees strange lights settling behind a hill near his home. As more and more adults are affected, he must turn to the pretty Dr. Blake for protection. Eventually, he must confront his fears in the unusual conclusion. Remade in 1986
- 5) Five astronauts set off to explore the moon but due to a malfunction they end up on Mars (..so annoying when that happens!). There they find evidence of an advanced civilization that has mostly perished in an atomic holocaust. The few Martian survivors now live like savage cavemen. After two of the astronauts are killed, the remaining three attempt to return to Earth.

T-SHIRTS OF THE FUTURE

Steve Green





Use your MonSFFA membership card and save at these fine stores



LEGENDS ACTION FIGURES

10% off all merchandise
7104 St-Hubert
www.legendSACTIONfigures.com



MÉLANGE MAGIQUE

15% off all merchandise
1928 St-Catherine West
www.themagicalblend.com



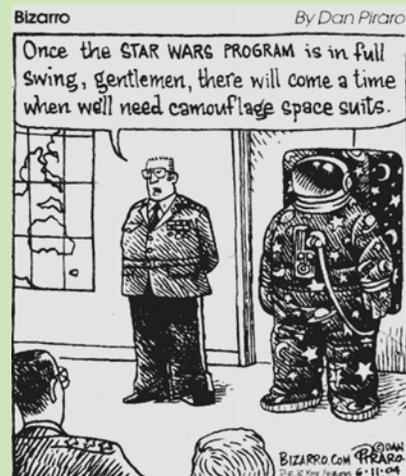
MILLENNIUM COMICS

15% off all merchandise
451 Marriane-est
www.libmillenium.com

SFF Sightings!



Josée Bellemare found this one, put her in the mood for the Pirate dance at Polaris!



CPL clipped this one from the Montreal Gazette.