

WARRP SC

Autumn 2011

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All members in good standing!
Please help us plan **your** activities!

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MonSFFA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Except where noted, all MonSFFA meetings are held
Sundays at 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Espresso Hotel, St-François Room, 1005 Guy Street, corner René Lévesque.

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

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AUGUST 21

Craft Workshops, Games, Sci-Fi Fair



SEPTEMBER 11, 2011

Exploring Steampunk
(Josée Bellemare & Mark Burakoff)



OCTOBER 14-16, 2011

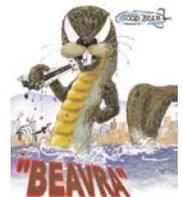


OCTOBER 30, 2011

SF Toys
(Sylvain St-Pierre)



Fan Film Theatre
(Berny Reischl)



NOVEMBER 20, 2011

Sci-Fi Telephone (Sketch & Kvetch)
(Keith Braithwaite)



DECEMBER 3, 2011

MonSFFA Christmas Party
Check our website for details



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Dear MonSFFen:

Hello all, hi Cathy, and thank you for another issue of Warp, issue 79 this time. I have finished cheering on the domestic dispute on the front cover, and will stop smiling and start commenting on what's inside.

That last letter of mine was three months ago, and I am still job hunting. Not an easy task, and I have to find something very soon. Haven't had any voicework lately either, except for that at SFCOntario 2...lots of fun, voicework on

Friday, and I would like to think that I came close for the Aurora Award. The display of past Aurora and Casper Awards we staged at the convention was well received. I can tell you that next American Thanksgiving in 2012, Yvonne and I will be the Fan GoHs at Loscon 39 in Los Angeles.

I cannot remember if I sent to you a list of local conventions, which includes cons in Toronto, Montreal, Buffalo, Detroit, and all over southern Ontario. If you'd like it, let me know, and I can send it along to you.

The Rama series is one of my favourites, but it also shows just how far a single novel can be extended, into four novels, and who know what else there was. This happens a lot, and perhaps happens too much. Same thing happened with Larry Niven's Ringworld, it was extended into four novels as well.

We had a great time at Polaris 25, especially at our tables. We did an amazing amount of business there, and each day, our tables were laid out differently. We are planning to do this again, not at Polaris 26, but with luck, at

Polaris 27 in 2013. We want to have lots of merchandise ready for that convention, and I've already started making steampunk jewellery.

I haven't heard much about this year's Con*cept, beyond the discussions on the Facebook page, but I hope it was successful. I see Howard's post, and Lee will be taking over the chairman's post, and Lee lives just up the street from me. I wish everyone luck for next year. And, looking at the calendar, I hope everyone had a fun Christmas party this past weekend.

And with Christmas, it will soon be here, so Yvonne and I wish you all the best of holidays, and may 2012 be a better (and more employed) year for all of us. See you next issue.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney

Hi, Lloyd,

Here is, mid-winter, and I'm still working on the autumn issue of WARP. Steve Greene suggested I claim I hadn't raked up the leaves, hence the coloured foliage in January.

Congratulations to you and Yvonne

on being invited to be Fan GoHs at LosCon. I hope you have a good time!

Thanks so much for sending the convention information for our events calendar. It looks like one Montreal event scheduled to make its debut this spring is postponed to next year, and Boréal will be in Quebec City. Con*Cept is scheduled for the weekend of October 19-21, Tom Kidd was just announced as artist GoH.

Last year's Con*Cept was a success in terms of happy fans, but not so successful in attracting more members. We had too few volunteers, and publicity was one of the things that suffered from it. I hope Lee and Howard will be able to pull in more help, or I fear this will be the last Con*Cept.

I shouldn't be wishing you a happy new year in an autumn issue, but, well, um, you know how well faneds keep deadlines, even in the best of times, and somehow my autumn always gets jammed up with running a con, which then runs into Christmas...Oh, well, Happy New Year to you both, and may you both find gainful employment!

See you at Ad Astra?

Yours in fandom,

Cathy

Hi Cathy!



I announced the first Canadian Fanzine Fanac Awards on Sunday at VCON and WARP (with you as Editor) won in the 'Best Fanzine' category. So however the CFF Awards develop from this point on, you will always be listed as the first to win this. Hope this pleases.

You will receive both the 'Faned' figure and Taral's certificate once they are complete, soonest.

The other Awards were:

Best Fan Artist: Taral Wayne.

Best Fan Writer: Garth Spencer.

Best Loc Hack: Lloyd Penney.

Life-Time Achievement: 'The Unknown Faned' who published Canada's first SF fanzine in early 1936 under the title: 'The Canadian Science Fiction Fan'

This is the beginning. We'll see where it goes from here.

Cheers!

Graeme

Hi, Graeme!

I'm tickled pink! I love the award, and had great fun trying to find the SF references in the cartoon.

Congratulations also to Garth, Taral, and Lloyd!

I think this award is an excellent project, a great way to hopefully rekindle interest in our fanac. Let me know if I can be of help to you next year!

Yours in fandom,

Cathy



Hi Guys,

May the Great Pumpkin be generous to you, and the Daft Lady keep your chaos to a minimum.

It's been a quiet year in Couverville. Not a very happy one, for my circle of friends - one of my friends lost her father, and a local SF club has lost at least three elder members that I know of. But most of us continue to be relatively healthy, if not wealthy or wise.

Life continues in its mundane round. The clams are returning north, and the campers have dispersed from their occupation at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Parliamentarians deserted Parliament and migrated south as they usually do, but then they are seasonal animals. There will be growth in the spring; houses will sprout new ears; young men's minds will once again turn into bad sushi.

After a long period of freelancing part-time I finally got some temp assignments that give me enough to live on; we shall see how long that lasts. At present I am working the night shift at cable company, reducing a backlog of email queries and complaints to a mere week or so of delayed responses.

I wish you all a New Year of burdens lifted, tasks concluded, struggles won, peace, joy, and discovering where that other sock went.

Yours, Garth Spencer

Hi, Garth!

Glad to see you in such good humour! The clams are returning north, are they? <grin>

The campers in Montreal were

evicted from the premises they had occupied, but for once the police had made an effort to establish a reasonably good relationship so that the eviction was done without violence. With winter well on the way, I suspect the campers were relieved to have a good reason to leave while saving face.

How is the job going? Adjusting to night shift can be difficult.

At my house, we usually know where the missing sock went. The dog ate it. Craziest mutt we've ever had!

All the best to you also, for the New Year and all the years that follow, no matter what they claim will or will not happen at the end of this one.

Yours in Fandom,

Cathy



Cathy,

Here's some really interesting early SF reading for you. "Rondah; or, Thirty-three Years in a Star" (actually it's an asteroid) - the writing is at times a bit overblown, but the ideas are amazing for the time: force fields, flying vegetable bird men, a superior race seeding life in the universe - all in 1887. Followed by a short weird tale, "Xartella."

For more on the book see: <http://io9.com/5860335/the-victorian-hugos-1887>

You're welcome to put some of either piece in WARP, Xartella being only about 5,000 words and Rondah about 31,000 words.

A copy of the original book would set you back a cool \$2750 or more (as currently listed on rare book dealer sites), I opted for microfilm, with inter library loan it's a wee bit cheaper, at \$0

Regards, and happy solstice season,

Georges

Hi, Georges!

And happy solstice to you, also!

I read the first story, and found it rather odd. At the start, I thought it was going to be an SF Canterbury tales. Then I wondered if it were a religious allegory, along the lines of CS Lewis' *Out of Silent Planet*. Love, jealousy, rage, mistaken assumptions are tossed in the mix as well.

The ideas are fantastic, especially for the times, but I felt the author wasn't quite sure what kind of story she was writing.

But I'm a child of my generation! I wonder what the author's contemporaries thought of it?

I had heard of Io9, but never before got around to looking it up. Very interesting site! The idea of extending the "retro Hugos" that far back is great. I

really should read *Allan Quatermain*. I'm trying to make a point of reading a classic or two every few weeks. Recently, I read RL Stevenson's *Strange Tale of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Until I read the story myself, I hadn't realized that the original audience did not know the truth until the end.

Sylvain has also been reading some

of the oldies but goodies, reviews of 2 Martian stories appear later in this issue.

Yours in fandom,
Cathy



The Canadian Fanzine Fanac Award Certificate

Designed by Taral Wayne, there are 10 homages to SF TV, films, comics, and literature Can you identify them all? (The Gestentner backpack doesn't count!)

Answers on page 13



Star Dracula

Part V

François Ménard

The story so far: When the Jump-gates failed, worlds colonized by humanity were isolated for over 350 years, until the invention of the super-light drive. Ships from New London are re-establishing contact with other worlds, one of them being the HCSS Demeter, captained by Jonathan Harker, just arrived in the Carpathian system.

Thomas Renfield, embittered at being passed over for command of the Demeter on the grounds that he's too good a First-Contact Op, is sent down to the planet, but crash lands. IGOR arrives on the scene to take him to "Master". The "Master" introduces himself as Dracula, and explains that an IGOR is an Iso-Genetic Organic Robot.

While he sleeps, Dracula poisons Renfield's mind against Captain Harker. Fearing for his life, Renfield escapes in the lander, but Dracula is displeased. Renfield is told he was to have waited, and that he would never be free.

Worried when there is no word from Renfield, Harker drops down to the planet to search for him. Dracula welcomes him with drugged wine. When he awakes, Harker is unable to contact Renfield or the ship, and he sprains his ankle while trying to escape the mansion in the dark.

Renfield is running amok on the Demeter and another lander is lost in an attempt to rescue Harker. The captain orders the launch of an emergency survival pod, hoping Harker will find it, and heads for home.

We pick up the story as Harker finds the emergency supply pod, but he is being hunted by a canine creature the size of a horse. The Demeter is headed straight for the planet Piccadilly, to the consternation of Mina and Carfax Command.

TWENTY MINUTES LATER, New London's in-system emergency relief craft Rescue One was approaching the Demeter. Reinhold Kilpatrick, the ship's pilot and commanding officer, watched as the larger inter-system corvette continued its suicidal flight towards Piccadilly. He turned to his sensor and comm officer, Stevenson, "Still nothing?"

"Not a beep," he replied. "No response to Carfax telemetry, no response to our comm."

"Could their comm system be down?" Lieutenant Kilpatrick suggested.

"Not in any way I can see," answered Stevenson. "We're receiving her transponder, I'm getting the auto-receive signal, there's just no response."

"Well then, let make hard-dock and tow her to Carfax." Kilpatrick then switched on Rescue One's internal comm. "Medical, you're up in five. Possibility of contagion is high so go in full suit and full decon." and he deftly manoeuvred the smaller but more powerful Rescue One onto the Demeter's emergency dorsal hard dock.

James and Weathermay, Rescue One's Medical and Security Officers respectively, were waiting in the emergency ventral airlock in full environmental suits. The gear was heavy, but necessary as it would isolate them from anything and everything onboard the Demeter while they did their job. Neither one liked the idea of going in blind however. Both knew full well whatever was going on board the ship was bad. No comm and the ship heading straight towards a planet could mean only one thing, James thought to himself, whatever it was had affected the entire crew. The airlock cycled, first removing atmosphere from Rescue One, then replacing it with air from the Demeter. The iris door on the floor of the airlock opened, and the two men made their way down the access ladder, Weathermay first followed by James, and into the Demeter's hold.

The emergency dorsal hatch of the Demeter dropped them into the middle of the central corridor. Internal power seemed to have been tampered with as the lights flickered off and on. James asked if Weathermay knew what would or could do this.

"Scans didn't show any damage," he replied, "But the only time I've seen anything like this was on a combat frigate. Power and command functions had to be rerouted to critical systems, played havoc with low priority stuff like the lights and fine temperature control. I'd guess power's being diverted to somewhere, but I don't know where." The two men called out, identifying themselves over comm and their suits' loudspeakers but received no response. "I'll head forward towards the crew quarters and bridge. Go aft, you'll find medical, recreation, and engineering. Once we've checked those we'll link back up in engineering and head down to the lander complex, standard airlocks, and utility. Stay on comm at all times."

James nodded in agreement and headed aft. He found nothing in the recreational area and had nearly reached medical when he heard Weathermay over the comm, "I've found where power's being diverted, James. Looks like the crew quarters have all been quarantine sealed and over-locked. Won't be able to get into any of them until either you or I power them down from the bridge or engineering."

"You want me to make a beeline for engineering then? I've just made it to medical." James asked over the comm.

"I should be at the bridge soon. Give medical a look-see and we'll decide from there."

James acknowledged and entered medical. It was completely dark and eerily silent. Even more so than the rest of the vessel. Power must have been diverted from there as well, but why? Medical was generally considered an essential function and last to go on ship in an emergency. James looked around with his suit lights, the hair on the back of his neck standing straight up, his breath quick and shallow. Whatever had happened on this ship, it was bad, real bad. There were two covered corpses on the examination tables. He swallowed hard and lifted the cover off the first one, a male in his mid thirties with an unusual bluish pallor that James had only seen the like of once before on a desiccated, month old corpse. The name on the table's ID plate was Reginald Clarke. James went over to the other to find the body who had been Ian Doyle headless but with the same bluish

colouring, as if all the blood in it was gone. Understandable in this case as it looked like the head had been removed suddenly and violently from what James could tell from the neck stump. Weathermay's voice came over the comm, breaking the silence of the infirmary and startling James.

"No luck here. Bridge has been locked off too. What have you got, James?"

After pausing to catch his breath and steady his nerves, James replied, "Two dead bodies and a dead medical bay. One of them died violently, the other from unknown causes."

"Violently how?" asked Weathermay, understandably worried.

"Not sure as to the specifics but he literally lost his head very suddenly, very quickly. The medical logs and files might shed some light on both causes of death but I've got no power here at all." James went back to study Clarke more closely hoping to find some clue he missed the first time.

"Alright, I'm heading there now. Once we link back up, we'll head for engineering and hopefully get some answers."

Once back together the two men made their way to engineering. The flickering lights and corridor walls seemed to close in around them. They both wanted to be off this ghost ship but they had a job to do. The only light in engineering came from the engines and machinery themselves, bathing the area in a dark red-purple glow. James thought he heard what sounded like sobbing off to his left and turned to see a man curled up under the compressor-bench rocking back and forth holding his knees up to his chest. "Live one!" he shouted as he ran to him. Weathermay followed and James bent down and began to examine the survivor. "It's alright now, you're safe." James tried to reassure him. "Everything's going to be alright, we're here to help." James checked the nameplate on the survivor's uniform, "Thomas? It's okay, Thomas, you're safe now." The man James had identified as Thomas Renfield just continued to rock and sob. James thought he could make out the words "blood" and "free" but had no way of being sure.

Weathermay put a hand on James' shoulder, "Here, let me." James stepped aside and Weathermay soothed, "It's alright, Thomas. There's no blood, you're free now, everything's alright. Everything's going to be—" then suddenly lunged and grabbed Renfield's calf and yanked him out. Renfield howled, got his feet under him and lunged at Weathermay. Weathermay was ready for him but Renfield still managed to force the larger man up against the wall. As they struggled, Renfield was biting madly at Weathermay's suit around the neck and shoulder. James pulled out his shocker, primed and charged it, and fired. The charged arc hit Renfield square in the back. He spasmed, fell to the floor but was still conscious. After a brief moment he lunged himself at James. Another charged arc hit him in his left shoulder and he was finally out. "I've never seen anyone take two hits before. What's wrong with him?" asked Weathermay, bewildered.

"I don't know," replied James, "But we'd better see about restoring this ship's power and control, and we should report in. I also recommend we restrain him, just in case."

"After two shots?" asked Weathermay incredulously. James just raised an eyebrow. "Good idea," Weathermay continued after a short pause, "Last thing we need is for this one to come at us from behind if he does get up."

After restoring normal power allocation to the Demeter both men made their way back up to the bridge. If there were any more like Renfield aboard it was wiser to be able to watch each others' back. Once they had unsealed the bridge they found a single person, a woman, dead at the command station. She also had that odd, bloodless blue tint to her skin. The nameplate on her uniform read Lieutenant Diane Morrow. James went to examine her as Weathermay checked the other bridge stations one after the next. "I thought this was Harker's ship." asked James as he made his examination.

"It is," replied Weathermay as he inspected the navigation station, "Or was. Looks like all control was routed to command. Seems the lieutenant here began deceleration just before she died. Any ideas as to how?"

"Not sure. Looks like one of the ones in medical. If I had to make a guess, I'd say sudden, rapid, hyper-acute anaemia but I have no clue as to what could've caused it."

"I'm sure they'll put this all together once we get to Carfax. I've got the ship's logs up now. Looks like they ran into some kind of trouble at their last stop, New Transylvania. They lost Harker and both their landers. Looks like our crazy Thomas was one of their FCOs. They lost the other when he attempted to rescue Harker. Then their engineer Doyle committed suicide by sticking his head in the engine. On they way back the crew started dying one after another. Seems our Thomas was believed to have something to do with that. Then things start to get really weird, this doesn't make sense. Here, our lieutenant here made her last entry in full AV, I'll bring it up on the display." On the command display in front of James there appeared a three dimensional image of Lieutenant Morrow at the command station. She looked tired and exhausted. Weathermay started the recording playback.

"I've just started deceleration. I won't be able to bring the ship in on my own but I'll send an SOS as soon as we're in range. These past six weeks have been a nightmare. Feldman thinks Renfield picked up some kind of engineered bio-weapon down on the planet, some kind of stealth virus but McGill was one of the first to make contact with Renfield and Clarke was never even in contact with him as far as we can tell. Renfield did bring something up from there though. Not a virus but..." she trailed off for a moment then looked up, "Who are you?" she asked but the display clearly showed she was alone, "How did you get in here?" Her eyes seemed to glaze over, staring into emptiness. "Yes," she said in a monotonous voice and bent her head to one side. Her eyes then closed halfway and her body suddenly shook and spasmed as if having a seizure, then relaxed. She began to moan softly and breathe hard as if in ecstasy, wrapping her arms and legs around empty air. Then she went completely limp and the recording ended.

Both James and Weathermay just stood there, dumbfounded, for several moments. Kilpatrick, who had been monitoring their communication came over the comm himself, startling them. "What's going on down there? Are you two alright?"

"We're both fine here, Lieutenant. Just in shock. I can't... I've never... I mean..." James trailed off unable to find words to describe what he had just witnessed. Weathermay just stood there, dumbfounded, unable to speak at all.



Harker scratched at his six weeks of beard growth.

He had considered using the sharpened piece of the broken rifle he now carried in his belt to shave but he felt it wasn't sharp enough and would've just ended up cutting himself. He still hadn't found out what happened to Renfield or where he was, but thanks to the comm unit in the emergency pod he had been able to track and find Lander Two. Unfortunately he had been no more able to turn the ship right side up than Renfield. Jonathan had been surprised when he picked up the lander's transponder, he hadn't even considered trying the comm until two weeks ago, just for something to do, but whatever had been interfering with the comm system had stopped. The sun would even appear now and then for a few hours every couple of days. Harker had not seen the wolf-thing since their initial encounter but he did hear that odd howl in the distance almost every night. After six weeks it still woke him and frightened him.

Now that he had found the lander, he considered what to do next. It would be at least another six weeks before help would arrive. He had hoped to find other signs of habitation, even other animals but all he found were more mountains and the odd tree. This worried him as he wondered, what did that wolf-thing eat? In some ways he hoped never to find out. He wanted to leave this rock. He wanted to be home, with Mina. He even considered heading back to Dracula's lair. Lander One might still be there, though he could not pick up its transponder, and perhaps the answers to the mysteries of this planet were there but he feared becoming trapped again, or running into those strange women-creatures or worse. A part of him wanted very much to find the truth about this planet, the same part of him that wanted to go out and explore the untamed wilds of space. Fear or curiosity? That settled it, he would try to make his way back, even if he was frightened with stone cold terror.



Arthur Holmwood sat at his desk in his office with Doctor Jack Seward, head of Carfax Medical, and Security Chief Quincy Morris. Together they were going over the reports and logs from the Demeter incident, as it was now being called. The ship itself was docked with the station. Its crew, all dead save Renfield, had been transferred over to Carfax Medical in order to undergo full autopsies. "So then, Doctor Seward," asked Arthur, "What were the results of the autopsies?"

Jack Seward, a thin man with a hooked nose and receding hairline, looked up from the report he was reading. "In every case, death was caused by a sudden and massive loss of blood. Even Ian Doyle, the one reported a suicide by the ship's medic. The -uh- decapitation appears to have occurred only afterwards."

"Possibly to hide the fact?" speculated Quincy in his thick Nova Montanan accent.

"Hide what fact, Quincy? And hidden by whom? I can only speculate that this was caused by some sort of bio-engineered contagion Renfield brought up with him. From what I gathered from the crews logs, dementia is the first symptom that this whatever it is has hit. Renfield has been displaying those very symptoms since his return to the planet. Why whatever it is hasn't killed him yet, I don't know."

"And how is Renfield?" asked Arthur, "Any progress?"

"None," answered Doctor Seward, "I still have him in psychiatric isolation. Physically I can't find anything wrong with

him other than malnutrition. But his mental state is unlike anything I've ever seen."

"Has his family been notified?" asked Arthur.

"Doesn't have any," answered Quincy. "No next of kin on file. Speaking of notifying, has anyone spoken to Mina yet?"

"She was in the command tower when it happened," said Arthur grimly. "She was the one that first realized something was wrong with the Demeter in the first place."

"Oh my..." Doctor Seward gasped. "That must've been some shock. How is she?"

"I've given her indefinite leave," stated Arthur, "I had hoped she would see you, but..." he trailed off.



Lucy found Mina waiting outside Arthur's office, her arms crossed and a livid look on her face, "Mina, darling," she consoled sympathetically, "What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be resting? With everything that's happened--"

"With everything that's happened," Mina snapped, "How can I rest?! To make matters worse, they haven't even sent a ship to find Jonathan yet!"

"What? That's impossible" Lucy replied incredulously, "I can't believe it. What are you going to do?"

"That's why I'm here, Lucy. I'm going to get Arthur to give me a ship, and then I'm going after him." Lucy had never seen her friend so determined. At that moment, she pitied Arthur. She knew he would refuse but she also knew how stubborn her friend was.

"No, you're not," she replied. Before Mina could argue, she continued. "Not by yourself you're not. I'm coming with you. And if Arthur won't give you a ship, then we'll hire one."

"Oh Lucy, thank you!" Mina was nearly in tears. "But I can't afford--"

"But I can. Now why are we waiting out here?" Lucy went to open the office door.

"Lucy, they're still in conference, we should--"

The automated hatch to Arthur Holmwood's office suddenly opened and Lucy and Mina entered. "Lucy? Mina? What is the meaning of this?" demanded Arthur, more than a little annoyed.

Mina, with uncharacteristic boldness approached Arthur's desk, passing in front of Quincy and Doctor Seward without so much as a glance at either of them. Slapping both hands on his transparent desk, eyes blazing into him, "Why hasn't a rescue ship been sent for Jonathan, Arthur? I thought the two of you were friends, or at very least you respected him. No one even knows if--"

"That's exactly the problem, Mina," Arthur interjected, "No one knows anything of what happened on that planet. And you know as well as I do that the decision to not send another ship to New Transylvania was not mine alone."

"But you have several ships at your disposal, Arthur," said Lucy as she passed behind her friend putting a comforting and supportive hand on her shoulder, "Surely you could send one of them? Or how many interstellar traders owe you, Arthur? Can't you get one of them to--"

"Lucy," replied Arthur, his anger replaced with exasperation and exhaustion, "I cannot and you know full well why. I cannot use my position to satisfy my personal feelings. In light of the

incident onboard the Demeter, Naval Command has instituted a full quarantine of the Carpathian system. My hands are tied, there's nothing I can do."

"Please, Arthur," pleaded Mina, "Just give me a ship, a crew. I'll go myself and take full responsibility."

"You know I can't do that, Mina. Once we find out what killed the crew of the Demeter and how to protect ourselves from it the council will authorize a rescue mission. Until then, my hands are tied." Truth was Arthur did consider Jonathan a friend, and he hated the situation as much as Mina, but there was little he could do. A team of specialists were coming up from the planet in three days to examine the bodies and find out exactly what happened and once they had, Arthur had a ship, primed and ready to go. Until then, all he could do was wait.

Mina stared daggers at him, but finally seemed to back down. Lucy looked at him with pain in her eyes, pain and disappointment. "I'm sorry," he went on, but the two women turned and left the office. Doctor Seward watched them as they left, and excused himself to follow them.

Lucy and Mina were standing in the corridor when Seward caught up with them. Lucy had her arms around Mina's shoulders, consoling her. He hurried to them, "Lucy, Mina, wait."

"What is it, Jack?" asked Lucy in a hostile tone. She didn't know why he had followed them and was more than angry with a great many people right then, Arthur, Naval Command, the council, even herself, for not being able to help her friend.

"Please, Lucy, I just wanted to tell the both of you my staff and I are working around the clock to find out what happened. Specialists from New London are coming up within the week. We will rescue Jonathan as soon as we can, I promise."

"Thank you, Doctor Seward," said Mina, drying her tears, "I know you're doing all you can. I just hope it's not too late. Lucy, would you walk me to my quarters, please?"

"Of course, Mina, let's go." As they turned down the corridor, Lucy looked at Doctor Seward and mouthed the words "Thank you." Jack's heart missed a beat, and he headed for the medical complex.

Once they arrived at Mina's quarters, Lucy turned to her friend, "Here we are. Are you going to be alright?"

"Yes," said Mina, suddenly looking more determined than Lucy had ever seen her, "Did you mean what you said? About the ship?"

"Absolutely. Just give me a couple of days to set everything up. And who knows, I'm sure Jack will have found something by then if he can. If there's one thing I know about Jack Seward it's that he doesn't give up easy." The two women shared a small laugh. Mina had spent more than one night listening to Lucy about her and Doctor Seward's relationship. But with the seriousness of the situation, their mirth quickly passed. "I'll get us a ship, don't you worry."



To be continued in WARP 81

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 11 - Toronto ON

Animecon, Guests: Sean Schemmel, more. www.hobbystar.com.

December 30 - January 1 - Futurecon 2, Markham, ON. SF New Year's celebration. www.futurecon.org.

January 20-22 - ConFusion 35, Troy, MI. Guests: Patrick Rothfuss, Tom Smith, & more. <http://confusion.stilyagi.org>.

January 20-22 - Emiko's Mini Convention, location, TBA, Waterloo region. Anime & gaming, www.go2emc.ca.

January 27-29 - G-Anime, Gatineau, QC. Guests: Adam Smith, Lee Ann Farruga, Dr. David Stephenson, Rene Walling, Charles Mohapel, Marie Bilodeau, more. <http://2012.ganime.ca/en>

February 25-26 - Con-G 2012, Guelph, ON. <http://www.con-g.com/>

March 10-11 - 9th Annual Super

Anime Convention, Toronto, ON. www.hobbystar.com.

March 16-18 - Furnal Equinox 2012, Toronto, ON. Furry convention. Guests: Dark Natasha & Marci McAdam. www.furnalequinox.com.

April 13-15 - Ad Astra 2012, Markham, ON. Guests: Harry Turtledove, Lesley Livingston, Joe Jusko, Shelley Shapiro. www.ad-astra.org.

April 14 & 15- Wizard World 2012, Toronto, ON. Guests: Jock, John McCrea, Barry Kitson, Javi Fernandez, Paul McGillion, Sandra Kasturi, Martin Springett, many more. www.wizardworldcomiccon.com.

April 20-22 - FilKONtario 22, Mississauga, ON. Filking convention. Guests: Meg Davis, Paul Estin, Steve

and Dorothea Biernesser. www.filkontario.ca.

April 27-29 - Eeriecon 14, Niagara Falls, NY. Guests: Catherine Asaro, Lois H. Gresh, many more. www.eeriecon

May 4-6 - Congrès Boréal, Québec, QC. Guests: Héloïse Côté, Patrick Senecal. <http://www.congresboreal.ca/>

May 5 & 6 - Toronto Comic Arts Festival, Toronto Reference Library. <http://torontocomics.com/>

May 18- 20 - Keycon 2012, Winnipeg, MB. Guests: Timothy Zahn, & others <http://keycon.org/>

May 25-27 - Anime North, Toronto, ON. Guests: TBA <http://www.animenorth.com/live/>



Les Couilles dans l'espace

Marquise ☆

Dernièrement dans la deuxième partie; le phénomène surnommé "Les couilles dans l'espace", par un humoriste de même origine que l'astronaute Québécois accidenté par cette matière organique, s'avèra être le pied d'un modèle vivant. Cependant sur Terre, ce modèle toujours vivant pourtant encore attaché à ses pieds entreprends une excursion sans papiers vers la frontière Américaine. Afin de mieux communiquer avec la NASA, il est accompagné d'une artiste-graphique lui servant de traductrice qui le ralentit pourtant avec sa piteuse santé. Et déjà, la venue d'un hélicoptère les surprisent dans les hautes herbes de la frontière.

Et maintenant :

LE CŒUR PLUS FÉBRILE, nous reprenions la route à une vitesse telle que, même si en dessous de la normale pour certains, je ne savais pas si je pourrais me rendre en fin de course. Enfin une clairière devant nous! L'ombre, plutôt que le soleil pour moi, me faisait accélérer comme la promesse d'un repos contre la chaleur et mes pieds endoloris qui me brûlaient à force d'ampoules! Maxime devint plus heureux, car il fut le premier à trouver la grille. Il put la grimper avec son manteau de cuir évitant les barbelés. Je ne pus m'y hisser et ne me risquai pas, car j'avais peur qu'elle soit électrisée. Maxime fut surpris de me voir forcer contre une pierre et pouvoir y passer mon sac à dos dans le trou qu'elle occupait, puis, me protégeant le visage m'y glisser moi-même.

Il vérifia si je n'avais rien et ne comprit pas comment j'avais fait. Je levai mon bâton de marche en lui disant qu'avec la foi rien n'était impossible. Il est vrai que Maxime et très peu de gens que je connaissais m'avaient vue passer d'épreuve de force et d'endurance aussi concrètement. Il ne pouvait donc comprendre que j'avais tranché de mon pied le tronc d'un jeune et fort érable accidenté pour me sculpter par la suite ce bâton de marche représentant les quatre éléments que Dieu avait assemblés dans notre monde visible. Je repris mon sac et m'essuya de la boue de ma cape et mon manteau pendant que Maxime admirait les incrustations de coquillages concassés et les gemmes et microperles de verre que j'avais incrustées dans mon œuvre noire, bleue, blanche, rouge, bois et métallisée, cristallisée dans un fini verre. Je ne pouvais stopper, car déjà mes genoux fatigués pouvaient enfler et m'empêcher d'avancer. Je redemandai donc mon bâton de marche et en me le redonnant, Maxime me demanda combien de temps j'avais pris à le faire. Je lui dis qu'à temps perdu, quand mes jambes étaient trop enflées et mes ampoules trop douloureuses, je l'avais sculpté en environ un an et demi, puis orné, peint, verni, incrusté et sertit en quelques mois le temps que les divers éléments sèchent. Alors que cela me permettait d'avancer plus rapidement en oubliant ma douleur, Maxime me demanda combien d'argent j'en demanderais. Je lui répondis qu'en temps seulement il valait plus de mille cinq cents dollars, mais qu'il devait se dévaluer rapidement, car il perdait facilement deux pouces par an chaque fois qu'il perdait à l'usure un embout de canne... De plus non seulement les éléments, les vrais, commençaient aussi à l'user, mais il fut également béni trois fois! Cela en faisait un objet que je ne pouvais vendre. Mais j'admis qu'il me trottait en tête depuis longtemps de m'en confectionner un pour avancer dans les bois, ou... user d'autre chose qu'une canne qui finissait à la longue par me faire mal à l'épaule et m'empêcher de travailler.

Maxime tomba à pique de me parler de me trouver un jour

d'autres bâtons à sculpter, car nous entendions des chiens qui hélas ne semblaient pas, à leur ton, vouloir jouer à va chercher avec des bouts de bois! J'implorai de mon regard Maxime de courir sans moi; qu'il ait une chance. Mais il refusa en me disant qu'il ne laisserait personne derrière. Justement, c'était de son pied qu'il s'agissait et je pouvais jouer le rôle de diversion, car je ne courrais pas. Il me traîna alors dans son sillage en me m'assurant que mon rôle devait être de lui servir d'abord et avant tout d'interprète et de témoin! Comment aurais-je pu argumenter? Je savais que Maxime comprenait l'anglais, il n'arrivait cependant pas à tout bien prononcer et à tout bien structurer quand venait le temps de répondre.

J'espérais que quelque chose arrive. Quelque chose jouant en notre faveur. Tout en forçant le pas et mon rythme cardiaque, je priai mentalement et j'avançais martelant la terre de mon bâton de marche. Ce que je ressentais comme lourds cognements dans mon bras battait à l'unisson avec le rythme de mon cœur dans mes tempes. Alors qu'une fine pluie se mit à tomber, Maxime se retourna vers moi avec une très grande inquiétude qui se lisait sur son visage. Étais-je suivie? Non. Il me laissa passer pendant que le temps se couvrit en s'excusant et en me demandant de ralentir un peu. Je n'arrivais pas à comprendre pourquoi il avait peur, j'étais engourdie, je devais avancer, je savais que si j'arrêtais ou que si je ralentissais, mes membres qui me semblaient plus lourds que le plomb ne me suivaient plus... Que nous échouerions!

Il ne mit pas long à courir pour me rejoindre sur la distance où il attendait en espérant que je m'arrête. Il m'avoua qu'il ne savait plus qui de mon obstination ou de nos poursuivants allait me tuer. Car il était évident à ses yeux que je n'allais vraiment pas. Mais alors, vraiment pas du tout. Il me retint par mon bras gauche, qui ne portait pas le bâton de marche, et je faillis tomber alors que ma cheville et mon genou semblèrent incapables de s'entendre sur un point où s'ancrer. Un éclair déchira le ciel alors que le vent se levait projetant une trombe de pluie plus abondante qui nous lécha de sa lourde fraîcheur pénétrante. Maxime me força à tourner sur moi-même alors que les chiens lâchés se trouvaient à quelques enjambées de nous seulement et leurs maîtres à égale distance derrière eux.

Il tonna comme l'un des chiens vint pour sauter sur Maxime, je ne fis qu'un tour avec mon bâton et l'embout frappa un nez canin avant de glisser sur son œil. La bête retomba sur le sol en gémissant, ses semblables hésitèrent en jappant leur rage. Dans le tumulte, les rafales de vent et la pluie, les gardes-frontières — armés comme si nous recréions une scène du Vietnam - nous gueulaient après tous ensembles dans ce qui me semblait un langage incompréhensible. La cape battante au vent, comme une fleuretiste, une partie de mon bâton trouva assise sous mon bras

l'extrémité pointée vers eux... qui avaient toujours leurs armes pointées vers nous. Maxime me demanda de faire ce qu'ils me disaient. De faire quoi? Maxime n'en savait rien non plus sauf que depuis un bon moment il tentait de me dire que je tournais au bleu. Alors que je tentai pour la énième fois de le corriger que je ne tournasse pas au bleu, mais que je dusse juste avoir les extrémités violacées par-dessus les cris des militaires, Maxime me souligna que cela ne changeait rien, que ce n'était pas normal et que j'allais « péter au frette » pareil, problème cœur ou non. Il avait raison! Cependant, l'un des hommes donna des ordres aux autres de rappeler les chiens, ce que j'appréciai fort quand je me rendis compte qu'eux non plus ne nous comprenaient pas. J'optai pour mon meilleur anglais pour leur demander de quoi il devait bien s'agir pour qu'ils envoient des chiens et se cachent derrière des fusils devant deux personnes désarmées, dont une femme malade?

Leur réponse fut assez directe alors qu'ils nous enlevèrent nos bagages et nous couchèrent dans l'herbe glacée par la pluie et me prirent mon bâton de marche. Alors que l'eau pénétrait sous mes épaisseurs vestimentaires, me fouettant le cœur chaud de son froid, j'eus des palpitations qui ne me laissèrent pressentir rien de bon. Spécialement quand il me sembla que tout mon sang me montait à la tête et que mon cœur que je sentais dans mes tempes y battait en décélérant. Maxime sembla rouspéter plus pour me défendre et ce qui me servait de canne. Cependant, son langage, quoique peu ordurier, laissait à désirer en fait de syntaxe. Je dû dire à nos opposants qu'ils tenaient en main une pièce de huit cents dollars américains et qu'à moins d'avoir mon talent et ma patience pour m'en refaire un, s'ils me le volaient ou me l'endommageaient je leur chargerais. Maxime me fit remarquer que ma voix vacillait et que j'avais changé les prix. Je lui répondis que je comptais le taux de change et il me rappela que le dollar canadien était maintenant plus fort que le leur. Quand je traduisis la chose aux autorités qui ne me semblaient plus du tout compétentes, ils s'énervèrent après mes papiers qui pourtant étaient dans ma sacoche ventrale. Le fait de devoir bouger pour me retourner les rendit soit un tantinet plus stupides, soit un tantinet plus agressifs, car ils ne voulaient pas que je bouge tout en voulant mes papiers. Et ils ne semblaient pas comprendre le fond de leur illogisme. Je me demandais combien d'années d'études cela requerrait pour devenir soldat quand la foudre tomba sur mon bâton malmené, clouant au sol le soldat qui le tenait. Dans la confusion, je me retournai légèrement pour prendre mon portefeuille, mais leur chef se retourna enragé et me donna un coup de pied à l'épaule pour que je reste à plat sur le ventre pendant qu'il me sembla qu'on éventra nos sacs à dos pour en vérifier le contenu. Sous cette pluie, c'était fascistement ridicule. On abîmait le portable de Maxime et mes œuvres ; les choses mêmes qui nous auraient permis de converser avec le monde de la NASA. Je ne compris pas immédiatement que l'on cherchait nos papiers, mais il ne me prit pas long pour tenter de me relever et à les traiter d'imbéciles et de vandales. Il ne me prit pas long non plus à m'effondrer sur le coup de crosse de l'une de leurs armes. Dans cet univers qui s'évanouissait autour de moi, je sentis Maxime tenter de garder ma tête hors de la flaque d'eau où je fus retombée. Tout comme — à distance qui semblait croître entre nous — je l'entendais me défendre de crainte que je cesse de respirer dans l'eau ou que mon cœur lâche.

Mais il me semblait dans la chaude lumière blanche, que rien n'avait plus d'importance. Je ne me sentais pas seule, je me sentais protégée et aimée au-delà de toute limitation humaine et matérielle. Un sentiment à partager aussi infiniment avec le reste de l'univers. L'univers!



Comme la douleur d'un bandage arraché à une plaie séchée, je m'arrachai à ce bien-être. Maxime, le pied, la NASA! J'ouvris les yeux dans une ambulance, dans une souffrance, mon esprit était plus agile que mon douloureux corps rétif. Avant que l'on ne m'administre de calmant, j'arrachai tous les tubes qui me liaient à une future grosse facture, qui de ce côté de la frontière ne justifiait pas que la vie devait avoir un pareil coût et éliminer ses pauvres en leur coupant leurs soins. L'ambulance n'avait pas quitté les lieux où nous fûmes agressés. Même si mon thorax me donnait l'impression qu'un imbécile y avait perdu de la soie dentaire qui s'était répandue entre mes côtes et me sciait les poumons et le cœur à chaque respiration, je hurlai aux soldats mi-juron, mi-sérieuse, que par la volonté du Ciel nous devons nous rendre immédiatement à la NASA.

Quand la soldatesque cessa de poser de vaines questions et de tenter de nous molester plus allègrement, nous parvînmes à les convaincre que nous avions des informations vitales à apporter aux autorités de la NASA et que nous devons faire plutôt vite sans nous encombrer de protocoles. Maxime guida plusieurs de mes mots, car il avait suivi la mission spatiale de plus près depuis

ces derniers jours. Je jouai mon rôle d'interprète à merveille. Spécialement quand je leur mis sur le nez qu'ils avaient peut-être détruit des évidences vitales en les exposant à la pluie et que nous devions parler à des professionnels avant qu'il ne soit trop tard, que nous savions d'où provenait le pied.

Pour une raison ou une autre, l'officier en chef semblait impressionné. Par compassion, ou pour ne pas perdre ses sources d'informations, il me proposa très clairement de repartir en ambulance. Je lui admis ne pas avoir assez de temps et assez de sous à gaspiller de ce côté de la frontière. Maxime et moi finîmes dans l'ambulance avec un garde-frontière, les autres confisquèrent notre matériel. Bien que mon cœur sonnait irrégulier, j'enrageais, car ils avaient conservé tout ce que nous avions. Je demandai à Maxime, en anglais pour bien être comprise de notre ravisseur, s'il y avait des propriétés intellectuelles à être volées sur son portable? Et alors qu'il haussa les épaules sans me répondre, encore plus impressionné du tour de force qui venait de se produire, j'ajoutai toujours en anglais que si tel était le cas, elles venaient toutes d'être volées. Je ne pus en dire plus, car on m'injecta quelque sédatif et il me sembla que le monde ne devint qu'un noir et froid néant autour de moi.

Je vis danser de la lumière devant mes yeux, mais le froid resta toujours et j'avais du mal à m'éveiller et à m'endormir. Il me sembla ouïr de la bisbille entre trois hommes autour de moi. L'odeur féminine aseptisée d'une infirmière fut la dernière chose que je sentis avant de recevoir un masque qui me pompa de l'air dans mes poumons fatigués. Le bruit de la machine me força plus près d'une réalité d'éveil où j'entendis dans une langue qui n'était pas mienne quelques lignes qui portaient sur la mort, la santé, l'impossibilité, les miracles et la vie. Il fut aussi question de parler à un interprète ou un témoin à propos d'un pied, de la sécurité nationale, de plus grande découverte scientifique. Quand la bisbille reprit de plus belle, je me rendormis en sentant bien la pression sur mon estomac et que la présence féminine les poussait dehors de la pièce.

Après un assez long et confortable sommeil, il me sembla que tout ce que j'avais vécu jusque lors n'était qu'un rêve. Dans ce que je croyais être mon propre lit, je me retournai doucement sur mon côté avec un ronron pour prévenir mes félines de ne pas se faire « écrapoutir ». Mon bras heurta un barreau de métal et mon pied, en direction inverse un autre. Que faisaient des katanas hors de leurs fourreaux dans mon futon? Il me sembla ressentir une pression sur mon bras avec un tentacule qui suivait mes mouvements en caressant mon corps. Junior? Sont-ce là tes griffes à l'intérieur de mon coude? Alors que je voulus enfouir mon visage dans mon oreiller, un obstacle de différentes pressions et températures priva mon nez et une partie de la joue de la douce sensation du coton. Alors que mes yeux cherchèrent l'énergie de s'ouvrir, comme s'ils avaient été de lourds volets hydrauliques scellés depuis des siècles, il me sembla que mon futon était désormais trop haut, et que la présence de mes chattes était remplacée par une autre. Quand mes paupières finirent par se desceller et mettre mes yeux à nu, mon regard rencontra celui d'un petit homme, en ensemble veston cravate brun, assis sur une chaise dans cette chambre blanche froide et aseptisée qui me sembla celle d'un silencieux et tranquille hôpital. Il projetait un sentiment de paix dans son expression de curiosité. Son visage mi-lune, mi-coupé au couteau comme un mélange de russe et

d'amérindien arborait un sourire calme et rassurant. Mais il ne me faisait pas l'impression d'être médecin, prêtre ou militaire. Il ne faisait qu'attendre que je sois prête à interagir. Interagir... Agir... Réagir... Maxime! Mes chattes! Le pied! Je tentai de parler, mais non seulement ma voix avait changé, mais il me sembla que de l'air me sortit par la bouche de force et je paniquai pour rattraper mon souffle en ne comprenant pas d'où ni comment mon air m'était fourni. Il me sembla me battre contre une tempête à laquelle je ne pouvais bloquer ma respiration. L'air autour de mon nez était frais et humide même si autour ma peau semblait se battre comme quelque chose de chaud et soudé à elle. L'air qui passait par ma bouche, par contraste, était chaud et il me semblait me noyer dans la pression de l'air!



Alors que je me débattis incapable de trouver le moyen de me détacher de cette trompe reliée à une machine et qui me donnait l'impression de me battre contre le xénomorphe sorti de son œuf dans le film Alien, l'homme se leva prestement et tout en me disant de me calmer tenta de prendre le contrôle de ma tête qui se démenait bras autour d'elle. Je pouvais l'entendre me demander de me calmer avec une voix basse, qui me semblait sans âge. Tandis que moi, je n'entendais que des coups de vent désarticulés et presque mécaniques sortir de ma bouche. Après une rapide étude visuelle de mon appareillage, il arriva à arracher

le tube de ce qui s'agrippait à mon visage. Le tube corrugué hissa en vomissant violemment de l'air sur le reste de ce qui me restait de visage! Mon visiteur me l'enleva du regard en tentant de trouver le bouton correct de la console pour le faire taire. Je respirai normalement à travers cette pièce étrangère, réchauffant de mon souffle son froid plastique transparent qui fut soudain pris de condensation. Mes mains tapotèrent l'ensemble du masque qui ne tenait que mon nez. Des bras de coton semblèrent s'enlacer sans fin autour de ma tête et je n'arrivais pas à trouver un fermoir à ouvrir derrière ma tête. Mon sauveur momentané en profita, en s'excusant à l'avance, pour me flanquer deux index autour des narines. Pas le temps de protester que la pièce relâcha son emprise sur mon visage. Je dus me résoudre à le remercier. Nous nous serrâmes la main alors que de l'autre je rejetai l'animal mécanique. Mon visiteur anglophone lança à la blague que je ne devais très certainement pas ma survie grâce à un entraînement spatial. Je réalisai enfin être devant un scientifique... Peut-être quelqu'un de la NASA.

Il se présenta sous le nom de Marc et admit qu'il se déplaçait que pour les choses sortant de l'ordinaire. Je me sentais loin d'être digne de ce privilège, car je ne devais servir que de témoin et d'interprète à Maxime... Le détenteur original de l'objet de tout ce brassage médiatique. Marc m'assura que la raison pour laquelle il se trouvait à cet hôpital était bel et bien d'étouffer l'affaire avant que la chose ne prenne des tournants phénomènes de foire. Il devait s'assurer en secret que le tout n'était pas une blague quelconque avant que la nouvelle ne se répande. Je hochai la tête et lui demandai si Maxime était bien traité. Il me répondit que les douaniers n'arrivaient pas à en tirer quoique ce fut et me demanda la langue d'expression de Maxime. Il ne voulut pas me croire quand je lui répondis le français, car un interprète français n'arrivait pas à le suivre. J'eus ri d'une façon qui l'inquiéta sur ce que le tube d'air m'avait fait avant que je le rassure et lui affirmai qu'un Français de France ne comprendrait pas le jargon québécois! Il me demanda si moi je le connaissais et je lui répondis presque à la blague que j'étais Québécoise.

Marc me dit qu'il allait arranger les choses et alla vers un coin de ma chambre pour connaître la signification particulière de mon bâton qui s'y trouvait. Je lui dis simplement que c'était un bâton de marche auquel j'avais sculpté les quatre éléments que Dieu avait mis sur la Terre. Il me regarda sceptique et me fit un signe vers le bâton, je hochai la tête et lui fit signe de l'inspecter. Il me rapporta avoir su pour la foudre et ne pas comprendre ce qui était arrivé. Je lui répondis que je n'étais pas une sorcière, mais que s'il ne croyait pas à la proposition chrétienne que j'avais à lui offrir, il pouvait alors croire qu'avec l'orage un porteur d'arme métallique et de radio dans un grand champ qui brandit ce bâton

dans les airs alors que nous étions forcés au sol a plus de chance de se faire toucher par la foudre. Marc sourit tout en donnant une légère rotation à l'objet d'art et croyait que je faisais peut-être preuve d'animisme jusqu'au point de donner un nom à mon bâton. Qu'en fait il aurait aimé en entendre plus sur ce que je croyais qu'il était arrivé. Tout en me défendant bien d'être païenne, je lui dis que je croyais que le Seigneur n'était pas amusé sur le moment et qu'Il le démontra en cet avertissement. Je lui rajoutai que par contre l'œuvre qu'il tenait en ses mains fut trois fois bénites par trois prêtres différents et se nommait Éther! Son regard sembla à nouveau empli d'une légère crainte. Alors qu'il ne poussait mot et regardait mes pieds enflés sortis des couvertures et qu'on avait légèrement surélevés à l'aide d'un oreiller, il me sembla que ses lèvres remuaient très légèrement, comme s'il comptait mes ampoules à chaque pied. Il me fut aisé de lui dire que je devais bien en avoir quatorze de chaque côté et que marcher neuf heures en un jour aidait... mais que Maxime n'était pas aussi fou, qu'il prenait l'autobus!

Marc secoua la tête avant de me poser les questions habituelles relatives à mon art, car il avait aussi vu ce qui restait de mes croquis. Je lui répondis les mêmes choses que d'accoutumé, il n'y avait rien d'extra... terrestre à propos de ce que je faisais! En fait, après le désastre de Katrina en Louisiane, et leur gouvernement ayant détourné le matériel d'aide destiné aux sinistrés en le classant surplus et le donnant aux postes, aux prisons et aux douanes, j'admettais que je croyais que les douaniers allaient se payer un énorme cadeau en nous dépossédant de notre matériel! Marc ne semblait pas rire alors qu'il tenait le bâton un peu comme une sarbacane, mais en laissant glisser son œil en surface. Il se demandait à quoi pouvait bien servir un bâton comme celui-ci si cela n'avait pas été pour la marche. Je ricanai un peu et lui rappelai que plusieurs patriarches et pasteurs avaient le leur, que symboliquement le bâton était un axe – voir un pont — entre le Ciel et la Terre, que Moïse avait séparé les eaux avec le sien, qu'un chef de tribu même fut choisi quand son bâton bourgeonna, que cela aussi est symbole de sagesse... Et que hormis la décoration, j'aurais pu aussi bien en faire une pôle à rideaux! Marc mit cette « pôle à rideaux » près de moi dans mon lit et me tapota l'épaule en me demandant de dormir. En fait, il dut remettre en ordre cette pseudo-trompe et me l'attacher à la tête pour que je puisse respirer en dormant. Mais avant de repartir, il m'assura qu'il allait arranger les choses pour nous transférer à la NASA. Je serrai cette œuvre épargnée contre moi remerciant le Seigneur pour ses grâces. Demain, la NASA... et peut-être des réponses.



À suivre, dans WARP 81 !



10 SF references in Tarals's illustration for the Fanac award:

Avro Arrow, Red Dwarf's Space Bug, Tin Tin, Kirk vs Gorn, City from the Jetsons, Apes & the 2001 Monolith, Galileo 7 shuttle from Star Trek, Tardis from Dr Who, Robot from Roger Ramjet, Barlennan from Mission of Gravity

Starfleet Treachery

Barbara Silverman

The story so far: On a rare return visit to Earth, Kathryn Janeway is called in to her father's office. Admiral Janeway tells her about Commander Chakotay's defection to the Maquis, soon followed by that of Ro Laren who is rumoured to have recruited over six thousand former resistance fighters. He fears the two forces may be joining up, and he asked his daughter to come up with a plan to stop Chakotay and disrupt the impending coalition against Starfleet and the Federation.

Janeway now has a mole, Tuvok, in Chakotay's crew, and is aware that Chakotay has recruited B'Elanna Torres and Tom Paris. Starfleet reports the suspiciously easy capture and arrest of Tom Paris, and Janeway worries that Chakotay may be upping the ante. Going ahead with her plan to lure Chakotay into a trap, she fills in the details for her first officer, Cavit.

CHAPTER 8



LOOKING UP FROM HIS CONSOLE at the ops station, Rollins turned his head in Janeway's direction. "Captain, Syzygien control is attempting to contact us."

Janeway gave the arm of her chair a small slap. This was it! The time had come!

Rising from her command chair, the captain moved to the centre of the bridge. "Open a comm channel! On screen!"

A moment later a humanoid face appeared before her. A face that was a cross between Cardassian and Bajoran with Klingon brow ridges, Ferengi ears and.... "Captain Janeway, the planet of Syzygie bids you welcome. I'm ruler Au'st. I regret to being off-world during your previous visits, and have been waiting anxiously for your arrival."

Janeway thought to herself, 'you and who else'. However, when replying she kept her thoughts to herself. "The Federation is pleased that they could provide these drugs. We understand the people of Syzygie are in most dire need of medical aid."

Ruler Au'st responded with what could be construed as a smile, revealing a set of very sharp teeth. "We are extremely grateful to the Federation."

The captain inclined her head in acknowledgement. "If everything is ready I'll begin the transport shortly."

Clasping his hands together, Ruler Au'st bowed slightly, the Syzygien form of agreement. "The medical staff made the arrangements you requested. They are standing by to lend whatever assistance you may require."

There was one key component of her plan she hoped had not been overlooked. "What about access to the section where the room is located? Have my instructions been carried out exactly?"

The Syzygien raised both hands shoulder high. "Precisely as you insisted. The vice-consul was very careful when relaying your requests. I personally oversaw all preparations and issued the necessary instructions myself. Until the security detail arrives access will be limited. All medical classes have been cancelled, only the emergency response team will be allowed into the area. This cannot be avoided as the section contains our planet's crisis monitoring system."

The captain was aware of this. If Chakotay went ahead as planned it would not be a problem. "Excellent! I'll prepare the

shipment. Please notify the hospital chief to expect us shortly. Captain Janeway out!"

She turned to Rollins at ops. "You have the bridge!"

Moving in the direction of her ready room, Janeway signalled her first officer. "Mr. Cavit, with me!"

Sitting down at her desk she activated her monitor, turning it so Cavit could see, "Have a seat Mr. Cavit. One of my primary reasons in choosing Syzygie was due to the location of their only medical facility. Situated in Tanis, the inhabitants from the surrounding areas go into the city for treatment."

She pointed at the map showing a close-up of a large city. "Since the drugs can only be delivered to this one location, it made planning much easier, eliminating the danger of last minute changes."

Janeway rotated the map. "As you can see, the building is located at the edge of the city, not in its busy metropolitan centre. This was a major consideration."

The captain looked meaningfully at her first officer. "Less chance of being detected."

Cavit liked what he saw, perhaps this plan would work. At first he had been doubtful, considering Janeway a 'science' captain with little experience in other fields. While he had served on a variety of galaxy class starships, though never as first officer. Even with the promotion he had considered it below his calling when assigned to Janeway. However, managing to push aside his deep longing to be on another ship, such as the Enterprise which had more important assignments, he had accepted his new posting gracefully. Now he could be instrumental in the capture of the Maquis leader.

Janeway tapping a button, changed the picture. "This is the floor plan. The supplies are to be placed in this room, here at the back."

The first officer nodded his approval. "The location is perfect. Due to the enhanced damping field Chakotay cannot beam the drugs up to his ship. He must send an away team. The layout of this building is a natural trap!"

Janeway leaned back in her seat. "Correct! This field will remain around the whole room as long as the drugs are there. Then once the transport arrives, not only will Chakotay be unable to beam the drugs up to his ship, he will also have the security team to contend with. That is why the Maquis must go ahead with the raid now."

The captain rubbed her hand along the arm of her chair. "You will place a special device on the wall which, once activated, will seal both itself and the doorway of the room with a regular force-ten security field. Nobody on Syzygie will be able to disengage it, however Chakotay, a former Starfleet officer, has the necessary training. Of course, we are not supposed to have knowledge of the Maquis raid. Starfleet assured the Syzygiens the drugs would be safe."



Cavit felt certain Janeway had overlooked the obvious. "Captain, Chakotay will use scanners and tricorders. He will detect the trap."

Clasping her hands together Janeway looked at her first officer. "During these past few weeks, Tuvok has not been visiting his family on Vulcan. Instead, he has been undercover on Chakotay's ship."

Cavit felt a surge of shock course through his body. Janeway had more sense than he had given her credit for.

Completely unaware as to the thoughts of her first officer, the captain continued her explanation. "Tuvok has been supplying the information upon which I based my plans. By becoming familiar with the Maquis ship and crew, he feels that it will be possible to undermine their systems. At least to the degree necessary for our success."

She leaned forward, placing her arms on the desk. "According to Tuvok's last message, only five or six Maquis will beam down, one of which will be Chakotay himself. There is only one other in his crew with the expertise to deactivate the force field, his chief engineer B'Elanna Torres. I had hoped Chakotay would join the away team, instead of sending Torres, evidently that part of my plan has worked. Let's hope the rest goes as well."

Reaching the most complicated part of her plan, Janeway took a deep breath. "When the Maquis walk into my trap, I'll send you a comm signal. Upon receiving that signal you will extend the dampening field around the entire building, therefore preventing the outlaws from beaming back out."

She hesitated for a moment, choosing her words carefully, ensuring her first officer understood the importance of his orders. "That will be the easy part. Since Chakotay is planning to participate in the raid, normally, I would concentrate my efforts only on the raiding party. However....Starfleet wants his ship, it's vital that we attempt to seize it."

She turned on her monitor, showing a star and planet map of the area. "This is Syzygie, and this will be our orbit around the planet. Now comes the difficult part, requiring critical timing. The Maquis ship will be hiding behind one of the moons, moving into the open only seconds before the landing party beams down."

The captain pointed to several objects on the map. "As you can see the moons are not close together, meaning the ship could emerge anywhere in this vast area. In order to reduce our scanning time, Tuvok will attempt to send out a signal, revealing which moon they are behind. This will give you the opportunity to compute the most likely point from which they will appear, and their probable orbit. However, Tuvok's signal will be of short duration, and will probably be sent just after you return to the ship. Therefore you must be alert and watching for it."

Placing her elbow on the desk, Janeway's arm pointed in

Cavit's direction. "It is vital that you have this information. The second that the dampening field is extended you will attempt to disable and seize the Maquis ship. You will only have from Chakotay's beam down to when I spring the trap, for locating their ship. This is an unknown time frame."

The first officer was astounded that Janeway had been able to plan with such complexity. However, one point was still causing him concern. "Extending the dampening field will alert the Maquis ship as to the danger."

Janeway leaned back. "Unfortunately, yes! Also, they will be keeping a very close watch on this ship. That is why we must be able to project their probable location in advance. You will not have time to scan a wide area, also, any concentrated search effort on our part will make them suspicious. You will have to be ready. The element of surprise will be on our side. Make the most of it!"

"I'll be ready!" Cavit promised.

Leaning forward, the captain picked up a padd from the desk. "While I have full confidence in Tuvok's abilities, there are many unknown factors over which we have no control. Also, there is the possibility that Chakotay will become suspicious and cancel the raid. Hopefully, luck will be on our side."

Cavit did not like Tuvok, and it annoyed the first officer that the Vulcan was playing such an important role. Cavit wanted to ensure, should the plan fail, the blame would fall on the security chief. "The success or failure of the mission could depend on Tuvok."

For a moment Janeway tapped the padd she was holding against the desk. "Yes, much depends on Tuvok. Over the years there is one lesson that I have learned....never underestimate the capabilities of a Vulcan."

Looking at the padd she was holding, Janeway hesitated. While she had been concerned that Cavit was a Maquis supporter, he had made no attempt to undermine her plans. Now the reverse caused her unease. If he was strongly anti-Maquis, the information she was now going to provide caused her some unease. If he used this knowledge incorrectly....

However, it was too late for second thoughts. Leaning forward she handed Cavit the padd. "Since the Maquis are not to be taken lightly, I had additional defenses installed. Here are the instructions for accessing. Since we are a science vessel these weapons would not normally be included in our arsenal. Therefore, they are not listed in the data banks and are shielded from detection. If you are unable to disable the Maquis ship, most probably they will attack. Should this occur, you are ordered to retreat immediately, returning after they have left the area."

Driving home this important point, she tapped the desk with her finger. "DO NOT! I repeat....DO NOT engage in battle! These weapons are to be used solely as the last resort, only if you are unable to avoid Maquis but you are to make every attempt to do so. Only if this ship is in grave danger of being destroyed are you to utilize this information. If attacked, defend yourself as the situation warrants with our regular phasers, retreating as soon as you can. Is this completely understood?"

The first officer did not show his irritation at this part of his orders. For the first time since joining Starfleet, he had a desire to disobey a direct order. "Understood Captain!"

She nodded dismissal. "Very good! Assemble the away team. Meet me in the cargo bay in ten minutes."

Before leaving Cavit felt he had to speak up. "Captain, if circumstances dictate we must retreat, it means you will be left behind. Therefore, at the mercy of the Maquis, who will probably rescue Chakotay."

Janeway slowly turned off her monitor. The prospect of becoming a prisoner of the Maquis certainly did not appeal to her. "Yes, that possibility does exist."

Cavit took a step forward. "Captain, that would place you in

Janeway slowly turned off her monitor. The prospect of becoming a prisoner of the Maquis certainly did not appeal to her.

grave danger. With these weapons, not only are we a match for Chakotay, we have superior fire power."

Janeway heaved a deep sigh. "There are several reasons why we are to avoid a confrontation. Those are my orders, they came directly from Starfleet Command. Hopefully, nothing will go wrong."

"Yes Captain!" Turning on his heel, a very unhappy first officer left the ready room.

Eleven minutes later the drugs landed on Syzygie.

CHAPTER 9

Materializing in a small open courtyard, Cavit and his team found themselves standing halfway between the medical facility and a smaller structure used for storage. The hospital, consisting of two floors with a landing pad and two emergency transports located behind, ran lengthwise away from the Starfleet team. In front of the building a single road ended just past the main door. Right at, what appeared to be, some type of cornfield.

Cavit now understood Janeway's 'edge of town'. Except for the front that stared at open farmland, the medical facility was surrounded by forest. Tall trees marching off into the nearby mountains.

Nestled between forest, hospital and field, the courtyard was isolated. Except for the storage shed at the far end, and a couple of benches with shrubby located along the side opposite the cultivated field, this area was empty. Grass dissected by stone pathways covered the enclosure. A doorway, with twin automatic sliding doors, led off the yard into the hospital. Cavit noticed that on the courtyard side, the building had windows only on the lower floor.

Detaching himself from the shadows, a man dressed in light green uniform walked over to meet the Starfleet team. Tall, thin as a toothpick, his face no different than Au'st, he carried the air of authority. "Starfleet welcome! My name is Avaris, Chief Medical practitioner for the planet of Syzygie."

Though Cavit's first impressions of the Syzygiens were not favorable, he made sure his voice remained polite. "I'm First Officer Cavit, Captain Janeway sends her regrets, important details concerning our next mission required her attention."

Avaris carefully scrutinized the away team. Having spent all his life on Syzygie he knew little about the Federation of Starfleet. Except what he had learned from the Maquis. "I understand. Please convey my thanks to the captain, we had the pleasure of meeting during a previous visit."

The introductions over, Cavit got down to business. "Two of my team will supervise and assist with the storage. The others will carry the containers inside."

Clasping his hands together, Avaris gave a small bow. "The majority of my staff are in the medic section with those who require tending, and must remain there. However, there are four others, members of the emergency response team and myself, who are able to assist. I'll attend to the arrangements."

Turning on his heels, Avaris began to retrace his steps.

Cavit did not particularly like Avaris.

But then, he very seldom liked or thought highly of anyone. "Carpenter, Vorik, go with the Chief Medical Practitioner while the rest of the team carry the containers inside."

As the Starfleet crew members started in the direction of the waiting containers, a female ensign and a young Vulcan hurried to join Avaris.

The first officer walked over to the entrance, quietly watching as his team placed the canisters just far enough inside. Satisfied that the Syzygiens would not be able to see the courtyard, he returned to the beam down point.

Ensuring that he was alone Cavit looked around, he then tapped his comm badge. "Cavit to Explorer."

"Explorer here!" Came the reply from high above the surface of the planet.

Once again Cavit looked around. "Send down lot two."

Seconds later more containers stood before Cavit. Along with Janeway and five other members of the crew.

Quickly the captain pointed to the left. "There, behind that storage shed! Go!"

Giving her first officer a curt nod, Janeway hurried to join her team.

When the majority of lot two had disappeared inside, Cavit signaled for lot three. As before more canisters appeared accompanied by several more crewmembers.

Cavit motioned with his hand in Janeway's direction. "There!"

Following on the heels of lot three came lot four, with the final members of the secret Starfleet team. Within seconds they too joined Janeway. Her team now safely hidden from prying eyes, there to await the arrival of Chakotay and the Maquis.

Cavit followed the final containers into the building, stopping a few feet in front of the storage chamber. Placing his hands behind his back, he silently watched the last of the drugs disappear into the room.

After setting the final container in its place, Vorik walked over to the first officer. "Sir, all canisters have been properly placed."

"Wait outside." Going into the room, Cavit made a quick inspection. Satisfied he exited the containment area. Placing a small device on the wall he imputed a series of commands. Instantly a force field shimmered into place across the doorway.

Tapping his comm badge Cavit contacted his ship. "Cavit to Explorer."

Once again the invisible voice responded. "Explorer here."

Cavit took a step back. "Initiate the dampening field."

Moments later an invisible cloak surrounded the entire room. One that only commands from a Starfleet ship could disable.

Secure in the force field protected room, the drugs were now bait in a trap waiting to be sprung.

Oblivious to the unintentional part his people were playing, Avaris approached Cavit. "My people are indebted to the Federation. Again, we extend our thanks to Captain Janeway."

Anxious to return to the ship, his thoughts now entered on the Maquis, Cavit was in no mood for pleasantries. "I'll inform Captain Janeway."

Turning on his heel the first officer hurried to the exit.

Avaris remained where he was, reflecting on the difference between Janeway and Cavit. Cavit had been distant and impolite, while the captain had been just the opposite, interested and concerned. He wondered which one the majority of Starfleet officers resembled.

Once outside Cavit joined the other crew members, who were already standing in a semi-circle waiting transport back to their ship.

The first officer tapped his comm badge. "Cavit to Explorer, away team to beam up."

Back on board the first officer quickly stepped off the transporter pad. "Andrews, assemble a full security detail with phaser compression rifles. Remain on standby here in the transporter room."

"Yes Sir!" Responded a slightly perplexed Starfleet lieutenant.

Cavit hurried up to the bridge, issuing orders the moment the doors of the turbolift opened. "Stadi, prepare to leave orbit!"

"Yes Sir!" Stadi tapped her conn panel.

Cavit sat down in the captain's chair. "Helm, lay in the quickest course to Alpha-Signey One."

Stadi imputed the necessary information. "Course laid in Sir!"

Cavit gripped the arms of his chair. "Take us out of orbit!"

Stadi tapped her controls.

The ship shuddered. Violent rocking sent two of the crew plunging to the deck. Others grabbed frantically for anything within reach. Then all was quiet. The two men, shaken but unharmed,

returned to their stations.

Contacting engineering, the first officer made sure his voice sounded as upset and irritated as possible. "Chief! What is going on down there?"

Several seconds flew by before the bewildered engineer responded. "Sir, I don't understand! Our panels show an explosion of some kind! But the computer is unable to pinpoint the source! There are no visible signs, however, our consoles are registering a number of damage reports!"

Cavit poured every bit of anger and frustration he could muster into his voice. "Find out what happened! Report the moment you have news!"

Jumping to his feet, Cavit whirled in the direction of ops. "Rollins! What happened?"

In complete confusion the hands of the ensign flew over his panel. "Sir! I don't know! There appears to have been an explosion in engineering! Sir! We've lost weapons and warp drive! Also transporters!"

In two strides Cavit reached the ops station. "Rollins! Get down to engineering. I want this fixed immediately!"

"Yes Sir!" Just short of running, Rollins hurried to the turbolift.

The first officer moved behind the ops console, quickly tapping the display. "Computer, authorization First Officer Cavit one-beta-two-one-three, send Captain Janeway's prerecorded message to Starfleet Command. Special authorization gamma-two-five."

"Message sent." Confirmed the uncaring metallic voice.

'Good,' Cavit thought to himself, Janeway had been correct, that had been the easy part. A small, sinister smile appeared for a brief moment. The modifications simulating an accident had worked perfectly. Now, if only the rest of her plan worked as well.

Alert and watching for the signal from Tuvok, Cavit glued his eyes to the display sitting before him. A signal which would lead to the capture and probably the end of the Maquis.



To Be Continued in WARP 81!

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STAR-GATE ENTERPRISE : RETURN TO THE CHRISTMAS PLANET

Josée Bellemare

Commander Kramer was in his quarters, about to look at their nest assignment. It was December 21st, the beginning of winter.

The crew had decorated certain parts of the ship for the Holidays. Ensign Goldberg had even started lighting a menorah for Hanukkah. The Enterprise would be home in time for New Year's but it wasn't the same as spending Christmas with your family. Morale would be low.

Kramer sighed heavily and opened the latest message from SGC. General Landry was on the screen.

"Colonel Kramer, I know it's hard to be away from the people you love during the Holidays so I'm sending the Enterprise to a special planet for a couple of days. It's part diplomatic mission, part shore leave. It's the next best thing to being home for Christmas. SG1 discovered this place a couple of years ago. I sent a copy of their report. Enjoy. Landry out."

Kramer opened the attached file and started reading. By the end of the report he was chuckling.

"Lt Pavlova, I'm sending you coordinates. Set a course for this planet and let me know when we get there."

"Coordinates laid in sir. We should be there early tomorrow morning."

At dinner that evening everyone was wondering where they were going. Eight o'clock next morning the ship came out of hyperdrive and went in orbit around a planet.

"Lt Harris, shipwide please."

"Attention everyone. I know that morale has been low because we're far from home at Christmas so SGC sent us for a couple of days of shore leave to the Christmas planet. It was discovered a couple years ago by SG1.

"About 15 hundred years ago Saint Nicholas, who turns out is an ancient, relocated groups of people from all over our planet to start a colony and every year they combine Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanza, Solstice and all the other holidays together and call it the Festival of Lights.

"This year they want us to be their guests of honour at the banquet. So we can look forward to two days of all the winter sports you can imagine, a huge banquet and, according to SG1, the best hot chocolate this side of the galaxy. We'll be landing in half an hour. Kramer out."

All over the ship cheering could be heard.

"Lt Sullivan, SGC gave us landing coordinates close to the main village. The locals are waiting for us; we don't want to disappoint them"

In the ship's supply room, cold weather gear was disappearing off the shelves. The excitement was high. The crew could be compared to children on the first snow day of the season and with the ship on the ground they wouldn't have to leave as many people onboard to keep the ship going.

The Enterprise landed. Colonel Kramer was the first to come out to greet the village leader. In the background many of the villagers had come out to see the Enterprise. They had never seen a ship that big before.

"I am Marcus, Village Elder. Welcome to our planet."

"I am Colonel Kramer, commander of this ship and we are most grateful for your hospitality. We've been travelling for several months and the crew was getting restless. That and the fact that we are far from our families for the holidays."

"I understand, Colonel Kramer. Hopefully your stay here will brighten your spirits. Come, let me show you our village."

"I would be honoured, Marcus". Then, talking into his communicator "Alright people, you can come out now."

All of a sudden all the doors on the ship opened up and the crewmembers came rushing out. Some of the calmer ones came up to the villagers, introduced themselves and headed towards the village. Some others lacked that kind of maturity: the moment they hit the ground they started making snowmen, angels in the snow and having snowball fights.

When he saw this Colonel Kramer just sighed and shook his head. Marcus put his hand on Colonel Kramer's arm, smiled and said:

"I understand how you feel. I have four children and two grandchildren. Fresh snow brings out the inner child in all of us."

Both men chuckled and made their way to the village.

The ship's chef, Major Louise Reynolds, had decided to check out the village and the local cuisine. The town hall had several tables of food and drink for all to enjoy. The first thing to hit her was all the wonderful smells. Then she carefully tasted different dishes, each more delicious than the last. When she saw someone bringing another tray of food she went up to the young man.

"Would it be possible to talk to the chef?"

"Is something wrong with the food?"

"On the contrary, it's absolutely delicious. I just want to meet the person who made it."

"Master Chef Lars will be pleased. Follow me please."

The young man led the way to the kitchen.

"Master Chef."

"What is it Ken?"

"This lady from the earth ship wanted to meet you."

"Major Louise Reynolds. I am the Master Chef for the Enterprise."

"I am Master Chef Anna Lars. Ken says you liked my food. Thank you."

"Like is too weak a word! It's fantastic! I have studied at some of the greatest cooking schools on my planet and my skills in the kitchen are highly sought after so I know food and what I tasted out there was incredible. I would love for us to trade recipes. I believe we can learn much from each other."

"I would be honoured. Let me show you my kitchen. We'll start with the supply vault."

The two ladies walked off together, tasting different foods from the kitchen staff.

On the slopes some of the crewmembers were experimenting with the local equivalence of skis and snowboards and wiping out a few times before getting the hang of it. Around the ship

snowmen of different sizes were popping up all over and off to one side two forts had been built in preparation for a snowball fight, Air Force vs. Marines. Even Dr Michaels got in on the fun and the crew quickly discovered she had a wicked throwing arm.

“Hey doc, where did you learn how to throw like that?”

“I have three brothers, one older and two younger, I learned real fast to hold my ground.”

The marine’s team soon surrendered.

Most of the crew had lunch in town and with only a skeleton crew onboard ship, the Enterprise kitchen staff was able to take things easy for once.

A few crewmembers not interested in outdoor sports helped the villagers decorate the town hall for the banquet and in a back room, a few others had joined a local band and were rehearsing songs for a show the next day. They had to learn to play local instruments but they were sounding good, doing songs from both cultures.

By dinner time most of the crew was back on board. The sports enthusiasts were discussing various manoeuvres they had learned, the shoppers were comparing their treasures and the marines planning a rematch. Everyone was looking forward to the next day, even the chef who had invited Anna Lars to visit her kitchen on the Enterprise.

Colonel Kramer was looking at his crew. He was glad that morale had lifted. He was eating his meal quietly when Dr Michaels took a seat next to him.

“This shore leave is just what the doctor ordered. Everyone is enjoying themselves. Everyone except you. I haven’t seen you have any fun.”

“I’m in command of this ship, I have to set a good example.”

“Nonsense, I’m older than you are and I was in a snowball fight this afternoon. I was so good at it that the marines surrendered begging for mercy. I do believe they plan to get even sometime tomorrow.”

“I’ll have a talk with them about that.”

“And ruin my fun. Don’t you dare! I have a wicked curve ball they haven’t seen yet. As for you, I want you to have fun tomorrow, doctor’s orders.”

“You know, you’re sounding a lot like...”

“That’s why I got this job isn’t it. I’m just living up to my character. Just don’t ever call me Bones.”

“Just be thankful I’m not living up to mine or we’d really be in trouble.”

They both laughed.

“Very well doctor, tomorrow I’ll make an effort to have fun.”

The next morning crewmembers returned to their activities. The slopes were once again full and the village saw more visitors. Anna Lars made her way to the Enterprise. She wondered what the kitchen would look like on such a big ship. Major Reynolds was waiting for her.

“I’ll give you a tour. You’ll see, with the exception of the ovens and the refrigerators it’s not that different. I have some ingredients you are going to love.”

The two ladies spent the morning and part of the afternoon preparing all sorts of dishes for the banquet that evening.

As for the snowball fight, Colonel Kramer had ordered that

to even things out no one would wear rank pins. Everyone felt that was fair. The participants got ready. To confuse things even further, many also wore ski masks.

The fight was fairly even for a while but soon the Air Force team started winning. Dr Michaels was having a ball. The man next to her, wearing a ski mask, commented:

“You really do have a wicked curve ball.”

Lenore looked at him, opened her mouth to say something but the man put a hand over her mouth, took aim and threw a snowball that hit a marine square in the chest.

“You’re right, I needed this.”

The marines were overpowered and surrendered. A young pilot screamed in victory

“Air Force rules.”

That’s when Colonel Kramer got up and took off his ski mask. The whole team cheered and the marines hung their heads in defeat. By mid afternoon everyone was back on the ship to prepare for the feast and at about 4:30 small groups were making their way to the village. Major Reynolds and her stall were already there, helping prepare the food.

The town all had been beautifully decorated and everyone was in a good mood. At the suggestion of Major Reynolds, the food had been set up as a buffet to accommodate all the extra people. The meal went well, everyone going back for seconds even thirds. When everyone was full, the concert started. Both groups enjoyed discovering new songs from another culture. After a while people started dancing.

The party was going strong when Colonel Kramer went outside to get some air. He was looking at the sky when an old man came up next to him.

“Colonel Jeremy Thomas Kramer, commander of the Starship Enterprise, from Earth.”

“Yes, and you are...?”

“Do I really need to answer that.”

Colonel Kramer took a good look at the old man: white hair with a beard and wearing a green robe with a fur lined cloak. The look in his eyes suggested ancient wisdom and youthful humour at the same time.

“Saint Nick?!”

“Please, forget the Saint part, just call me Nicholas. Why aren’t you inside with your friends?”

“I’m not much of a party person.”

“You need to learn to have fun.”

“You sound like my doctor.”

“She’s right you know. You don’t have to worry about setting a good example all the time. You have a good crew and you are going to be a great leader.”

Just then Dr Michaels came out with two mugs of hot chocolate. She handed one to Colonel Kramer.

“Who were you talking to?”

Colonel Kramer looked around but saw on one.

“Would you believe Saint-Nicholas?”

“On this planet I would. Merry Christmas, Sir.”

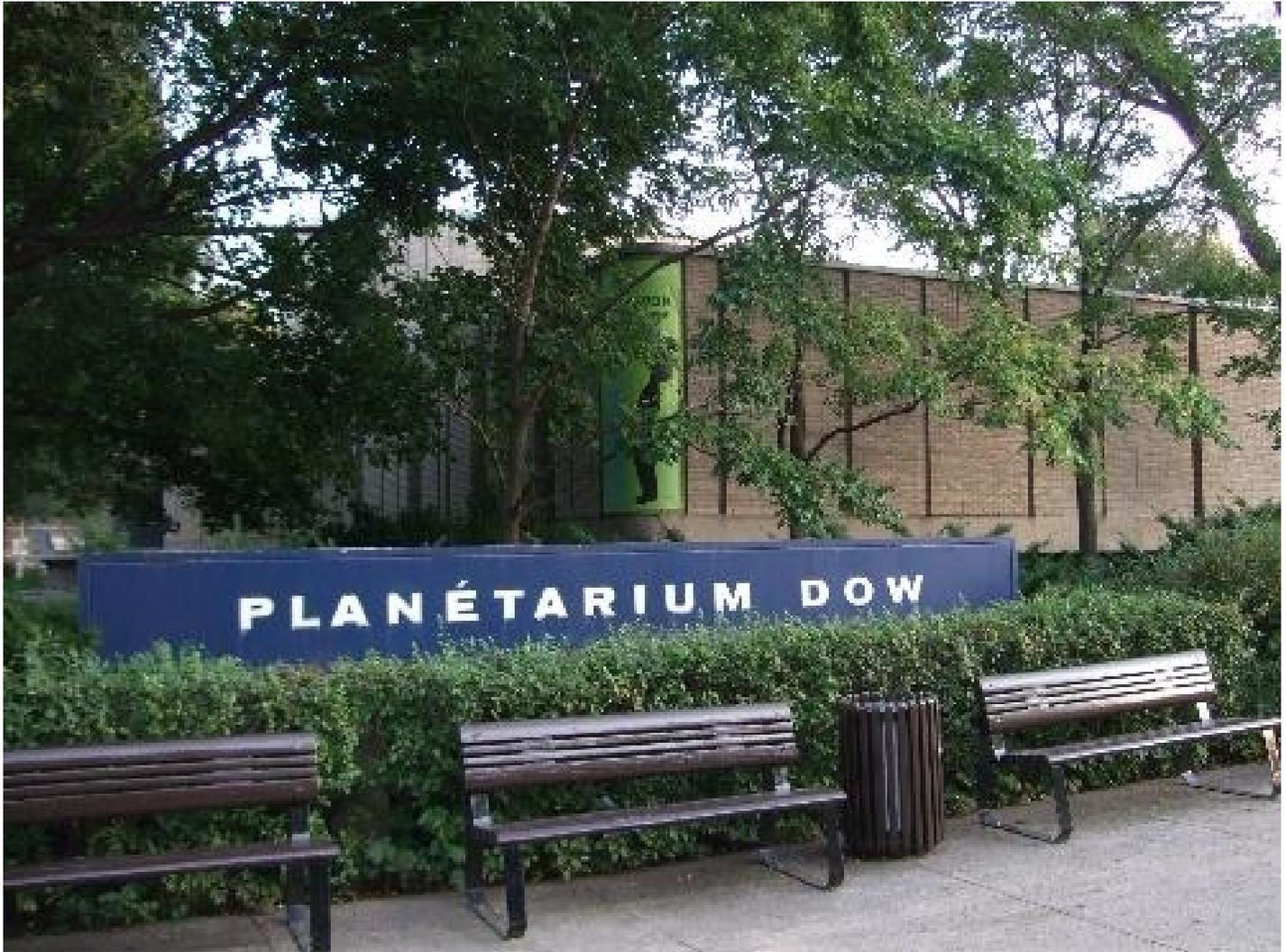
“Merry Christmas.”

They heard music coming from inside. The band was playing, and someone was singing Silent Night.



Farewell, Old Stars

Sylvain St-Pierre



My grandfather was working for the Dow Brewery in the 60's; so when that company donated the Planetarium to the city of Montreal, I got to see a special presentation reserved for employees and their families before it opened to the general public. I went back many times after that over the years, but it had been a while since my last visit. Last October 7th, I bought one last ticket before the stars went out for good.

I know that the new Planetarium that will open next to the Biodôme will be larger and have state of the art equipment, but I cannot help but feel a little pang over the passing of this marvellous building that never failed to fill my mind with wonder. I'll really miss that ponderous old Zeiss projector and those rounded brick corners.

(All pictures by the author.)

Top of this page: The outside of the building. It officially opened on April 1st, 1966, and this was the oldest and largest still operating planetarium in Canada.

Next page, top: The much weathered statue of Copernicus in front of the entrance, The sundial (I never could tell the time on it), The men's room entrance. (Fortunately, it was not the zero-G kind.)

Second row: The *Galerie*, with its collection of astronomical paintings and photographs and the line-up for one of the very last shows. Like me, most of the audience was there out of nostalgia.



The wonder-filled Gift Shop.

The Zeiss projector: Despite weighing two tons and a half, it moved with a silent grace that never ceased to amaze me.

Model of the Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium. It is expected to open in 2013.



The Aurora Awards: Voting for the Aurora Awards closed on October 17th. The distinctive trophies – aurora spelling SF when viewed from above – were presented at Convention which this year was hosted by SF Contario in Toronto, November 19-20.



PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

Best English Novel

WWW: Watch, Robert J. Sawyer (Penguin Canada)
Black Bottle Man, Craig Russell (Great Plains Publications)
Destiny's Blood, Marie Bilodeau (Dragon Moon Press)
Stealing Home, Hayden Trenholm (Bundoran Press)
Under Heaven, Guy Gavriel Kay (Viking Canada)

Best English Short Story

"The Burden of Fire", Hayden Trenholm (Neo-Opsis #19)
"Destiny Lives in the Tattoo's Needle", Suzanne Church (Tesseract Fourteen)
"The Envoy", Al Onia (Warrior Wisewoman 3)
"Touch the Sky, They Say", Matt Moore (AE: The Canadian Science Fiction Review, 11/10)
"Your Beating Heart", M. G. Gillett (Rigor Amortis)

Best English Poem / Song

"The ABCs of the End of the World", Carolyn Clink (A Verdant Green)
"Let the Night In", Sandra Kasturi (Evolve: Vampire Stories of the New Undead)
"Of the Corn: Kore's Innocence", Colleen Anderson (Witches & Pagans #21)
"The Transformed Man", Robert J. Sawyer (Tesseract Fourteen)
"Waiting for the Harrowing", Helen Marshall (ChiZine 45)

Best English Graphic Novel

Goblins, Tarol Hunt (goblinscomic.com)
Looking For Group, Vol. 3, Ryan Sohmer & Lar DeSouza (lfgcomic.com)
Stargazer, Volume 1, by Von Allan (Von Allan Studio)
Tomboy Tara, Emily Ragozzino (tomboytara.com)

The Canadian Fanzine Awards were presented at V-CON in Vancouver, October 2nd.

Best Fanzine: WARP, edited by Cathy Palmer-Lister

Best Fan Artist: Taral Wayne.

Life-Time Achievement: 'The Unknown Faned' who published Canada's first SF fanzine in early 1936 under the title: 'The Canadian Science Fiction Fan'.

Best English Related Work

The Dragon and the Stars, Derwin Mak & Eric Choi, eds. (DAW)
Chimerascope, Douglas Smith (ChiZine)
Evolve: Vampire Stories of the New Undead, Nancy Kilpatrick, ed. (EDGE)
On Spec, Diane Walton, ed. (Copper Pig Writers Society)
Tesseract Fourteen, John Robert Colombo & Brett Alexander Savory, eds. (EDGE)

Best Artist (Professional and Amateur)

Erik Mohr, cover art for ChiZine Publications
Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk, "Brekky" cover art (On Spec Fall)
Christina Molendyk, Girls of Geekdom Calendar for Argent Dawn Photography
Dan O'Driscoll, cover art for Stealing Home (Bundoran)
Aaron Paquette, "A New Season" cover art (On Spec Spring)

FAN/AMATEUR AWARDS

Best Fan Publications

No award was given due to insufficient nominations

Best Fan Filk

Dave Clement and Tom Jeffers of Dandelion Wine for "Face on Mars" CD
Karen Linsley; concert as SFContario Guest of Honour
Phil Mills, for "Time Traveller" (song writing)

Best Fan Organizational

Helen Marshall and Sandra Kasturi, chairs of Toronto SpecFic Colloquium (Toronto)
Andrew Gurudata, organizing the Constellation Awards
Brent M. Jans, chair of Pure Speculation (Edmonton)
Liana Kerzner, chair of Futurecon (Toronto)
Alex Von Thorn, chair of SFContario (Toronto)

Best Fan Other

John and Linda Ross Mansfield, Conception of the Aurora Nominee pins
Tom Jeffers, Fundraising, FilKONtario
Lloyd Penney, Articles, columns, LoCs



The World Fantasy Awards were awarded at the WF Convention in San Diego, California. October 27th -30th. The 2012 WFC will be nearer to home, November 1st - 4th in Toronto.



Best Novel : Nnedi Okorafor, *Who Fears Death* [DAW]

Best Novella: Elizabeth Hand, “The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon” [Stories: All-New Tales]

Best Short Fiction: Joyce Carol Oates, “Fossil—Figures” [Stories: All-New Tales]

Best Anthology: Kate Bernheimer and Carmen Gimenez Smith, eds., *My Mother She Killed Me, My Father He Ate Me* [Penguin]

Best Collection: Karen Joy Fowler, *What I Didn't See and Other Stories* [Small Beer Press]

Best Artist: Kinuko Y. Craft

Special Award Professional: Marc Gascoigne, for *Angry Robot*

Special Award Non-Professional: Alisa Krasnostein, for *Twelfth Planet Press*

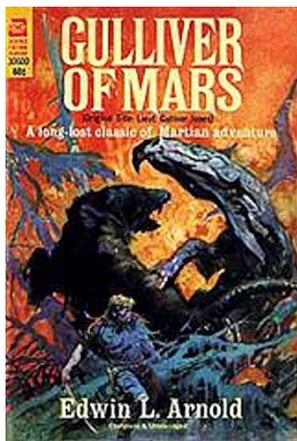
The 2011 World Fantasy Awards Lifetime Achievement Winners 2011 (for the 2010 Award Year) are:
Peter S. Beagle
Angélica Gorodischer



REVIEWS: Literature

Two Old Martian Novels Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre

With the upcoming John Carter movie due next March, I have been browsing around for related material. In the course of doing so, I came across a couple of little-known novels that are respectively great uncle and second nephew to Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Barsoom* series.



Gulliver of Mars was written by Edwin Lester Arnold and first published in 1905 under the title *Lieutenant Gullivar Jones: His Vacation*, twelve years before *A Princess of Mars*. I already had some vague knowledge of this book because I remembered having seen snippets of the Marvel comic version in the '70s, and the lead character does make a brief appearance in one of more recent *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* graphic novels.

The book is now in the public domain and is available for free from several sources on the Internet. I got my copy through the Stanza App for my iPod Touch. I'm rather glad that I did not pay anything for it, because it is among the most disappointing novels I have come across in a long time, and I generally like those century-old stories.

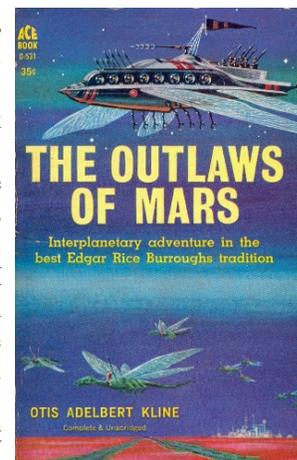
The action is supposedly set on Mars, but the described locale bears little resemblance with the desiccated classical version, being instead quite lush and well-watered. One has to admit that telescopes were not as good in those days, and little was known then about the Red Planet. Like the later John Carter, US Navy Lieutenant Gullivar Jones is unexpectedly taken to Mars

(by way of a magic carpet!) and spends much of his time trying to rescue a beautiful princess who has been abducted by barbarians.

Arnold's Mars is a world that used to be glorious ages ago, but the delicate Hither race has become lazy and now lives only for pleasure. The flora and fauna do present some interesting features, but the language of the narrative is flowery to the point of being tedious to read and I had to force myself to finish the whole thing. There is a lot of talk, but not all that much action, and at times one is hard pressed to remember the plot.

I tend to be a magnanimous critic but, in my opinion, this novel is worth reading only if you have a scholarly interest in such things. From an entertainment point of view, there is very little to be had here and even if there are some strong similarities between the plots, Burroughs can hardly be accused of plagiarism in this case.

The Outlaws of Mars, by Otis Adelbert Kline, is on the other hand quite openly John Carter inspired, and the cover of the 1961 Ace Book edition proudly proclaims that it is an “Interplanetary adventure in the best Edgar Rice Burroughs tradition”. I knew I had the book somewhere in my collection, but I acquired it from a second hand bin in 1974 and had forgotten both the title and the name of the author, so it took me a while to find it again. The novel was actually first published in 1933, and there are



rumours that there was at the time a feud between Kline and Burroughs over the great resemblance between the respective authors' stories. It was however later established that the supposed antagonism was most likely invented by the publishers to spruce up the sales of both writers.

Knowledge about Mars had improved in Kline's days, and it was becoming increasingly unlikely that intelligent life could be found there. So the author played it safe and had his hero, a modern day man (from the 1930's, remember) named Jerry Morgan, teleport back in the past, at a time when the Red Planet had started to dry up but still supported an advanced civilisation. This feat is accomplished thanks to Jerry's uncle, an Earth scientist who somehow got telepathically in touch with ancient Martian colleague Lal Vak and his contemporary Venusian counterpart Vorn Vangal.

As soon as he arrives on Mars, Morgan immediately saves the beautiful and quite humanoid princess Junia from a hideous beast. Hideous beasts, it's a well-known fact, always go for beautiful girls first (they probably taste better). Like the Martians of Arnold and Burroughs, those of Kline are, apart from their various skin tones, very Caucasian-looking in appearance, with an approach typical of an Earth Caucasian writer from the 1930's:

the dominant race is white and the slaves are brown.

It is written in the stars that the fate of beautiful princesses is to get in peril, and Junia does her duty once again by being promptly kidnapped by the evil rebel Sarkis the Torturer, giving Morgan another opportunity to save her. Like John Carter, Jerry is greatly helped in this endeavour by his stronger Earth muscles, but his smoking habit also strongly impresses the Martians, for whom the ability to exhale smoke is nothing short of amazing!

One of his distant ancestors also happened to be an Irish viscount, which automatically makes him a noble in the eyes of the Martians – who set great store in such things – and this removes any objection anybody might have about him pursuing the princess' affections (how fortunate). Needless to say, the hero succeeds in the end and gets the girl.

Without being a complete loss, the whole thing is written in a style that does not nearly approaches Burroughs' in quality. The most interesting thing about Kline's Mars is the design of the vehicles, which all look like animals of various kinds. The novel did, however, do well enough to justify the publication of a sequel, *The Swordsman of Mars*, which is presumably much of the same.



REVIEWS: Movies

Les aventures de Tintin : Le secret de la Licorne Revu par Sylvain St-Pierre



Il y a des monstres sacrés, auxquels on ne touche pas sans se faire taper sur les doigts, et Tintin est un de ceux-là. La bonne nouvelle, c'est que Steven Spielberg et Peter Jackson ont été extrêmement respectueux envers le

personnage, et que leur adaptation des aventures du célèbre reporter est superbe.



Un film plein d'atmosphère.

Techniquement, le film est sans reproche; avec juste le bon dosage entre le photo-réalisme et l'aspect bande dessinée. L'atmosphère est mystérieuse à souhait là où il faut, et inondée de

lumière et de couleur quand c'est nécessaire.

Le procédé de capture de mouvement est parfaitement au point, et donne aux personnages une souplesse que l'on n'associait guère auparavant aux images de synthèse. Les faciès des personnages, même secondaires, sont remarquablement similaires aux dessins d'Hergé.



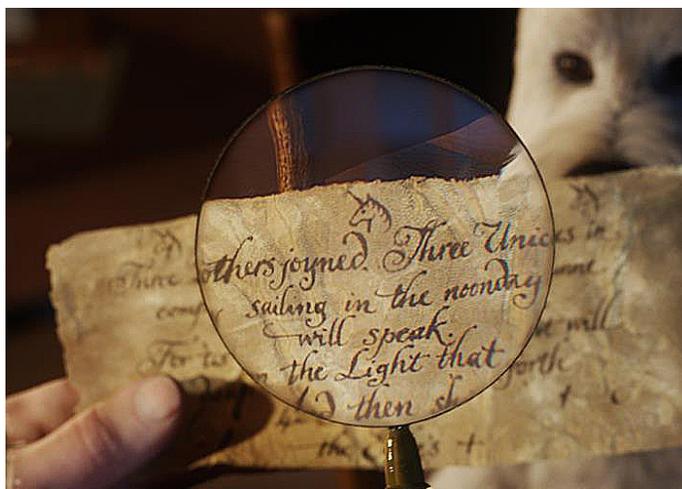
Je dirais même plus, c'est criant de vérité!

Côté intrigue, l'agencement d'éléments tirés de trois albums a été bien fait, et les quelques divergences sont somme toute assez mineures et pour la plupart parfaitement justifiées. Même l'introduction prématurée de La Castafiore a été bien menée (je voyais venir le gag à cent à l'heure à cause de l'insistance que l'on mettait sur l'incassabilité de la vitrine protégeant la troisième maquette). Et si l'on peut se désoler de l'absence du Professeur Tournesol, on peut se consoler en se disant que la reconstruction de l'intrigue lui laisse toutes les chances de nous être présenté dans une suite qui s'annonce des plus probables.

Les purs et durs décrieront sans doute quelques gags un peu gros, comme celui de la propulsion aux rots éthyliques; et des cascades un peu exagérées, mais c'est après tout un film de Spielberg et il faut bien plaire au public d'aujourd'hui. Le remplacement des frères Loiseau par Sakharine en tant que vilain

principal peut en faire tiquer quelques-uns, mais moi j'ai personnellement aimé car cela s'inscrit très bien dans l'histoire. D'ailleurs, Sakharine était vraiment un personnage de l'album original, quoique vite oublié, et lorsqu'on l'y rencontre pour la première fois on a déjà l'impression qu'il est louche. Pour peu que l'on connaisse bien l'histoire, le bond est facile à faire. Je recommande d'ailleurs hautement la lecture des albums, immédiatement avant ou après avoir vu le film, question de comparer.

Le seul détail que j'ai trouvé navrant est celui de l'affichage. La plupart des textes écrits, depuis les devantures des boutiques jusqu'aux fameux parchemins de François de Haddock, sont rédigés en anglais! Certes, Tintin est présenté comme étant un britannique dans la version originale anglaise du film (sacrilège!), mais le récent *Les bagnoles 2* a démontré qu'il est parfaitement possible de générer de nouvelles images dans n'importe quelle langue. Lorsque l'action se déroule dans un pays francophone, cela devient à mon avis une nécessité!



Aurait-il été si difficile de changer la langue?

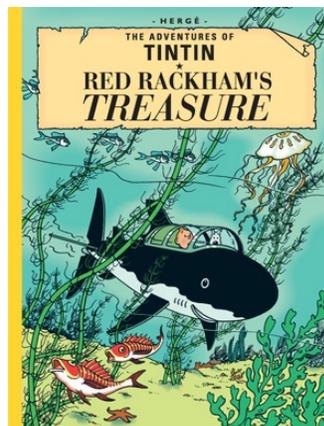
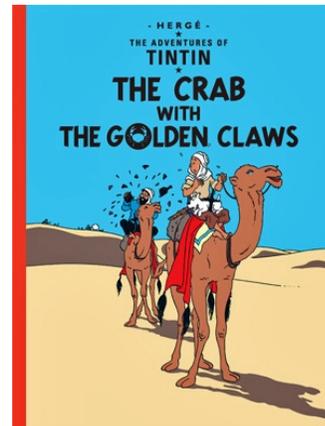
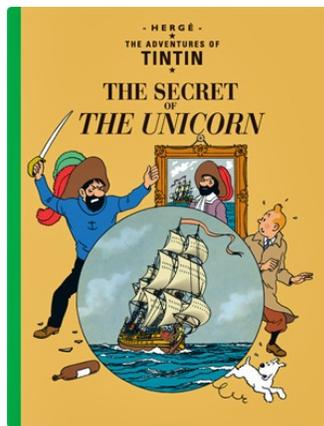
Who?

Many, if not most, of our American neighbours who will see the *Adventures of Tintin* will discover the character for the first time on the silver screen. Montrealers, on the other hand, are quite familiar with this young hero – even the Anglophones. Created in 1929 by Belgian graphic novelist Georges Prosper Rémi (Hergé), the famous reporter is very well known in Quebec, and we even got to see the movie weeks before anyone else in North America because of this.

Tintin's career spanned several decades, and some of his adventures were later re-drawn in contemporary style by the author, but Spielberg and Jackson chose to set the action in the original time period of the three source stories, in the early 1940's. A decision I warmly approve of. While there are some science-

fiction/fantasy oriented Tintin stories (*Destination Moon* and *Explorers on the Moon* are my personal favourites), the series generally leans more towards mystery and high adventure. They have been translated in just about every known language, including Latin and French-Canadian *Joual*.

Rest assured that you will find the movie quite enjoyable even if you have never read the albums, but you will appreciate it a lot more if you have at least some knowledge of the original stories. Should you be unacquainted with *The Crab with the Golden Claws*, *The Secret of the Unicorn* and *Red Rackham's Treasure*, in either the original French or a translation, then I strongly suggest that you at least leaf through them, if only to see how faithful the adaptation is (quite, on the whole).



This movie is absolutely awash with references to the graphic versions, sometimes in very subtle and clever ways. For instance, the original plot for *The Crab with the Golden Claws* involved an opium smuggling operation, with the drug hidden in cans of crab meat. This was dropped from the movie, but we do encounter a golden crab fountain, with water gushing from its claws! The very first scene shows Tintin having his portrait made by a street artist, who is none other than Hergé himself... The list of such instances is endless, and I found them a veritable delight.

If you have absolutely no idea of who Tintin is, there are several comprehensive Web sites that will help you fill this void. The one at <http://us.tintin.com/> is an excellent way to start.



Disney's John Carter New Movie Trailers
Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre

I have found a couple of new John Carter trailers on the Web (one of them Japanese). While still very fragmentary and disjointed, they do shed a bit more light on what the upcoming movie may look like. Those new trailers are much faster moving than the first, so the quality of the pictures grabbed from them is unfortunately not the best.



01: Ruins of a Martian city. In Burroughs' stories, they litter the landscape. This one still has a large arena in the middle, where it appears that John Carter and a Green Martian are chained and made to fight one of the dreaded White Apes.



02: Green Martian Crowd. Thousands of warriors cheerfully watching the fight. According to E.R.B., the average Green Martian finds death and torture hilariously funny, so they are probably having a good time.

03: A White Ape. Those fierce creatures haunt the deserted cities and are feared even by the ferocious Green Martians. This scene is very fast moving in the trailer, so it was hard to freeze a clear shot. The size, shape and colouring of the beast all appear to be about accurate; but according to the books it is supposed to be hairless, with just a tuft of hair on the top of the head.



04: Charging Thoats. Another fast moving scene, and therefore hard to freeze. Still, the Martian steeds appears to quite accurate in all aspects that we can perceive.



05: A trio of Green Martians. This picture gives a better view of their physique. Aside from the differences previously noted in Warp 79, the middle pair of arms should be lower, so it can function as legs if needed. In truth, though Burroughs did include that fact in their description, he never made use of it in any scene that I can recall.



06: Ferocious-looking Green Martians. This snippet is of particular interest because it seems that individual Green Martians have differently shaped tusks in the movie. Not a bad idea as such. This could denote different tribes or help tell specific characters apart.



07: Martian Creature. Without a doubt this can only be Woola, Carter's pet *calot*, or barsoomian "dog". The general body shape seems accurate, but it should be the size of a Shetland pony and have *ten* legs, not just six.



08: **An Inhabited Martian City.** The fact that it is made of two parts, each with a tower in the middle, leads me to believe that this is supposed to be Helium, seat of the greatest empire on Barsoom. If so, it is a pitiful shadow of the vast capital described by Burroughs, who wrote that Lesser and Greater Helium are ten miles each in diameter, separated from each other by about seventy-five miles and that their central towers are nearly a mile high!



10: **John Carter Mounting a Flying Bike.** Burroughs did mention the existence of smaller flying machines, and was not overly precise in his description, but I have no recollection of anything looking remotely like this contraption. To be fair, we do not see the thing very well, probably on purpose.

09: **A White Martian?** The skin colouring and baldness strongly suggest that it is a Thern, possibly their leader, Matai Shang (if so, this would be actor Mark Strong). However, the White Martians of the books all wear blond wigs and even have strong penalties for appearing with a naked head in public. Also, just like all other Martians, Therns are supposed to go around virtually naked, no matter their rank.



11: **Swarm of Flying Bikes?** Another blurry scene, because the camera appears to be following one flying bike out of many that seem to be zooming between the legs of gigantic walking war machines. While most of the previous discrepancies could be chalked up to artistic licence or cinematographic needs, this is definitely pure invention and looks very much like a rip-off of *The Empire Strikes Back!*

To conclude this review, I will make a prediction. It is always risky to guess a plot point based on disjointed teaser flashes, but I am going to give it a try. Here are the images:



12: **Rays Etched in Stone.**



13: **Mysterious Hand-held Glowing Device.**



14: **Beam of Light Shot from Strange Apparatus.**

There is no guarantee that the engraved rays – of which there seems to be nine – are on Earth, but that block of stone appears to be in a cavern, and we do know from the books that John Carter jumped to Barsoom from a cave. The mysterious device is held in a hand that appears to be wearing clothing, so there is a good chance that it is an Earth scene. There is no mention of the strange apparatus in the books, but it has the look of something

long neglected in a dark place.

How John Carter gained the ability to move from one world to another is never really explained in the novels. The closest thing we have for a trigger is a small quantity of greenish powder that Carter notices when he returns to Earth for the first time, held at the bottom of a round copper vessel over a small charcoal burner tended by the mummy of a little old woman with long

black hair; this in the cave where he had seen his own lifeless body lying down a long time ago.

I offer the following alternate movie plot: John Carter discovers or seeks refuge in the cave, notices the etched rays, finds (or already had) the device, which activates the apparatus, which

in turn teleports him to Barsoom.

We should find out in a couple of months if I would make a good detective or not...



Summer 2011 Movie Reviews Keith Braithwaite and Friends

Priest

Priest is a serviceable sci-fi actioner that takes sizable cues from Star Wars, Clint Eastwood Westerns, and any number of monster and vampire movies. Notably better than director Scott Stewart and lead Paul Bettany's last picture, the excruciating *Legion*. -- **Carl Phillips**

Thor

This is another in the series of Marvel superhero adventures leading up to next year's hotly anticipated Avengers movie. Complete with the usual array of dazzling CGI imagery, *Thor* is certainly a flashy outing if not a particularly memorable film. But under the direction of Kenneth Branagh, it is an entertaining enough exercise, made so largely by a solid cast-including a few Oscar-calibre talents-that elevate proceedings above the norm for this kind of project. Lead Chris Hemsworth interprets his character rather well and very much looks the part of the titular God of Thunder. -- **Susan Denham**

Hobo With a Shotgun

Made by a group of Halifax-based filmmakers, *Hobo* is a colourful, over-the-top palm to that low-budget, ultra-violent genre of cinema showcased by the Quentin Tarantino/Robert Rodriguez double feature *Grindhouse*. *Hobo*, in fact, began as a contest-winning fake trailer used in the promotion of *Grindhouse*. Director Jason Eisener scored '80s action star Rutger Hauer as his hobo for this expansion to a feature-length bloodbath that only devotees of this kind of thing will appreciate. -- **Carl Phillips**



Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides

This fourth Pirates film is much like its predecessors, a jumble of a script made tolerable only by the charming performance of the superb Johnny Depp as quirky pirate Captain Jack Sparrow. I'll allow a nod, as well, to the talented Geoffrey Rush, who compliments Depp's Sparrow as foil Barbossa. But ask yourself, without these two, would anyone be watching these films? -- **Keith Braithwaite**

X-Men: First Class

One of the summer's best comic-book movies, if only because the story doesn't revolve around Wolverine for once! Rather, the plot explores the genesis of Charles Xavier and Erik Lehnsherr's relationship, friends as young men, later to become

foes as, respectively, apex mutants Professor X and Magneto.

Marvel fanboys will enjoy the retro silver-age setting as Xavier, Lehnsherr and other young mutants become involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis. The film offers plenty of James-Bondishly cool action and super-powered stunts, but it is the compelling characters – the aforementioned leads, and notably a young Mystique and Beast – that set *First Class* a class above typically plotless superhero movies too often peopled with cardboard cut-outs.

And wanting Wolverine fans can take a measure of comfort in the clawed one's brief but memorable cameo. -- **Keith Braithwaite**



Super 8

A highlight of the summer's cinematic offerings, director J. J. Abrams homage to Steven Spielberg's early genre films unspools very much like a vintage Spielberg sci-fi movie, perhaps a little too much so, to the point of subsuming Abrams' own directorial style. One could easily mistake this for a Spielberg film along the lines of *Close Encounters* or *E. T.*

That said, *Super 8* is a great ride, capturing the signature Spielbergian vibe of an out-of-this-world adventure unfolding in small-town America. The earnest kids on their bikes, the mysterious incidents occurring around the neighbourhood, and a secretive government are all here as something big and scary and largely unseen (until the end), in transit from Area 51, escapes from a train wreck. A group of kids shooting a scene for their homemade Super-8 zombie movie witness the wreck and soon become involved in unravelling the mystery of what exactly has escaped into the night.

A wonderful young cast, including Riley Griffiths, Joel Courtney, and Elle Fanning carry the film as their coming-of-age story overshadows even the otherworldly events of the wider plot. Not since *Stand By Me* has a group of young actors shone as brightly.

I particularly enjoyed *Super 8*, no doubt in part because it afforded me a nostalgic return to those halcyon days of my own fanboy youth, when I was reading comic books and SF paperbacks, building and photographing plastic scale monster models, and experimenting with making my own sci-fi shorts with



our family's 8mm home movie camera.

And stay through the credits to see the kids' completed zombie movie. – **Keith Braithwaite**

Green Lantern

The first thing about this movie that I didn't like was that the CGI looked akin to something you'd see playing a computer game - too smooth and shiny to pass as real. Maybe that was a stylistic choice by the director but to me the characteristic sheen of pixels just screamed "fake!"



Now if that had been the only thing wrong with this movie, I wouldn't squawk. Without listing all of *Green Lantern's* failures, I will highlight the biggest, which is that the whole thing is monumentally dull. The movie drags to the point of viewers losing interest. And the action sequences are pretty bland, as are most of the characters as presented.

The source material, one would think, should have resulted in a better movie. – **Carl Phillips**

Transformers: Dark of the Moon

An empty cinematic experience jam-packed with special effects-laden action amounting to little of interest, despite beloved sci-fi star Leonard Nimoy's voicing of Sentinel Prime, who turns up in robot wreckage discovered on the moon by the Apollo 11 astronauts. Megan Fox's replacement, model Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, should stick to her day job. – **Keith Braithwaite**

Cowboys and Aliens

James Bond and Indiana Jones starring in a blockbuster mash-up of the sci-fi and Western genres with comely Olivia Wilde as the girl and Steven Spielberg and Ron Howard attached as producers! Must have sounded to the studio like a can't-miss project. But miss it did. Box office was decidedly disappointing.



This cleverly titled movie failed to live up to its promise because of a predictable story, uninspired action sequences, mediocre dialogue, and perhaps most of all, a noticeable lack of spark onscreen amongst the leads. – **Keith Braithwaite**

Captain America: The First Avenger

The best superhero flick of the year! A rollicking adventure in the same vein as *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, one of director Joe Johnston's inspirations for this period superhero actioner. Cool production design, crisp dialogue and a quick sense of humour, an engaging story and cast, all at play in that



marvellous Marvel universe with the promise of bigger things to come when the Avengers assemble next summer. – **Keith Braithwaite**

Rise of the Planet of the Apes

A highlight of the summer blockbuster season, this reboot takes full advantage of modern filmmaking's amazing motion-capture technology to bring the iconic apes of this classic sci-fi series to life like never before. Script, direction, performances, production design, and special effects are across-the-board brilliant. It's been a long time since I've been part of an audience



audibly awestruck by a film-during the superbly crafted dramatic scene in which lead ape Caesar spoke his first defiant word, a collective gasp circled the theatre.

Rise balances a moving story of friendship with a prison escape film, all wrapped around a sci-fi concept and culminating in a thrilling finale that sees the intelligence-boosted apes, led by Andy Serkis' Caesar, overcome their subjugation at the hands of humans, eventually to inherit the Earth as a virus devastates mankind. Purists might buck at this change from the original movie's premise of nuclear destruction, but the update works and takes nothing away from the beloved original.

A must-see. – **Keith Braithwaite**

Fright Night



This remake of the 1985 horror/comedy features a deliciously wicked performance by Colin Farrell as the vampire who moves in next door. Unlike the original, this take on the story is more fright than funny, resulting in an arguably better movie. – **Susan Denham**

The Thing

A prequel to John Carpenter's early-'80s remake of the '50s classic *The Thing from Another World*, this perfectly fine sci-fi/horror flick suffers from being, basically, a rerun of Carpenter's film. The events unfold pretty much as they did in Carpenter's version, so watching this *Thing* leaves viewers with a sense of déjà vu. It's all very well executed, but we've been there, done that, bought the T-shirt.



Props for the strong female protagonist - Carpenter's movie featured an all male cast - who, cast in the mould of the *Alien* franchise's Ripley, figures out what's going on and how to deal with it. – **Susan Denham**



Immortals
Reviewed by François Ménard



In trying to be a cross between the *Clash of the Titans* remake and *300* with a little *Conan the Barbarian* mixed in, *Immortals* ends up being something of a disappointment and definitely inferior to both. Taking a very loose interpretation of the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur (one of my favourite Greek myths)

Immortals seems to have no idea where it's going or what it wants to say. King Hyperion, played by Mickey Rourke and probably the most interesting character in the film, is leading his army on a bloodthirsty rampage across Ancient Greece seeking a magical bow that will allow him to free the Titans and avenge himself on the Gods who he believes allowed his family to die. In so doing he captures the Virgin Oracle Phaedra, played by Freida Pinto and destroys and enslaves the village Theseus, portrayed by Henry Cavill, a low-born commoner with no father calls home. His mother killed before his eyes Theseus is enslaved and sent to the

salt mines.

What follows is clichéd, by the numbers action/revenge flick with several plot holes and decent but by no means amazing action sequences. Nothing we haven't seen done better before. The fights between mortals do actually feel quite realistic, in that they are bloody and short. When the Gods and Titans do battle we have the start-stop-start-stop technique used in *300*. While in *300* this worked as an adaptation of a graphic novel, the "stops" meant to represent comic frames, *Immortals* tries to use it to show how "powerful" the Gods are and doesn't quite fit.

The side characters are bland and cookie cutter, Stephen Dorff's reformed thief Stavros a perfect example. The Gods are one dimensional and boring. Luke Evans' Zeus in particular feels miscast and poorly written. The "romance" between Theseus and Phaedra feels fake and tacked on. Only Mickey Rourke's Hyperion, John Hurt, and a brief cameo by Lance Henriksen have any real believability to them, a testament to the actors not the characters.

My suggestion, give this one a pass and watch *300* or *Clash* on DVD instead.

The Three Musketeers, 3-D
Reviewed by François Ménard



I was lucky enough to win passes to see an early screening of the new 3D *Three Musketeers* movie. I was not disappointed. A fun, swashbuckling adventure respecting Alexandre Dumas' classic with added modern twists and a little

steampunk thrown in.

Re-imagined as a special elite unit (think Impossible Mission Force), the film opens with the titular Three Musketeers, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, along with MiLady deWinter, in Venice breaking into Leonardo daVinci's vault seeking the plans of his greatest war machine. Our heroic trio is then betrayed by MiLady and disgraced, leading into a story that surprisingly follows Dumas' original quite well.

Possibly the strongest element of the film are its action sequences. From sword fights to airship battles these are well staged, well enacted, and surprisingly for a modern film

(especially in 3D) easy to follow without the blur and stutter-cut seen so often in modern action flicks. The 3D and visual effects are also quite good.

The acting is good to fair. Christoph Waltz as Cardinal Richelieu for example is absolutely superb. Mads Mikkelsen's Rochefort is also worth noting. The titular Three Musketeers Mathew McFadden (Athos), Ray Stevenson (Porthos), and Luke Evans (Aramis) are quite good, especially Stevenson and Macfadyen, as is the young D'Artagnan played by Logan Lerman. Freddie Fox's foppish and naive King Louis XIII is also worth mentioning if somewhat overdone at times. Milla Jovovich's MiLady deWinter is her typical female action star, though twisted into the villainess/femme fatal as opposed to the hero.

The film's one main weakness is the plot. specifically when it strays from Dumas' classic. In particular when our four heroes try to get back the Queen's jewels from the villainous Duke of Buckingham, played by Orlando Bloom. In trying to turn it into a break-in/caper sequence the double twist falls dismally flat.

A fun action film and a definite recommendation, especially for fans for the classic musketeers and/or Milla Jovovich films.



REVIEWS: Conventions & Events

Montreal ComicCon 2011
Reviewed by Keith Braithwaite

Many MonSFFen no doubt attended the recent Montreal ComicCon at Place Bonaventure over the September 17-18 weekend. They were among some 20,000 comics, horror, and

sci-fi fans who took in the event, according to a local newspaper report published following the convention. The hall was certainly crowded and we can easily believe that number, and perhaps add

a few thousand more.

Effectively demolished by this mass of fandom was the myth of today's sci-fi fan being a socially awkward, girl-shy fellow in his 20s or 30s still living in his parents' basement. There were as many women wandering the convention floor, young and old, as men, noted another newspaper piece on the event. Interviews with dozens of the fans present found few that fit the myth. The Montreal ComicCon's attendees were a diverse mix of teenagers, young college students, aging baby-boomers, many couples, some married with their children in tow, blue collars workers and professionals. It's always satisfying to see the mainstream's negative image of the so-called geek turned on its head.

Autograph hounds must have been especially thrilled with the opportunity to meet so many luminaries from the fields of comics, movies, and television. The galaxy of guests included actors Adam West and Burt Ward, stars of the 1960s Batman TV show, and comics legends Stan Lee and Neal Adams. Also on hand were Buck Rogers' Gil Gerard and Erin Gray, Star Wars' Jeremy Bulloch, TNG's Michael Dorn and Marina Sirtis, Buffythe Vampire Slayer's James Marsters, Mercedes McNab, and Clare Kramer, among many more!

Fans could have their rare comic book or collectible signed, or have a photo taken of themselves with their favourite actor. But at considerable additional cost. Autographs and photo opportunities with the star guests were extra, averaging about \$30 and climbing as high as \$125 for an AdamWest/Burt Ward photo op. The avid fan's visit to ComicCon might well require taking out a second mortgage! Perhaps folk might have, instead, opted to spend their money in the dealers' room – big conventions like this one tend to offer little more than a roster of name stars for the autograph collectors and a dealers' room for the rest of us,

although we must give this con points for setting up a display of very cool sci-fi vehicles, including the classic 1960s Batmobile. You don't see that every day! The event catering primarily to comics fandom, we were not surprised to find a lot of the hundred or more vendors in the hall selling comic books. Action-figures were in abundance, as well. Prices varied and there were probably a few bargains to be found but in general, we gauged that prices were not particularly discounted. To be fair, we didn't have opportunity to properly peruse the dealers' room so there may well have been some great deals amid the clutter of merchandise. The reason we didn't have opportunity to properly peruse the dealers' room was that the place was so very crowded. We don't know if organizers were expecting so many, but the horde moving about the hall at times made it near impossible to get around. Shoppers were packed thick in front of dealers' tables and we often couldn't get near the goods. The throng proved an impediment to fully enjoying the convention, unfortunately. Line-ups to take in many of the scheduled talks and Q&As by star guests were so lengthy that a lot of people missed these appearances in part or altogether waiting in line to get in. The queue just to get into the con snaked back and forth in the foyer, taking between an hour and two to negotiate!

Big, star-studded shows like the Montreal ComicCon, while offering fans the chance to meet celebrated stars of the genre, are at the same time burdened by the inevitable disappointment experienced by the many fans who miss meeting their favourite stars simply because there are too many people in line in front of them. We suspect that some may not be so willing, next time, to spend their day waiting in single file, hoping that they'll get to the front of the line before the star attraction leaves the building.



MonSFFandom: August to November

AUGUST

Space this issue is at a premium, so we'll quickly report for the record that our club meeting of August 21 included Keith Braithwaite's overview of the early-60s B-movie *The Magic Sword*, the contemporary art film oddity *Rubber*, and the recent sci-fi/soft porn comedy *Deep in the Valley*. Our scheduled game of *Sci-Fi Pictionary* was pushed to

September to allow more time for continuing feedback on and discussion of meeting and extrameeting activities. We closed with a 20-minute video tutorial showing the creation of an illustration using an airbrush, shot at a club meeting in 1989 and featuring the talents of artist and now club president Berny Reischl.

SEPTEMBER

September's meeting was held on the 11th and featured a presentation by Josée Bellemare and Mark Burakoff on the topic of Steampunk. The motifs of an imaginary world in which steam-powered Victorian technology drives man to astounding adventures have permeated many areas of the SF/F universe, from superhero comics to Jim Henson's famous Muppets! The distinct visual facade of Steampunk is all over SF/F art, comics, film, and

television these days and has spawned a boom in fannish costuming circles the likes of which we have not seen since the emergence of the renaissance fair.

Following the mid-meeting break, one of our newest members, Paul Gareau, read aloud a brief article he had penned on the topic of writing better science fiction, and Keith Braithwaite capped the afternoon hosting a game of *Sci-Fi Pictionary* in which all present participated. Lots of fun!

OCTOBER

October's meeting was held on Halloween's eve and featured Sylvain St-Pierre's nostalgic recalling of some of the really cool sci-fi toys we played with as youngsters, like the tin rockets, ray guns, and robots of old, the spaceage Major Matt Mason series, and the more recent *Micronauts* and *Transformers*. Sylvain's presentation included numerous slides and old TV commercials pitching various toy lines.

Berny Reischl followed with screenings of selected short fan films culled from the Web, highlighting the imagination and creativity of sci-fi fandom, after which an impromptu BoA meeting closed proceedings. The group selected meeting dates for next year and began piecing together meeting programming.

NOVEMBER

A goodly number were in attendance for the club's final meeting of 2011, held on November 20. Keith Braithwaite opened proceedings with a game of Sci-Fi Telephone Line. Giving full props to MonSFFAn Marquise Boies, who back in the '90s originated this particular variation on the traditional parlour game, Keith selected four artists and four writers from the group and made of them two teams. A writer from each team was shown an image – a spacecraft on the one hand and a monster on the other – and given five minutes to write a description. These descriptions were then handed to each of the next team members in line – artists – who each produced a sketch based on their respective team member's freshly penned description, and so on through another set of writer and artist, resulting in final sketches, which were then compared to the original images. It was interesting to note the diversions from the original, as well as the similarities, with folk observing that hardware – here the spaceship – seemed to come through this process in better shape than organics – the monster.

In addition to our usual raffle, the mid-meeting break saw a new idea for an in-meeting fund-raiser tested, with positive results. Continued discussion of plans for 2012 meeting programming followed—we had begun laying out the coming year's activities at our October gathering – as well as talk of various other items of club business. A suggestion to, at some point soon, cease producing and mailing paper issues of Impulse as a means of saving the club a couple hundred dollars per year was met with largely favourable reaction. Impulse would thus become an exclusively electronic publication. A few MonSFFen, however, remain attached to the traditional paper news bulletin. We'll explore the issue further in the coming months.

The meeting wrapped up with a brief recording session, committing the last few remaining pages of dialogue to "tape" with regard to our on-going old-fashioned radio play project. Paul Gareau and Keith Braithwaite gave emotive performances, with Berny Reischl working the board as recording engineer. We have rededicated ourselves to this recently neglected group undertaking and with this session, now have all of the voice work completed. Editing and post-production (sound effects and music) are next!



MonSFun: Vector2 and artwork by Marquise. ☆ An engineer works on a Tardis.

