

WINTER 2013

WARP

85



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Please help us plan **your** activities!

On the Cover

Cover art features the work of MonSFFan Marquise. The piece is called "Wishes". Thank you Marquise!

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Find us on Line!



YAHOO!

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.

MARCH 24

Spot The Blooper: We challenge folk to spot the mistakes in SF/F movies.
Fan Fiction as an Introduction to SF/F

Open Discussion: The floor is open for discussion of any genre topic.

APRIL 28

Weird and Wacky Worlds of SF

True Crime Stories in the Virtual World

April Meeting Challenge: What was your best practical joke? Physical proof is needed to confirm that you are King of MonSFFA's practical jokers!

MAY 26

GUEST SPEAKERS

Claude Lalumière and fellow authors Camille Alexa, Lisa Poh, Marie Bilodeau, and Patrick T. Goddard will be on hand to read excerpts and discuss their stories in the new Tyche Books Collection:

Masked Mosaic: Canadian Super Stories.

Paleoart **OR** Sci-Fi Model Kit Box Art

JUNE 9

Club outing to new planetarium. Details to be determined and information to be passed on to the membership by the April meeting

JULY 21

BBQ

AUGUST 11

Craft Fair

SEPTEMBER 22

SCI-FI Western Crossovers
Death and What Comes Next

OCTOBER 27

And The Geeks Shall Rule!

About how far some fans can go to express their love of all things fannish
Science Fiction Double Feature

Club Discussion: What Was Your Best Halloween Prank?

NOVEMBER 17

Steam Powered Giraffe
My Adventures in Stop Motion

DECEMBER 7

MonSFFA Christmas Party: Details TBA

Really Fine Print: WARP is published quarterly by the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA), a nonprofit organization of fans interested in sharing their love of science fiction and fantasy. The opinions expressed in WARP are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of MonSFFA or the editor. To reprint any article, please contact the writer, or ask the editor to pass on your request. The use of copyrighted material is generally discouraged; but sometimes unavoidable; our apologies to the copyright holders, no serious infringement is intended. This is an amateur production, and your tolerance is appreciated by your fans.

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Dear Cathy:

Thank you for Warp 84, always a pleasure to see it. Time to get to it and write some comments for the next issue, I hope.

My letter... Yvonne and I had inquired to Ad Astra about a dealers' table, and we found their prices a little expensive for what we sell, steampunk jewellery and

hats, and odds and ends. Later on, we found that the con actually offered crafter's tables as well, but we had already made other plans. Those plans are to simply attend the convention, and we will be there Saturday only. We will save our handicrafts for Steam on Queen 2 in June, and for SFContario in November. If you get any other information on Perception (Rene Walling spoke to me about this last year as SFContario was winding down), please do pass it along.

Good to see another Tale From the Convention!, but there must be some autocorrect function that keeps misspelling my last name...

That SFF sighting, that Cylon... I know where the picture was taken, that's Bloor St. W. in the heart of the Bloor West Village in west-end Toronto. I lived close to there many years ago, Yvonne and I used to shop at the butcher shop in the background, and the late Mike Glicksohn lived very close to there. I wonder why there was a Cylon in the BWV...

Our trip to Las Vegas some years ago now... we wanted to go to the National Atomic Testing Museum, but it was closed at the

time, and we were told it was closed permanently. Not so, I guess, but it costs a lot of money to operate a museum these days. I am thinking of the Canadian Air & Space Museum that's been mothballed for some time, but may be reopening close to Pearson Airport soon.

We don't need an iPad app to see how we'll look when we're old; we're already old, and all we need is a mirror. I don't want to know how much older we'll look when we're even older; I'm happy to be patient.

Hope this gets to you in time, Cathy... the job hunt has been ratcheted up with the news yesterday that my assignment at the Globe and Mail, the one I've had for over 8 years now, will end as of April 19. They found a way to automate my job, and they have no interest in keeping me, or finding me other work to do.

Take care, and see you with the next issue.

Your s,

Lloyd Penney

Hi, Lloyd!

First allow me to apologise for misspelling your name, the fault is mine. I have a sister-in-law named Penny, and the fingers just type what they are accustomed to type, rather like my car that kept trying to take me school months after I had retired from teaching.

I am going to Ad Astra, driving down with Yolande as usual. Sylvain St-Pierre is also going, so we will see there on Saturday. I'll be going to the Dr Who convention in Toronto in November, but that's going to be about it for my convention schedule this year. It's not just financial, though, cons I like are just disappearing left, right, and centre. As for World Con, it really is too hot in Texas, and I'll save the dollars for London in 2014.

Sorry about your losing your job to automation. It seems newspapers are really having to cut corners everywhere. The

Montreal Gazette dropped its Sunday edition, and several columnists including two that I read regularly.

I do hope the Canadian Air & Space museum does get a reprieve. Losing our heritage is always a worry. How will we know where we stand, and where we are going if we do not remember where we've been?

Take care, Lloyd, say hi to Yvonne, and good luck with the job hunt.

Yours in fandom,
Cathy



UPCOMING EVENTS

April 6, Geekfest, Montreal, QC

<http://geekfestmtl.com>

April 5-7, Ad Astra, Guests: Jim & Shannon Butcher, Stephen Hunt, more TBA. www.ad-astra.org

April 13, Can/Am Con (model competition); Richmond, VT
<http://ipmsplattsburgh.tripod.com/canam/announce.html>

April 13, WellCoME 16 (model competition), Guelph, ON
<http://www.thesprue.com/>

April 14, BuffCon 30 (model competition); Buffalo, NY
<http://www.ipmsniagarafrontier.com/>

April 19-21, FilKONtario 23, Mississauga, ON Guests: Tim and Annie Walker, Rand and Erin Bellavia, Katt McConnell. www.filkontario.ca

April 26-28, Eeriecon 15, Grand Island, NY. Guests: Jack McDevitt, Carl Frederick, many more. www.eeriecon.org

May 3-5, Congrès Boréal, Montréal, QC invité d'honneur: Eric Gauthier
<http://www.congresboreal.ca/>

May 3-4, IPMS Region 1 Regional – NorEastCon 42 (model competition) Rochester, NY
<http://ipmsrochester.org/>

May 17-19, What the Fur? Montreal, QC, GoH: HollyAnn
http://www.whatthefur.ca/home_e.php

May 24-26, Anime North, Toronto, ON Guests: voice actors Eriko Nakamura, Ryo Horikawa, and Trina Nishimura, photographer Kevin Lillard, and writer Neil Nadelman www.animenorth.com

June 8, Niagara Falls Comicon, Niagara Falls, ON Many celebrity artists and actors <http://nfcomicon.com>

June 15-16, Hamilton Air Show; Hamilton, ON

<http://www.hamiltonairshow.com/>

June 22, Steam on Queen 2, Toronto, ON <http://www.steamonqueen.ca/>

June 22, Constellation Awards Banquet and Ceremony, Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Toronto-Markham, ON
<http://constellations.tcon.ca/>

July 12-14, Polar Chill, Richmond Hill, ON Polaris Relaxicon. www.tcon.ca

July 18-2, San Diego Comic Con (SF multi-media); San Diego, CA
<http://www.comic-con.org/cc/>

July 26-28, ConBravo, Hamilton Convention Centre, ON A Geek event, guests include many indie video producers as well as critics, reviewers, & writers. <http://conbravo.com/>

August 16-17, The Official Stargate SG-1/Atlantis/Universe Convention Chicago, IL
<http://creationent.com/cal/sgchi.htm>

August 22-25 Fan Expo (SF multi-media) Toronto, ON
<http://www.fanexpocanada.com/>

August 30-September 2 Dragon*Con (SF multi-media); Atlanta, GA
<http://www.dragoncon.org/>

September 13-15, Science Fiction: The Interdisciplinary Genre - An Academic Conference at McMaster University, Hamilton, ON
http://www.academiceditingcanada.ca/blog/item/106_sf_inter_genre_cfp

August 29-September 2, Lonestar: The 71st World Con, San Antonio, Texas Guests: Ellen Datlow • James Gunn • Willie Siros • Norman Spinrad • Paul

Lloyd Penny, Lynda Pelley, & CPL

Cornell <http://www.lonestarcon3.org/>

September TBA London Scale Model Show (model competition); London, ON
<http://www.ipmslondon.ca/>

September 28, CapCon (model competition); Ottawa, ON
<http://www.ipmsottawa.com/capcon/index.htm>

October 4-6, GenreCon Geek event, guests TBA <http://www.genrecon.com/>

October 4-6, CanCon & CanVention (Aurora Awards) Ottawa, ON
<http://www.can-con.org/>

Oct 11-13, Salute to Supernatural Toronto, ON
<http://www.creationent.com/cal/supernatural-toronto.htm>

Oct 26, 2013 Ajax Model Show (model competition) Ajax, ON (*No website*)

November 1-3, Reversed Polarity, Richmond Hill ON. Doctor Who 50th Anniversary convention. Toastmaster, Larry Stewart, Guests TBA
<http://tcon.ca/reversedpolarity/>

November 15-17, Astronomicon 2013, Rochester, NY. Literary SF convention. Guest: David Gerrold, Liana K, Ed the Sock, more TBA.
<http://www.astronomicon.info/>

November 29 - December 1, SFContario 4, Toronto, ON Guests: Seanan McGuire, Dave Kyle, Chandler Davis www.sfcontario.ca

December 6-8, SMOFcon 31, Toronto ON. Convention runners' convention.
<http://www.smocon31.org/>

Dec 30-Jan 1 Futurecon 4 (relaxacon) Toronto, ON
<http://futurecon.org/>



Star Dracula: Part VIII

François Ménard

The story so far: When the Jump gates failed, worlds colonized by humanity were isolated 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. First Contact Op, Thomas Renfield is sent down to the planet, but crash lands. IGOR takes him to "Master" who 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. 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. He sprains his ankle 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 first officer orders the launch of an emergency survival pod, hoping Harker will find it, and heads for home.

Six weeks later, the Demeter was on a collision course with the planet Piccadilly, and Harker was still lost on Carpathia. Rescuers found the Demeter's crew all dead of sudden blood loss, except for a delirious Renfield. Carpathia is declared quarantined until the cause is found, but Mina, Lucy and Dr Seward are determined to rescue Harker.

Lucy is in sickbay suffering from severe anaemia and Mina has hired a pilot to rescue Harker. Renfield escapes from confinement in mysterious circumstances and is found eating insects in Hydroponics. An orderly is discovered in a tank, her body drained of blood. A team of medical specialists, including a very elderly Professor Van Helsing, arrives. Carfax Station is put under medical quarantine.

Van Helsing collects garlic and wolf's bane to protect Lucy, but later Lucy is discovered dead, the protective plants heaped in a disposal unit.

Dammit, Jack, I said no!" yelled Arthur Holmwood with uncharacteristic anger, "Lucy's body goes on ice like the others until we've sorted out this disease, and it bloody well is a disease, then we commit her to the void like she wanted. I will not have that witch-doctor professor of yours," he pointed to Van Helsing but still refused to acknowledge him, "cutting her up for no damned reason! You want to do a scan, fine. A virtual dissection, fine. But not this. No way, no how."

"Arthur, please," pleaded Doctor Seward, "It sounds odd but I can vouch for Professor Van Helsing. I'd stake my career on his knowledge and experience any day."

Professor Van Helsing sighed and placed a weary hand on his old student's arm. "Come, Jack," he said, his voice strained and tired, "I understand how he feels. We have work to do, let us be off." he turned to Arthur, "My sincerest apologies, Administrator Holmwood, and my deepest condolences." Arthur merely scoffed and waved him away. "Let's go, Jack." and the two of them left Arthur's office.

"Are you certain, Professor?" asked Doctor Seward as the made their way back to medical.

"Not certain, no." Van Helsing sighed, "But I will be. I have a plan, Jack, but I'll need your help. And Mister Morris's if you're sure about him."

"He loved her, Professor. And she him, if only like an older brother. Quincy's a good man, and if this thing's as dangerous as you say, I wouldn't mind having a trained soldier at our side." answered Doctor Seward.

"Good, good. Then we set everything up. I'll get what we need from hydroponics and mechanical, you get everything ready in cryogenics. Remember, no one else must be there, they'll only be in mortal danger."

"You should get some sleep, Professor, you look tired." Doctor Seward was worried. He had never seen his mentor seem so worn out, so old.

"I do that, Jack, never you fear. You should get some rest too. We'll all need all our strength for what is to come." and the two men parted ways to prepare.



Arthur Holmwood awoke to the emergency tone of his comm. It was still very early in the morning, even for him. He could see through the viewport in his quarters the Britannic sun had not yet cleared the planet below, creating a dim arc of half-light spread across stars. Arthur roused himself and answered the comm. It was Doctor Seward. "What is it, Jack?" he yawned.

"I'm sorry Arthur, but I think you should come down to cryogenics immediately." the Doctor's voice seemed worried and an anxious over the comm.

Arthur took off his sleep suit and began to dress himself, "Is there a problem?" he asked.

"Just get down here, Arthur. Please hurry, it's Lucy." the Doctor's voice trailed off.

Arthur shut off the comm and doubled his speed in dressing. What the blazes was going on, he asked himself.

Arriving at cryogenics Arthur found both Jack and Quincy waiting for him just outside the door, as well as that blasted Professor. If he had anything to do with this, Arthur and Jack were going to have some choice words and quarantine or no, he'd see to it this Van Helsing was thrown off the station. "Just what is the meaning of this?" he demanded to know. "Do you have any idea what's going on, Quincy?"

"Sorry, Arthur," replied the Nova Montanan in his thick accent, "They called me down here, too, and wouldn't tell me a blasted thing until you got here."

"I am very sorry to both of you gentlemen," said Professor Van Helsing. "But the safety of the entire station is at risk, as well as what remains of our dear Miss Lucy. If you'll all follow me, quickly now." and he opened the door and entered the chamber behind. Quincy was the first in behind him, followed by Doctor

Seward and Arthur.

“Jack, I swear—” Doctor Seward cut Arthur off before he could finish.

“Arthur, please, trust me. Van Helsing knows what he’s doing but prepare yourself for a shock.” and both men entered cryogenics.

The chamber was large, long, narrow, and dark. Both long walls were covered in recessed, horizontal cryogenic tubes stacked five high. As an unusually high number of the tubes were active, preserving the bodies of the Demeter’s crew as well as few from the station. The air in the chamber was unusually cold and a thick mist clung to the floor from the condensation. Van Helsing made his way to the tube that contained Lucy’s body. Arthur was relieved to see from it’s display it had not been used since Lucy had been sealed inside. Each tube had its own onboard automated log to aid in medical documentation. Van Helsing motioned to Doctor Seward and the younger man stepped forward and keyed the controls. With a pop and a hiss the edges of the tube expelled a thick, white mist and steam for several seconds. The tube then extended itself out of it’s recess and lowered itself on it’s hydraulics to waist height. The steam and mist cleared to reveal the tube was empty.

“Where is she?” requested Arthur with a whisper containing rage. After a moment he went over to Quincy, took the man’s shocker, and levelled it at Van Helsing. “Where is she?! What have you done to her?!” he screamed.

Van Helsing met his accusatory anger with a steady gaze, unflinching. “You saw yourself, no one has tampered with the tube. You yourself were here when her body was placed in cryogenic suspension. I feared something like this would—” he stopped suddenly as they heard the door to the chamber cycled open and the crying of what sounded like a small child. “Come, all of you. Come quickly.” and he lead them to the far end of the chamber.

“Come on, Arthur,” pleaded Doctor Seward as he followed Van Helsing. Administrator Holmwood regained his senses, handed the weapon back to Quincy (who responded with an angry look), and they both followed the other two men into the far corner of the chamber.

A lithe female figure with long, full red hair entered the chamber wearing a form-fitting, white cryosuit and carrying a little girl who was the source of crying. The figure was Lucy!

“Lucy!” exclaimed Arthur as he stepped forward. She dropped the child, who ran off to the opposite end of the chamber and huddled into a corner, and stared at Arthur with eyes that seemed to glow with their own, fiery red light and were filled with passion and hunger, “Lucy, you’re alive!”

“Yes, Arthur,” she answered with a voice that was Lucy’s but seemed different, deeper, sultrier, and felt as though it vibrated through Arthur to his very core. It was intoxicating. “I’m here, waiting for you. Come to me, my love. Come to me, kiss me and caress me. Take me in your strong arms and hold me. I’m yours, my love.” Arthur hurried towards her, arms outstretched. He had never desired her more than he did now.

“No!” cried Van Helsing as two embraced. Lucy’s mouth open wide inches from Arthur’s throat and bearing abnormally long, sharp canine teeth that seemed more suited to a large carnivore than a human. Van Helsing pushed forward, thrusting his piece of silver and sprig of wolf’s bane into Lucy’s face. She recoiled suddenly and violently, hissing a sound no human could produce, “Back!” he commanded. Lucy backed into the rows of cryo-tubes behind her. Pressing herself to them she moved around Van Helsing and back to her own tube. Reaching it, she lay down upon it, closed her eyes, and seemed to phase through the tube’s transparent housing and into it. Then all was still and there she was, in cryogenic suspension as though nothing had happened.

Quincy moved quickly to take care of Dian Quarters, the little girl Lucy had abducted, and took her out of the chamber. Jack went to Lucy’s cryogenic tube and checked its systems, trying to make sense of what he had just seen. Arthur stood there, in shock, unable to understand what he had just experienced. Van Helsing put a hand on his shoulder and shook him back to reality. “I am sorry. So very, very sorry. Now do you believe me?” he asked.

“I-er-I don’t- yes Professor.” he answered still disturbed by what had just happened. “I’m sorry I doubted you.”

“Perfectly understandable, my boy. I would not have believed me either had I not known. But now I hope you’ll let me do what must be done”

“No, Professor.” Van Helsing was shocked at Arthur’s answer, but he stopped the older man before he could protest, “Not you. If there really is no other way. Lucy was, is, my responsibility, I’ll do it.”

“Are you certain?” asked Van Helsing. Arthur nodded, “Very well. Take these,” he handed Arthur a small grav-hammer and a short, thick tree branch that had been sharpened to a point at one end. “Jack,” he turned to Doctor Seward, “Open the tube.”

After several moments the cryogenic tube which held Lucy’s body was open. Her body lay there, cold, unmoving, lifeless. It seemed impossible to Arthur that he had just seen her, moving. Heard her, speaking. Following Van Helsing’s instructions he placed the pointed tip of the branch over her left breast. Raising the grav-hammer he took a long breath, “I’m sorry, Lucy,” he whispered, “Forgive me.” with that, he brought down the grav-hammer on a three gee setting onto the branch, forcing it into Lucy’s chest and through her heart. She screamed, blood sprayed from around the wooden shaft, and then it was over. Lucy lay silent, unmoving, and now truly dead.

Van Helsing patted Arthur on back in support and condolence. “Now our truly difficult work begins. Now we track down the one that did this to poor Miss Lucy and end it once and for all. Will you aid me?”

“Yes, Professor,” Arthur replied, “All my resources are at your disposal.”

“Good, good. For now, let us rest as best we can and mourn Lucy’s passing. In the morning, we begin.”



TO BE CONTINUED IN WARP 86

Starfleet Treachery

Barbara Silverman

***The story so far:** Kathryn Janeway was 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 has asked his daughter to come up with a plan to stop Chakotay and disrupt the impending coalition against Starfleet and the Federation.,*

Janeway had a mole, Tuvok, in Chakotay's crew and knows that Chakotay has also recruited B'Elanna Torres and Tom Paris. Starfleet reported the suspiciously easy capture and arrest of Tom Paris and Janeway worried that Chakotay may be upping the ante. She ambushed the Maquis, using a shipment of medical supplies as bait. Chakotay was captured, but the rest of his crew escaped. A conversation with Chakotay left Janeway puzzled as to his motives, and the ease with which he was captured.

After turning Chakotay over to the authorities, Janeway was assigned to exploring the Gamma quadrant for three months. On her return, her father explained it was necessary that she get to know the quadrant and become familiar with the Cardassians. It appears there may be an alliance between the Cardassians and the Dominion, and if so, the Federation needs to know if it's an alliance of mutual protection, or aggression. Chakotay may hold some answers, so Admiral Janeway was bringing him to Starfleet HQ for a meeting with himself and his daughter, but Chakotay was beamed out of the shuttle craft.

CHAPTER 18

The peeping of her console brought Kathryn Janeway back to the world of wakefulness. Rolling over she forced eyelids open far enough to peek at her twentieth century clock. A gift from her father, it was a replica of a hand carved one brought over by a distant seventeen-century ancestor from Ireland.

Using her hand she pushed herself into a sitting position, quickly disengaging herself from the warmth and comfort of her bed. "Damn! I told him so!"

Grabbing her dressing gown, stepping carefully over the still sleeping dog, Janeway headed for the outer room. Hurrying to her desk, without waiting to sit down, she activated the monitor. "So Dad, how did Chakotay escape?"



The furious face of Admiral Janeway growled. "How did you know?"

Tightening the house-coat she sat down. "You would not be calling me at 02:30 to ask the time of day!"

Admiral Janeway banged a fist on the desk in his office. "Kathryn! How did they know? How did they engineer such an escape? He just vanished. It had to be by transporter, from where I don't know. There was no warning, no ships, nothing. Just puff and he was gone. We were scanning constantly, even on guard for cloaked ships and transport signals from earth. One moment he was sitting in front of me, the next he was gone! No trace! Nothing from the anklet! No warp signature from a ship! Absolutely nothing!"

The younger Janeway tapped her fingers on the arm of her chair. "Well, obviously, he was not beamed into open space. What about the warden? He knew beforehand?"

The fire in the eyes of the admiral almost melted the computer monitor. "Only an hour before. However, we're not ruling anything out. From the time I notified Britt until I arrived, he was at the penal colony the whole time. As a precaution I had outgoing communications monitored. No unusual transmissions, unless there was a hidden code which we missed. I've order a complete investigation of all communications from the prison and

Starfleet Command, plus a review of all activities of anyone involved, from security guards to office staff. I'll be examining every piece of information myself."

In frustration he shook his head. "Katie, I don't know. Nobody, other than myself, knew before hand. I revealed the destination coordinates only after we were airborne, and only then did I contact Britt."

Thinking of all the hard work that had just vanished into space, the captain was more than slightly annoyed. "It is possible the Maquis were monitoring the prison for unusual activity. Ready for this moment."

Her father rubbed his hand along the edge of his desk. "Possible. I had thought of that, and felt prepared. The main question is how did they do it. No ship! When there had to be a ship!"

The younger Janeway rubbed tired eyes with her fingers, while her mind went into action. "Well, there's only one way to find out. I guess you want me to bring him back!"

There was no reply from her father.

Kathryn pointed out the obvious. "Okay, but this will not be easy. Without a doubt, I will not be able to send Tuvok undercover again."

Thinking of how best to proceed Kathryn Janeway began drumming her fingers faster and faster on the desk. A sign of intense irritation. "I need Tom Paris!"

"Paris!" Exclaimed her father in surprise.

The captain nodded. "Yes! He was a member of the Maquis longer than Tuvok, therefore Paris might have some information. Especially, since he was one of their pilots, it stands to reason he would know about their bases and operations. This time I don't see any alternative but to go into the Badlands. Maybe Chakotay would be interested in a cup of coffee."

"Kathryn!" Responded the completely baffled admiral.

She had no time for explanations. "Nothing! Just get me Tom Paris."

As the admiral's anger subsided, his concern moved to the forefront. "You have him and anything else which you need. It's

vital you find Chakotay. Use any means necessary. Just find him!”

The captain then made a pledge she would keep. Though not in the manner she envisioned. “Dad, I promise you, that Maquis leader will remember the name of Kathryn Janeway until he dies!”

A quick smile crossed the admiral’s face. “I’m sure of that!”

Both his voice and face became solemn and grave. “Kathryn, it’s vital I speak with Chakotay. Today, right after you left, I received a message from Jean-Luc.”

The lines under his eyes deepened, fatigue and worry made his face suddenly old. “It does not look good. Evidently, there was contact between the Cardassians and Dominion before commencement of the peace negotiations with the Federation. Perhaps, as much as two years before, however, we still don’t know the results of those meetings. Were they trade negotiations, or were they anti-Federation perhaps planning an invasion? Knowing Cardassia..... Katie, this top priority, top secret. As far as your official orders are concerned, you are to apprehend and return Chakotay to prison. However, you have another order.....directly from me. It is far more urgent I speak with him.”

His eyes registered the horror that lay on the horizon. “We are facing a much greater threat than the Cardassians alone would ever be. Perhaps the greatest danger, outside of the Borg, this Federation has ever been up against. Instead of wasting time

trying to recapture Chakotay, try to speak with him. I want you to arrange a meeting between the two of us. If he should request it, in the Badlands at a place of his choosing. You have authorization to make any arrangements that you deem fit.”

Realizing the implications of the Cardassian-Dominion alliance, Kathryn felt her stomach muscles tighten into a knot. “I’ll do whatever is necessary!”

“I know I can depend on you!” Admiral Janeway closed the transmission.

Slowly the captain turned off her monitor. Deep in thought she started to dress. No use going back to bed when there was so much to do.....and think about. At the moment she didn’t know whom she was angrier at, Chakotay for having escaped, or her father for having taken such a risk. Though he did have a very good reason for having done so.

Reaching down she patted the head of the now awake dog. “Molly, I fear this is not going to be easy. First I have to find Chakotay, in his own backyard. A backyard he knows inside and out. Somehow, I promise you, I’ll find him. Wherever he is!”

Six hours later Captain Kathryn Janeway headed her ship in the direction of the Badlands. And one Maquis Commander Chakotay!

CHAPTER 19

Located at the perimeter of the bridge, the tactical station stood behind and slightly to the left of the command area. Studying the readouts, Janeway and Cavit were discussing with Tuvok details of what lay ahead. With them was Tom Paris, released from prison into the captain’s custody, under the provision that he aid in locating Chakotay.

Janeway turned to Paris. “As one of their pilots, you must have knowledge of the Badlands, and the most likely location of Chakotay.”

He replied with a trace of amusement in his voice. “Captain, I have some knowledge. Chakotay was careful about how much any one person knew. He has the Maquis divided into several divisions, each with a different home base. Except for group leaders, there is little contact between the various sections. Only his most trusted advisors, Evans and Ro Laren, know all the locations.”

Janeway hid her surprise. ‘Ro Laren? An advisor!’ This would be news to her father. Evidently there were several things Starfleet intelligence did not know. She wondered what other surprises would come her way?

Paris pointed to the console. “May I?”

The captain stepped aside.

For several minutes he bent over the panel, studying a display of the Badlands. Finally he straightened his long, lean frame. Tapping the map with his finger, slowly, thoughtfully, Paris informed Janeway. “Chakotay has several bases in the Terokof Belt. In this area here. These are the ones favoured by the Maquis. They are well secluded, extremely difficult to locate.”

Looking directly at the captain, Paris’ voice carried more than a trace of insolence, as he tilted his head in the direction of

the conn. “Unless you know about them. They are protected by major plasma storms. Your helmsman better be good. You might be sorry for not allowing me to be on the conn.”

Janeway made no reply. Only discipline prevented the captain from showing her intense dislike for young Paris. He was arrogant and cocky, everything a member of Starfleet should not be. She was looking forward to the end of this mission, when once and for all she would be rid of this mutinous youngster.

The captain moved closer to the display, examining the area pointed out by Paris. “This is a large region. Are you able to narrow it down?”

Paris answered easily. Knowing, but not caring, about the captain’s opinion of Tom Paris. He drew a circle with his finger. “My guess, he could be here. On this M-class planetoid.”

Janeway looked up at the Vulcan standing beside her. “Mr. Tuvok, do you agree?”

The security chief glanced down at the console. “It is logical. I have heard of these bases, Mr. Paris is correct, only a few know of their location. During the time I was with the Maquis, Commander Chakotay did not take his ship into the Terokof belt. Though, on several occasions the Commander and Mr. Evans did go by shuttle, and is rumoured to be the site of Chakotay’s own headquarters. This region is extremely dangerous, perhaps the most treacherous in the Badlands.”

Janeway looked directly at Paris. “You were there?”

He shrugged indifferently. “Only once. Just after joining the Maquis, I was taken into the Terokof Belt to speak with Chakotay. Look Captain, I was the chief pilot onboard his ship for only a week, during this time Chakotay did not go to his headquarters and command centre. I do not know the exact location, only what I can surmise based on rumours. It never really mattered.”

Continuing to study the readout of the region, Janeway did



not like what she saw. Major plasma storms were an understatement. "I suspect Chakotay, or the other Maquis while he was in prison, may have moved, or be in the process of moving the bases."

Shaking his head, Paris uttered a hallow laugh. "It's not that simple. It took months to locate the ones he now has. In the Badlands you take what it gives you."

Placing his hand on the wall, he regarded Janeway in a condescending manner. "Captain, you have no idea what you're heading into. Not all land masses are habitable. Not all plasma storms can be navigated. The combination of the two are difficult to find. But why would they go to the trouble of moving? Chakotay would never give out their locations."

Staring directly into the eyes of Tom Paris, Janeway beckoned with her head in his direction. "What about you. As a member of Chakotay's crew you could have facts and details which others would not. I'm sure they would consider the possibility of you exchanging early release for information."

Then she added with a bite to her voice. "Exactly as you are doing!"

Tom took a deep breath, at the same time shaking his head. "Captain, Captain, you don't understand. It really does not matter. This is Chakotay's territory. I, or someone else, can tell you where he is, getting there is another story. Why do you think he chose the Badlands? You have to know and understand the storms, which takes months of study. Even with the Federation's advanced computers, this data must be collected right on location.....over a period of time. Then, and only then, it would take a whole fleet of ships to harm the Maquis in here. The possibility of a large number of ships surviving, either Starfleet or Cardassian, is virtually impossible. Chakotay knows that."

Removing his hand, standing straight and tall, Tom Paris returned the steady gaze of the captain. "Besides, Chakotay has a warning system set up along the safe routes into the Badlands.

This is one of his 'little secrets'. I found out only by accident, and only because I was a pilot. He knows the moment any ship enters the area, he has several surprises set up along these pathways. No ship travels in the Badlands....unless Chakotay allows it to do so."

He then added in a mocking tone of voice. "If I thought you had a chance....I would not be here!"

His attitude grating on her nerves, Janeway refrained from allowing Paris any satisfaction by replying. Instead she turned to the female lieutenant manning the conn. "Stadi, adjust our course to the new heading."

Stadi quickly tapped instructions into her panel. "Aye Captain! Course laid in, seven-mark-seven-two-five."

Walking over to her command chair Janeway sat down. Paris slowly followed, stopping beside her seat.

Fascinated, Janeway watched the ribbons of plasma flashing in anger. First one way, then another. Lashing and flaring against the blackness of space. Tendrils reaching, hoping to grasp and destroy any ship unfortunate enough to venture within their range.

Paris looked down at Janeway. "Beautiful and dangerous!"

She felt a chill run up and down her spine, understanding Chakotay's reason for choosing the Badlands. This region was not only treacherous, but finding one man would be the proverbial needle in a haystack, with deadly traps every inch of the way. Now she knew why Paris had so readily agreed to help her....an easy ticket out of prison.

Well, she would take this haystack apart piece-by-piece if necessary. This young man and a certain Maquis leader were in for a surprise. Kathryn Janeway was not one to allow anything to stand in her way.

Even plasma storms! Especially with so much depending on her success.

From the ops position Harry Kim's voice rang out across the bridge. "Captain! There's a ship heading our way. It's Maquis!"

TO BE CONTINUED IN WARP 86



Stargate Enterprise **New Year, New Adventures**

Josée Bellemare

It was the morning of the 31st. The Enterprise crew was enjoying vacation time back on Earth and would be launching out again in a few days.



Having spent Christmas with his family, Commander Kramer was spending New Year's at Peterson air base before beaming back to the Enterprise. After all this time he still felt a sense of amazement about it all. Since they first launched, the Commander and his crew had visited Atlantis twice, participated in a rescue mission, introduced new trade

and agriculture to an ally planet, opened diplomatic relations with leprechauns and Kramer had personally met St-Nicholas and Merlin. All that in the space of 18 months.

At least at Peterson's he could talk about his adventures. He was reminded of his 10-year old niece and her toy spaceship. She said she would be an astronaut when she grew up. He could help her with that in 15 years or so.

In the meantime their next destination was planet Hebridan for the Loop of Kon Garat race. Lieutenants Sullivan and Pavlova had received permission from the SGC to enter the race with Scotty as their engineer.

He would tell the crew when they launched on the 7th. The GC even commissioned special flight suits for the team and

baseball caps for the crew to show their support.

That night the New Year's Eve party was going strong. It was more for the personnel to have fun: no formal uniforms and lots of party hats and noise makers. At one point he ran into Dr Michaels.

"Doctor, nice to see you, Happy New Year."

"Glad to see you having fun for once."

"I'm learning. Even St-Nicholas said I need to relax once in a while."

"Wow, St-Nicholas agrees with me. Too bad I can't brag about it."

"I know what you mean. You want to share all the fantastic things you've seen but you can't because even the program we belong to is secret, never mind that we've been to other planets."

"Exactly! And all the family and friends who keep bragging about all their accomplishments and we can't say a word about ours no matter how badly we'd love to shut them up."

"Someday, maybe, we'll get the chance. In the meantime, here's to the Enterprise and her crew; long may they travel through the galaxy."

They both raised their drinks in a toast just as the countdown started.

"10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Happy New Year!"

Commander Kramer and Dr Michaels exchanged a friendly hug and season's greetings. The party went on for another hour or so before everyone called it a night.

Over the next few days the Enterprise crew members started trickling in and by the 6th everyone had reported in. The morning of the 7th Commander Kramer addressed the crew.

"Attention all personnel. First I want to wish all of you a happy new year and I hope that your holidays with family and friends went well.

To start the year off right our next mission is to go to planet Hebridan where our very own Lts Sullivan and Pavlova will be participating in the Loop of Kon Garat race. Baseball caps with the team's logo will be available for all crewmembers. There will be representatives from many planets and species at this event so I expect all of you to be on your best behavior. Kramer out.

Lt Pavlova, set a course for Hebridan, Lt Sullivan, get us under way."

The trip itself was uneventful. The two lieutenants spent all their off duty time getting ready for the race, watching reports of previous races, analyzing the competitors and their ships. The course was different every year and was only revealed at the last minute to avoid giving competitors an unfair advantage. Scotty was also busy getting the ship ready, going over every inch and every circuit.

When they arrived, Commander Kramer and the racing team beamed down to the planet to meet with the officials. Since they had a team in the race the SGC delegation was assigned a luxury box in the local stadium where they could follow the race. It was just like what you would find on Earth: comfortable seats, free food and drinks and a big screen on the wall to follow the event.

As soon as the formalities were over with, Commander Kramer went back to the Enterprise to organize things. The event would last several days with the race spread out over three stages.

As the sponsors of a team, the SGC was expected to host a small party sometime during the race. Kramer would leave that to Dr Michaels and his chef. Lenore loved parties and Louise would love to show off her cooking skills. He would just show up to charm the officials. The race would start the next day so that night the capital was one big party. Shore leave was granted with the usual warnings about best behavior.

Determine to enjoy herself, Dr Lenore Michaels beamed down to the planet. Dressed in her finest leather outfit, she explored the city. Some things were the same no matter what planet you were on. After a while she went into the local version of a sports bar and ordered a drink. That's when she heard a very interesting conversation. When she got all the details she could she left the bar and beamed back to the ship.

The minute she was back on board, she called Commander Kramer, senior officers, the racing team and chief of security to the conference room. When everyone was seated she told them what she overheard. "Earlier tonight I was in a bar and heard a group of ladies I can best describe as race groupies organize a contest for race week. Points can be earned by collecting promotional items signed by the racers and invitations to VIP parties but the big points can be had by sleeping with various race personnel: members of the racing teams and their sponsors. As the new team we are number 1 on their list, especially the Commander. I don't know if this is a security risk but I thought you should all be told."

Commander Kramer blushed. "I had no idea I was so popular. First of all, I don't want to hear any Captain Kirk jokes. Second, you were right to tell us Dr Michaels. Besides the security risks involved, this could be diplomatically awkward. We don't want to appear rude or distant, but we don't want to be too intimate either.

I think we should inform race officials about this... contest and let them decide what they want to do about it. As for our VIP box, authorized officers or race officials only, no admirers or fans. Lt Harris, send a message to SGC telling them about this. I know a few of them plan to visit during race week. They should know what they're walking into.

Finally, Dr Lenore Michaels, you are going to be my escort for the duration of race week. If it looks like I'm unavailable that might discourage the race groupies, as you called them, if not, I'm counting on you to protect my honour."

"Why me? I'm a doctor, not a bodyguard."

"You are an attractive, accomplished woman, just the kind of lady an officer would look for as a date. And, if you can beat the marines in a snowball fight you can certainly hold off a bunch of enthusiastic fans."

"I'll do my best. For appearances sake I believe we should call each other by our first names when in public."

"Agreed. Now I think we should all turn in. We have a big day tomorrow."

The morning of the race, the teams and their sponsors were officially presented by the local media. In the days to come, each team would be interviewed in more detail. Then the Tech Con Group, official sponsors of the race, explained the three stages of the race including the obstacle course for the final stage.

The first stage was a flat out race, where speed was all that

mattered. Half the contestants moved on to stage two: a series of complex manoeuvres to test the design of the ships. It was the third stage that everyone looked forward to, an obstacle course around the solar system. The grand prize was a lucrative engineering contract but there were also prizes for ship design. If they won, the SGC believed that the contract would be an excellent way to exchange technology.

After the opening ceremonies, the officials just wandered around the stadium, chatting with various teams of granting interviews. Commander Kramer, with Dr Michaels at his side, was just finishing up an interview when a couple of young girls came up to him. Dr Michaels put her hand on his shoulder and whispered in his ear, all the while smiling to keep up appearances.

"Them!?! They're just kids, barely out of their teens."

"Just smile, remember you're supposed to be with me."

"Excuse us; you're Commander Kramer, captain of the earth ship?"

"Yes, what can I do for you girls?"

Their faces froze at that comment but they kept going.

"We're members of a local Racing Association and we want to invite you and your team to a party this evening."

"I'm sorry but that's not possible: tonight our team is hosting its own party for the officials and officers from our homeworld. Tell you what, why don't you give me your address and I'll have a bunch of team caps sent over. I'll even have our racers sign them."

Smiling suggestively, one of the girls took out a card from her cleavage and held it out, but it was Dr Michaels who took it. Commander Kramer put his arm around Dr Michaels' waist and walked away, leaving the girls looking upset.

That evening the party was held in the SGC VIP box. Having been informed of the situation and the cover story, General O'Neill came with Colonel Carter and General Landry was escorted by his daughter. Dr Michaels' dress was a perfect balance between race excitement and respectability. When the chairman of Tech Con Group heard of the contest he was not surprised.

"Sadly I had heard rumours. As a father I find such behaviour deplorable but short of locking them in their rooms there's not much you can do. Unfortunately, many racers are more than willing to participate. I hope this will not adversely

affect your opinion of us."

"Not at all."

Another official joined the conversation. "Couldn't help but overhear. I have also heard the same rumours. Thankfully my daughter is only 5. I don't have to face such a situation for many years to come. If you don't mind changing the subject, Commander Kramer, you are a great host: the food is wonderful, the drinks are refreshing, even the music is interesting. I look forward to further contact with your people."

"Thank you minister, I'm flattered."

The next few days went well. The team from SGC qualified from the first stage with a very good time. The second stage also went well, with Scotty winning a prize for engine design.

During that time, Commander Kramer had to dodge two more invitations from various young ladies. He and Dr Michaels were discussing it, sitting at a terrace. "I can't believe this. I'm being propositioned by girls young enough to be my daughter. It's not that they find me attractive, I'm just the means for them to win a contest."

"Hey, I'm supposed to be your date and I heard one of those girls call me an old cow when she thought I couldn't hear her."

"I heard one say that I'm not so bad for an old guy. I feel old and cheap. Oh no, the first two are coming back for another round. Let's get out of here."

They got up and Dr Michaels gave Commander Kramer a long passionate kiss and still smiling, whispered in his ear, "Don't get any ideas, that was just for show." The couple left smiling, leaving the girls stunned.

Finally, the third stage of the race came. The excitement was high and the SGC team were among the top three. Commander Kramer and Dr Michaels as well as a few other officers chose to watch the race from the VIP box but it was also shown all over the Enterprise. It was the final stretch, SGC almost tied with the lead ship. Around the first moon of Hebridan the lead ship was hit by stray mining debris and lost control, forcing SGC to swerve to avoid a collision. This caused just enough delay for the third ship to win the race. In the SGC box people were screaming: anger, frustration, disappointment.

Dr Michaels patted Commander Kramer on the back, "Don't worry; we'll kick their butts next year."



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IRISH FOLKLORE

Keith Braithwaite

This is an expanded version of a piece written by Keith Braithwaite for the March 2013 issue of Impulse, MonSFFA's News Bulletin, renamed for the occasion "Spreagadh," which is the Irish Gaelic word for "Impulse."

We celebrated **St. Patrick's Day** and all things Irish this past March 17, and thought the occasion a perfect opportunity to explore the font of inspiration for many a fantasy story, the vivid folklore of the Emerald Isle.

The early oral history of the Irish people liberally fuses fact and fiction to the point of it being difficult for modern historians to separate the two. With repeated tellings, the tales were embellished over generations, and the original Druidic intent of maintaining an historical narrative began to give way to the idea of passing the time during long winter nights with entertaining and uplifting stories told around the fire. When supernatural elements were added to the mix, chronicle became myth, as in the case of the Tuatha Dé Danann.

Tuatha Dé Danann

The Tuatha Dé Danann—roughly translated as the “People (or Tribe, or Nation) of the Goddess Danu”—are, in fact, a people believed by most historians to have originated in the Middle East and migrated to Ireland through central Europe some 1800 years B.C. to become Ireland's first truly civilized society. Advanced for the time in their scientific knowledge and practised in the arts, they lived under a system of government that included a judicial branch presided over by revered Brehons, or judges, whose word was irrefutable law that even the High King could not overturn.

The Tuatha Dé Danann arrived in western Connacht Province and conquered previous invaders the Fir Bolg in the First Battle of Maige Tuired, anglicized as “Moytura” or “Moytirra,” on the Mayo-Galway border, assimilating the defeated Fir Bolg into their feudal society. Establishing their seat of government at Tara in county Meath, the Tuatha Dé Danann were themselves conquered about 800 years later by the Milesians, who came to Ireland from the Iberian Peninsula and are believed to be the ancestors of the Gaels. The Milesians subsequently integrated much of Tuatha Dé Danann culture into their own.

As Milesian misunderstandings about those they had vanquished arose, and fears surrounded their strange and unfamiliar customs, superstitions developed and the Tuatha Dé Danann were ascribed all manner of magical powers and supernatural attributes. And so did the historical Tuatha Dé Danann in time become the mystical beings of Irish folklore.

The Irish Literary Revival of the late-19th and early-20th centuries sought to give to Ireland a unique literary and cultural identity, distinct from Britain's, that the country could rally around. Writers such as William Butler Yeats, Douglas Hyde, and Lady Isabella Augusta Gregory drew upon the heroes of legend to showcase the best of the past and create a noble example for the

present, shaping a cohesive Irish history and culture.

Lady Gregory's *Gods and Fighting Men* (1904)¹ is considered by many a key Revival work, presenting the Tuatha Dé Danann as not only an historical people, but a representation of Ireland's rich folkloric heritage, giving rise to a sense of national identity and reawakening an interest in Irish folklore and wider Celtic mythology not only in Ireland, but worldwide. Her mix of history and the supernatural offered a captivating folkloric account of Irish history and a magical “Otherworld” specific to the Irish.

Akin to the Greek Elysium and the Norse Valhalla, the Otherworld, or Tír na nÓg, “The Land of the Young,” also sometimes called Tír na mBeo, or “The Land of the Living,” Tír Tairngire, “The Land of Promise,” or Mag Mell, “The Delightful Plain,” is described either as an enchanted underground country or an island paradise situated beyond the edge of the map in the Western Sea. It is the home of supernatural beings, a place of eternal happiness where one hundred years is as a single day and old age, sickness, and death are non-existent.

Few mortal men have visited the Otherworld; one such is the poet Oisín, brought to the blessed realm by his lover, the golden-haired goddess Niamh Chinn Óir, on a magical horse that can gallop across water. What seems to Oisín only a few years pass and he eventually grows homesick, but during his time in the Otherworld with Niamh, a great many years have passed in Ireland. He returns home upon Niamh's horse with a warning never to let his feet touch the ground lest the years catch up with him in a heartbeat and he wither and die. He thus expires after falling from his mount while helping some men building a road move a heavy stone out of the way, and in some versions of the tale, he is visited by St. Patrick just as he dies.

The Tuatha Dé Danann are intrinsically tied to the Otherworld. Believed to have descended from the gods and arrived in Ireland “in a mist...through the air and the high air”, they are said to be a semi-divine race, and are masters of the enchanted arts and sciences.

They brought with them the four legendary treasures of Ireland: the Lia Fáil, or Stone of Destiny, which would loudly shout or roar when the rightful High King put his feet upon it, and was also



Lady Gregory 1852--1932

¹Now in public domain, the entire text is available on line from <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/gafm/>

able to revitalize the ruler, insuring a long reign; the Great Spear, or Sleg, of Lugh, which unfailingly found its target and was a guarantor of victory for whosoever wielded it in battle; the Claidheamh Soluis, or Sword of Light or Shining Sword, from which no opponent could escape, and once the sword of Nuada, first King of the Tuatha Dé Danann, who had lost an arm in battle that later was replaced by the healer Dian Cecht with a fully functional artificial substitute cast in silver; and the Coire Dagdae, or Dagda's Cauldron, a bottomless vessel from which no company departed unsatisfied.

After their defeat by the Milesians, the Tuatha Dé Danann were relegated to living underground, beneath the many sidhe, or barrows or cairns, that dot the Irish landscape. By means of the féth fiada, or cloak of concealment, they were able, when they so wished, to walk unseen among men.

Fairies



Fairies, or the Sí, Aos Sí, Aes Sídhe, or Daoine Sídhe, meaning “People of the Mounds,” are thought to be of Tuatha Dé Danann lineage. Some sources describe them as survivors of Tuatha Dé Danann society who retreated into the Otherworld after their defeat at the hands of the Milesians. Scholars consider that they may well be folkloric manifestations of the historic Tuatha Dé Danann.

Fairies are enchanted beings comparable to humans in stature, perhaps a little smaller, and are in

general strikingly beautiful in appearance, although some can be hideous and frightening. They live alongside but remain largely invisible to mortal men, tending their farms, enjoying athletic games, engaging in courtship and the like, much as do humans. They do not appreciate intrusions upon their privacy and are fiercely protective of their homes. Larger communities are ruled by a king or queen and live together in earthen forts, or Raths, inside which their palaces serve as assembly halls and the settings of great celebratory feasts. Passers-by can sometimes hear the sounds of this revelry in the countryside at night.

The din of battle can also be heard late at night when two rival Fairy armies clash; such hostilities are known as a Slua Sí, or Fairy Cavalcade, and it is inadvisable for a human to be out during such a conflict. The white liquid often found on the ground the morning after a Fairy mêlée is thought to be Fairy blood spilt during the fight.

It is prudent to avoid insulting or angering Fairies and considered bad luck, when speaking of them, to refer to them directly, so people instead employ such terms as Na Daoine Beaga (The Little People), Na Daoine Maithe (The Good People), and



Na Daoine Uaisle (The Noble People). Also, it is unwise for a human to join in a Fairy feast, for to partake of Fairy food or drink leaves one unable to return to the human world.

Alp-Luachra

An Alp-Luachra, or “Joint-Eater,” is a greedy fairy that preys upon people who happen to fall asleep by a stream, appearing in the form of a newt and crawling into the person’s mouth and down their gullet to consume half the food the person has eaten.



Fear Dearg

Fear Dearg, anglicized as Far Darrig and meaning “Red Man,” is a solitary Fairy half as tall as a man and dressed in a red coat and cap who occupies himself with, in particular, macabre practical jokes. His appearance often signals bad luck, especially if he is refused a request.



Clurichaun



The Clurichaun is similar to the well-known Leprechaun. Some sources regard them as regional variations of the same creature, or as a night form of the Leprechaun. A Clurichaun is always drunk and surly, and will damage one’s home and spoil one’s wine stock if mistreated. If treated well, he will protect one’s wine cellar.

Gancanagh

A Gancanagh, or Gean Cánach, meaning “Love Talker,” is a male Fairy known for seducing human women. A toxin in the creature’s skin makes him irresistible to the women, who typically die after interaction with the Gancanagh, either of heartbreak while pining for his love, or fighting each other to the death over the fellow.



Leannán Sídh



Meaning “Barrow-Lover,” the Leannán Sídh, or Leannán Sí, is a Fairy woman who takes a human lover. She is often depicted as a beautiful muse who offers encouragement to an artist in exchange for their ardour, which, unfortunately for the artist, frequently results in madness and an early demise. While it lasts, however, the artist leads an inspired life.

Poet William Butler Yeats' take on the Leannán Sídh cautions that if one consents to be the lover of this Fairy mistress, they fully become hers and cannot escape her hold except by finding another to take their place. She lives by taking from her lover his very life essence and he soon wastes away, the fate of the Gaelic poets, according to Yeats, too many of whom die young as "this malignant phantom" will not allow them to remain long on this Earth. But on the other hand, if they refuse her advances, she is compelled to become their slave.

Yeats lived until age 73, by the way, and so presumably was not under the thrall of any metaphysical colleen.



Banshee

A Banshee, or Bean Sídh, meaning "Woman of the Sídh," is a Fairy woman and harbinger of an impending death. She is more often heard, wailing and keening, usually in the vicinity of the family home of the person soon to die, than she is seen, but rare sightings of the Banshee reveal her to be an old woman combing her long, white hair as she laments.



Dullahan

The Dullahan, or Gan Ceann, meaning "Without a Head," is a headless horseman, usually seen riding a black mount and brandishing a human spine as his horsewhip. He carries his own head tucked under his arm and the place at which he halts his ride is said to be the very spot where a given person is fated to die. Upon the Dullahan calling out their name, that person immediately expires. It is impossible to bar a Dullahan's way as all gates and locks open as he approaches. But he is afraid of gold and can be successfully driven off by even a small amount of the precious metal.



Púca

The Púca is a ghostly horse with horns that appears to people outdoors late at night, dashes in under their legs, and takes them on terrifying rides through the countryside.



Cat Sídh



More common in Scottish folklore—there called a Cat Sith—than in Irish, this is a large black spectral cat with a tuft of white on its chest.

Taibhse and Taise

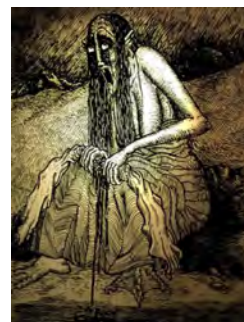
A deceased person returning to ask a favour of the living is called a Taibhse; these ghosts are harmless. A Taise is the apparition of a living individual, kind of like a doppelganger. Meeting one's own Taise is a sign of imminent death or madness.

Sluagh Sídh

The Sluagh Sídh, or Fairy Host, are said to be the troublesome and destructive spirits of the restless dead, often sinners or, in general, evil people who are welcome neither in Heaven nor Hell, on Earth nor in the Otherworld. They fly through the air in flocks, approaching from the west as they try to enter the houses of people who are dying in an attempt to carry off with them the souls of those poor unfortunates. The practise of closing west-facing windows to keep evil spirits out stems from this superstition.

Abhartach

Abhartach was a cruel and tyrannical dwarf who committed upon his people many abominations before he was finally slain by a neighbouring chieftain. Buried in a standing position, he rose from the dead the very next day more malevolent than before, is again killed and buried, only to rise a second time and terrorize the countryside. In some accounts, Abhartach drinks the blood of his victims. A druid, or variously, an early Christian saint, provides the solution to the problem and when Abhartach is dispatched a third time, he is this time buried head down, effectively neutralizing his magical powers. He never again rises as one of the Neamh-Mairbh, or walking dead.



Literary historians who challenge the commonly cited model for Dracula as being the Transylvanian prince Vlad Țepe (known as Vlad the Impaler, so named for his favoured form of execution) note that Irishman Abraham "Bram" Stoker's only source of Wallachian history at the time was a book that did not detail the Impaler's blood-soaked atrocities. They argue, then, that Stoker may have taken the tale of Abhartach as inspiration for his vampire.

Leprechaun

The most recognized denizen of the Irish Otherworld is undoubtedly the Leprechaun; the mischievous rascal's name is derived from Leipreachán, defined as a "Pigmy or Sprite", as well

as, but with less certainty, from the Old Irish Luchorpán, meaning "Small Body."

Leprechauns live in isolation, making for themselves quite comfortable homes in small holes in the ground covered in foliage. They are mischievous tricksters, neither entirely good nor completely evil.

The wizened and bearded Leprechaun stands about two-and-a-half feet tall and dresses in old-fashioned usually red or green attire that includes a magic hat which allows him to disappear and sometimes to travel across great distances in the blink of an eye. He carries with him a change purse each for copper, silver, and gold coins, and a special purse that can never be emptied.

He is a shoemaker by trade, making and mending the dancing shoes of his fellow Fairies of the Otherworld. And in that Fairies love to dance, he is kept rather busy. Paid for his services in gold, he keeps his earnings in a crock that he surreptitiously buries underground or places underwater. Difficult to catch, if one succeeds in getting hold of a Leprechaun, the little chap is compelled to reveal the location of his treasure; or, one can simply follow a rainbow to its end to find the pot-full of hidden riches.



SF/F AWARDS

C. Palmer-Lister



The Hugo Awards: The finalists for this year's Hugo Awards and John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer were announced on Saturday, March 30, 2013. A record number of nominations were received: 1343 valid nominating ballots, 1329 electronic and 14 paper. Winners will be announced at the 2013 Hugo Awards Ceremony September 1, 2013 at LoneStarCon 3.

As I write this, on March 31, I see that the griping on line has already started. Geez, just because your favourite novel or TV show was not nominated does not mean the world has gone all to heck in a hand basket!

Best Novel (1113 nominating ballots cast)

2312, Kim Stanley Robinson
Blackout, Mira Grant
Captain Vorpatril's Alliance, Lois McMaster Bujold
Redshirts: A Novel with Three Codas, John Scalzi
Throne of the Crescent Moon, Saladin Ahmed

Best Novelette (616 nominating ballots cast)

"The Boy Who Cast No Shadow", Thomas Olde Heuvelt
"Fade To White", Catherynne M. Valente
"The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for Sushi", Pat Cadigan
"In Sea-Salt Tears", Seanan McGuire (Self-published)
"Rat-Catcher", Seanan McGuire

Best Related Work (584 nominating ballots cast)

The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature
Chicks Dig Comics: A Celebration of Comic Books by the Women Who Love Them
Chicks Unravel Time: Women Journey Through Every Season of Doctor Who
I Have an Idea for a Book ... The Bibliography of Martin H. Greenberg
Writing Excuses Season Seven

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form (787 nominating ballots cast)

The Avengers
The Cabin in the Woods
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey
The Hunger Games
Looper

Best Novella (587 nominating ballots cast)

After the Fall, Before the Fall, During the Fall, Nancy Kress
The Emperor's Soul, Brandon Sanderson
On a Red Station, Drifting, Aliette de Bodard (Immersion Press)
San Diego 2014: The Last Stand of the California Browncoats, Mira Grant
"The Stars Do Not Lie", Jay Lake

Best Short Story (662 nominating ballots cast)

"Immersion", Aliette de Bodard
"Mantis Wives", Kij Johnson
"Mono no Aware", Ken Liu

Note: Category has only 3 nominees due to the minimum 5% requirement of Section 3.8.5 of the WSFS constitution.

Best Graphic Story (427 nominating ballots cast)

Grandville Bête Noire
Locke & Key Volume 5: Clockworks
Saga, Volume One
Schlock Mercenary: Random Access Memorabilia
Saucer Country, Volume 1: Run

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form (597 nominating ballots cast)

Doctor Who, "The Angels Take Manhattan"
Doctor Who, "Asylum of the Daleks"
Doctor Who, "The Snowmen"
Fringe, "Letters of Transit"
Game of Thrones, "Blackwater"



Best Editor, Short Form (526 nominating ballots cast)

John Joseph Adams
Neil Clarke
Stanley Schmidt
Jonathan Strahan
Sheila Williams

Best Semiprozine (404 nominating ballots cast)

Apex Magazine
Beneath Ceaseless Skies
Clarkesworld
Lightspeed
Strange Horizons

Best Fan Writer (485 nominating ballots cast)

James Bacon
Christopher J. Garcia
Mark Oshiro
Tansy Rayner Roberts
Steven H Silver

Best Editor, Long Form (408 nominating ballots cast)

Lou Anders
Sheila Gilbert
Liz Gorinsky
Patrick Nielsen Hayden
Toni Weisskopf

Best Fanzine (370 nominating ballots cast)

Banana Wings
The Drink Tank
Elitist Book Reviews
Journey Planet
SF Signal

Best Fan Artist (293 nominating ballots cast)

Galen Dara
Brad W. Foster
Spring Schoenhuth
Maurine Starkey
Steve Stiles

Best Professional Artist (519 nominating ballots cast)

Vincent Chong
Julie Dillon
Dan dos Santos
Chris McGrath
John Picacio

Best Fancast (346 nominating ballots cast)

The Coode Street Podcast
Galactic Suburbia Podcast
SF Signal Podcast
SF Squeecast
StarShipSofa

The John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer (476 nominating ballots cast)

Zen Cho*
Max Gladstone
Mur Lafferty*
Stina Leicht*
Chuck Wendig*

**Finalists in their 2nd year of eligibility.*

For more details, ie editors, publishers etc, consult the Lonestar website: <http://www.lonestarcon3.org/>

Mousing over titles and some names will bring up links to their sites, if I could find them.

Short stories are usually made available free to members of the World Con in reading packages.



The Constellation Awards: This year's Constellation Awards winners will be announced live at the 2013 Constellation Awards Banquet and Ceremony, taking place on Saturday, June 22nd, at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Toronto Markham.

Television Categories

Best Male Performance

Jared Padalecki, Supernatural
Jensen Ackles, Supernatural
John Noble, Fringe
Niall Matter, Primeval
Peter Dinklage, Game Of Thrones
Robert Carlyle, Once Upon A Time

Best Female Performance

Amy Acker, Grimm
Felicia Day, Supernatural
Lana Parrilla, Once Upon A Time
Maisie Williams, Game Of Thrones
Meaghan Rath, Being Human
Nina Dobrev, The Vampire Diaries

Best Science Fiction Television Series

Continuum
Doctor Who
Fringe
Once Upon A Time
Primeval: New World
Supernatural

Film, TV-Movie, or Mini-Series

Best Male Performance

Bruce Willis, "Looper"
Fran Kranz, "The Cabin In The Woods"
Joseph Gordon-Levitt, "Looper"
Josh Brolin, "Men In Black 3"
Mark Ruffalo, "The Avengers"
Martin Freeman, "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey"

Best Female Performance

Anne Hathaway, "The Dark Knight Rises"
Charlize Theron, "Snow White And The Huntsman"
Halle Berry, "Cloud Atlas"
Jennifer Lawrence, "The Hunger Games"
Noomi Rapace, "Prometheus"
Sarah Silverman, "Wreck-It Ralph"
Scarlett Johansson, "The Avengers"

Best Science Fiction Film, TV-Movie, or Mini-Series of 2012

The Avengers
The Cabin In The Woods
Chronicle
Cloud Atlas
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey
The Hunger Games
Looper

Other Categories

Best Technical Accomplishment

Cinematography in "Cloud Atlas"
Visual Effects in "The Avengers"
Visual Effects in "Ted"
Cinematography in "Game Of Thrones"
Visual Effects in "Supernatural",
episode "A Little Slice Of Kevin"
Visual Effects in "Chronicle"
Visual Effects in "John Carter"

Best Overall Film or Television Script

Arrow, "Muse Of Fire"
The Cabin In The Woods
Chronicle (Max Landis)
Continuum, "A Stitch In Time"
Looper (Rian Johnson)
Supernatural, "Hunteri Heroici"
Touch, "Pilot"

Outstanding Canadian Contribution

Continuum
Judith & Garfield Reeves-Stevens,
creators of "Primeval: New World"
Lost Girl
Shaftesbury Films, for "The Listener"
Supernatural



*Further details, for instance titles of specific episodes, producers, etc, see the official website: <http://constellations.tcon.ca/>
Mousing over names or titles may call up links to websites, at least those I could find or thought worthwhile looking up.*

REVIEWS: Movies & Television

FACE OFF Lynda D.-Boyer

Ça fait maintenant environ un an et demi, deux ans que je regarde ce programme, et je le trouve FAN-TAS-TI-QUE !

Enfin, peut-être un peu moins vu que c'est leur 4e présentation, mais les créations présentées sont toujours époustouflantes.

Face/Off est une sorte de série télé-réalité, genre compétition, présentée au canal SPACE (70) à tous les mardis soirs à 21 h pm. Sur une période de 4-5 mois à chaque fois (sept. - déc., janv.-avril). Elle réunit de 12 à 14 artistes, débutant ou non dans le milieu du cinéma, auxquels on fait appel pour créer des personnages, des créatures. À chaque semaine, on leur donne une épreuve spécifique qu'ils doivent réussir en 3 jours. Je vous donne un exemple.

Épreuve : créer un Roi des Enfers venant de différentes cultures (chrétienne, hindou, indienne, etc.) Chaque artiste a choisit un nom et on lui présente son histoire par la suite.

Seul ou en équipe de 2-3 personnes, dépendant de celle-ci.

Dans ce cas-ci, lors de la 2e journée, on donne ce que j'appellerais un "twist" : l'enfer en question a viré...en glace !

Vous imaginez les efforts ? Eux qui ont déjà commencé le travail, il faut légèrement ou complètement changer le concept de la créature prévu à l'origine, rajouter certains trucs, etc. 1er jour : présentation de l'épreuve, préparation du travail (imaginer/dessiner la créature, matériel requis, etc). 2e jour : efforts continus. 3e jour : 5 heures laboratoire, arrivée des modèles. "Last looks" en 1 heure.

La fin de chaque épisode réunit les artistes avec leurs créations face à 3 juges qui vont décider à la fois du gagnant de la semaine et l'artiste à éliminer. Leurs noms : GLENN HETRICK,

VE NEILL, NEVILLE PAGE. Bien que très bien connus dans le milieu aux États-Unis, je n'en ai jamais entendu parler, bien qu'il soient brièvement présentés à chaque fois. Durant les 3 premières présentations de FACE/OFF, un autre homme faisait office de 3e juge, mais je crois que ses obligations personnelles/professionnelles l'aient obligés à se retirer. J'ignore les raisons. Il a été remplacé par M. Page.

Il y a parfois, également, de brèves épreuves d'une demi-heure à 2 heures, dont le gagnant (e) (pas d'élimination) reçoit l'immunité. Il ou elle ne peut être éliminé(e) de celle de 3 jours.

Je vous laisse deviner ce qui se passe à la fin des 4 mois en question, ou il n'y a plus que 3 finalistes...

J'aime beaucoup cette émission de télé-réalité dans le fond parce qu'elle permet aux artistes concurrents de se surpasser, de se dépasser, de se connaître entre eux, de développer une solide amitié. Aussi, et surtout, parce qu'ils ne sont plus simplement des noms sur papier : ce sont maintenant des êtres humains, avec chacun (e) leurs faces, leurs visages, leurs manières d'être, leurs talents et défauts respectifs...

Juges comme artistes en bénéficient parce que ça leur donne de nouvelles idées, de nouveaux concepts, ça leur permet de faire connaissance, de n'être plus des inconnus les uns pour les autres.

Il faut également, je trouve, beaucoup de courage pour participer à la compétition, parce que les artistes reçoivent compliments/critiques constructives de la part des juges. Depuis que cette série télé-réalité a commencé, un seul artiste n'a pu y faire face : dès la première épreuve, alors que les artistes attendaient la décision des juges, il est parti de lui-même, et a donc été disqualifié. Tous les autres artistes qui y ont participé à un moment donné ou à un autre ont tenu le coup...

*You can download episodes of Face Off from Space:
<http://www.space.ca/FaceOff.aspx>*

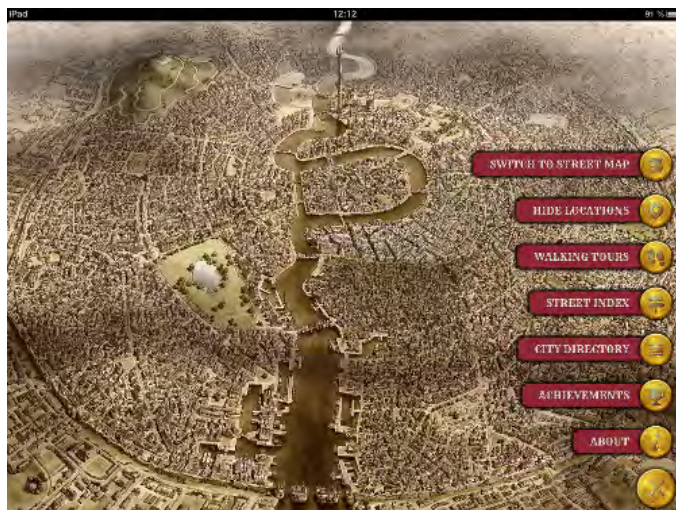
Ankh-Morpork iPad App Sylvain St-Pierre



The splash page

As apps go, the Ankh-Morpok one is a little expensive. \$13.99 plus tax is what you expect to pay for a decent soft-cover book. But this particular application represents an immense amount of work and is a cut above your standard reprint of a public domain novel.

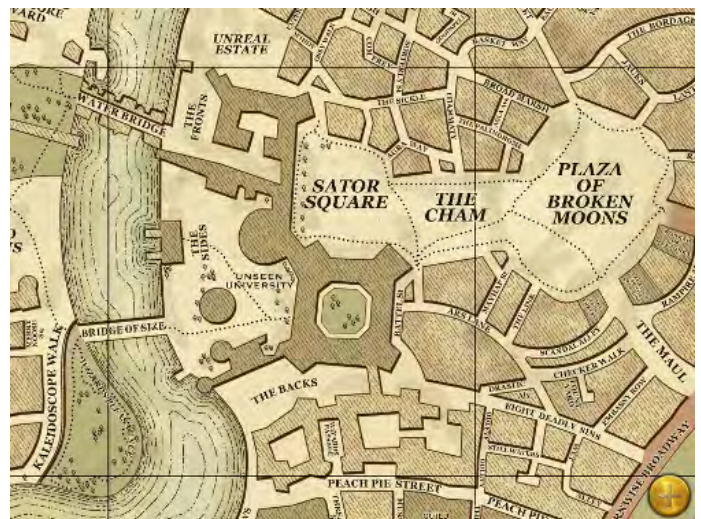
Given that it is pure fantasy, the Discworld has been mapped with a precision that many so-called real world locations could use. Unlike the Star Trek universe, where vast empires and stellar alliances seem to undergo a major upheaval every time a new star chart is published, canon chelonigraphy has been remarkably consistent. The Ankh-Morpork App agrees almost perfectly with Stephen Briggs' *The Streets of Ankh Morpork*, first published in 1993, and which was itself quite amazing in that it managed to not contradict any of the previous stories



A scalby bird's eye view, with topic menu

(and was priced at the time at \$10.95). The minor differences can easily be blamed on urban renewal.

One can choose between a standard street map, done in a nicely old fashioned style; or an aerial view, somewhat more confusing to read but oh so much more entertaining. The second option is quite lively, with lots of people walking the



Area around the Unseen University, in map mode.



The same neighbourhood, in aerial view mode. The figure in the middle, holding a bright blue umbrella, is Hortensia d'Antiqua, giving one of her excellent walking tours.

streets and each neighbourhood has a distinct ambience. In the vicinity of the Guild of Seamstresses, for instance, one can hear giggles as the girls - uh... *entertain* their customers; and strangely coloured puffs of vapour emanate from the Alchemist Guild building.

And the people are not limited to humans: the pedestrians are from all the numerous races known to inhabit the city. Plenty of helmeted dwarfs, lumbering trolls, assorted witches

and less readily identifiable creatures. Some of them are unique, too, and finding specific characters is an actual game function imbedded in the app. So far, I have been able to find Captain Carrot, Sergeant Detritus, Moist von Lipwig, Gaspode the Wonder Dog and Death (the scythe was a dead giveaway...).



Death walks the street. Note the icons, marking shops, inns and various places of interest.

Strangely, I am still looking for the Librarian, despite the fact that he must be standing out in a crowd!

There are very exhaustive street and business directories, and you will never be at a loss to find the nearest shop that sells dark glasses for the convenience of vampires who need to be out in the daytime. Taping a location icon will call up more information about a given place. Often, you will get nothing more than a quaint name, especially for the many taverns, but for some there can be a very comprehensive description and even printed advertisement. Three complete walking tours are also offered, with Hortensia d'Antiqua acting as a guide and witty commentator.

While you do not need to have read every single Discworld

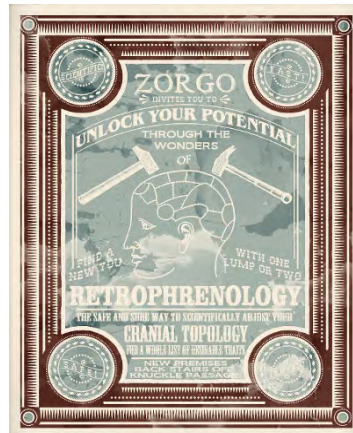
novel to enjoy it, this application will require at least some basic knowledge about this universe. Otherwise, you will not understand what is funny about Agatean laundries, Genuan restaurants or the Reformed Temple of Om. Or why it is so vitally important to hold one's breath when crossing a bridge over the river Ankh.



Moist von Lipwig

There is not all that much truly original material, but one should not disregard the value of updates. The app went on line on February 11th, 2013 and, as I write these lines in early March, there has already been a revision. This was supposedly to take care of a few bugs, but I am almost certain that new shops and sights were added as well, as I do not recall having seen them earlier (though this city is so vast that I may be wrong there).

Definitely a must-have for any serious iPad-owning Discworld enthusiast. Sadly, this product does not seem to be available for other platforms, but we can hope that this will change if there is enough demand.



Typical advertising.¹

¹In our world, phrenologists used to read a person's character by feeling the bumps on their head. On the Discworld, a retro phrenologist selectively adds bumps to give you a more desirable character...



REVIEWS: Webcomics

Free Fall, A Girl and her Fed, Selkie, Oglaf Danny Sichel

Strip name: **Freefall**
<http://freefall.purrsia.com>
Creator: Mark Stanley
Updates:
Monday/Wednesday/Friday
Art quality: cartoony,
competent, and consistent

Freefall puts the "science" in science fiction. Florence Ambrose is an engineer who tries to solve



problems... and on a recently-settled colony planet, there can be a *lot* of problems. The robots who make up a substantial portion of the colony's labour force seem to be developing free will, the local nonhuman alien is constantly stealing things just because he can, and Florence herself isn't even supposed to be there. She was released from coldsleep on the wrong planet, and she'll have to wait 7 years before it's safe to go back into coldsleep. Oh, and she's a genetically engineered canine, a "Bowman's Wolf" which means she's – technically – an artificial intelligence, and – even more technically – is property without rights.

Sometimes the pace can seem a bit slow – *Freefall's* been

going since 1998 (early on, there's a throwaway mention of Bush v. Gore dragging on for centuries), and less than a year has passed in-story – but Florence is having some VERY full days, with lots of important things happening, and Mark Stanley doesn't want us to miss a bit.

Strip name: *A Girl and her Fed*

<http://www.agirlandherfed.com>

Creator: K. Brooke Spangler

Updates: Monday /Thursday



Art quality: Originally, stylized black-and-white semi-competence; switched to nicer full-color material after a few hundred strips or so, and Spangler has gone back to the beginning to replace the cruder material with the better stuff on a gradual basis. So when you read from the beginning, you'll hit a point where the art quality suddenly drops... but as you continue, it'll jump back up.

AGahF is an unholy blend of dirty politics, plausible supertech cyborgs, psychic powers, and ghosts. It's a romantic comedy, it's a conspiracy thriller, it's an action adventure. And there's a really obnoxious uplifted koala.

It all starts when Hope Blackwell (the Girl) discovers that her mail is being opened, and that she's under surveillance by Agent Patrick Mulcahy (the Fed). Why she was under surveillance in the first place, and why Mulcahy was put on this assignment, and what Benjamin Franklin has to say about the whole thing, leads to a much deeper and darker world than any of them could have imagined.

Occasionally, the plot can be a little tricky to follow, but that's because Spangler treats us like adults, expecting us to be able to make the necessary transitions without having our hands held the whole way – and sometimes because we're being set up for a nasty revelation a few strips later.

Strip name: *Selkie*

<http://www.selkiecomic.com>

Creator: Dave Warren

Updates: Monday / Wednesday / Friday

Art quality: Sketchy cartoonish, but developing rapidly. Begins in black-and-white, switches to color after a few dozen strips.

It's not uncommon for slice-of-life webcomics to dip their toes in SFnal waters – the sapient cactus



in *Girls with Slingshots*, the omnipresent AIs in *Questionable Content*, Kharisma's imaginary friend protecting her in prison in *Something Positive* – but that's almost never a regular theme with actual consequences. *Selkie* is a refreshing exception to this trend, a pleasantly mundane portrayal of daily life, realistically and consistently affected by something distinctly alien.

Todd Smith is a young professional who decides to adopt a child. He subsequently learns that, instead of being caused by some debilitating disease or congenital condition, his new daughter Selkie's utterly peculiar physical appearance is the result of her being, quite literally, not human. What comes next is a nicely plausible tour of the consequences and implications of an alien biology – from the difficulty of finding shoes that will fit nonhuman feet, to the realization that a child who needs to leave class to flush her gills risks extra bullying – cleanly woven into a friendly narrative with believable characters. In the background, but regularly making its presence felt, is the question of where Selkie came from and why she was given up for adoption.

This is a comic that will make you care about the power struggles in a class of second-graders, and the lives of their parents.

Strip name: *Oglaf*

<http://www.oglaf.com>

Creator: Trudy Warren

Updates: Sunday

Art quality: Lush, detailed, clean, well-rounded and distinct.

At the other end of the spectrum from *Selkie*, we have *Oglaf*. The first thing you must know about *Oglaf* is that it is almost

entirely Not Safe For Work. In fact, the archives assume that each strip is not safe unless otherwise specified (and thus we have strips labelled with 'Safe', 'Fairly Safe', 'Safesque', 'A Bit Sweary', 'Immature', 'Low Impact Monster Penis', etc). And the reason *Oglaf* is not safe for work is that it has sexual content. It has *very* sexual content. In many *Oglaf* strips, characters openly have sex, or are motivated by sex.

That said, this is not porn. This is hilarious absurd comedy (with punchlines like "it was a mistake to let the mule drink" and "that's a branch; it's **always** been there"), often but not always sexual or sex-themed, set in a stereotypical fantasy world with magic and monsters and adventurers. For the most part, the strips are stand-alone, but there are some recurring characters and a few brief arcs, so you'll get more out of it if you start at the beginning. (Click 'next page' instead of 'next story')

Oh, and there's a character named 'Oglaf'. He's appeared twice in four years, and does not have sex with anyone.



The Queendom of Sol Series
Sylvain St-Pierre

I discovered the *Queendom of Sol* universe by sheer chance. A short story set in it, *The Policeman's Daughter*, was included in Rich Horton's *Science Fiction Best of the year 2006*, and I liked it so much that I sought other works by the same author. I found that Wil McCarthy is now a well established writer who keeps to the fields he graduated and made a living in: nanotechnology and computer science. The two are put to very good use in his stories.



Wil McCarthy

Far more than the plot, it is the description of everyday life that I find fascinating in the series. The timeline covers several thousand years but the start, although not precisely pinpointed, seems to be roughly around a hundred years from now and we get the impression that a few people from our time may still be alive by then.

The term "Queendom" is owed to the fact that humanity, having drifted to excessive libertarianism, found itself lacking moral guidance. It was decided to restore monarchy, but the only person of royal blood left that could be found was the last princess of the island of Tonga, who was drafted to the position, much over her protests. Rather than get a malleable virgin queen as they expected, the Solar System got a strong willed woman who ended up doing a wonderful job. As for the virgin part, that requirement is taken care of through advanced medical attention...

Technology has gone forward in most other fields, but it is mainly two inventions that have revolutionised human civilisation: wellmatter and faxes, and we get quite an eyeful in the opening book, *The Collapsium*.

Wellmatter is a silicon-based substance that can be programmed on the fly to emulate just about anything, including theoretical compounds that cannot exist in nature. It is generally called wellstone because this is the most common default setting, but it can imitate metal, wood, fabric and much more. With a simple verbal command, because it can - and usually does - include an hypercomputer as part of its matrix.

A chunk of wellstone needs power to work, but it can easily gather it's own energy from ambient light and heat, because it can also be made super-absorbent or super-reflective. In fact, one of the first edicts of Queen Tamra-Tamatra Lutui pertained to Architectural Courtesy, because whole neighbourhoods were ending up freezing or roasting through the excessive heat gathering or dumping of a few large buildings. If you think the idea ridiculous, please consider that today's employees at the Aria hotel in Las Vegas have to keep moving potted plants around the pool during the day, to prevent patrons' toupees from catching fire under the concentrated sunbeams reflected by the curved mirror walls...

A slab of wellstone is not quite as sturdy as a slab of steel of the same size, since at least half the mass must remain silicon to maintain the simulation of steel, but if greater strength is required then you only need to simulate titanium or some exotic super-alloy, some of which, like bunkerlite and impervium, are very strong indeed. As long as it can be exposed to light for a few hours a day, a wellcloth garment will keep you warm or cool as needed, and you only need to mutter a few words to transform a silk negligé into an armoured battle suit, in the colour of your choice. Any wellmatter surface can be turned into a high quality holographic communication device, with a picture so sharp that it is like looking through a window (a feature extensively used by interior decorators).

Faxes are even more astonishing. Basically, they are nanotech matter dismantlers/assemblers that work amazingly fast both ways. You can throw an object at a fax plate, which looks like a fog-covered slab, and it will go in as if through a curtain, broken down into its constituent atoms, all of them precisely recorded. With the information thus saved, you can then "print" as many copies as you wish, with the option of editing such details as size, texture or colour. You can also send the file to another fax anywhere in the Solar System, effectively resulting in teleportation. The only restriction is that the printing fax must have sufficient reserves of the necessary elements in its buffers, but you can fix most shortages by feeding anything available - including dirt or garbage - in the machine. Faxes can also produce wellstone, which can imitate other matter, so you do not even really need to stock large quantities of the rarer elements.

As might be expected in a world where such devices are common, the economy of the Queendom is a bit different from ours. Traditional manufacturing is virtually non-existent, and mostly restricted to the making of fax machines, which are difficult to make and do wear out with usage because of the extreme finesse of the components. With a well-stocked fax, and a few ordinary household robots to help, a single person can assemble a high-performance spaceship in a few hours. Physical production costs being nearly non-existent, most consumer goods are available on a designer fee basis, much like modern software. If you download a chair, you will pay a small sum to whoever created it. Many things are available as freeware, but you have to be careful of scammers, otherwise you will find out one morning that the item no longer works and is demanding payment to restart...

Where it becomes really interesting is that faxes can do all this with people as well, although a high-end device (practically all of them are) is a must for a viable result.

The ability to manipulate people just like a text file has resulted in a society that we would find rather strange. You can print several copies of yourself at the same time, and use them in many different ways. It can range from simply having a conversation with yourself to something a little more elaborate,

like going to several functions at once. Multiple copies can be reconverged, and you will have all the memories of each. I personally find that last bit fascinating for fans, because you could attend all the tracks of a good convention that way! It would also make organising and running the same convention quite a breeze. Imagine: once single competent volunteer could do everything...

People can be edited just as easily as objects, and everybody looks like they want. Most opt to be young and beautiful, but you can make yourself bright blue or add extra limbs if you feel like it. Things like grey hair and jowls become fashion statements rather than signs of old age. Many people no longer bother to exercise, because you can stuff yourself with burgers and fries all day long and still be slim and muscular (there is probably a golden statue to the inventor of the fax somewhere, erected by grateful fans...). Medical attention becomes the rarest of services, as any ailment, from a chipped nail to decapitation, can be instantly cured by throwing the patient into the nearest fax, which are everywhere, and you can lace your bones with nearly unbreakable substances as a preventive measure.

In the early days of faxes, some people did have serious misgivings about the fact that faxing technically required the “death” of people who went through, but since those people who refused to use one for that reason eventually all died, they became very rare indeed. Many of us would find their average attitude towards death a bit callous: as long as a single copy of someone is still in existence, even if that copy was made years ago, it is considered that this person is still alive. Legally, this can have strange results. “Murder To the Fifth Degree”, for instance, is viewed as merely a denial of the memories accumulated by the slain copy and is only a misdemeanour. Murder One, however, the killing of all existing copies with no backup available, is the most terrible of crimes because you have eradicated an existence that might have lasted forever!

With lives lasting so long, there is tendency to consider

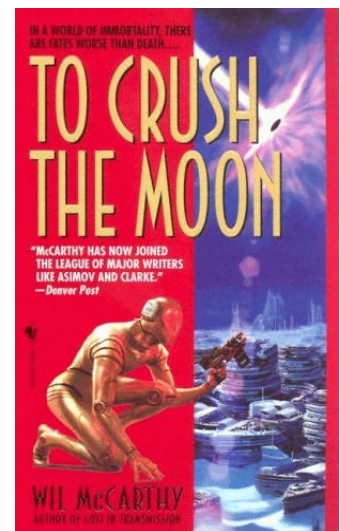
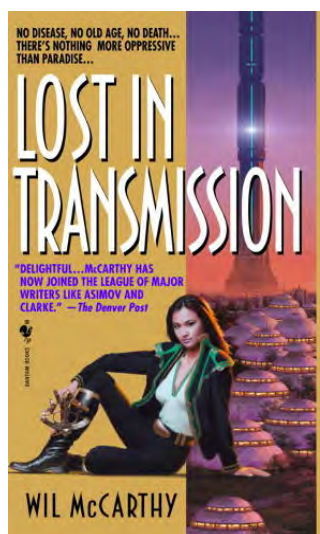
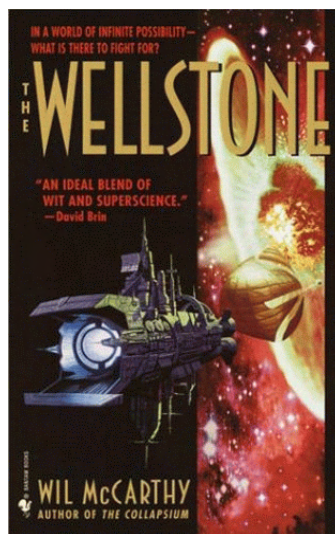
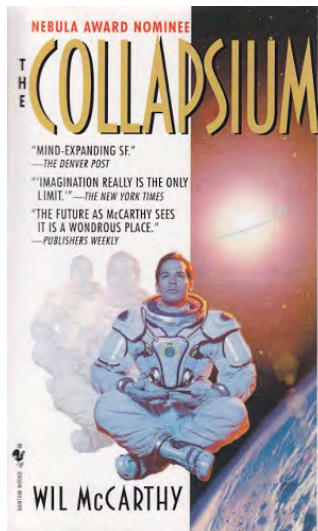
anybody younger than fifty to be still a child, and the second book in the series, *The Wellstone*, deals mostly with that problem. There are also other inconveniences, like the danger of letting multiple copies diverges too much, because you may find that some of them will no longer want to reconverge. The law does allow for copies to “divorce” their own self in certain cases, and there are - fortunately rare - instances of people murdering themselves. One villain even makes copies of himself to torture whenever one of his plans does not work, as punishment for failure!

A far greater concern as time passed was the emergence of Death cults; people who felt that it was wrong for humans to live forever and who kept trying to wreck the system. While they technically never succeeded, because of the extraordinary safety measures put in place, their help was eventually instrumental in the fall of the Queendom when refugees from a failed colony came back with unreasonable demands about being too quickly reintegrated on overcrowded worlds.

The colonisation of other star systems is the main focus of the third book, *Lost In Transmission*, and the many original ways faxes are used in that effort make for a fascinating reading. This includes the building of new people from scratch, the Faxborns, to help building up the population to sustainable levels.

The fourth and last book, *To Crush the Moon*, deals with what happened after the collapse of the Queendom and is mostly set on the Moon, which has been compressed to a smaller size to provide a surface gravity comparable to that of Earth.

All the tomes in the series have comprehensive and well-written technically appendices. And while the sort of scientific wizardry the describe is still way ahead of us, we really get the feel that such may very well become possible one day. In all, a spellbinding and superbly woven tapestry about the way a given technology can shape a civilisation. I personally highly recommend it.



January 2013

Photos by CPL & BKR

MonSFFA's January 20 meeting saw the re-election as MonSFFA President, Vice-President, and Treasurer of, respectively, **Berny Reischl, Keith Braithwaite, and Sylvain St-Pierre**. MonSFFA elects annually a president,



Keith and Berny at the January Meeting

vice-president, and treasurer—who together form the Executive Committee—and charges them with the responsibility of running the club on behalf of the membership. The three executives recruit advisors and appoint officers to assist them in carrying out this responsibility. Added this year to the usual three executive posts was a second vice president; **Lindsay Brown** will take on that role, one she has previously filled.

Despite a difficult 2012 which saw the club struggle financially and wrestle with apathy, all against the backdrop of a changing fandom, MonSFFA remains relatively healthy. Certainly, meeting programming has continued to entertain and inform while the club reports that it had a little more money in the bank at the end of 2012 than at the beginning. Cost-cutting measures with regard to the club's publications, Warp and Impulse—notably, the move to online delivery—seem to have paid dividends.

Our Executive members have all of our best wishes and support as they face the challenges of another year at the helm of one of Montreal's longest-running and most active sci-fi clubs.

The club's January 20 meeting included a discussion period that focussed on filling the void left by Con*Cept's demise. The featured presentation was a most interesting show-and-tell by **Berny Reischl and Mark Burakoff** on their fannish business venture producing quality sci-fi lapel pins and other collectibles.

Under the name Two Wacky Pin Guys, Berny and Mark have been running a cottage industry for some years producing strikingly designed, high-quality sci-fi lapel pins and, occasionally, other collectibles. Berny's day job as a graphic designer and artist, and Mark's as a master

model-maker for a company that produces cast metal promotional and souvenir items like lapel pins, key chains, and belt buckles have allowed their small fannish business venture to shine. Over the years, profits have been sufficient to finance their numerous trips to SF/F cons, where they sell their merchandise. The unique design and superior quality of their product often outclasses large-scale authorized manufacturers producing the same kind of thing. TWPG products have impressed a number of film and television people, resulting in several contracts to produce lapel pins for the Star Trek and Babylon 5 franchises, for example! But most of the TWPG line are limited-edition individual lapel pins or beautifully packaged collectible sets of pins inspired by classic sci-fi films and TV series. One framed set of 2001: A Space Odyssey pins drew a marvellously appreciative personal response from Arthur C. Clarke, to whom Berny had sent a complimentary set.



Berny and Mark do not produce large quantities of their pins and collectibles in order to remain below the radar of copyright police. Most of the movie studios and television producers don't mind the free publicity generated by TWPG and other fannish product, but some do, and Berny and Mark stay clear of their properties. Only once or twice has TWPG ever received a cease-and-desist notice, which was immediately respected.

MonSFFen were given a slide-show on the process of designing and fashioning masters from which moulds are made and the pins produced. The means of applying colour and certain fine printed details were explained, too. A selection of the TWPG pins and collectibles produced over the years, along with design sketches, were on display.

The second half of the meeting was dedicated to one of our regular "Open Discussion" sessions and dealt with a suggestion put forth by **Keith Braithwaite** that a new mini-con of some kind, similar to the **TransWarp Mega-Meetings** of old, be considered as replacement for the defunct Con*Cept. (The TransWarp events were, essentially, expanded MonSFFA meetings involving the participation of other local sci-fi clubs.) The idea was generally well received by the group and an animated discussion followed, with folk commenting on particulars of the proposed project, such as

structure, marketing, programming, attendance cost, and an optimum date. The event, should it come to pass, would likely be a small-scale, no-guest, probably one-day affair focussed on panel programming and hands-on workshops for fannish crafting of various kinds. Some sort of dance or party in the evening would cap the day. Further discussion is

promised.

We extend particular thanks to **Berny and Mark** for sharing their experience as fannish entrepreneurs with us at our inaugural meeting of 2013.



Display tables had work in progress from Wayne, and models and creations by one of our youngest members, Isis. As usual, members met for supper after the meeting. Seen here are Keith, Josée, Sylvain, Berny, and Lindsay.

Con*Cept Corporation Dissolved

At a Special General Assembly held just before MonSFFA's January 20 meeting and chaired by Con*Cept Secretary/Treasurer **Marc Nadeau**, the members of Con*Cept present voted to dissolve the corporation that has existed for about a decade, under which Con*Cept was governed. Without a functioning convention, there is little reason to maintain the corporate body, explained Marc. But the decision as to whether or not to terminate the corporation is legally in the hands of the members of Con*Cept and as such, Marc put forward a motion to dissolve Con*Cept SF&F Inc. After a brief discussion, the vote was called and the room overwhelmingly opted in favour. Only one opposed the motion.



Board members Sean Peatman (standing) and Marc Nadeau chair their final meeting.

Once the legal paperwork is filed and the corporation is no more, Con*Cept's assets (there are no debts) will be transferred to MonSFFA, which founded the convention over 20 years ago. This amounts to some \$60 cash and a number of physical assets such as office supplies, storage containers, and Art Show display panels (a complete list is to be provided MonSFFA).

The club will no doubt hang on to a few items but will likely offer the remainder to other local fannish groups who might make good use of them.

Potentially, Con*Cept could be revived and run outside of any corporate structure, should a group attempt to relaunch the convention, but legally, the name Con*Cept would be unavailable to them.

Club Policy Regarding Electronic, Physical Distribution of Warp

As club members know, MonSFFA's fanzine, Warp, is available in either traditional printed or electronic form. While we encourage MonSFFA to adopt the electronic version in order to maximize savings by the club related to the costs of printing and mailing, we understand that some may prefer a printed copy of each issue. We encourage members who desire one of our physical copies of Warp to acquire the publication at a MonSFFA meeting, thus saving the club the charges associated with mailing the fanzine via Canada Post.

Members who wish a club-produced printed version but are not necessarily able to attend each club meeting (out-of-town members, certainly) may request a copy be mailed to them. Please note that these members must contact club VP

Keith Braithwaite (450- 692-8831 or keith1958@live.ca) and ask that printed versions of the fanzine be sent to them via standard post. Please further note that **only** those members from whom the club has received such a request will be mailed a physical copy of the fanzine. Our default assumption is that each of our members receives Warp electronically. It is important that any MonSFFA who wishes a club-produced physical copy but cannot attend club meetings so as to pick one up contact VP Braithwaite to make arrangements to have Warp mailed to them.



If we do not hear from you, we won't know to mail you your printed copy of WARP.