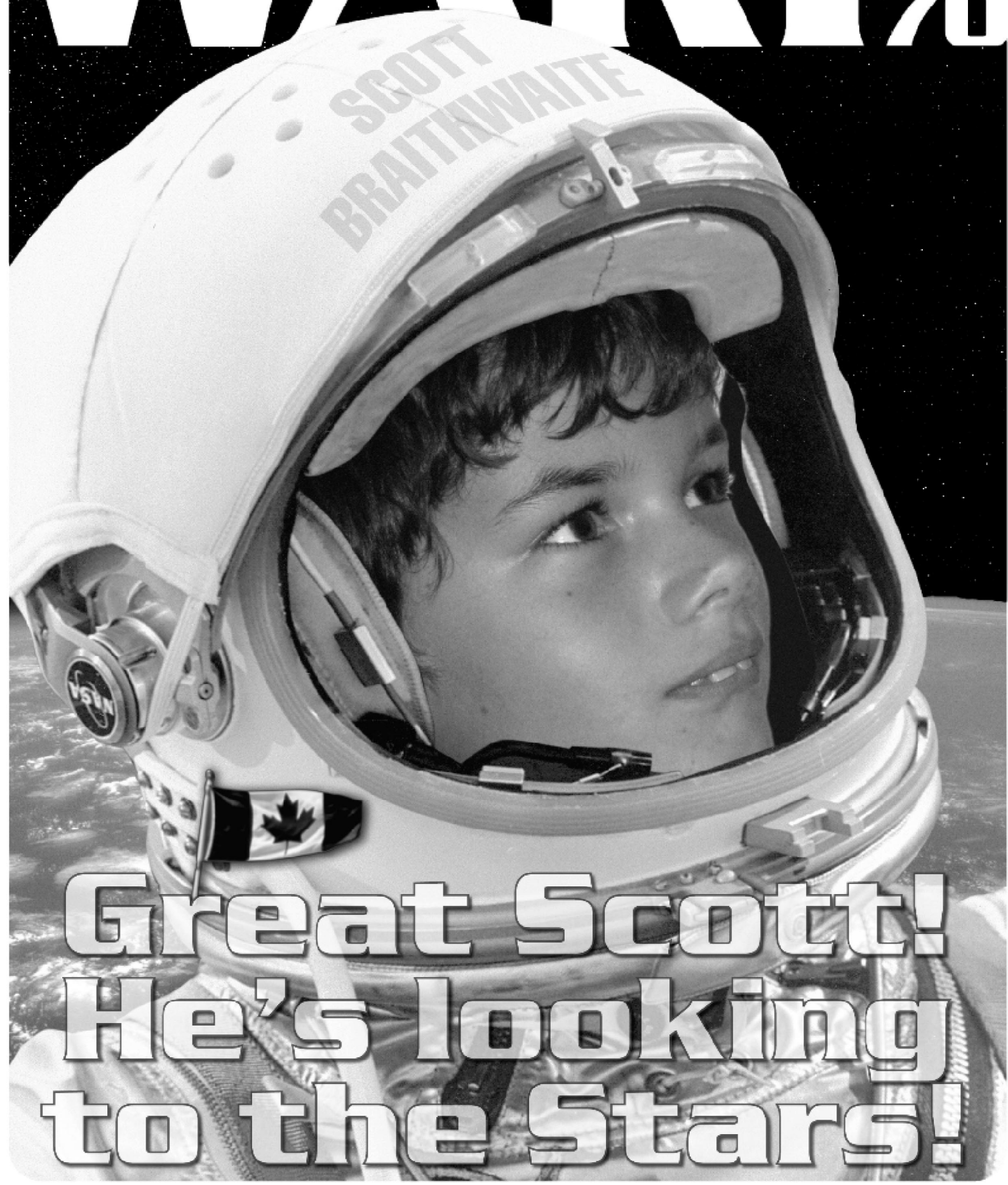


WARIP 70



**Great Scott!
He's looking
to the Stars!**

MonSFFA's Executive:

Bernard Reischl
President

Keith Braithwaite
Vice-President

Sylvain St-Pierre
Treasurer

Appointed Positions:

PR, Membership, editor of *Impulse*
Keith Braithwaite

Web Master
Bernard Reischl

Audio/Video
Wayne Glover

Editor of WARP
Cathy Palmer-Lister

Board of Advisors (BoA)

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

On the Cover

Bernard Reischl used Scott Braithwaite as his guinea pig during a demonstration of photoshop. Scott's first contribution to WARP can be found on page 15 of this issue.



Write to us:

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MonSFFA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Programming is subject to change.

August 24, 2008

BoA

All members in good standing are invited to help plan our activities.
IMPORTANT: Discussion of possible new meeting hall.

MonSFFA Member Workshops

*Share your talents!
Learn a new craft!*



September 21, 2008

Spacecraft Design – Real & Speculative

Presented by Keith Braithwaite,
Wayne Glover & Dominique Durocher



Con*Cept 2008 – Conchair Cathy Palmer-Lister invites MonSFFA participation in Montreal's annual SF & F convention

Space Babes and Hunks

Presented by Fernando Novo, Keith Braithwaite,
& Josée Bellemare



October 26, 2008



Local Convention Roundups
(Con*Cept, Draconis, Otakuthon)



Presented by Keith Braithwaite

November 16, 2008

Star Myths

Presented by Cathy Palmer-Lister

Guest Speaker

Presented by member(s) of the RASC, Montreal
Centre



December 6, 2008

MonSFFA Christmas Party
Time and place TBA.

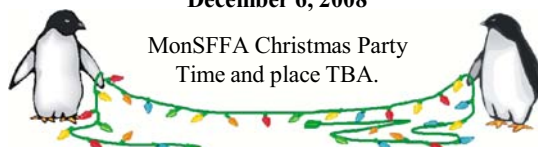


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May 3, 2008
Dear MonSFFEN:

Many thanks for issue 69 of Warp, and once again, happy anniversary. You can all take some pride in being able to keep a club and paper fanzine in this age of e-files and websurfing at home.

Comments on what's within...

My letter...that is an old letter. Time for an update. The CNIB let me go just before my three months was up, and as far as I can tell, it was because my manager couldn't get the department on budget, so I was let go to save money. I have since been at Panasonic Canada, and I still have my work at the Globe and Mail and BBW, but the hunt for full-time work goes ever on. Cathy, I did have a great time in Vegas, and at Corflu Silver. There was a direct-to-web camera so that those who tuned in could see what was going on in the main room in real time, plus comment on it. The convention had 93 actual attendees, and as many as 38 virtual attendees. This feature will be going on in what will be called the Virtual Fan Lounge. The first event it will cover will be a party in Vegas...tonight!

Sylvain says that the trip from Montréal to Yokohama was a grueling trip...I guess the Japanese will

find out first hand when they make the reverse trip next year. I hope there will be a meeting sometime this year, possibly at Con*Cept or just before, so that as many Anticipation committee members can gather as possible. We might take the train.

One common question I have heard some American fans ask is that if I was to go to the Montréal Worldcon, would I have to speak French? I think that after the Japanese Worldcon, having some of the local language/un petit peu de le language wouldn't hurt, but it is not necessary. Besides, how many times have I been to Con*Cept, and how many times have you heard me speak French?

If a deity appeared to me, and said "I AM WHAT I AM!", I'd probably ask him if he were Popeye. And, I'd spend my eternity in perdition, but at least I'd be warm and laughing my head off.

Yeah, there are no founding members of MonSTA around, but I did find Geoff Bovey through Facebook. He's living in Boise, Idaho these days. And that Tungsten/keyboard combination that Sylvain has...well, we've got it, too. Very handy. I wrote five letters of comment while we were flying to, having fun in, and flying away from, Las Vegas. Sylvain, how did you store your article to a USB drive? My Palm has a 1Gb SD card in the top slot, and it saves all my writing when I take my Palm/keyboard combination in my travels.

I haven't seen any of the remastered original Trek episodes, but I'd like to. The eleventh Trek movie is a year away, I think...great typo of Theresa's, with production

beginning on November 7, 2207. With a date like that, it wouldn't be a science fiction movie, but a documentary.

And there's Lou...he shocked me by attending Ad Astra this year. I hope he had a good time. Greetings to Trudie and Kevin! It has been a very long time. Yvonne and I will be at Con*Cept in October...hope you will be, too.

I'm going to fold this up and get it out. Yvonne and I are going to the annual dinner of the Canadian Aeronautics and Space Institute tonight, so we've got to get spiffed up and ready to go. Have a great weekend, Cathy, and see you next issue. Going to Polaris? We're not sure yet...

Yours,
Lloyd Penney

Hi, Lloyd!

It was nice to see you and Yvonne at Polaris 22. I guess we see you next at Con*Cept? Looking forward to it! The train station, btw, is very near the Days Hotel.

Too bad about losing the CNIB job, hope a new one comes along soon! Interesting tech at Corflu Silver. Sounds like the kind of thing we need to get the Canadian Conrunners, west and east, together. I still can't believe I missed that panel at Polaris! Lucky Marc Nadeau was there...

Lou was at Polaris, too. Apparently, he shouted over to me, but I was in my own world and didn't hear him.

Yours in fandom,
Cathy



The Zine Dump #19, edited by Guy H. Lillian III of Challenger fame, once again features a very nice review of WARP 69. Strangely, perhaps because of the change in address, Guy thinks Sylvain St-Pierre is the new editor, and that WARP 69 was my last issue. Sounds like a plan!! How about it, Sylvain? (wink)

*To which Sylvain replied:
"I'll think about it in fourteen years or so, when I retire..."*

Warp 69 / Cathy Palmer-Lister, MonSFFA, P.O. Box 1186, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 4A7 / NEW EDITOR: Sylvain St-Pierre, 4456 Boul. Ste-Rose, Laval Quebec, Canada H7R 1Y6 / www.monsffa.com /

The Montreal club celebrates its 20th anniversary through this fine issue of a great clubzine. The cover depicts a special pin created to mark the occasion, and spotted throughout are photos and notes from members

thanking the club for the camaraderie it's brought. Herein the new editor, Sylvain St-Pierre, wittily reports on Nippon 2007 ("Rodan did buzz our plane, but was thwarted by Gamera"). I can't believe he skipped the Hugo ceremony.

Other members contribute fiction, club interviews, meeting minutes, Star Trek stuff (remastered classics and the 11th movie ["Production officially began November 7, 2207," making it a documentary]), another chapter in an ongoing fantasy (The Last Mage), reviews of zines (very kind to Challenger), cons, movies, books. The zine closes with reprints of the last umpteen editions of Impulse, the club newsletter.

Not much is mentioned about the '09 worldcon, to be held in their city, but I sense an accelerating excitement. Just look at the legions of contributors Cathy attracted to her last issue! Special bravos to her – she's done a splendid job.

Hi, Guy!

Thanks so much for another kind review! I am fortunate in having great contributors!

For better or worse, I am still the editor of WARP, though I find myself increasingly short of time for it. Being retired does not add any hours to the fan's day!

Oh, that typo in the Star Trek story! LOL! Lloyd noticed it also, but it went clean over my head. Documentary, indeed!

We are looking forward to Anticipation, and it's coming up soooo soon! It will be nice to have a World Con I don't have to fly to. I think I will have to take a hotel room, though, as I don't want to be driving home late after the Hugos and the Masquerade.

I will hopefully see you at Denvention, at the Hugo Awards. The ninth nomination for Challenger! Congratulation, Guy!

Yours in fandom,

Cathy



A short piece, probably entirely unknown to the SF world – A 1838 prediction of life in 2000!

In the text there appears [sic] here and there, indicating that even though the spelling seems odd, it appeared that way in the original. One interesting prediction is that the USA is at war with Persia! Also that they are about to start to build a road across the Behring strait (In reality there's actually a tunnel being planned right now).

A VISION OF THE YEAR 2000

*Anonymous. 1838. Maryland Gazette (Annapolis, MD) vol. 93 no. 28, p. 1
From the Seneca [sic] Observer.*

It is one of the beauties of our mortality, that the still watches of the night are fraught with visions. The unchained mind, free, as it were from the earthly tabernacle which surrounds it, wanders away into the universal regions of creation and leaps in its own pure essence with a wing that never tires, and an eye that never fails. It travels from the eternal snows that crown the solemn mountains of the north to the magnolia groves of the south, and yet faints not. It listens one moment to the thunders of Niagara, and the next it hovers around the temples that crown the capitals of the eastern world.

We have been invited more particularly to this subject by a friend, who had the curiosity to relate to us a most singular vision, to say the least of it, and, one which we are compelled to believe is tinctured with more truth than many of these unsubstantiated and shinier creations of the brain.

He states that he retired to rest, with a mind tranquil and composed, and in precisely such a state as to ensure pleasant dreams, and deep, unbroken slumber. The last tone that vibrated on his ear, was the fitful tinkling of the distant sleigh bells, that trembled around his couch as faintly and delicately as a wind harp in the evening.

He had not long enjoyed his toilette for breakfast. He descended and what was his surprise to find a new and uncouth collection of persons assembled around the breakfast board. Their costume was extremely ludicrous, and the subjects of conversation were new and strange. One portly man, with the look of a magistrate thought "the last war which America had with Persia was the sole cause of our present distress." Another said that he had just returned from that

country, after a long passage of a week, in the balloon Arielt and from what he learned while there, he believed the war was a just one. One of the ladies said that she was extremely gratified at beholding one of the ancient race, known in history as the Indians, which the celebrated professor at Hill College, kept preserved in a glass case for the inspection of visitors." One other gentleman remarked that the Antiquarian society, located at the capital in Mississippi valley, had published it as their belief, in the last quarterly journal, that Columbus himself was an Indian and the great father of this ancient and annihilated race. The portly man inquired when the flying messengers would pass, as he wished to send some documents to New Orleans, and it was important that they should arrive by evening. "I understand," said the lady, "that president Jones has succeeded in his experiments," and the last Florida Gazette states that he drew every spark of electricity from the clouds of an approaching thunderstorm which passed on calmly and quietly. I also understand, said the portly gentleman, that the great road leading from our most northwestern state Angoria, to China, by way of Berring's [sic] straits, is nearly completed and that the steam cars would soon commence running thereon.

Our friend was not a little surprised at these remarks as the odd and unnatural appearance of the circle who uttered them. He made bold to inquire the meaning and language which had been used but he met with nothing but strange and unnatural grimaces in return. He finally observed an almanac hanging upon the wall up – on which was inscribed the year 2000. He rushed into the street, and at that moment a steam car whistled by and was out of sight in a moment. He

had not proceeded far before he was met by a sprightly little lad who told him that the great steam balloon would leave the earth at precisely 6 o'clock, on a party of pleasure, and would dine in the clouds at 12 M., requesting him to provide himself a ticket. He replied he should prefer [sic] travelling in carriages. The boy looked wild at this remark--but at last recollected that he had seen one of these ancient vehicles in the museum. He told him that if he preferred he might attend the experiments of the great Air-Gun Transportation Company, by whom he could be sent to any portion of the world in the twinkling of an eye; or as he appeared somewhat advanced in years, he might renew his age by stepping into the next door. At this moment the air became suddenly darkened by the approach of a vast body of human beings passing to the south, who, he was informed, was a number of men taking a pleasure excursion on wings. He passed on a little further and stopped where a young man was sawing wood: he attempted to address him, and just then perceived that it was a mere machine kept in motion by weights. He was soon met by a scientific-looking old gentleman who told him that he was heartily glad that the new Caloric engine had been tested and found to answer every purpose. "We shall" continued he, "be able now to dispense with those old lumbering steamboats which have for more than a century been lumbering our waters," "Indeed," was the reply. Turning round, he beheld a five story building, upon which was inscribed "museum" in large letters. He entered, and the first thing which met his eye was a figure of wax, attired in female costume, according to the strictest fashion of the present day. The guide told him that it had been fashioned according to history, and that tight sleeves, and taper wrist were perfect models of dress about the nineteenth century. -- On looking up he observed the dusty portraits of Washington and Franklin, with a few other conspicuous characters. Upon asking why so few of America's sons were honoured with a place in the cabinet of paintings, the guide replied that all who had ever existed were to be found upon the walls. Upon

enquiry for certain military commanders and statesmen, he declared that he never heard of them. "History informs us," said the guide, "that gunpowder was used in ancient times, but the engine of modern days, is far preferable; it demolishes a thousand men each revolution." Our friend observed the skeleton of a horse, which the guide solemnly declared was a domestic animal of the former ages. He was asked if he would step into the next room and submit himself to the operations of the great somnambulist, who would count every artery in his body, explain to him his own physical machinery, and conclude by discovering to him the present occupation of his friends, who wore cotton planters on the shores of the Pacific.

He left the museum and proceeded to the suburbs of the city, and was not a little surprised to find himself amid fields of foreign vegetation -- The tea plant was on one hand -- groves of mulberry trees on another -- immense tracks covered with the sugar beet, &c. &c. Near by were the manufacturing establishments; some for silk weaving -- others used for sugar refineries, all of which were clattering with continual motion. At last he came to a yawning chasm in the earth which he was told was the shortest passage to China, as the car usually effected a descent in a couple of weeks, passage fifty dollars; and all baggage at the risk of the owner. Our friend was disposed to comply with the terms and visit the celestial empire, as this appeared a rare and unusual opportunity.

He had just stepped on board and commenced descending like lightning, when he awoke -- the beautiful and delicate creation of palaces, towers, and all the paraphernalia [sic] of the year 2000, which stood like frost work in his brain throughout the moments of slumber, and all the vast unborn population that crowded the great arena of futurity, with their magic machinery, dissolved as instantaneously as the explosion of a bubble; and wearied by his very dreams, he arose with a grave countenance and dissatisfied mind, to commence the toils and perplexities of the year 1838. ♦



Torchwood X ?

The lady was standing in the hotel lobby, looking at a brochure, memorizing the local hiking trails. All of a sudden her head came up and she smiled. She put the brochure back in its place and went outside. Just as she came down the front steps, a car came into view, a few hundred yards from the hotel. When it pulled in she greeted the two men inside with a huge hug. "Craig, Richard, good to see you. I missed you guys."

"We missed you too, Sharon."

"So tell us about this place. It was your turn to pick the location for our annual vacation."

"The Blackmoor Hotel has beautifully decorated rooms, an indoor pool, a gym, an 18 hole golf course, tennis courts and plenty of hiking trails. I booked us a cottage: we each have our own room, a common sitting area and a small kitchen."

"Sounds good, we can unpack then grab some dinner."

"Works for me and we can spend the evening catching up. OK, Sharon, lead the way."

After dinner in the hotel restaurant, the three went back to the cottage. "So, who's first with the latest pictures of the grandkids?"

Richard brought his portable computer. "I'll go first. You should see how fast Michael is growing. Would you believe he's already giving me a challenge at chess and he's only 9."

The computer screen showed several pictures of a young boy, some with his parents and one playing chess with his grandfather.

"He looks just like you Richard. What about you Sharon? How is your little Gwyneth doing? Is she following in you and your son Cameron's footsteps and going into medicine?"

"Actually, no. Her passion is electronics: just last week she took the DVD player apart and then, put it back together."

"How is it working now?"

"Better than ever. And she's just 8. Here, look for yourselves." She handed them a stack of pictures.

"Send her my way when she graduates

university. My security firm can always use another genius."

"She's adorable, she's going to break a lot of hearts when she grows up."

"Alright Craig, your turn. How is little Arthur doing?"

"He wants to be an astronaut, just like his aunt."

"That's right, your Jenny is going to the international space station."

"Professor Jennifer Stirling, astro-physicist, is on the list to go up sometime next year. Now Arthur wants a spacesuit for Halloween and telescope for Christmas." They all laughed.

"Who would have thought that our children and grandchildren would turn out like us. I'm just glad they didn't follow in our footsteps. It's hard enough sending strangers out in the field, I couldn't do it if it was one of our own."

"It's getting late. We'd better turn in: we have a 9 o'clock tee-off time."

They put away their pictures and went to bed.

In Torchwood's Glasgow office, the alarm system went off. Unfortunately no one was there to hear, the only employee having gone home for the night. The next morning, when Angus MacDonald came in to work, he discovered that Torchwood House had been broken into. After reviewing the security footage he called the Cardiff branch for help.

"Jack, it's the Glasgow office on the line: he's asking for help."

"Put it on speaker"

Tosh pushed the button. "Go ahead Glasgow, what can we do for you?"

"Torchwood House was broken into last night."

"What was taken?"

"A carved plate and some stones with symbols that match those on the plate. They were discovered at an archeological site about ten years ago. Doesn't do anything really, but because the plate is made from an alloy we couldn't identify we got to keep it. The really strange thing is the thieves weren't human:

humanoid in shape but the life signs were all wrong. Body heat and heart rate completely off and they seem to have superhuman strength and agility. I'm out of my league here and you guys have more field experience with aliens. Can you help?"

"Send us all the information you have and we'll have a team over there by tomorrow."

Thanks, I really appreciate this. Usually, nothing ever happens in Scotland."

The information was coming in and they looked over the security footage. "Alright people, any theories? What are we dealing with here?"

"Some form of shape shifter maybe."

"What about humanoid alien?"

"Both good possibilities. Pack the gear you think we'll need and be ready to leave in two hours. Ianto, Tosh, I want you here to coordinate everything. The rest of you pack enough clothes for a couple of days but only what you can carry. Ianto, find us a place to stay in the area. OK people, get ready, we're going on a road trip."

While everybody was moving around, getting their gear together, Ianto was tapping away at the computer. When he found what he was looking for, he printed it and went into Jack's office. "Here you are sir, you'll be staying at the Blackmoor Hotel. It's close to Torchwood House and I've booked you one of their cottages, that way everybody will have their own room and you'll have more privacy to set up your equipment. The reservation is in your name, here are the directions and all the details."

"Thanks Ianto, I don't know what we'd do without you."

"I'll remind you of that when the time comes to give me a pay raise."

The next morning, Sharon, Richard and Craig were on the golf course, swinging one hole in one after another. "It feels good not having to hold back, afraid of people finding out."

"I'm with you on that one. It's bad enough having to let people win because you need to keep their good will but when they start giving advice on how to improve my game when I could blow them out of the water..." With that comment, Craig hit the ball straight into another hole in one. That felt good."

They finished their game and went back to the hotel for lunch. For the afternoon they planned to go sightseeing and get souvenirs for their family. Just as they were leaving, Jack and his team came in and Jack, being Jack, looked Sharon over and smiled at her. Her two friends noticed and laughed.

"Jack, stop it. We're here on business, you can flirt later."

Yeah, besides isn't she a bit old for you?"

"Remember who you're talking too. Besides, true beauty is timeless."

Gwen and Owen rolled their eyes and picked up their luggage.

Outside, Craig and Richard were teasing Sharon.

"Still turning heads I see."

"I wonder what he'd think if he knew you're married and a grandmother."

"It's always nice to be noticed. Now let's get to town, we have grandchildren to buy for."

The Torchwood team spent the afternoon setting up their equipment and several hours later they were ready for action. "OK team, let's grab some dinner then we can go check out Torchwood House and the surrounding area." While the Torchwood team was trudging through the woods, Craig, Richard & Sharon enjoyed a fine dinner and a show at the hotel restaurant.

The next morning, after a big breakfast, Craig, Richard & Sharon set out with a picnic lunch to explore the local hiking trails.

"I memorized all the trails before you got here. The most challenging one goes north-east from here, through the woods and up a mountain to some ancient ruins. I was told the view from there is spectacular."

"Sounds like a plan, let's go."

Little did they know that the Torchwood team was heading in the same direction, having detected strange energy readings.

Both teams got there about the same time, from different directions but they weren't the first ones there. Strange looking creatures were standing in a circle around a stone table in the centre of the ruins. When they saw they had company, three of the creatures took up defensive positions, weapons drawn. Jack went over to the other three and took out the psychic paper.

“We’re from Torchwood, we’ll handle this.”

Craig picked up the paper, looked at it and handed it back to Jack. “This is blank. Stay out of our way.”

With a puzzled look on his face, Jack looked at the paper. It said “You’re out of your league, kid.” During that time the three had advanced on the creature, their expressions and movements clearly showing they were ready for a fight. One of the creatures raised his weapon, ready to shoot but he never got the chance. Before he could aim, Richard took him down with a flying tackle. Still at the top of their form, Craig, Richard & Sharon were able to knock out all four creatures in a short but intense battle.

“You kids can take it from here.” As they walked off, the Torchwood team could only stare. Only when they were out of sight, Jack remembered the creatures and took out the equipment needed to secure them.

When they got back to the hotel, Craig, Richard and Sharon were greeted by the desk manager who noticed scratches and leaves and twigs in their hair and clothing.

“Is everything alright?”

“Fine, just the challenge we needed.”

“Best vacation in years.”

“We’ll be checking out as soon as we pack so please have the bill ready.”

All three walked off towards their cottage laughing and smiling. An hour later they were gone.

The next day, at Torchwood, Jack was furious. “I want answers people. Not just about the creatures but about those three tourists. We got our butts handed to us by a bunch of senior citizens!”

Tosh was tapping away at her computer. “I wouldn’t get too upset, Jack.”

“Why not?”

“They were pros.”

“What?”

By now everybody had gathered around Tosh’s

computer. “After I heard what happened I took the liberty of downloading their pictures from hotel security and running them through the system.”

“What did you find?”

“Sharon Macready, Richard Barrett and Craig Stirling are the best operatives in Memesis history. Stirling is now running the place. Each one a genius in their own field, all of them masters in more sports than you can think of.” Just as Tosh was getting to the section on family, children and grandchildren, Jack’s cell phone started ringing.

“Captain Jack Harkness?”

“Speaking”

“Look at you computer.”

On the screen there was the image of fireworks then the screen went blank.

“That’s unbelievable: not only has the link been cut off but a virus erased all the information I downloaded.”

The voice on the phone said, “It’s not a good idea to snoop in other people’s lives. Don’t ever try that again because if you do next time I won’t be so nice.” His voice changed from a threat to a shared understanding. “You of all people should know, some secrets the world is not ready for.”

Tosh asked, “Should I try to reestablish the link?”

“No need, we know all we need to know.”

In his office, somewhere in Geneva, Craig Stirling hung up the phone, turned off his computer and smiled. ❖

NOTE: I do not own Torchwood or The Champions. The Blackmoor Hotel, the ruins and the families of the Champions and what they did with their lives are all my imagination.

Here are the answers to the Warp 69 TV Crossovers:

Doctor Who X Heroes

King Kong and Godzilla X Beavra

Supernatural X Nightstalker





The Last Mage: The Dragon's Mouth

Nikolai Krimp

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

Chapter 10

It was just after midnight when the guards roused Blick. If all were to go as planned, they would be away from the city before anyone saw them leaving. Sending one of his captains to wake the others, the two girls dressed quickly and followed the young captain downstairs to where the others were already waiting. Once the final preparations were complete and all the provisions were neatly stuffed into their backpacks the party left the house and followed Blick and his men to the northern end of the huge cavern, where a few more of his men waited. As soon as it was determined that it was safe to continue, Blick reached up and pulled on a small wooden lever, which opened a secret stone door and let them pass through. After the last man was through the opening, the door closed noiselessly behind them. They were now officially out of the city. One of the young dwarf's men lit a torch, which made the glowstones begin to glow, revealing the passage to them. Though the tunnel was not very high, a normal man could walk without hitting his head on the ceiling, but it was just wide enough for one person to pass.

"How long is this corridor?" asked Roma.

"The glow stones run on for a three day march," answered Blick. "After that, we will be in complete darkness. There will be torches along the way, for I have sent my men ahead with them. We also have a good supply of lanterns and plenty of oil for them. We should have enough to make it all the way to the Teufel's Tahl."

"What is this Teufel's Tahl, you keep mentioning?" asked Shannon. "By the sound of it, it doesn't seem like a very nice place."

"No it isn't," answered Blick. "I'd much rather face an army of orcs, than pass through that valley, but Duncan and I did promise Teagan that we would get you to the Dragon's Mouth with that box of yours. So the safest route is through the valley. Perhaps it will be an uneventful trek."

They continued to walk until they came to a wider area in the tunnel. Here a few more of Blick's men were waiting. Stopping to eat, they rested for a short time before continuing. Here the young dwarf divided his men into two groups. Five men out in front and six men following behind the group.

The rest of his men, they would meet close to the end of the glowstones. They would also have the rest of the torches and more lamp oil.

While waiting for the group to finish eating, Shannon had a chance to examine the tunnel. This, like the ones under the mountain in Enderby, also had very smooth walls. The floor was rough and not well masoned like the walls and ceiling, but not rough enough to make them trip on any protruding stones. She ran her hand along the cold, damp walls, wondering how long ago the dwarfs worked these tunnels and for what reason. "Were they mining?" she wondered. "If so, what minerals did they find? Or were they just underground highways and escape routes?" She continued to think about all the different races now occupying this new world. The humans must have been shocked to find other races that were only known to them in myths, roaming the earth as they once did in the past. Shannon was still lost in her thoughts, when Blick stood and announced that they should continue.

Gathering up their gear, the now much-larger group trekked farther down the underground passage. They marched the rest of that night and all of the next day before stopping to sleep. Shannon had lost all track of time. She didn't know if it was day or night. The dwarfs, they knew, because they were used to this. They knew just how far they could travel these tunnels in one day.

After everyone had feasted on cold roast and drank ale, wine or just plain water, the group propped themselves up against the stone walls and either conversed with one another or fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. The elf girl closed her eyes once Blick assured her that outside it was now night. The torch had been extinguished and all the light they had came from a single candle and the glowstones near by. Blick posted a guard at each end of the sleeping party, which was changed every couple of hours so that, by morning, each dwarf had almost a full night's rest.

Time passed quickly and all too soon the guards awakened Blick. Breakfast consisted of whatever leftovers of meat remained, for it wouldn't keep much longer. They had only brought enough fresh meat for a day or so. From here on, it was going to be bread, cheese and whatever they could scrounge, for the hunting wasn't the best in the tunnels. Besides, Shannon, after hearing Blick describe some of the creatures that roamed these caves and how to prepare them for consumption, didn't want to eat anything that crawled around down here. It sent shivers up and down her spine. When the troop was ready, they continued in a northerly direction.

The tunnel they were following changed somewhat, from the wider and not so twisting, to a narrower and lower ceiling,

making it harder for the three taller ones to walk erect.

Shannon realized that they were heading down deeper into the mountain, for the air was slowly growing warmer. When she asked Blick about this, he acknowledged her perception.

"Yes, you are correct," he answered, "and it's going to get much hotter the deeper we go, until the tunnel widens and we reach one of the underground rivers. Then it will cool down a bit."

They continued all day, stopping only for brief periods and then pushing on until Blick called for them stop. Ahead, just beyond the glowing stones, was a larger cave. He sent forth two of his men to investigate. Moments later, one of the dwarfs returned giving the all clear. The rest of the party followed Blick and his man to the larger cave. It was well lit with glowstones by the time they arrived. The cave was much wider than they had expected. Here, if there had been any wood, they could have built a fire but it was not to be. Another cold meal was consumed and washed down with a drink.

It had been a long and arduous day, with the twisting and sometimes very narrow passage that slowed them down to almost a crawl. At one point, the tunnel was so low that even the dwarfs had to get down on their hands and knees and crawl until the ceiling lifted, allowing them to regain an upright position.

Shannon was glad that she could lie down. Using her backpack for a pillow she fell asleep. Since entering the tunnels, her dreaming had stopped. No more nightmares. She was glad to get another full night's sleep. Guards were posted and everyone turned in early, too exhausted to talk.

Shannon awoke the next morning with her body aching. Standing up, she felt faint and almost collapsed. Kirin caught her as she took a step and ended up in his arms. Blick immediately ordered more torches to be lit and examined Shannon's exposed skin.

"Just as I thought," he said with a sigh. "You've been bitten by a Murp. It is a tiny brown spider with a powerful bite." Checking the ground where she had been lying, he found many more of these tiny creatures, in the cracks and crevasses, where Shannon had slept. "Give me a container of lamp oil," he ordered one of his men. The young dwarf, then poured the liquid over the spider's nest and with a lit torch set the nest ablaze. The tiny spiders didn't have a chance, for the oil saturated ground and the heat from the flames destroyed their nest in minutes. "We will have to wait here until Shannon is well enough to travel. The spiders, though poisonous, haven't got enough venom in them to kill a grown person. One would have to be bitten by thousands of them to kill you, but a few bites will just make you quite ill. The only

cure is rest until the fever dissipates. I'm afraid that we will be here another day before we can continue. So everyone make yourself comfortable."

The young dwarf had his men check over the entire cave, to make sure that there were no more surprises.

Shannon rested and slept most of the day. Later that evening her fever rose. Roma took care of her by keeping cold compresses on her forehead until the fever broke. The troop got a good night's sleep and in the morning, Shannon was ready to travel. She was not as fast as she normally would have been, but she kept up with the group. At the end of the cave, Blick found the secret switch that open a sliding door. The new tunnel was even narrower than the last one. Duncan, who had been quiet for most of the trek, began to complain.

"If you would lose some weight," Blick teased him, "you wouldn't be having all this trouble wearing down the walls with your fat belly."

Blick's insult angered the old dwarf so much that Duncan made an effort to catch the younger one and halve him with his ax, but the passage was so narrow that his round belly and backpack got him stuck. It all seemed so amusing to Shannon and her friends, but Blick's plan had worked. He had managed to bring Duncan through the narrowest part of the passage, even though he needed help and had to pull the old man until he popped like a cork out of the bottleneck.

They marched all day without stopping. They even walked while they ate. Sitting down to rest was out of the question as the passage was far too narrow for anyone to sit. Shannon was beginning to tire from the long exhausting journey and was glad when Blick announced that the end of this passage was near.

"Thank the gods," grunted Duncan. "I swear these walls are closing in on us. I don't remember them this narrow."

His glare in Blick's direction told the younger dwarf not to respond.

Stepping out into an open area, Blick found one of his men lying near the entrance. Bending to examine the dwarf, he found that his man was still alive. Talking softly to the fallen dwarf, Blick found out what happened and called the rest of the group around him while another of his men tended to their fallen comrade.

"It seems that my men were attacked by trap worms," Blick explained. "These are large carnivorous worm like creatures that hunt in packs and lay traps to capture unsuspecting travellers. But what I can't seem to understand is that after the worm attack, the rest of my men were killed by what Grogan here described as a demon."

"What sort of demon?" asked Duncan.

"He couldn't tell me more," answered the younger one. "Maybe if he survives, he'll be able to shed some more light on what happened here. For now we will camp here and wait to see what happens to Grogan."

No one could ask more from Blick. He treated his men as if they were his family. He did send three scouts on ahead, to see if anymore had survived the attack.

It was almost time to turn in for the night when they returned with the news. None were alive. It seemed that those who were just wounded in the worm attack were killed when the demon attacked them. There were burn marks all over the walls and flooring of the cave. Even the ground, where the trap worms had been hiding was scorched. Being driven back by the dwarfs, the worms probably tried to attack the demonic being without success.

The next morning the party resumed their journey. During the night, the injured man died of his wounds. He had never regained consciousness. After burying him, they left. At the site where the battle had taken place, the group had the grim task of burying the rest of their comrades. Picking up the supplies that were scattered all over the cavern floor, they carefully stepped over the pit trap, where the other eight dwarfs had died and continued on their way. No one spoke for a long time. Only when they stopped to rest, did some light conversations begin.

Blick sent a few men out in front of the group. This was done so they wouldn't be surprised and attacked by any unknown creatures. They were told to stay within sight of the rest of the group, in case help was needed.

As the scouting party entered a rather wide corridor, they were set upon by two giant cave fishers. Blick and the rest of his men threw themselves into the fracas, while Duncan and the rest stayed back to protect Shannon. The fishers were about six feet in length and moved quickly from side to side, trying to avoid the brutal blows from the war hammers, only to be slashed by the sharp battle axes that other dwarfs swung. One man wasn't so lucky. Raising his hammer to administer a blow to the side of one of the cave fisher's head, he got himself clamped in one of the creatures fore pincers. Before the group could react and come to his rescue the dwarf was sheared in half. A final deathblow from Blick's ax came too late. Now the dwarfs concentrated on the remaining fisher, but the battle was over before they could reach the creature. Seeing its mate die, it too stopped fighting. Taking the opportunity, the dwarfs dealt one blow after another until the fisher lay on the stone floor, motionless and quite dead.

After burying another of their comrades, Blick announced that they would make camp by an underground lake, a short distance away. Cautiously the group made their way to where Blick said they would sleep overnight. Here the

cavern was lit by the usual glowstones and some other illuminating stones that seemed to have been placed there by mother nature and not by the hand of man.

When Shannon asked Duncan about these gems encrusting the walls and ceiling, he just replied that there was no name for them. Children just called them star crystals, because they shone so brightly when the light of a torch or candle reached them.

Roma walked over to the lake and stuck her hand in the water. To her surprise, the water was quite cold, unlike the temperature in the cave. When she asked, Blick told her that the melting snows of the Crag fed the lakes in these caverns, even though vast rivers of lava deeper underground regulated the air temperature. But he cautioned her not to go swimming in the lake. Stories were told of small fish with large mouths and sharp teeth that could tear a man apart within minutes. If she wanted to wash herself, she should get some water and go behind one of the huge boulders, near the wall, for privacy.

Not wanting to miss an opportunity to wash, Roma and Shannon got some of Blick's men to bring them an ample supply of water and washed themselves before the evening meal.

With no wood lying around and no trees to cut down, every meal here under the mountain was a cold one. There wasn't even enough fuel to spare to brew some tea, so water was drawn from the lake and the waterskins were refilled. Any ale or wine they still had left was consumed that night after their supper. With bellies full, the party lay down and went to sleep.

During the night, a few Klawduts neared the camp, only to be driven off by the sentries. One of the rats came a little too close and received a blow on the head from a war hammer, which killed it. Grabbing the dead rat by the tail the dwarf swung it around above his head several times and then sent it flying out into the middle of the lake. Moments later he could see a slight disturbance, a rippling of the water, and the rat disappeared from view.

"I wouldn't want to be swimming out there," one guard said to the other.

His companion didn't answer, but just shook his head. He knew all too well what would await them out there.

In the morning, Shannon had recuperated more fully from the spider bites and was anxious to leave. The venom from the spiders had completely worn off, making her eager to finish the journey.

According to Blick and Duncan, tonight they would be their last night in this huge cavern. Tomorrow morning they would enter a passageway, which would lead them to the Teufel's Tahl. It also meant the end of the glowstones. From there on, they would have to rely on torches and lamps, but

that was still a day away.

Shannon thought to herself, "How could people live in these caves, without ever seeing daylight? She promised that when they would eventually emerge from the cave and set foot out in the open, she would kneel and kiss the ground."

They marched all morning and by the time they stopped for lunch, they had left the lake far behind them. Now they stood in one of the largest caverns Shannon had ever seen. The ceiling was so high that she couldn't make out any distinguishing marks on it. She could just barely see the opposite wall.

The group was very tired by the time they reached the end of the cavern. With the heat and all that walking, they just plunked down onto the floor with their backpacks still on their backs.

Blick looked concerned and asked to speak to Duncan privately. The two walked off into the distance and spoke. Upon returning, Duncan addressed the rest of the group.

"It seems that Blick remembers that there weren't so many passageways the last time he was here," he said, "and he has forgotten which route is the correct one. It looks as if someone has taken the liberty of adding a few more tunnels just to confuse us. In the morning we will divide up and enter each of the tunnels and follow it for a while to see if anyone of them will lead us to the Tahl. We will all return here and make a choice then. I think that is the safest way around this situation. Or does anyone here have a better idea?"

No one answered, because they all knew it was the best idea so far. Besides, they were just too tired to think.

Shannon looked over at Roma and Kirin. Treymane, already had his eyes closed and was snoring softly. This was their fifth night in the caves and the three wanted to be out in the open. Their three-day trek turned out to be longer than originally anticipated. They longed to be out under the stars, even if it meant fighting the orcs. But they knew that Duncan and Blick only meant to do good by keeping them safe. Yes, but keeping them safe had a high price tag attached. Already ten of Blick's men lay dead in these caves, never to see their families again. Was the cost too high or was this a necessity? These thoughts crossed Shannon's mind all evening. Finally, when her eyelids grew heavy, sleep took over, pushing her thoughts aside until morning.

Shannon woke up earlier than the rest. Standing, she walked over to where one of the sentries was on duty.

"I wonder what the weather is like outside this morning?" she asked softly.

"I hope it is warm and sunny," was the guard's reply. "If you keep that thought with you while in here, you'll find it easier to keep sane."

Shannon found those words strange coming from a dwarf. They are supposed to be used to living underground. But then there must be some that like the open spaces. As she returned to where her friends were sleeping, Blick stirred and woke up. Stretching and yawning, he rubbed the sleep from his eyes and he got up. Waking the rest of the group, he and Duncan laid out the plans for searching the caves.

Shannon, Duncan and two men would enter the cave on their left and walk for one hour making mental notes as they went along. Then they would turn around and meet up with everyone back here. Once all passages had been explored, a decision would be made on which cave they would enter. Kirin and two men would search the next one to the right, Roma and her two men would take the next, Treymane and two men the next and Blick with two men would explore the one on the far right. When everyone was ready, they all stepped into their respective tunnels and disappeared from view. In two hours they would all regroup.

The cave that Roma entered didn't last one hour. Approximately one half hour later the cave came to an end. Searching carefully for hidden levers or pressure plates in the walls and flooring, the three came up empty. Disappointed, they turned back.

Kirin's cave proved longer and after an hour or so of twisting and turning, rising and descending, they were ready to turn back when one of the dwarfs thought he heard a voice coming from up ahead. Looking for a place to hide was difficult, because there were no nook and crannies in this cave. Whatever it was that lay ahead, they would have to either try to outrun or stay and fight. A decision was made. Since the cave was too narrow to run in, the three decided to stay and fight. Their torchlight was doused and, with weapons drawn, they waited. The wait wasn't long, for soon the flickering light of someone's lamp or torch could be seen approaching.

"Thank goodness there are no glowstones here to give us away," whispered one of the dwarfs.

The passage before them grew brighter as the flickering lights, dancing all over the walls, grew nearer. Then voices were heard.

"I'm sure I heard someone talking," one of the voices said.

"SHH!" another said.

A smile crossed Kirin's face, for he suddenly recognized the high pitched sound of the hobbit. Reassuring his two men, Kirin called out, "Treymane! Is that you?"

"Yes!" came the reply. "If that is the voice of Kirin, my friend."

As the two parties met, they realized that the two tunnels they had entered were one and the same.

Blick and his two men thought immediately that the passage that they were following was the wrong one, for it turned south and continued that way for a while before turning east and then north. It was a more travelled tunnel, wide enough for two large men to walk side by side. The young dwarf knew then that this was the passage that he had followed many years ago, when the dwarf nation fought the armies of the Tower of Tophet. Turning around, Blick and his men headed back with the good news.

Shannon and her party worked their way through the twisting passage they had been assigned. The dwarfs stayed back a few steps and always kept an eye out behind them. The younger of the two men seemed very nervous and was calmed by the older dwarf. Duncan smiled at the elf girl and said, "He'll be okay once we get out of this passage and out into the open. His name is Tallar and he never liked caves. He loves the forest."

They were in the passage about an hour and were ready to turn back when suddenly there was a blinding flash and the Shannon and the old dwarf disappeared. Tallar, the young dwarf, seeing what happened, cried out in panic and ran back to the main cavern where everyone was waiting, leaving his companion alone. ❖

The Last Mage Continues in WARP 71



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

Joe Aspler

In Part I (WARP 69), I described modern dentistry as an antidote for those who would like to live under low-tech conditions. Let us now consider the case of Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632 – 1687), composer of the French Baroque period. Lully may truly be said to have been a man who died for his art.



The conductor's baton is a relatively modern invention. In Lully's time, conductors used a staff, rather like a drum major in a marching band. Lully was over-enthusiastic with his staff, and hit his big toe. The wound became infected, gangrene set in, and he died a very nasty death.

Today, such an injury would require a few minutes of medical attention – a shot of local anaesthetic, cleaning out the wound, a few stitches, and perhaps a walking cast, antibiotics, and tetanus vaccine. The French Baroque period

– like most of human history – might be a place for a brief visit, but you wouldn't want to live there!



As a post-script, we can look at the case of Marie-Adélaïde of Savoy (1685-1712), Dauphine of France and mother of King Louis XV. She died of measles. It could be more accurate to say that she had measles, and probably died from complications arising from her doctors and their "treatments".

For a post-script closer to us in time and space, let us consider John Augustus Roebling (1806-1869), designer and chief engineer of the Brooklyn Bridge. He suffered a foot injury on the work site, and died of tetanus. No simple shot of tetanus anti-toxin in those days! ♦



Writers of the Future

In Warp 69, the next generation of MonSFFen were asked to submit stories, cartoons, or artwork to WARP for publication. This is Scott Braithwaite's first contribution to WARP.

In this strange but exciting adventure, seven young people are researching the elusive sand crocodile when they encounter something quite unexpected...

HALF-CAMEL Scott Braithwaite

In the middle of the Sahara Desert, seven people stood ankle deep in camel poo. Their names: Trina, Michael, Tony, Scott, Emily, Chelsea and Gabby. Tony speculated that camels had come this way, and something had really scared them.

At about 11:30 o'clock they all got in their Jeep. Tony and Chelsea sat in the front. They were in the Jeep for about an hour before arriving at their camp. They went over their information relating to the study of the rare sand crocodile. So far, they had not found anything except a dead dromedary camel in the lake. It had been bitten in half. Sand crocodiles were here but just not visible.

Everybody fell asleep except Gabby. She went into the thick brush for some privacy. Two hours later everyone woke up to find that Gabby was not in her tent, and not outside, either. Tony, Trina, Chelsea and Scott went looking for her. They looked and looked but she was nowhere to be

found.

But then, back at camp, Michael found Gabby's sneakers full of blood. He called for Emily and then screamed so loud that Tony, Trina, Chelsea and Scott came running back. Michael put the sneakers on the ground. All of them looked at the shoes for a moment, then Emily pointed out a tooth imbedded in the left shoe. Trina took it out slowly. When it was fully extracted, they saw how big it really was.

Scott examined it and Tony said it was from a sand crocodile. "But its too big," said Chelsea.

Tony said, "I know. Maybe it's a mutant."

Michael did not know what mutant meant. He decided to walk about a mile away and look for a crocodile on which to do research. But he did not find anything. Trina saw Michael but from far away. He looked like a crocodile so Trina took out the tranquilizer gun and shot him. Direct hit!

Michael yelled, "What was that for?"

Trina told everybody that she had tranquilized the giant crocodile and everyone ran to the Jeep and got in. When they got closer, Chelsea pointed out that it was Michael. Everyone hopped out of the Jeep and went to Michael's side.

"He's sleeping," said Tony.

Two hours later, Michael woke up and said, "I want a peanut butter and jam sandwich". And so he got one. Emily made all of them a sandwich.

A few seconds after they were served, they heard a sound in the distance. It was a sand crocodile! They had all kind of forgotten that there was a giant crocodile out in the desert. So they all got in the Jeep and started driving again.

They drove to a lake and found that there were about eight sand crocodiles in the lake, one of them a giant. Tony said, "That's one big sandy."

Michael went up to Scott and whispered, "What's a 'sandy'?" Scott said, "A sand crocodile, stupid."

So they looked, examined, and discussed the situation. But Mike wanted Gabby to be alive and thought she might still be in the stomach of the crocodile, alive. He said to Chelsea, "I'm going in!"

Michael then backed up and yelled, "Cannonball!" He jumped in and was eaten by the seven smaller crocs.

Emily said, "I wonder why the big one isn't eating. He should have been all over that fool."

As the lake filled with blood the giant crocodile looked at the five remaining people. Trina yelled, "Get out of my way," and pushed Scott into the lake. But Scott was a good swimmer and swim he did, as fast as he could. The croc almost got him but he managed to jump ashore and run.

The crocodile started to chase the five, so they ran and ran until they had finally lost the crocodile. Chelsea said, "What should we call it?" The others said, "We should call it dead! Let's kill it!" they repeated over and over again.

During the night, they all stayed in the Jeep because they were scared. The windows were rolled up and they were all looking out attentively. When Emily looked out her window and saw a light in the distance, she thought it was a rescue party, so she ran out of the Jeep and was eaten because the light was actually the reflection of her flashlight in the nocturnal eye of the crocodile. They all yelled, "Noooooooo! Not another one!"

The four remaining adventurers tried to sleep and the girls did manage to get some sleep, but not the boys. Scott and Tony talked about what to do to kill that thing.

When Trina and Chelsea woke up they were scared,

very scared. Scott and Tony were no longer in the Jeep; they had gone out to the tent for supplies. Tony came out first with a bunch of food, followed by Scott carrying four high-powered rifles and two BB guns, for backup. The only problem was that they only had two bullets for each rifle and three shots for each BB gun.

Tony put the food in the back seat and Scott handed everyone a rifle, but set the BB guns in the back with the food. Suddenly Chelsea got so stressed that she accidentally shot a bullet into the air. Everyone jumped. But it was nothing to worry about. She had shot straight up into the air and no one got hit. So the four friends set off to kill that crocodile.

After many miles of driving, Chelsea said, "It's been four hours. Where is that thing?"

She hopped out of the Jeep and said, "If I stood here for four more hours it wouldn't get me." But then they saw something moving over by the lake. It came closer, through the bushes, and then jumped out. It was...a fox!

Chelsea was so scared that she was quickly on top of the Jeep squealing like a schoolgirl. But she was not looking at the fox. There was something else on her mind: her big date in two weeks! Only then did she notice something moving, which caused her to stop thinking about her date. She cried, "Save me from the... The fox?"

She hopped back in the Jeep and said, "What a relief."

After 30 minutes, they had found the giant crocodile. Chelsea yelled, "Ha, ha! Die!" She went up to the croc and shot him but missed. The crocodile ate her slowly and painfully.

Scott pulled out the BB gun and shot her in the head, hoping to kill her quickly so that she would not suffer.

Now there were three people and one big mother croc. It was show time.

Trina shot both her bullets into its mouth and it started to bleed. The croc spat Chelsea out and she hit Scott in the face. He passed out. The croc ate Scott up like an M&M on Super Bowl Sunday.

Tony decided that they could not beat the crocodile with just firearms. He took out a grenade he had been hiding in his bag. He pulled the pin and heaved it at the croc.

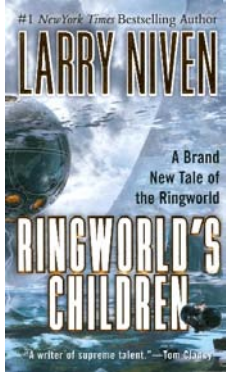
There was a loud explosion, then, for a few seconds, everything was quiet until the dust cleared and Trina saw the croc and Tony, both dead. She yelled "Noooooooo!"

Later, she was rescued by the army. She didn't know it at that moment, but her adventures were just beginning. ❖

BOOKS

Ringworld's Children

Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre



Many years ago, not long after the paperback publication of the second book in the Ringworld series (*The Ringworld Engineers*, 1980), I attended a convention where Larry Niven was Guest of Honour. While he was signing my stack of books, I asked him if he thought that there would be yet another instalment in the foreseeable future. His answer was an emphatic “no”...

Having read *Ringworld Children*, which was published in 2004 and is now the fourth tome, I

wish he had kept his word! While that book does contain some clever parts, they are in my opinion few and far between. A lot of the text has the feel of verbose filler and the whole thing is quite frankly only a shadow of the novel that started it all. The plot is a continuation of *The Ringworld Throne*, so you will need to have read that one as well to make sense of what is going on.

You won't be entirely cheated if you are a Niven fan, but I think that most will agree that this is definitely not that author's best work. If you *really* like everything Niven writes, there are some references in the text that leave things open for still more stories. ♦

A Couple of New Old Books

Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre

While browsing in the Polaris 22 Dealers' Room, I came across two interesting items: reprints of very old novels, originally published in pulps many decades ago. These are the sort of things not often available outside of conventions, and it's always fun to find stuff like that.

The first, *The Scientific Adventures of Baron Münchhausen*, was written by none other than Hugo



Gernsback, who is often credited with being the father of science fiction or, at the very least, pulpdom. Despite the rather eyebrow raising title and a somewhat ludicrous setting, there was a genuine intention to promote scientific knowledge behind the story. Of course, it should be kept in mind that we are talking about science as it stood in 1915, and we should not laugh too quickly about those details that we now know to be incorrect. In those days, Gernsback was publishing *The*

Electrical Experimenter, a magazine devoted to the then brand new field of radio broadcasting and other electrical devices. Most of the articles tended to be on the practical side, showing people how to build their own receiving set or how to do various amusing things with electricity.

This serialized novel was one of Hugo's early forays into the field of scientific fiction, but not the first, and

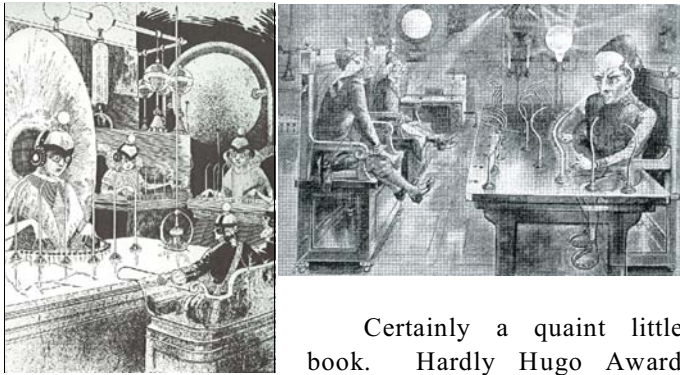
hardly the last. The story opens with the owner of a radio station receiving a mysterious call on his brand new super sensitive apparatus. We learn that the message is coming from none other than the famous Baron Münchhausen, who went into suspended animation in 1797, and that he is calling from the Moon!

Follows a tale of how Münchhausen got secretly involved in the then still ongoing World War One and how he managed to reach the Moon. The description of our satellite, which has air in low lying areas and remnants of life below ground, is quite entertaining in itself but it is the subsequent trip to Mars that is truly the *pièce de résistance*.

We are treated with an extensive review of the Martian civilization, complete with technology, customs and values. This includes telepathic caps with a wire trailing on the ground for contact, a transparent material called *tos* that is used to construct just about everything (there is no privacy at all to be had on Mars) and how water is moved along the canals by force rays (Mars was at that time considered flat, and scientists were saying that canals could not exist because there was no downhill for the water to move to).

One of the things that I found to be of particular interest is the inclusion of a scene that I found hauntingly familiar. After a bit a research, I managed to unearth, in one of my reference books, a picture from the 1928 reprint of the same story in *Amazing Stories*. This one is by famous artist Frank Paul, and it is quite fascinating to see how different it is from the original rendering of the same

chapter by Thomas Wrenn.



Certainly a quaint little book. Hardly Hugo Award winning prose, but definitely something to read if one wants an insight on how scifi really took off.

The Martians in Gernsback's story are quite enlightened and peaceful, which makes them completely different from the Martians of the second book, *Edison's Conquest of Mars*. I knew about this novel from the same reference book (A Pictorial History of Science Fiction, by David Kyle, 1976), but never expected to actually read it one day.

This one was written by Garrett P. Serviss even earlier, in 1898, and it shows. Both in respect with the science, which is often dubious even by the standards of the time; and its racial outlook, which most of us would probably consider very politically incorrect. Basically, the White race in general, Anglo-Saxons in particular and Americans most specifically, can only succeed, for they are the smartest, the most noble and most righteous (*SIGH!*).

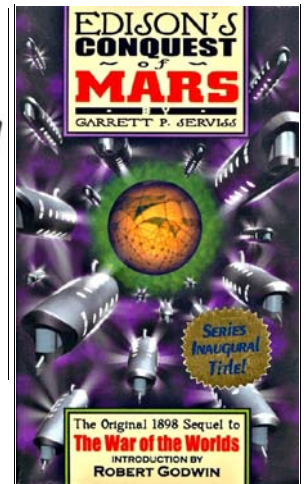
In recent years, re-visiting famous novels of the past has become a somewhat popular genre, but this particular story was written as a contemporary piece, when Thomas Edison and all the other famous scientists and statesmen named therein were alive and well. Knowing a bit about that period of history is therefore useful to understand some points, as they are taken for granted and not explained the way they would be if related by a 21st Century author.

The publisher of this new edition thoughtfully provided an introduction explaining the context in which this book was written. When H.G.Wells started publishing his famous War of the Worlds story in serial form, it was an instant hit in Great Britain. Quick to recognize a potential source of profit, the American newspapers immediately started reprinting it under the title *Fighters from Mars*, simply changing the location from England to New England (the copyright laws were a lot more lenient in those days...). This throws some light as to why it is in the city of Boston that the hero is re-united with his family in the 2003 movie version. Obviously, the script-writer knew about the Americanized serial and paid homage to it.

Set just after the end of Wells' story, the plot of Edison's *Conquest of Mars* relates how, under the

leadership of the United States, the various nations of the Earth unite and try to rebuild the damage. The occupants of the last Martian projectile to land have managed to take off for their home world before being infected by Earthly germs, and this is a source of grave concern, for it is feared that they might come back.

Enters Thomas Edison, who announces that he has perfected both an electrical gravity nullifier and a disintegrator weapon at least as formidable as the Martians' fearful heat ray. It is again tempting to find such things



laughable today, but it must be remembered that at the end of the 19th Century, many inventors did indeed accomplish great advances working alone in their laboratory. Edison came up with the gramophone, incandescent light and numerous new ways to use electricity, and was commonly known as the Wizard by his contemporaries.

As in the Münchhausen story, the first ship is tested with a trip to the Moon, where the explorers find gigantic ancient ruins, a five foot long human footprint and a crater full of diamonds. On then to Mars. Edison's gravitic drive is not very fast, so it takes a while.

En route, they stop on a small passing planetoid which turns out to be made entirely of gold. There are also some stranded Martian pirate miners and, after a fierce battle, the Earthmen manage to capture one.

Despite the fact that the story is supposedly a sequel to the then already well known War of the Worlds, the author totally disregards Wells' tentacled aliens. Serviss' Martians are gigantic humanoids, quite misshapen and very bellicose. The fleet then moves on to Mars, where it is met with all the power that the Martians can muster.

For those who like a good battle, this book definitely has that. Both sides are about evenly matched; the Martians having number and overall superior technology on their side; while the Earthmen's ships can climb above the atmosphere and their disintegrators are, at least in some ways, more practical. There are heavy losses on both sides, but they are felt more heavily by the Earth fleet, whose supplies are dwindling.

By one of those strange twists of luck that were a trademark of fiction back then, Edison rescues a human slave girl during a raid and gains precious information. We learn that thousand of years ago, Martians raided Earth and built the Pyramids of Egypt, but had to flee when the local germs started to decimate them (and yet they came back – so much for superior intelligence...).

The slave girl (who is, of course, Caucasian, blonde and beautiful) is the last of her kind on the red planet, the Martians having just finished killing all the others in retaliation of Edison's attack. This is quite convenient, for it spares the invaders the anguish of causing them harm when they put into action their final plan. Having learned from the girl that most of the inhabited areas of Mars are below sea level (there is plenty of water on that version of this world), the Earthmen make a daring raid and open the giant locks that are keeping out the flow.

Nine tenth of the Martian population perishes in the

flood, and many of those who are left will starve to death before the flood recedes. This is considered regrettable by the noble Earthmen, but it was necessary to prevent another attack on Earth. Serves the monsters right for not being righteous. In fact, the Earth people are much more moved by the death of a forty-foot tall woman of Ceres, captured by the Martians during a raid on that world, than they are about the drowned millions. It's a good thing that nobody put actual weapons of mass destruction into the hands of our great-grandparents, or we would not be here today!


You really need to put yourself into the mindset of the people of the time in order to appreciate such books. Both *The Scientific Adventures of Baron Münchhausen* and *Edison's Conquest of Mars* have been reprinted by Apogee Books, a Canadian company. They feature the original illustrations and bear a comprehensive introduction by Robert Godwin. I really enjoyed them, and shall certainly keep an eye open for other similar titles. ❖

CONVENTIONS / EVENTS

Otakuthon 2008


Reviewed by Mireille Dion

Photos by Charles Mohapel



The 2008 Otakuthon festival of Montreal took place on July 26th and 27th at the Palais des Congres. Like the latest editions of the festival, a variety of activities was organized for the convention members. From screening of anime that have not been released on this side of the ocean yet (as well as of old classics), to initiations to the Japanese folklore, the convention had just about everything an anime/manga/video game fan could wish for. Interesting panels, thematic games, screenings of typical (whacky) Japanese television games, an art room where fans can purchase affordable and original fan art, a traders' room, a thematic restaurant where we can find popular otaku (anime fan) food, video games and competitions of various fan interests, etc. There were simply too many things to do for a humble otaku to see it all and experience it all in

one week-end.



Then, of course, we must not forget to mention the terrific ambiance that resulted from the myriad of costumes and folkloric clothes that the otakus wore throughout the week-end. Some of the visitors were simply dressed in Japanese clothes, or with t-shirts that were related to an anime or the anime world in general, but many more were costumed as either a recognizable character or else a character that could be part of the background of an anime or manga. What a colourful and cool change of scenery that was for us all, not to mention for the Palais des congrès.

All in all, the convention was once again a huge success and I, for one, look forward to returning next year! ❖

Salon de la Passion Médiévale 2008

Reviewed by Josée Bellemare

On the last weekend of April, the Hippodrome de Montréal was once again host to the Salon de la Passion Médiévale et Historique.

As always, dealers were in abundance, selling everything you can think of and a few more. You could find a variety of weapons, clothing and accessories, toys and all sorts of items to decorate your home.

One vender was even having a liquidation sale: everything at ridiculously low prices. They were selling the stuff by the bagful. The thing was, the items for sale were either very cutesy or very dark.

There was the usual fighting demonstration but one session was different: with music, a commentator announcing the rounds and competitors dressed in clothing from very different time periods, the whole thing looked like a combat video game.

Several role playing groups were in attendance, trying to interest potential participants and on stage we saw the regular musicians we come to expect every year. We also saw a fashion show but the biggest attention grabber this year was the belly dancers. Very talented and flexible, it was obvious these ladies do not have hip or back problems.



MOVIES / TELEVISION / DVDs

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull

Reviewed by Mireille Dion

At first, I really loved to see Indy in the fifties and witness how the events of history have affected (or not affected) him. Some of the best (and funniest) stunts of the movie take place within thirty minutes of the opening title, too. However, if Indy is back as we know him and in more-than-fair shape for his age, the new characters are not as satisfying and even crowd a little bit too much what could have been a faster-paced adventure movie.

The villainess played by Cate Blanchett is particularly disappointing considering the level of craft that Ms Blanchett has demonstrated in several other movies. I guess even the best of actresses can only do so much with the scripts they are handed, and since Lucas is behind the story of this movie, such depth limitations do not really come as a surprise anymore.

As for the rest of the new characters, Shia Labeouf camps a perfectly clichéd 50s youth *à la* Marlon Brando. His interactions with the experienced archeologist are interesting, and sometimes humorous, but all in all, those interactions are not what I remember the most once the movie was over. They certainly don't compare to what we enjoyed last summer in the fourth Die Hard.

As for the return of Marion Ravenwood, it was cool but I just didn't feel any real connections taking place between the characters; I only thought of them as people going through a new Indy adventure together – which was more or less proceeding as if even the movie didn't quite know where it was going – and dealing with the consequences



afterward.

However, if the non-Indy characters didn't draw me in that much this time around, some situations and stunts most decidedly did and for those, I'm really not disappointed that I took a chance on the movie at the theatre. It is definitely worth a \$5 ticket and should be seen at least once on the big screen.

Still, for all the cool stunts, one other element also left me on my appetite. That element was the crystal skull itself. For Stargate Sg-1 watchers like me, such an artifact will not be unfamiliar and, as the secret of the skull is revealed, I felt more than a few times like *deja-vu...* or that the writers/storytellers tried really hard – too hard perhaps – to distinguish their crystal skull from the one introduced in SG1... There were also a few plot holes in regards to that skull and how they used it in the movie, begging the question as to why they bothered including those long scenes into the movie if they weren't going to play a role later on...

I have also read in other critics that the movie lacked a sense of tension due to impending doomsday, and I must say that I agree on that account as well. In a way, the story (with its plot holes and two-dimensional extra characters) kind of feels more like an amateur fanfiction story rather than something that resulted from professional story-tellers and writers...

So, all in all, it is a good summer movie, but not quite up to par with the old ones (such as *The Last Crusade*).

Personally, I think that this might be due to the fact that they ventured down a not-so-Indy direction rather than stick to the Nazis (ex-Nazis, pro-Nazis)/religious artifact proven formula of two of the previous movies. Even *The Temple of Doom*, although not related to the Nazis, dealt with mystical godly power of some kind... That is not to be seen in this new movie...

Therefore, I recommend not shelling out more than 5\$ for it and to keep the extra money to return see Iron Man for the same price.

Oh, for the Harrison fans, he is as good looking as ever, and so in shape that you wouldn't believe that we're twenty years after he last shot the third Indy movie. ❖

Stargate SG-1 - The Complete Series Collection by Various Directors & Writers

Reviewed by Charles Mohapel

While nobody can like all 214 episodes of Stargate SG-1 equally, we all have our favourites, and this Complete Series Collection gives us every single episode of all 10 seasons and a lot more. You also get all of the bonus materials from the 10 single-season sets, plus four additional Special Features Discs and a really cool-looking cardboard box with a 3-D Stargate on it and holding all 54 DVDs. Also included is a beautiful booklet, listing all the episodes in order by season, as well as giving a brief synopsis of each episode and listing what is on each and every disc.

My personal favourites include anything from the Directors Series with Martin Wood, for the simple reason that he makes you laugh at the same time as you learn how a show is made from the other side of the camera. If you have an interest in working in the industry in props, special effects, CGI, stunts, makeup, etc., each of these crucial departments gets its moment in the sun.

Some of the extras are simultaneously fun and interesting, others are cool, and some are downright sophomoric. Given that cast, crew, directors, and executive producers number over 500 and the average workday is around 14 hours, the show could be quite a grind. That it isn't is due in part to the fact that both Executive Producer Brad Wright and Richard Dean Anderson have surrounded themselves with like-minded people who work hard, fool around on set often, and make this a pleasurable show to work on.

Unfortunately, the design of the box interior leaves a

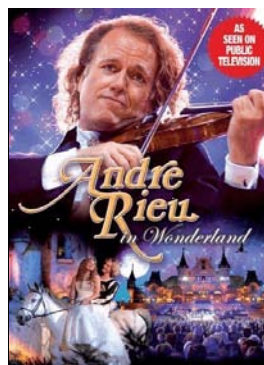


great deal to be desired. Instead of the three slim, clear DVD cases (two double and one single) used in the later years, the interior design made me think of a wallet where your credit cards fit into slots and overlap like shingles on a roof. This is a very bad design because it causes each card to rub against its neighbours and damage the magnetic strips. The interior of the box lets the DVDs rub against each other, and even worse, fall out of their slots.

I give the contents an 'A+', the outside of the boxed set an 'A', and the inside packaging an 'F'. That said, I would unconditionally recommend the set for all 9,900 minutes of materials (according to Amazon.com), as well as recommend that you invest in 27 slim double cases to protect your treasure. I did and they fit the box perfectly.

All in all, the Stargate SG-1 - The Complete Series Collection DVD set is a must-have for any serious collector.

❖



RIEU IN WONDERLAND

Josée Bellemare

If you want to mix classical music, fantasy and a lot of fun, I strongly recommend the concert DVD of Rieu in Wonderland.

You have great music, dance numbers, the fairytales you grew up with and great

background scenery. The concert was recorded at Efteling, a fairytale theme park in the Netherlands.

André Rieu always brings a great deal of enthusiasm to his concerts and this one is no exception. Combine that with a fantasy setting and you get a show you'll want to watch time and time again. •

Appearing in each issue of Warp, "MonSFFAandom" collates abridged versions of the news and activities reports published over the last few months in Impulse, MonSFFA's approximately monthly news bulletin. Warp's production delays throughout 2008 have put us a tad behind so we've got a lot of catching up to do over this and the next issue of the club's fanzine.

As is our practice, we'll present club news, activities, and at the end of each installment of "MonSFFAandom," in chronological order, the MonSFFA meeting reports. With this installment, we'll cap 2007, leading with coverage of our 20th Anniversary/Christmas Party, and get started on recounting 2008. Our next installment (Warp 71) will complete our review of 2008 and bring us into 2009, at which point we should be more or less caught up. And so, let's begin.

Right off the top, the January 2008 issue of Impulse reported on the club's last event of 2007, our big party:

MonSFFen Celebrate Festive Season and Club's 20th Anniversary

MonSFFA marked its 20th anniversary last month, adding commemorative celebrations to the club's annual Christmas party. In addition to the usual Christmas party traditions, the club welcomed MonSFFen, current and former, and friends to a buffet dinner and dance, handed out special anniversary souvenirs, and screened nostalgic video footage, circa MonSFFA's early years.

Over 40 folk joined the party, among them former MonSFFA members Kevin Holden and Trudie Mason, he a founding member of the club and both very active in the organization of events and activities during MonSFFA's formative years. Ex-Montrealer Andrew Gurudata, a long-time friend of the club, travelled from Toronto to DJ the party while Mark Burakoff and Lindsay Brown oversaw a super-sized raffle, prizes for which included a number of books, collectibles, DVDs, and a portable DVD player. A number of nifty door prizes were also distributed throughout the evening.

The club's archives were opened for the occasion and MonSFFA's complete collection of Warp fanzines was put on display for perusal. Party-goers, meanwhile, signed anniversary messages to the club on a large card provided for that purpose. The revelry finally wrapped up in the wee hours; a great time was had by all!

The club salutes its current membership and all MonSFFen who have come and gone over the past 20 years. And, we thank those many club members and friends who pitched in to help plan and run our 20th Anniversary/Christmas 2007 party.

The issue then outlined the club's meeting and events schedule for the coming year...

2008 MonSFFA Meeting Schedule

The club has selected the following dates for its regular meetings and events this year: January 13, February 17, March 30, April 20, May 25, June 22 (field trip), July 20 (summer barbecue), August 24, September 21, October 26, November 16, December 6 (Christmas party).

...and set up the new year's elections:

2008 Club Elections

The first order of business at the club's January 13 meeting will be the selection of MonSFFA's 2008 Executive Committee. All club members in good standing are encouraged to participate in this process.

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

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

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

All MonSFFA members in good standing are eligible to cast a ballot. Members are asked to be present at the designated place and time in order to exercise their right to vote. Proxy voting is not permitted.

January's Impulse closed with a reminder of the club's recent address change and an apology for a delay in delivery:

Printed Version of January 2008 Impulse Delayed

While the electronic version of this edition of *Impulse* was distributed as always, production of the printed version was unavoidably delayed and did not reach subscribers in the usual timely manner. Rather, copies were made available at the club's January 13 meeting, or subsequently mailed to subscribers. We apologize for the delay.

February's Impulse led with comment on the "rough seas" anticipated for the club's freshly installed Executive over the coming 12 months:

2008 Executive Faces Difficult Year

With rough seas ahead, MonSFFen opted for a steady hand on the tiller in 2008—last year's Executive Committee have been returned to office for another year. President Berny Reischl, vice-president Keith Braithwaite, and treasurer Sylvain St-Pierre probably make up the most experienced of any MonSFFA Executive to date. This will serve us well as the club tackles dramatic operating cost increases related to the rental of our meeting room, an issue we expect will override just about all others in the coming year.

The Days Hotel has again increased function space rental rates this year and our treasury simply cannot sustain these elevated costs for much longer. Already struggling with last year's price hike, MonSFFA is now faced with somehow raising still more cash, cutting meetings, or abandoning the hotel altogether for another, less expensive meeting hall, if indeed such a locale can be found. No walk in the park but we are confident of having put in place the best possible Executive to deal with the situation.

We wish Berny, Keith, and Sylvain well as they prepare to pilot the club through another year.

The issue also included another reminder of MonSFFA's address change and a couple of revisions to the club's 2008 meeting schedule, notably the cancellation of the "planned October 26 meeting...as meeting rooms are unavailable on that date, or on any other in October." Alternate activities were reported to be under consideration.

"MonSFFA Moment" was the tag given to a brief sidebar that would appear a number of times throughout the year's run of Impulses, each highlighting an instant in the 20-year chronicle of the club. The first of these historical snapshots was introduced with this issue and recounted the expansion of the club's mandate in 1988. The Montreal Star Trek Association—MonSTA—became the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy

Association—MonSFFA, henceforth to serve the interests of not only Star Trek fans, but those intrigued by any and all things pertaining to science fiction and fantasy.

Grave news closed the February issue, involving a prominent member of Montreal fandom and long-time friend:

Emru Townsend

We are in receipt of solemn news that long-time friend of MonSFFA Emru Townsend is ill and in need of a bone-marrow donor. Our thoughts are with him and his family.

As we understand it, finding a compatible donor is, unfortunately, no easy task. Emru's sister, Tamu, has provided the following Web site addresses and encourages folk to consider registering as bone-marrow donors. "The 11 million potential donors world-wide can help save a life," she says.

Hema Quebec:

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

Canada Blood Services:

<http://onematch.ca/registry>

National Marrow Donor Program (US):

<http://www.marrow.org>

National Blood Service (UK):

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

Emru's plight was taken up not only by local fans, but ultimately by the mainstream Montreal media, resulting in heightened awareness of the desperate need for bone-marrow donors. Against all odds, a donor match was found for Emru! His prognosis had suddenly and considerably improved, mid-summer, and hopes for his recovery were buoyed. We know today, however, that in the end, Emru's illness proved intractable. Before the close of the year, he was gone.

We'll jump forward, just for a moment, to the December 2008 issue of *Impulse*, which relayed the sad news to MonSFFen:

Emru Townsend Succumbs to Leukemia

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Emru Townsend on Tuesday evening, November 11. He was 39. Emru was an erudite, refined, and gracious individual, a profoundly amiable fellow, beloved and respected throughout Montreal's animation and SF/F community. He will be greatly missed.

Emru's many friends in local fandom were cautiously optimistic this past summer when news came that, against all

odds, a stem-cell donor had been found for him. (Because very few blacks are registered as donors, there was little chance of finding a match.) Though we all knew he was not yet out of the woods, this turn of events gave many of us hope. But alas, his particularly aggressive form of leukemia proved unconquerable. He died peacefully surrounded by close family.

Emru is survived by his wife, Vicky Vriniotis, young son Max, parents Beverley King and David Townsend, and sister Tamu....

In keeping with Emru's wishes, folk were again encouraged to learn more about registering to be a bone-marrow and stem-cell donor.

Returning, now, to early 2008, March's Impulse covered news of the passing of SF icon Arthur C. Clarke:

Last of the "Big Three"

Multiple Hugo and Nebula award-winning science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke passed away of respiratory illness on March 19 at age 90. He had suffered for decades from post-polio syndrome, the result of having contracted polio in 1962. The British-born Clarke, an enthusiast of undersea exploration who has lived in Sri Lanka for some 50 years, was the last of science fiction's so-called "big three," Isaac Asimov and Robert A. Heinlein being the other two best known and most celebrated SF writers of the post-World War II era.

An avid collector of pulp science fiction magazines in his youth, and a devoted "space cadet," Clarke was the first non-American Guest of Honour at a Worldcon, in 1956. His major science fiction novels include *Childhood's End* (1950; expanded 1953), *The City and the Stars* (1953; expanded 1956), *The Deep Range* (1954; expanded 1957), *A Fall of Moondust* (1961), *Rendezvous With Rama* (1973), and *The Fountains of Paradise* (1979). He is probably most associated, however, with *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), the definitive SF film by Stanley Kubrick, which Clarke co-scripted with Kubrick, and which was based on Clarke's short story "The Sentinel" (1951). Clarke also novelised the film.

In 1945 he published "Extra-Terrestrial Relays," a paper outlining the principles of satellite communication using satellites in geostationary orbits. Some 25 years later his concept became reality. He received numerous honours for his invention and today the 42,000-kilometer geostationary orbit is referred to as the Clarke Orbit, so named by the International Astronomical Union.

Twice chairman of the British Interplanetary Society (BIS), Clarke's work on space flight influenced astronomer Carl Sagan while TV producer Gene Roddenberry took some of his inspiration for *Star Trek* from Clarke. In July of

1969, CBS tapped Clarke to co-anchor news coverage of the *Apollo 11* moon mission with Walter Cronkite and astronaut Wally Schirra. He repeated the assignment for *Apollo 12* and *15*, and the historic *Apollo-Soyuz* link-up.

The visionary Clarke was among the first to predict reusable space vehicles and the proliferation of the mobile phone. He speculated that we'll soon see space tourism, complete with domed hotels on the moon and people riding into orbit on the space elevator he envisioned in *The Fountains of Paradise*. He also ventured that the 21st century will see the development of some kind of new energy source, that we'll be able to synthesise all of our food in the not-too-distant future, and that by 2030, we will have made contact with an extraterrestrial civilisation.

April's Impulse provided details of a small fund-raiser scheduled for that month's club meeting:

Sci-Fi Garage/Bake Sale

The club is holding a small fund-raiser at our April 20 meeting in the form of a combination garage and bake sale.... We encourage all members to participate, and to bring a friend!

Here's how it'll work:

Let's begin with the garage sale. Members are invited to sell off some of their old sci-fi stuff—books and comics, videos and DVDs, toys and collectibles! Clear your shelves of used magazines, or empty your cupboards of items you no longer collect and sell these treasures to your fellow MonSFFen.

We ask that you please slap your name and a price tag on each item or bundle of your stock.

And, stuff a few extra dollars in your wallet or purse as you will almost certainly spot something someone else has brought in that you've just got to have!

As facilitator, MonSFFA asks for a 10-percent cut of your sales—sell \$50 worth, for example, and MonSFFA receives \$5 of that. We'll have a few members on duty to handle things and oversee the garage sale.

And, MonSFFA will accept with *much* thanks any generous donations of cool items members may wish to make in support of the club's fund-raising efforts. Said items will be included as prizes in future club raffles or, should we accumulate a sufficient number, auctioned off that very afternoon to augment garage sale profits.

We've conceived the bake sale as a lavish version of our usual MonSFFA snack table. Suggested donations for the various delicious treats will be posted.

Members may participate in two ways: first, by purchasing some of the tasty offerings and second, by supplying a few of these edibles. We ask that members

prepare a delectable SF/F-themed snack—cookies, cupcakes, fudge or chocolate squares, for example—or modify munchies purchased at the grocery store to somehow reflect our sci-fi theme—the *Star Trek* insignia might be rendered in icing on a store-bought cookie, for instance. Members not particularly skilled at creating desserts may simply pick up a commercially available snack item that can be cleverly renamed—a donut could thus become a stargate. Be creative and have fun.

Note that a *small* serving for about a dozen people is all that is required of each member supplying a snack or two. Also, please do not prepare foodstuffs that require refrigeration or that need to be heated before serving as we are not equipped to handle such. And importantly, please include a list of ingredients for the benefit of MonSFFen who may have allergies to certain foods.

All monies raised through this Sci-Fi Garage/Bake Sale will be directed to the club's general operating fund.

The next Impulse was designated a May-June issue and reached members prior to the club's May 25 meeting, noting that the news bulletin would not publish again until mid-July, shortly before MonSFFA's annual summer barbecue. The issue led with the particulars of the club's planned field trip to Montreal's Biodome in lieu of a June meeting:

Sign Up for Biodome Field Trip

The club has planned a field trip to Montreal's Biodome in place of a June meeting. The outing will take place on Sunday, June 22.

The Biodome, housed in the former Olympic Velodrome next to the Olympic Stadium (Metro Pie-IX or Viau), is a first-rate zoological exhibition featuring recreations of a number of ecosystems supporting a variety of terrestrial and aquatic animal life. Wonderful photographic opportunities abound. Our admission fee includes self-guided tours of not only the Biodome, but the related Insectarium and Botanical Gardens.

We will gather in the entrance lobby of the Biodome at 10:45AM (don't be late!) in order that we may enter as a group at 11:15AM and benefit from a special group rate offered for admission: \$20 per adult, \$10 per child. These prices amount to \$5 off the regular cost of admission per individual. We require a group of at least 20 to qualify for the discount. MonSFFen are encouraged to welcome family and friends along for the afternoon.

Some club members have already signed up; we must reach the 20-person minimum by the conclusion of our May 25 meeting, and collect all monies for the group admission

charge. Note that should we be unable to meet that minimum, all monies will be refunded and we'll each then have to pay the regular admission charge.

Finally, folk may wish to bring with them a bagged lunch rather than partake of the somewhat pricey onsite snack bar.

Unfortunately, we came up just shy of that 20-person minimum, but the band of MonSFFen and friends that visited the Biodome on June 22 greatly enjoyed the excursion.

The May-June issue also touched on the club's developing plans for next year's Worldcon, set to take place right here in Montreal:

MonSFFA's Anticipation Plans

As MonSFFen know, the World Science Fiction Convention—the Worldcon—will unfold here in Montreal next year under the name Anticipation. As one of the principal SF/F organisations operating in the host city, MonSFFA's executive believes that the club should hold a welcome-to-Montreal room party, perhaps, or some such function at the event.

Over the summer, the executive would like the input of the club's membership as to MonSFFA's plans for Anticipation. How should we welcome world fandom to our city? What can we put together for the Worldcon next year? Give it some thought and let the executive know of your ideas, either in person at one of our upcoming meetings, or by standard or electronic post.

Members who would be changing addresses on or about Montreal's traditional July 1st moving day were prompted to so advise the club.

The issue closed with a few brief notes, beginning with an outline of the reasons behind MonSFFA's search for a new meeting hall:

While MonSFFA's monthly meetings continue to be held at the Days Hotel, given the club's budgetary constraints and the improbability of the hotel reducing sufficiently its newly elevated function space rental rates, the club is actively searching for a new meeting locale, preferably in the downtown area. While we would certainly like to stay put, regrettably, financial realities are what they are. Cost cutting has helped some and will allow us to extend our stay at the Days Hotel a little longer, but long-term projections tell us that we simply cannot sustain the increasing cost of renting our meeting hall there.

Other quick annotations included a recap of recent local movie premieres co-sponsored by MonSFFA, as well as word that MonSFFA Webmaster Berny Reischl and Warp editor Cathy Palmer-Lister were “pleased to announce that Warp is now available in .pdf format exclusively to MonSFFA members.” MonSFFen were instructed to “e-mail Berny (president@monsffa.com) to request the access password for each issue then surf to the club’s Web site and download your issues of e-Warp, complete with full-colour photos and hot links, among other features.”

And that brings us to the last part of this installment of “MonSFFAandom,” the monthly meeting reports, presented here in chronological order, November 2007-April 2008:

November MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA’s November 18 meeting opened with Sylvain St-Pierre’s trip report on the 2007 Worldcon in Yokohama, Japan. Sylvain showed numerous slides as illustration while he recounted his experiences at Nippon 2007, noting that the Japanese approach to SF conventions is somewhat different from that of Canadians and Americans. The practice of pre-registering for a con, for example, is uncommon in Japan and thus, lines at the Japanese Worldcon’s pre-registration desk were rather shorter than North American fans expected. Sylvain spoke, as well, of host city Yokohama, which he explored to some extent during his stay, offering photos of several of the local attractions he visited.

Following the mid-meeting break, Keith Braithwaite, assisted by his children Scott and Erin, ran a challenging and entertaining game of Sci-Fi Pictionary.

Just prior to the start of the meeting, the club’s BoA convened to map out programming for the coming year.

Our thanks to all those who contributed to our November meeting.

January MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA kicked off 2008 with a newsletter workshop, overseen by Warp editor Cathy Palmer-Lister. MonSFFen present were recruited to write articles, pen reviews, and such for the next issue of Warp, the club’s newsletter/fanzine, while others were asked to proffered submissions. Cathy introduced an informal nostalgic theme in the wake of MonSFFA’s 20th anniversary celebrations, held in December. A few of the club’s old-timers were interviewed, reminiscing on the club’s early days.

Following the mid-meeting break, Berny Reischl cued up a selection of fan films he’d culled from the Web, including a clever *Star Trek* spoof presented in the style of an old black-and-white silent movie, complete with melodramatic acting, printed dialogue panels, and piano

accompaniment. Of particular interest were several funny, well-acted shorts produced by a Montreal-based troupe of filmmakers/actors calling themselves GalactiCast, who deftly applied green-screen techniques to rather good visual effect. *Lost*, *Blade Runner*, *King Kong*, *Power Rangers*, even TV’s Dr. Phil were the subjects of the group’s farcical sci-fi parodies.

The club membership present also selected MonSFFA’s Executive Committee for the coming year....

Our thanks to all who contributed to our January meeting.

February MonSFFA Meeting

Sex and horror were on the agenda at MonSFFA’s February 17 gathering.

Sylvain St-Pierre was first up with an extensively researched presentation on reproduction in SF, from strange alien mating rituals to the creation of life via such means as genetic manipulation and cloning. Aldous Huxley’s novel *Brave New World* and the popular *Star Wars* movies, for example, feature cloning. Mary Shelley’s classic *Frankenstein* was offered as an example of the creation of life not by God but man, with horrific consequences, while tales of artificial life include the films *Blade Runner* and *A.I.* Vampires, *Star Trek*’s Borg, and the pods of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* reproduce by assimilation. Immortality eliminates the need to reproduce and, indeed, the state of imperishability goes hand in hand with impotence in Bob Shaw’s *One Million Tomorrows*. And then there’s Frank Bellkap Long, who postulates a species in which the females are a thousand times larger than the males. Larry Niven’s female Kzinti, meanwhile, are non-sentient. But it is the male Dextran who is non-sentient in David J. Lake’s *The Right Hand of Dextra*. Isaac Asimov creates a scenario involving three sexes in *The Gods Themselves* while Jack Vance’s Dirdir feature multiple types of males and females. A.E. Van Vogt’s Riim and Jack L. Chalker’s Czill reproduce by splitting apart, as does the Blob of classic sci-fi movie fame.

Sylvain outlined still more stories in which aliens sported, for instance, removable sex organs, or could switch genders or procreate with other species—*Star Trek* features a lot of this type of hanky-panky—or enjoy sex telepathically. When it was all over, everyone lit up and enjoyed a cigarette.

Keith Braithwaite was up after the mid-meeting break with a discussion of the techniques employed by horror writers and filmmakers to scare their readers and viewers. Keith cited comment on the subject by a variety of horror writers, including Stephen King, Dean Koontz, Robert Bloch, Charles L. Grant, and William F. Nolan.

Nothing is so frightening as what’s behind the closed

door. The anticipation of violence is far more suspenseful than violence itself. The monster glimpsed at in the shadows is much scarier than the one viewed in graphic detail. In other words, allowing the reader or viewer's imagination to do the heavy lifting, rather than laying it all out before an audience, works best. No blood-splattered prose or gut-churning gore splashed on the screen can equal the spine-tingling chills evoked by the imagination of the reader or viewer. A cheap scare can be had by shocking an audience with some sudden, gruesome trick, but *real*, down-deep terror is best achieved by suggestion, by the steady building of suspense, by tapping into the most primal fears of the reader or viewer.

Keith examined this thinking in detail, providing examples from horror literature and film, while outlining some of the stylistic techniques employed by successful horror writers. For example, words and images of death—quiet as graveyard, moonlight as pale as a corpse—subliminally suggest to the reader that a character is in serious danger or is about to die. Also, the use of simpler words and shorter sentences as the narrative approaches a climatic moment of violence increasingly propels the reader forward, headlong, to that moment.

Our thanks to presenters Sylvain St-Pierre and Keith Braithwaite.

Star Trek Theme at March MonSFFA Meeting

Star Trek was the theme of our well-attended March 30



Theresa Penalba

meeting, with Theresa Penalba speaking on *Star Trek: the Animated Series* and Wayne Glover allowing MonSFFen a look at some of the original series episodes recently re-released in high definition DVD format, sporting extraordinary reworked visual effects.

Theresa led off, briefly covering the origins of the *Star Trek* series that continued the adventures of the original *Enterprise* crew in animated form for two seasons, from 1973 to 1975.

While a Filimation Studios-produced cartoon, the Daytime Emmy Award-winning *Star Trek: the Animated Series* was not typical Saturday-morning kiddie fare. The show reunited all but Walter “Chekov” Koenig of the original live-action series’ cast—Koenig was a victim of budgetary restrictions—and featured stories by many of the same writers who had penned scripts for the original series.

The writers followed the same guide that had been used on the original show, but had greater freedom to envision bizarre alien races and such as this was an animated series—anything that could be imagined could be drawn. Original series alumna D.C. Fontana was hired as the animated show’s story editor on Gene Roddenberry’s recommendation.

Despite being a cartoon, the show resisted dumbing things down for the kindergarten set and offered a combination of familiar and new characters to satisfy old and new audiences alike. Most notable of the new crew were the multi-limbed Edosian Lieutenant Arex, and the feline Lieutenant M’Ress. Sequels to some of *Trek*’s favourite tales pleased fans who had been yearning for more since the cancellation of the original series several years prior. Further, these animated adventures featured original-series guest stars like Mark “Sarek” Lenard, Roger C. “Harry Mudd” Carmel, and Stanley “Cyrano Jones” Adams reprising their familiar roles.

The animated series also introduced elements that would show up in later versions of *Star Trek*, like the holodeck, a second exit on the *Enterprise*’s bridge, and the revelation that the “T” in James T. Kirk stood for Tiberius.

Theresa closed by treating the group to a screening of the episode “More Tribbles, More Troubles,” a sequel to the classic “The Trouble With Tribbles.”

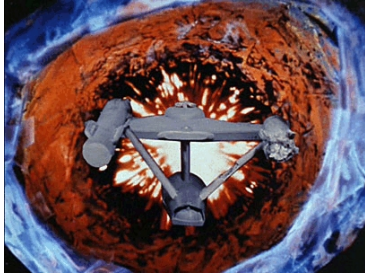
Following the mid-meeting break, Wayne Glover took centre stage and offered his audience a look at the high definition DVD releases of the original series. He noted that the recent scrapping of the HD-DVD format in favour of Blu-Ray has resulted in the cancellation of any further *Star Trek* releases in HD-DVD. To date, season one of the original series has been released but the planned follow-up of seasons two and three is now revoked. All three seasons will be retooled for the Blu-Ray system.



Wayne Glover

This hi-def *Trek* features spectacular new digitally created visual effects that have been inserted into the episodes, replacing the low-budget effects work of the originals. Matte paintings and planetscapes have been upgraded to remarkable result. The *Enterprise* itself is beautifully recreated in CGI, refined with exceptional hull detail of a quality light years beyond that of the original images. Fresh camera angles and movements, as well, dramatically improve the visual impact of the *Enterprise* and other spaceships manoeuvring against enhanced starfields. Where the original special effects often showed a simple bright light to represent an oncoming

spaceship viewed on the main screen by Kirk and crew, the reworked visuals offer a nuts-and-bolts spacecraft wonderfully realised in CGI. One of the most awesomely revamped sequences, to be sure, is the wreck of the starship *Constellation* from “The Doomsday Machine.”



Before...

have not yet aired in Canada, Wayne stated. The MonSFFen present, then, were glad of the opportunity to have a look.



And after!

We thank our March-meeting presenters Theresa Penalba and Wayne Glover, as well as Berny Reischl for providing technical support. The usual suspects receive a nod of thanks, too, for their help planning and running the meeting.

Early arrivals were treated during the pre-meeting time slot to a screening of a recent episode of *Star Trek: New Voyages*, a semi-professional Web-based series. A quick club BoA was also convened during the mid-meeting break to cement the last details of 2008 MonSFFA meeting programming.

April Meeting's Fund-Raiser Boosts Revenue

MonSFFA staged a small fund-raising operation in conjunction with its April 20 meeting, boosting usual meeting revenue by over \$100. Club members and friends in attendance enjoyed a spread of delectable victuals at our SF/F-themed bake sale while snapping up bargain-priced books, toys, and assorted collectibles at MonSFFA's Sci-Fi Garage Sale.

A table was set up in a corner of the room from which were sold a variety of entertainingly named sci-fi snacks that had been prepared for the occasion by club members. Fudge squares were labelled Bantha Podo, for instance, while slices of cake tinted with green food dye were dubbed (what else?) Soylent Green. This fare was available throughout the afternoon and together with our usual selection of drinks, kept the fen well fed and watered.

A number of MonSFFen, meanwhile, had brought in a

selection of sci-fi items for sale to their fellow club members. Several tables were set up to display these wares and sales profited both the MonSFFen selling their stock and the club, which collected a percentage of sales as a facilitator's fee.

We take this opportunity to thank those members and friends who contributed to and helped organise and run our fund-raising operations, in particular Julia Sinclair, Lindsay Brown, and Alice Novo, who handled the bake sale, and Josée Bellemare, who oversaw the garage sale.

As for the afternoon's programming, Cathy Palmer-Lister moderated a discussion of “green” SF, this being science fiction stories featuring an environmental theme. While global warming—or more accurately, climate change—has dominated public debate these past few years, the group recalled the many disaster tales published in the 1970s involving elevated pollution levels triggering a return to the Ice Age. The science of climate change now popularly promulgated, it was noted, suggests that while certain areas of planet Earth may well heat up, turning now temperate territories into arid deserts, other regions are expected to plunge into just the kind of Ice Age conditions those decades-old SF stories envisioned. The recent blockbuster film *The Day After Tomorrow* depicted such a scenario. This is all a little exaggerated, perhaps, suggested some.

Discussion ranged widely, questioning, for example, the ethics of terraforming another world to suit human needs, a common SF trope. Also proffered was the theme of environment adversely affected by overpopulation, this another doomsday theme popular in the SF of earlier decades. Stories involving new sources of energy were touched upon but biofuels were thought by some to alleviate one problem while causing another—spiralling food costs and eventually, shortages. The film *Soylent Green* was cited as a means of dealing with this issue, and as a grotesque form of recycling.

While the Earth has undergone dramatic environmental shifts over the course of its natural history, it was suggested that the rapid advance of climate change recorded in recent years may not, ultimately, allow species to adapt, as they have in eons past. But some species will no doubt survive, just as has always been the case at such pivotal points in the life of our planet. The great beasts of the Ice Age perished as their world grew warmer but many other creatures managed to survive the transition to a warmer climate.

Finally, man's grasp of technology has allowed him to adapt to vastly different environments and may well prove to be his savoir in any ecological cataclysm to come.

The group then enjoyed a screening of the moving eco-themed SF film *Silent Running*, courtesy Berny Reischl. ♦