

MARCH 1999 (VOLUME 13, NUMBER 2)

PRICE: \$

WARPF 46

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTREAL SCIENCE
FICTION AND FANTASY ASSOCIATION (MonSFFA)



Inside This Issue: Rumours of the Jedi, The Fandom Menace, *Crusade* Cancellation?, Convention Reviews, Model Building, the latest SF News, and More...

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COVER UP:

MonSFFen Theresa
Penalba, Lynda Pelley, and
friend Joel Burdick pose in
their *Star Wars* costumes at
the Toronto Trek masquerade.
(Photo by Dominique
Durocher.)

Lots of *Star Wars* material
this issue. Keep reading!

1999 MonSFFA EVENTS SCHEDULE

ALL MonSFFA MEETINGS HELD SUNDAY
AFTERNOONS, 1:00PM TO 4:00PM (SOME
MEETINGS INCLUDE MORNING ACTIVITIES,
WHICH BEGIN AT 10:30 AM), IN THE
ST-FRANCOIS ROOM OF THE DAYS INN, 1005
GUY STREET (CORNER RENÉ LÉVESQUE),
DOWNTOWN MONTREAL

1999 EVENT PROGRAMMING*

March 21 - The Rites of Spring

1:00pm: New Life and Evolution.

2:30pm: Plants, Animals, and other non-sentients. How does SF/F
portray the family pet?

April 18 - Time Travel and Time-Related Fantasy

1:00pm: It will have been going to have happened: the grammar
of time travel. Also, bumbling through time: time travel humour.

2:30pm: A Myth in Time: the revisionist mythology of *Hercules*,
Xena, *Stargate SG-1*, etc.

May 16 - The Golden Age of SF

1:00pm: Update and info about the SF Film Festival (June 4-19)
The Golden Age classics in SF film and literature.

June 27 - Star Wars: New Verus Classic

1:00pm: *The Phantom Menace* - Did it live up to expectations after
so many years of anticipation?

2:30pm: Game: *Star Wars* Trivial Pursuit.

July - Summer Break - No Meeting

August 15 - Deep Space Nine and Space Ship Design

1:00pm: The future of *Star Trek*? *Voyager* will soon end and *DS9* is
finished...Will there, should there, be a *DS9* movie? What will
happen to the *Star Trek* franchise?

2:30pm: Space Ship design - model building, 3D-modeling, SPFX.

September 12 - Space 1999 Anniversary

10:30am: Showing of Space 1999 pilot episode before the meeting.

1:00pm: See the moon for the very last time...

*All programming is tentative, and scheduling is subject to change.

JANUARY

17

FEBRUARY

21

MARCH

21

APRIL

18

MAY

16

JUNE

27

AUGUST

15

SEPTEMBER

12

OCTOBER

17

NOVEMBER

21

DECEMBER

11

Warp is published about five times a year by the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA). Address all correspondence to: *Warp*, c/o MonSFFA, P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2W 2P4. A subscription to *Warp* is a benefit of membership in MonSFFA. MonSFFA is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of science fiction and fantasy literature, film and television, comics, fanzines, art, music, costuming, model-making, gaming, etc. The opinions expressed in *Warp* are solely those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *Warp* or MonSFFA. The use of copyrighted material in this newsletter is—yes, we know—verboten, but is not intended to seriously infringe upon any of the rights of the copyright holders. Come on, people...lighten up! This is an amateur publication intended for enjoyment only. "Perfectionism is self-abuse of the highest order."

MonSFFA's Address: P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2W 2P4
MonSFFA's Web Site is at: <http://www.odyssee.net/~draken/monsffa/monsffa.html>

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Submissions: We will accept submissions on a variety of media, however, please take note that your text or artwork must eventually be processed on a Macintosh computer using QuarkXpress for page layout. For e-mail submissions, send to pellyn@odyssee.net with text in the body of the e-mail or as an attachment in ASCII format, and photos/artwork in jpeg format. For disk submissions, please send your material on diskettes or zip disks with Macintosh formatting—text should be ASCII and images should be jpeg or any format that can be processed by Adobe Photoshop. Please include a print-out of your material with all disks. If you do not own a compatible computer or a modem, you may submit typed or neatly hand-written documents, preferably single column and double-spaced. Please send all photographic material as prints; my flat-bed scanner cannot scan slides. Material (other than e-mail) can be submitted in person at MonSFFA meetings or be sent by mail.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR



Good news! *Warp* is back on schedule! I've cleared most of the backlog of articles from last year, including the very long Toronto Trek coverage in the "Convention Reviews" section of this issue.

Empirecon will be looked at in depth next issue, including lots of photos. It was a great convention and space did not permit the comprehensive coverage it deserves in this issue, so I've included only a brief review at this time.

MonSFFA is attempting to do something for the premiere of *The Phantom Menace*. Note that the opening of this movie has been moved up to May 19th now, instead of the previously announced May 21st. The plans are still sketchy, but it will probably involve getting costumed fans together at the cinema for the premiere. If you have a costume and want to be involved let me know, either in person at the club meeting or by e-mail.

Spring is on its way, and with it MonSFFen are starting to think about which conventions they want to attend this summer. I have not yet received the flyer for this year's Toronto Trek, otherwise you would see it reproduced in this issue. They seem to be later booking their guests this year than usual, so there are not many names as yet to go on the anticipated flyer. So far T-Trek has signed Peter Jurasik (Londo Molari of *Babylon 5*) and Stephen Furst (Vir Cotto of *Babylon 5*). We are still awaiting the announcement of their *Star Trek*, usually *Voyager*, guest(s). There are rumours going around about possible *Stargate SG-1* guests and, since it is a significant year, guests from *Space 1999*. I hope they let us know soon.

Toronto Trek may get serious competition this year. Another big science fiction media show will make its debut in Toronto on August 27-29th. Although still unofficial, we have it from good sources that a company called Hobbystar Marketing will put on a show in the Metro Toronto Convention Center. The guest list is said to include: Jeri Ryan (*Seven of Nine*, *Voyager*), John Delancie (Q, various *Star Treks*), Kenney Baker (R2-D2, *Star Wars*), Warwick Davis (Wicket, *Star Wars*), Ray Park (Darth Maul, *The Phantom Menace*), and Lou Ferrigno (*The Incredible Hulk*), with more to be announced. Prices could be as low as \$20 CDN for the weekend or \$10 per day. Supposedly there will be a separate charge(?) for Jeri Ryan, or a VIP ticket of some sort that includes all events plus some other goodies. Hopefully all will become clear in another month or so when this convention officially begins its advertising. Again, if I receive a flyer in time for the next issue of *Warp*, it will be published.

If you're not planning to travel this summer, you're out of luck as far as conventions go. There are no local cons planned in Montreal until the Fall (Con•Cept and Empirecon II). However, if you're starting to plan your vacation, make sure you will be sticking around for the weeks of June 4th-20th. Dimension SF, The Montreal Science Fiction Film Festival, will be running in the Imperial cinema. This is still the best cinema in town and it will be a pleasure to watch good prints of our favourite SF classics there!

Lynda Pelley,
Editor

www.cam.org/~reisch/filmfest.html

SHOWCASING A CENTURY
OF SCIENCE FICTION FILMS
FROM SPECTACULAR
CLASSICS TO NEW RELEASES

UN SIÈCLE DE CINÉMA
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GRANDS CLASSIQUES
ET FILMS INÉDITS

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LE FESTIVAL DE FILMS DE SCIENCE-FICTION DE MONTREAL





MonSFFA and *Warp* welcome letters of comment and inquiry. Mail letters to:

P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc,
Montreal, Quebec, Canada,
H2W 2P4.

Unless otherwise indicated, we assume all letters are intended for publication. *Warp* reserves the right to edit letters where deemed necessary.

Attention: Lynda Pelley, Editor

Thanks for your generous write-up for *North of Infinity—Futurity Visions* in the January 1999 issue of *Warp* (issue number 45). I am donating the enclosed copy to MonSFFA. I would love to see a review in a future issue of *Warp*.

All right, I won't be shy. My story "Queen's Move" appears in the Winter 1998 issue of *On Spec*.

Leslie Lupien
Montreal, Quebec

Thanks for the donation of the book, Leslie. We've slated it for raffle and we'll see what we can do about getting it reviewed. Congratulations are again due with news of your story in On Spec. Do keep us informed of further published stories. It's great to see one of our own in prodom's pages.—Ed

Bonjour,

Après quatre ans maintenant, je me décide à vous écrire pour devenir membre de votre association de SF, en espérant que vous existez encore après tout ce temps. Mais avant de devenir membre, j'aimerais vous poser quelques questions:

1. Combien en coûte-t-il par année maintenant?
2. Avez-vous un journal, mensuel

ou autre?

3. Si oui, avez-vous une page de correspondance?
4. Et une page pour ceux qui recherchent des livres, revues, films et autre objets de collection?
5. Quand il y a un évènement fanique à Montréal, comme un congrès de SF, de BD ou un festival *Star Trek* par exemple, en sommes-nous avertis à temps?
6. Faites-vous partie du groupe Boréal, et savez-vous où et quand ce congrès aura lieu cette année? Je l'espère, car c'est le seul que je connaisse.

Même si vous ne répondez pas toujours "oui" à toutes mes questions, je suis toujours prêt à devenir membre de votre association.

Daniel Gingras
Acton Vale, Québec

Cher Daniel, les frais de participation à l'AMonSFF sont de 20\$ par année. Nous sommes particulièrement fiers d'avoir réussi à maintenir ce taux sans augmentation depuis plusieurs années déjà.

Oui, nous avons un journal. Il s'appelle Warp et la publication en varie de trois à cinq numéros par année. Son coût est inclus dans les frais d'association au club. Nous publions également à l'occasion des feuillets pour avertir nos membre de la tenue d'évènements importants.

Oui, nous avons une page de correspondance. Elle est généralement bien remplie.

Oui, les membres du club peuvent faire gratuitement publier des annonces et afficher les articles qu'ils offrent ou recherchent, pour vente ou échange.

Oui, plusieurs évènements de SF locaux insèrent de la publicité dans Warp, et nous fournissons des détails sur les autres dans la colonne des nouvelles. De plus, ces congrès sont généralement annoncés lors de nos réunions mensuelles. Les congrès de BD sont assez fréquents à Montréal, et se tiennent habituellement à l'hôtel Delta. Il n'y a pour l'instant aucun festival Star Trek de prévu dans notre ville pour un avenir prochain.

Boréal est le nom du congrès francophone du Québec. Depuis quelques années, cet évènement est intégré à Con•Cept, qui a été à l'origine créé par notre club et était auparavant surtout anglophone. Nous continuons de participer activement à ce congrès, qui se tiendra cette année du 1 au 3 octobre, à l'hôtel Days Inn du Centre-Ville.

Nous espérons avoir bien répondu à vos questions, et vous accueillons avec joie au sein de l'Association Montréalaise de Science-Fiction et de Fantastique.—Sylvain St-Pierre, Responsable des services aux membres

Dear MonSFFA,

Sorry for the late renewal (enclosed). I have added \$2.50 to cover the cost of mailing me a (back-issue) copy of *Warp* 44, please. Thanks for sending me issue number 45, by the way.

Brian McCullogh
Kirkland, Quebec

A copy of Warp 44 will be in your mailbox by the time you read this, Brian. Thank you for renewing your membership—better late than never, as the saying goes.—Ed

Dear Friends,

I would appreciate it if you could send me a membership form to join the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association.

Thanks in Advance,

Robert Khayat
St-Laurent, Quebec

An information flyer/membership application was sent to Robert, who has since joined our ranks. Welcome, Robert. Glad to have you aboard.—Ed

Dear MonSFFen:

The 45th issue of *Warp* has arrived, and many thanks. I'll see if whatever I type out at this late hour makes any sense...

I watched the B5:Crusade prequel movie *A Call to Arms*...it was very

low key, seeing its premise. Half of it is questions about President Sheridan's sanity, and the other half was generic space battle. Ho hum, time to save Earth again, and only John J. Sheridan can do it, la di da. *Star Trek* had roving starships and then a space station, and *Babylon 5* is doing it in reverse order. I fear that *Crusade*, with its roving starship, will be *Trek* done *B5* style. JMS, please prove me wrong.

ST9: Insurrection is the latest of the *Trek* movies that relies on a corrupt senior officer in StarFleet's ranks. There's a lot of that going around...and this is an idea I wish they'd retire. However, the movie itself was good, lightweight entertainment.

One movie I enjoyed even more was *What Dreams May Come*. Based on the book of the same name by Richard Matheson, Robin Williams and Annabella Sciorra explore ideas about heaven and hell, and how far one will go to save the one he loves. Excellent movie. I rarely buy movies, but I will buy this one, and give it my Hugo nomination and vote.

Empirecon has come and gone...I'll be looking for reviews in the next issue. My first reaction was to compare it to CreationCons, but it sounds like it's a cross between a fan-run con and a pro con, for it has a corporate base to it. I wish it luck. There's been a similar SWcon in Toronto, but it's been compared to Creation, so we avoid it.

I wish Concinnity luck in 1999. I believe there may be legal recourse with hotels that simply renege on signed contracts, but fans don't have the wherewithal, or even the knowledge, to pursue these cases legally.

I fully agree with John Dupuis on Yves Meynard's *The Book of Knights*. The setting is familiar without being clichéd, and the story is light without being fairy-tale-ish. Magic is in that land, but it rare and hard to find, and magic finally explains the knight's quest. For someone like myself who's tired of the usual quest story, usually a Hobbit-clone, it was a pleasure to read.

Star Trek: The Experience sounds

great, the Trekkers' dream come true. I know some fans who live in Las Vegas, and they took in the experience. They were unimpressed, so I suspect they're jaded. Should I ever get to Vegas, though, I'll try it. Sounds like the reproduction of the *Trek* sets has been top notch.

Famous last words from Keith the director...I look forward to seeing Moxie on the big screen. Do the Moxie bottlers in Maine know about this? Will the local Klingons take your side, or theirs?

Ad Astra 19...still no word about it. I am worried about the lack of action about staging the con at this late date, and the con's website has not been updated since last June. As soon as I hear anything about it, I'll pass the word on.

Time to wrap up...take care, and see you somewhere around the con trail, or the next issue.

Lloyd Penney

Thank you for your letter of comment on Warp 45. To see what we thought of the latest crop of movies, go to our Movie Review section.

No! No! No! Please don't compare EmpireCon to those horrible Creation people. That would be a terrible insult to Ace Lopes and his associates, who worked so hard to organize a good convention.

We also wish Concinnity luck. If memory serves, Con•Cept also had an experience with a hotel whose employees graduated from the Darth Vader school of contract negotiation. "We are altering the bargain. Pray we don't alter it any further..."

We here at MonSFFA have also not heard anything about Ad Astra 19. We would be printing their flyer in this issue of Warp, had we received one.

There has been lots of positive feedback about John Dupuis' "In Search of Wonder..." column and Sylvain St-Pierre's article about the Las Vegas Star Trek Experience. I'm sure they both will be pleased.

As for the Moxie bottlers in Maine...we don't know how much they know or when they knew it, but we sure hope they have a sense of humour! (Although, they're probably used to the

weirdness, having dealt with the Klingons for several years...)—Ed.

E-mail from:

"Grand Jedi Master Uilmuteiz"

In the next *Warp*, I think you should maybe print a copy of the *Star Wars Insider* survey. I'm sure it would be interesting for them to receive more survey answers!! If you do put the survey in the next *Warp*, I'm willing, if you give them back to me at the meeting following the distribution of *Warp 46*, to fax them to *Insider*.

Thank you for reading.

Sebastien

(The new guy...hey I'm in this because of you, you know...)

P.S.: If you're planning to write an article, I really enjoyed EmpireCon, and I might be the only one who thinks it was worth it...

P.S.2: It was also my first convention.

Welcome to MonSFFA, Sebastien! Many of the Star Wars fans we have spoken to thought EmpireCon was very worthwhile. We're looking forward to the next one!

Several of our longtime members had their first contact with the club exactly the way you did—they spoke to our club table representatives at a local convention and have remained with MonSFFA ever since.

Your idea of sending back the SW Insider surveys is interesting, however, it would probably be better to hand out the loose sheets at a club meeting rather than publish them in Warp.

When the Star Wars: Special Edition was released, SW Insider mailed out tickets and gave a special preview screening for fans in Montreal and other major North American cities. There are rumours that SW Insider will do a similar thing for the opening of The Phantom Menace, sending out tickets to fans. Those who fill out and send in the survey stand a much better chance of being on that mailing list...—Ed

MonSFFAAndom

"ALL THE CLUB NEWS THAT FITS, WE'LL PRINT!"

MonSFFA'S 1999 EXECUTIVE TAKES OFFICE

The first MonSFFA meeting of each year traditionally sees the club select its executive for that year. 1999's executive took office on January 17. Both president Cathy Palmer-Lister and treasurer Sylvain St-Pierre were returned for another term while Stephen Toy stepped forward to fill the vacancy left by departing vice-president Dave Legault. We congratulate our 1999 executive and wish them a good year. And, we take this opportunity to thank Dave Legault for his many years of dedicated service to the club, first as a valued member of our Board of Advisors, and more recently, as our VP. Dave was instrumental in organizing the club's popular *FedEx Files* video-film projects and 1997's "create-a-universe" writer's workshop, among other undertakings. He regrets that he does not have the time he once did to devote to MonSFFA but hopes still to participate in club activities on occasion.

MonSFFA MEETINGS:

OCTOBER '98-FEBRUARY '99

October:

The 18th's meeting packed 'em in for the club's annual Sci-Fi Garage Sale fund-raiser. Stacks of books, comics and magazines, along with assorted toys, model kits, posters and all sorts of sci-fi collectibles were on sale, raffled off, or up for auction. Ann Methe presided over the meeting as auctioneer. Over \$300 was added to the club coffers.

November:

This month's meeting took place on the 22nd and featured a screening

of the club's recently completed video-film *The FedEx Files: "Moxie"*, sequel to *Plant 9 From Outer Space*. Josée Bellemare scored highest on a "Moxie" trivia quiz prepared for the occasion and came away with the prize of a *Star Trek: Insurrection* movie poster. And speaking of alien space cabbages invading Earth (!), the meeting capped with a discussion of SF's most popular alien-invasion scenarios, steered by the club's default moderator, Keith Braithwaite.

January:

Our meeting of the 17th installed the club's 1999 executive (see previous item). We then moved to a fond overview of the recently wrapped *Babylon 5* television series while anticipating continued adventures in the B-5 universe—periodic TV movies and *Crusade*, a spin-off series, will carry the torch forward. (The meeting was immediately preceded by a screening of the most recent B-5 TV movie, *A Call to Arms*, courtesy Wayne Glover.) Following the mid-meeting break, the topic of the latest *Star Trek* film was introduced. Keith Braithwaite, Krikor Ajemian and Theresa Penalba formed our panel and, along with the audience, came to the conclusion that *Star Trek: Insurrection*, while entertaining enough, was nothing to write home about.

February:

MonSFFA gathered on the 21st to see presented (after two unavoidable cancellations last year) Lynda Pelley's long-awaited slideshow of her and Dominique Durocher's visit to the Smithsonian's Magic of the Myth *Star Wars* exhibition. Her detailed and dazzling presentation, which a few of us had seen in January at the big Empirecon

'99 *Star Wars* convention, was an even greater treat in the far more intimate setting of a MonSFFA meeting. Berny Reischl and Mark Burakoff were up next with their SF/F take on the Win, Lose or Draw parlour game (also called Pictionary). They'd made a lot of special modifications themselves! And the rest of us had a blast sketching, kvetching and guessing at just what it was our teammates were drawing up there. Berny and Mark awarded members of the winning team a special one-shot MonSFFA pin they designed especially for the event.

The club thanks the half-dozen or so MonSFFA members who provided the programming for these meetings, and everyone who helped out in support.

CHRISTMAS PARTY '98

MonSFFA's 1998 Christmas party took place on Saturday evening, December 12, welcoming all of Montreal fandom to the downtown Park Place Bar, for many years, now, our seasonal watering hole. A good time was had by all, with the last of the revelers closing the place around 3:00AM, reluctant to put away their cues and abandon the back-room pool table. Our traditional Christmas mega-raffle offered up prize after prize, including a *Star Trek: Insurrection* movie poster, an Imperial Star Destroyer 3-D puzzle and several *Star Wars* action figures. The generosity of club members netted us a couple of large boxes and several bags full of non-perishable food items, and toys, for donation to Sun Youth's Christmas Basket Drive.

The club thanks our Park-Place hostess, Debbie Gordon, and her staff, for wetting our whistles again

this year. Thanks to Keith Braithwaite, who arranged for the party, supplied the evening's music and, along with Stephane Marcotte and Catherine Gervais, took care of the collection for Sun Youth. Thanks to John Dupuis for running the raffle, and to everyone who brought in goodies for our snack buffet.

MonSFFA TAKES PART IN LOCAL CONVENTIONS

The club, of course, took part in Con•Cept '98 (October 2-4) but was also pleased to be able to participate in a new Montreal genre convention over the weekend of January 23-24, 1999. Empirecon '99, a *Star Wars* convention set up by Ace Lopes, owner of Empire Comics (A MonSFFA Discount Program participant), showcased before a capacity crowd of over 2500 people SW actors David "Darth Vader" Prowse, Jeremy "Boba Fett" Bulloch, Phil "Owen Lars" Brown, Caroline "Mon Mothma" Blakiston, and Maria "Greedo" De Aragon. Ace was kind enough to provide MonSFFA with a booth, free of charge, from which to promote the club, which we did with great success. We returned the favour by providing Ace's crew with a few volunteer gofers, and by helping out with programming (notably, Lynda Pelley presented her *Star Wars: Magic of the Myth* slide-show). With the arrival of Empirecon (Ace plans another later this year), Con•Cept is no longer Montreal's sole sci-fi con, which it has been since the demise of the Sci-Fi Festival, Conv-iction and

others in the early-mid '90s. Con•Cept '98 saw us premiere *The FedEx Files: "Moxie"*, our sequel to *Plant 9 From Outer Space*, as well as work a MonSFFA table in the fan-club/model-exhibit room. And, as always, MonSFFA took part in programming, sitting on various of the weekend's numerous panels.

MonSFFA thanks the folks at Con•Cept, and Ace, for setting us up rather nicely and allowing us to participate meaningfully in their respective conventions. We look forward to doing it again next time out.

MonSFFA DISCOUNT PROGRAM: UPDATE

We regret to inform our membership that Galaxy Enterprises, a long-time discount program participant, has folded its tent. MonSFFA's Paul Bennett and his wife, Sue, who for many years ran this mail-order business specializing in all manner of cool SF/F collectibles, have decided to retire. While we will, of course, miss Galaxy, we want to wish Paul and Sue all the best and thank them for being a part of our discount program.

Meanwhile, a second mail-order house listed on our discount program page, The New Frontier, has come under new management. One John Fleming has bought the business from Barry and Sheila Alder and renamed it Hangar 18 Models. John has informed us that the discounts Barry and Sheila extended

to our members will continue to be offered. In addition, he has lowered prices across the board. We welcome John into the fold, wish him well with his new venture and at the same time thank Barry and Sheila for their many years of favour.

WARP EDITOR ENCOURAGES PROMPT SUBMISSIONS TO NEWSLETTER

Warp editor, Lynda Pelley, has strongly encouraged, first of all, more contributions to the club's newsletter, and secondly, the prompt submission of same. Promptness is important in order that Lynda not receive loads of stuff at the last minute, a sure recipe for production delays such as those experienced over the past year.

An issue of the newsletter scheduled to reach members' mailboxes by a certain date must be at the printer's about two weeks prior to that date. But when the bulk of submissions are received only days before the issue is supposed to go to the printer, obviously, Lynda and her staff won't be able to put the issue together in time to meet deadlines and it will be delayed in reaching members. Procrastination on the part of *Warp's* contributors can lead to unwanted production delays. So please, people, submit your articles, reviews and stories sooner rather than later. This, of course, applies as well to submissions of photos and artwork.

Questions? Corner Lynda at a club meeting, drop her a line via MonSFFA's P.O. box, or e-mail her (pellyn@odyssee.net).

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

The cost of running MonSFFA rises from year to year and your membership renewals are *vital* to the continued operation of this club. Please be sure to renew *on time*. Note: MonSFFA has not raised its yearly membership fees since 1988! We remain the *best* bargain in town for SF/F fans.



CONVENTION REVIEWS

Quite a few MonSFFen attended Toronto Trek XII last summer. Here then, we present accounts of that convention experience and others from some of the participants.

TORONTO TREK 12: FROM A FIRST-TIMER

review by Barbara Silverman

Greetings from Cloud 9. I still have not returned to terra firma. The cause, Toronto Trek 12, July 10-12th. It was my first con and what a time!

I had the good fortune to join Cathy Palmer-Lister, Lynda Pelley, and Theresa Penalba on their yearly adventure to T-Trek. If you have ever shared a room with three others, two of whom are involved with costumes and masquerades, no words are necessary.

For those who have never had this pleasure, a word of caution. When entering the room before showtime, be prepared for panic and confusion, especially if showtimes have been moved up. When returning afterwards, be ready to fall over leg coverings, weapons and a helmet or two. For the newcomer to

Lynda and Theresa, and their luggage—at least some of it... Photo by Dominique Durocher.



all this—well—I survived.

Friday night I attended the "Klingon Sex and Mating Rituals" panel. This was presented by Sophie Laporte (*Klingon Sex Manual*) and Nova D (*The Secret Longings of Mistress Janeway*) with Richard Hatch as their 'victim'. I laughed for the full hour, having at one point, tears running down my face. Richard Hatch was a great sport and a good time was had by all. If you wish to know more—I'll leave that to your imaginations.

My greatest pleasure came from seeing Robert Beltran (Chakotay) from *Voyager*, my favourite program. Unfortunately shooting schedules caused him to be delayed, finally arriving after 9:00 pm Saturday night exhausted from a very hectic day. But he still stayed on stage until 10:30 pm answering questions.

His lateness also resulted in me finding myself standing, at 10:30 at night, in line for over an hour to obtain his autograph. Thus convincing my friends back here in Montreal that I really am insane.

The question and answer periods with Anne Lockhart, Richard Hatch and Robert Beltran were interesting, entertaining, and informative. I have always found it fascinating to compare a TV character with the real person. The most unexpected things can be discovered.

This was especially true of Robert Beltran whose light-hearted manner is vastly different from the strict and efficient first officer that he portrays. It was unfortunate that the first questions asked of him dealt with his ancestry and they were not presented in a decent manner. This produced a sour note for the whole show, and as far as I am concerned such questions should not be asked at conventions. Despite this, I enjoyed his show. Personally I found his wit and manner of answering questions in an unexpected way entertaining, though others did not. I hope that someday I will have a

chance to see him again.

Anthony DeLongis (Maje Culluh from *Voyager*) delighted the audience with a sword and bullwhip display. Anne Lockhart, as his assistant, had the pleasure of finding a bullwhip wrapped around her without so much as a scratch; a manoeuvre only an expert such as DeLongis could accomplish. DeLongis also demonstrated the art of fist and sword fighting for film. It is amazing that what looks very real on the screen is an art of leg and arm movements.

I was very glad to have had the opportunity to meet and talk with my favourite author, Julie E. Czerneda (*A Thousand Words For Stranger*). She had some very humorous stories to relate of her adventures as a sci-fi writer, as well as many helpful hints.

As with everything, not all was perfect. The hotel restaurant had very, very slow service. More than once I was late for a panel due to this service or lack thereof.

I was also disturbed at the provocative and very personal questions asked by the fans when the guests were on stage. But this was

Robert Beltran on stage at Toronto Trek. Photo by Lynda Pelley.



rare and on the whole I greatly enjoyed these opportunities to learn more about the stars.

I also feel disappointed to find that some of the stars are now charging for their autographs. Though there may be good reasons behind this, for me, it takes away some of the fun of conventions.

Despite a few not so enjoyable moments I am sorry it's over. Three days were too short. Time stands still during conventions; it is another world—a world of fantasy.

TORONTO TREK 12: FROM A CON ADDICT

review by Theresa Penalba

This past Toronto Trek was one of the best I've ever been to. It ranks second to the first time I attended a TT con back in 1993.

I had *very*—and I do mean *very*—little sleep before, during, and after the con. I was constantly on the go, and had such a great time, that on the Sunday when I was registering for next year, I could not even figure out what month, much less what date, it was. This is a sign that I had a great time!

I. Guests, Autographs, and Standing in Line...

The one big thing that I liked about this year's con was the number of main guests. The one downside—and expensive aspect—was that some of the guests were charging for autographs. It looks like this is becoming a common practice at cons now.

When I received my progress report in May or June, there were already five main guests listed: Robert Beltran (Chakotay, *Star Trek: Voyager*), Jeff Conaway (Zack Allan, *Babylon 5*), Jason Carter (Marcus Cole, *Babylon 5*), Richard Hatch (Capt. Apollo, *Battlestar Galactica*), and Anne Lockhart (Lt. Sheba, *Battlestar Galactica*). As a late addition, after the printing of the progress report, Anthony DeLongis (Maje Cullah, *ST: Voyager*; and a host

of other roles plus a film and stage combat teacher) was added.

Then a week before the con, I found out through TT's web page via Lynda Pelley that Robin Atkin Downes (Byron, *Babylon 5*) was a last minute guest. Rumours are that he phoned up and asked to be a part of the con.

I am one of these people who love to meet the guests and collect autographs (for my own personal collection), so when I heard how many guests there were going to be, I started wondering how I was going to manage the logistics of getting all of those autographs. Little did I know that there would be additional unannounced, and unexpected, guests!

On the Friday of the con, just after the registration opened up, they announced that Robin Atkin Downes was signing, so I ran to get his autograph. I was quite surprised that there were very few people waiting there. At one point there was nobody in the line! I guess they were all stuck in that long "pre-reg" line.

I bought a photo of "Byron" with Patricia Tallman as "Lyta" (with her signature already there) and got it signed by him. He was really nice to meet in person. He's very tall and I love his long hair.

I had seen him pose with somebody for a picture and asked him if I could have one taken with him too. He said "Sure, yeah!" Now I know that this is not allowed in the autograph lines anymore—there are separate photo opportunities scheduled due to time constrictions—but I made sure that there was no one else waiting for an autograph, and since he said yes, I went for it. I went around the table and got a really nice picture taken with him. I shook his hand and thanked him.

No sooner had I returned from around the table, I got yelled at from some woman on the Con Com committee for having a posed picture taken. I explained to her that there was no one in line and that I had asked him beforehand, but she still continued to yell at me. Then Robin himself came over to her and



Theresa poses for a photo with Robin Atkin Downes—and they both get yelled at by a bossy Con-Com person!

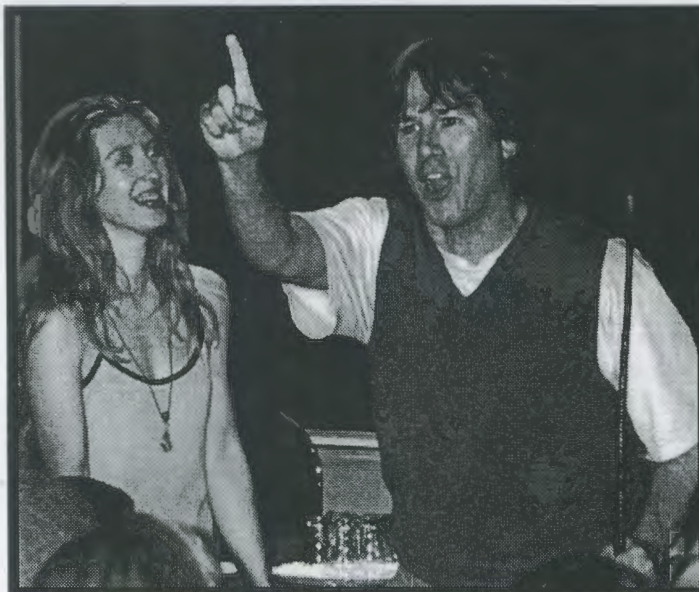
stuck up for me saying that he let me take a picture with him and he didn't mind, but this woman *still* yelled at me and *him*, saying that you can only get pictures taken at the scheduled times and this was not the scheduled time! Robin looked at his copy of the schedule and told her that he wasn't even scheduled for any of these times. She just shook her head and said, "Oh well, too bad." Robin and I just looked at each other and shook our heads. I thought it was really nice of him to stick up for me.

One down, six more to go...

On that same evening, Anne Lockhart and Richard Hatch had tables set up beside each other and were signing. There was quite a few people there and the line moved slowly due to the fans talking with the guests. I don't mind waiting when this happens, as long as they don't talk for five minutes or more. It's a great opportunity to talk to actors whom you've watched and admired since you were a little kid.

Anne Lockhart was very nice to talk to. I didn't really remember her character too well, but I did manage to say a little something to her.

Then came Richard Hatch. I saw him and just about died! It felt like 1978 all over again! He has hardly changed in 20 years. I bought a photo, had it signed, had a card



Richard Hatch reading poetry (left) and getting paddled (right) at the "Klingon Sex and Mating Rituals" panel. He was a very good sport—most guests wouldn't stay up late and do this type of thing with fans. Photos by Theresa Penalba.

signed, and had my BG cast photo signed. I asked if I could take his picture, got it, and then shook his hand. I also told him that it was a pleasure to meet him, said how much I love *Battlestar Galactica* and how I loved watching it as a kid.

Later on that evening, I found out that the "Klingon Sex and Mating Ritual" panel was to have Richard Hatch as the victim. I had to see this!

I managed to get one of the few remaining seats. The room was quite full. There wasn't enough seats for everybody so there were a lot of people standing on the side and at the back of the room. I guess a lot of people wanted to see this!

Richard Hatch gets revenge against his tormenter by biting her on the neck as the Klingons watch. Photo by Theresa Penalba.



Once it started I was glad that I had come. The things they did to him and the things he had to do were unbelievable! If I had not seen it for myself, I wouldn't have believed it. He was whipped and paddled—a number of times—and he had to read romantic Klingon poetry and had to bite a woman on the neck. I, along with everybody else, was laughing so hard. There were times where I thought I was going to pee my pants! It was a riot, especially when he was getting whipped. Richard was a great sport!

After almost everybody had left, Barbara Silverman (it was her first convention!) and I had hung around hoping to get a picture with him.

Lou Israel came over and started talking to Richard. Soon all three of us were talking to Richard. It was during this conversation that we found out that Richard is 53 years old. We all told him we couldn't believe it and that he looks great for his age. He told us the secret is to eat healthy and exercise. In other words your body is your temple.

On the Saturday, I saw Jason Carter on stage for a few minutes and then went to stand in line for a photo session with him. I like this opportunity because it lets fans get up close to the actors. I got a nice picture with him. He has beautiful green eyes and is handsome not only on TV but in person too. I love his British accent and I also love his character from *B5*. The only thing I was a little disappointed in was that he had cut his hair. I loved him with long hair.

I also saw Jeff Conaway on stage for only a few minutes because I was waiting in line for a picture with him, too. I really enjoyed meeting him. I loved him in *Grease*. "Kenickie" is my favourite character from that movie. He was really cool!

Later on that afternoon I got to meet an unexpected guest. It was during Richard Hatch's stage presentation. He was mentioning "Baltar" and saying that John Colicos is here in Toronto right now. The

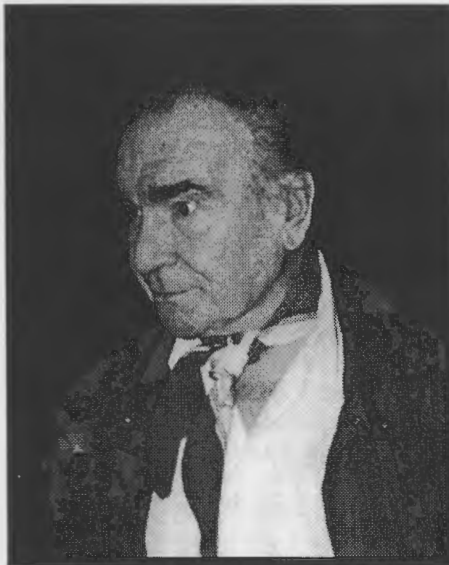
audience all went "He's here, he's here at Toronto Trek?" Richard replied, "Yes, he's here right in this audience" and pointed him out. John got up and acknowledged the introduction. We all gave him a round of applause.

Afterward, when Richard's speech was over, a lot of people went to see John Colicos. There were so many people wanting to get his autograph that he decided to go out into the hall to sign. He didn't mind meeting the fans. The volunteers asked him if he would like to sit at a table and he said, "No, all I need is a chair."

I managed to get a nice picture of John and got his autograph too. I shook hands with the guy and told him it was a pleasure to meet him, which it was. I loved "Baltar" as a kid. I also used to be afraid of him when I saw him on the screen. I thought it was so great for him to show up like that and sign for the fans. I know that almost every year he comes to the convention unannounced, and I finally got the chance to meet him.

There was also another unexpected guest signing. It was Chase Masterson (Leeta, the dabo girl from *Deep Space Nine*). She came as a part of the Primedia table. Every time I passed by the table, she was always signing. I figured I

Surprise guest Chase Masterson from Deep Space Nine, sponsored by Primedia. Photo by Theresa Penalba.



Surprise guest John Colicos—Baltar on Battlestar Galactica and also known as Kor the Klingon on Star Trek. Photo by Theresa Penalba.

might as well go see her now while I had some time. She was also nice to meet.

Just after getting John and Chase's autograph, I managed to see the last half hour of Anthony De Longis on stage. He was something to see. I got to see him and his partner, Simon, duelling onstage with real swords. I found out later that what I missed in the first half was Anthony showing the audience some moves with a bullwhip. I made a point to see him on the Sunday.

At 5:00pm just about all the guests were signing, except for Robert Beltran, who had missed his plane and was going to arrive late. It was in this line that I got my cast photo from B5 and a beautiful picture of Jeff as "Kenickie" from *Grease* signed. He signed it "To Theresa, Count this as your 'hicky from Kenickie', God Bless, Love Jeff Conaway." I love that line from the movie and was glad that he signed it like that.

Now with my new camera I can take off the flash so I was able to get a great close up picture of Jeff. He is hypersensitive to camera flashes so that's why they wouldn't let people take pictures of him with a flash.

Next came Jason Carter. He's a riot to meet in person. I got my cast photo signed and when I asked him

if I could take a picture of him, he said, "Sure, ready?" and gave me this wacky pose. He was great!

Robert Beltran was on stage just after the masquerade (*Masquerade described in detail later in the article—Ed.*). I missed the first 10 minutes or so, but from what I saw, I thought he was great on stage. I found him to be very funny although some people might have found his sense of humour offensive at times.

One member of the audience asked him if he was really Native American. He told us that he was actually of Mexican-Indian descent. However this did not seem to satisfy this person. I guess the fan asking the question didn't consider Mexican-Indians to be "real" Native Americans. Some other person then took issue with him about non-Natives playing the role of Natives on TV. For some reason a few people really had it in for him.

I didn't catch the end of that confrontation because I was busy trying to get close to the stage to get a picture. I also missed the last 20 minutes of his speech to go stand in line for his autograph. Thank God I went when I did, because there was a long lineup behind me which extended out into the hotel parking lot.

He started signing at around 10:30 pm and didn't finish until after 12:30 am. The people working around him kept on asking him if he was tired, and they would have cut the line short, but he said no, he really wasn't that tired. I guess he was still on Los Angeles time.

"Chakotay" is my favourite character from *Voyager* and I also find him very attractive so I just had to meet him. I got his autograph, shook his hand, and told him how good looking he is. I couldn't believe I said that! I turned beet red. I was so embarrassed I just about died. I asked him if I could take a picture of him and got a great picture up close. I then told him that it was a pleasure to meet him and he replied, "The pleasure was all mine." I just about died!

I then went on to dance the night away. I eventually went to bed around 2:30 am but didn't fall asleep until about 4:30 am. I somehow managed to get a bit of sleep.

After partly recuperating from last night, I got up real early to stand in line for yet another set of autographs.

I met Jeff and Jason once again. Jeff looked very tired. I think he was partying hard from the night before. Jason gave me another wacky pose (which I simply love), and it was here that I got to meet Anthony De Longis.

I went up to him and asked if I could buy a picture and he said, "Sure, only if you tell me your name." He signed it "To Theresa, 'Noblesse Oblige' (or something like that, which I have no idea what it means) Anthony 'Maje Cullah' DeLongis. Then when I asked if I could take his picture, he suggested that I get one with me in it as well. It was a great pose; he had his head right next to mine, but in the picture I look half dead—I was—I had only gotten about two and a half hours of sleep the night before. He was fantastic to meet. When I shook his hand, I noticed he had a very strong handshake. He was really nice also.

I got to see Robert Beltran on stage a second time. He was even funnier than the night before, although I seem to think he is shy up on stage. He doesn't really like to



Jeff Conaway (Zack) and Jason Carter (Marcus) of Babylon 5 clown around on stage. Photo by Theresa Penalba.

reveal too much about himself but when he does, he always makes the story funny. He could do a great stand up comedy routine.

He also told us a funny story about when he and a friend auditioned for a role in *Star Trek III*. Leonard Nimoy was holding the auditions. Robert was the first to go in and he admitted to us that he really didn't do his homework on *Star Trek* so he didn't get the part. This was obvious when he returned to the waiting room and asked his friend, "What's a Klingon?" We all laughed. His friend didn't get the part, either. It went to John Larroquette of *Night Court* fame. While he told us this story he did a great impression of Leonard Nimoy. He had the voice and movements down pat.

One woman had the guts to ask him the same question I was

thinking of but was too shy to ask—whether he wears boxers or briefs. This question caused most of the women in the audience to go wild. He seemed embarrassed to answer the question so he replied, "Both". We all laughed.

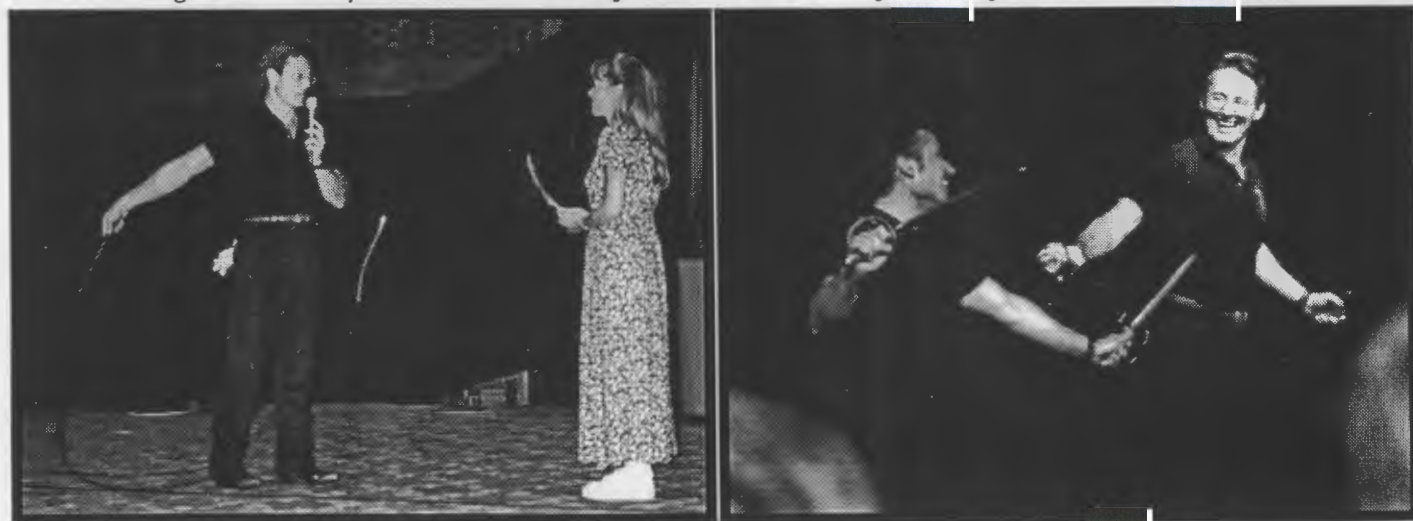
I stood in line with Barbara to meet him once again. We ended up talking with a woman who thought she knew for certain that he wore boxers...

I got to see Anne Lockhart, Anthony DeLongis and Richard Hatch on stage once again. I enjoyed seeing them a second time.

Anthony DeLongis was really spectacular and interesting. And those who missed it, missed something amazing. He demonstrated how you can use the bullwhip gently or with full force—on Anne Lockhart! He stood in back of her and wrapped the whip gently around the both of them. Then he unwrapped it and let it go full force. He also convinced Anne to stand about 30 feet away from him holding a feather in her left hand and he was going to demonstrate that one needs to have good marksmanship to use the bullwhip. She stood there looking terrified but Anthony was able to knock the feather out of her hand using full force without touching her.

He later showed us how Hollywood fakes fights for the movies and TV. He demonstrated

Anthony DeLongis gave a spectacular demonstration with a whip (left), assisted by Battlestar Galactica's Anne Lockhart, and with swords (right) with stunt partner Simon. Photos by Theresa Penalba and Lynda Pelley.





Anne's pants: Anne Lockhart and Anthony DeLongis make a joke about fans collecting original costumes from the TV series. Photo by Theresa Penalba.

using his partner Simon. They showed us some of the techniques and secrets. They threw punches left and right and at times it looked like they were really hitting each other. They even did a sword demonstration. At one point they each had a sword in each hand and were going at one another with full force. You had to see it to believe it!

I was glad I went. He was a real interesting guest to see. Far more than what I was expecting. He was different than any other guest I've ever seen. A definite highlight of the con.

By this time the convention was just about over. I really enjoyed meeting all the guests. I thought they were all fantastic and really friendly. Most of them could be spotted wandering around mingling with all the fans. I ran into Jason Carter at the elevator, and ran into Richard Hatch in the hallway on two separate occasions.

Just before the closing ceremonies, Barbara (who likes Robert Beltran as much as me) had the chance to run into Robert coming out of the elevator as he was leaving for his flight back. Oh how I wish I could of been there with her!

Several of the guests were still there on the Monday morning, such as Anne Lockhart, Richard Hatch, and Jeff Conaway, and they were still taking the time to chat with various fans before leaving.

I had such a fantastic time at this convention. There was so much to do and so many guests to see that I could not see it all, but I tried. I was running around so much all weekend that I didn't have much time to eat or sleep. I was running on pure adrenelin the whole weekend. I even lost track of time! I haven't had this much fun and excitement since the first year I went. I will remember this for years. I can't wait for next year now!

II. The Masquerade Experience

I just love the masquerade. (I guess because I love Halloween so much and I love to make costumes and dress up. The masquerade gives me this excuse.) I've been participating in it each year since Toronto Trek 8.

In the past I've made "Darth Vader", a "Jawa and R2-D2" combo, and "Boba Fett". I always make my own costumes but this year the task was given to Joel Burdick, one of my friends who lives in Belmont, NY.

Last year I had the idea to make a stormtrooper costume but didn't really have the equipment to make it. Since Joel works in a cheese factory plant, he is able to get big white cheese barrels free. Since he was planning to make one for himself, he chose to make one for me. That way when we both went on stage, the costumes would look identical.

The only part of the costume that was bought was the guns and the helmets. The rest Joel did himself out of 5 cheese barrels and 2 white waste baskets. The cost of each costume (not including the helmet and guns) came to about \$30 US. That covered the rivets and paint.

Ever since I was a little kid I have always dreaded the idea of getting up on stage in front of an audience. The only reason I can do this at the masquerade is because I

am hiding behind a costume. I also need to have my face covered, so all my costumes consist of helmets or masks. Even with all of this, I still get very nervous—especially right before going on stage. I don't know how I end up going through with it! I think it has to do with the rush I get on stage when I hear the audience scream and cheer for me.

All of the contestants are supposed to show up at 6:30 pm in the green room. We have to show up an hour and a half early because we need time to check in, find out what dens we are in and what number we are assigned, get into our costumes (do some last minute repairs sometimes), get our picture taken, and get judged for workmanship.

I only got there at 7:00pm. That wasn't too bad because everything was running behind schedule.

I got dressed into my costume there. Most contestants are already

Theresa models her new stormtrooper costume.



dressed before coming to the green room. I usually do that, but this year I wanted the costume to be a complete surprise.

There were two others that went on stage with me this year. Joel, who made the two trooper costumes, and Lynda. We needed three people to pull off our skit. It was based on a segment of the 10 minute *Star Wars/Cops* parody, *Troops*, from the internet, which no doubt many of you have seen. Joel and I were the stormtroopers and Lynda was a Jawa (costume made by me) who steals a donut out of the box Joel is carrying. Once the Jawa steals the donut, I have to chase her down and shoot her. Then we inspect the body and walk off the stage. This is all done to the music and dialog from the parody.

After checking in, I went over to find Joel to get him to help me get into my costume. It didn't take that long at all, thank God, because I was a nervous wreck. Joel was trying to calm me down. Part of the reason I was a nervous wreck was because Lynda was not there yet. I knew she would be a little later than me because I had seen her just finishing supper in the hotel restaurant when I was coming to the green room. (Future contestants take note: never eat supper in the hotel restaurant before the masquerade. The service is always slow and you always end up late for the masquerade. If you have to, make sure you are there at least two hours ahead of time.)

As it got closer to curtain call, I was getting more and more nervous. The primary reason was that Lynda had not shown up yet. We wouldn't of been able to do the skit without her. Both Joel and I had already gotten our costumes judged and now we were all lining up to take our places to go on stage. Joel, who is normally calm, started getting worried and a little mad when she didn't show up yet. I think at one point he was ready to kill her if she didn't show.

Finally at 7:35 she showed up. My nerves calmed down a little. Both Joel and I were yelling at her for

being so late, although she was fully dressed in the Jawa costume, except for the eyepiece/headgear which she got into in a flash. She told us the reason she was later than planned was because of the unbelievably slow service at the hotel restaurant. This is the reason why I eat my supper in my hotel room. That, and I am also too nervous to eat much of anything.

(Note: There was never any real danger of me arriving so late that our group would miss participating in the masquerade. After attending 30-plus conventions over the last 10 years, it is safe to say that the masquerade never runs on time. I habitually show up in the green room about 30 minutes before curtain call fully dressed in my costume and with my act together, and even then it's a hurry up and wait situation. I'm not about to skimp on supper so that I can hang around for up to two extra hours in the green room—especially since lunch is the meal I usually skip at conventions!—Ed)

At this point we were all set to go on stage at which point I started getting nervous again. The reason this time was that I was afraid of falling on the stairs or tripping on stage. You see, I wear glasses and I can't see a thing without them. I have to take them off in order to wear my helmet and since the stormtrooper eyes are made out of dark sunglasses, even with my glasses on I can't see much. I also could not bend my head down to look at the floor and I could barely bend my knees to get up and down the stairs leading to the stage.

I was convinced that I would fall on the stairs because last year I actually did and part of my costume fell off and broke. I dreaded that happening again this year.

At 7:45pm the masquerade was supposed to start but we got told that we had to wait for Richard Hatch ("Capt. Apollo" from *Battlestar Galactica*) to show up because supposedly he was one of the judges. (I found out later that he wasn't, he just wanted to see the show). I got even more nervous when I heard that. I kept on saying

"Oh my God, I have to go out on stage with Richard Hatch in the audience!" (I am a big fan of *Battlestar Galactica* and love his character.) "What if I fall?" Once again both Joel and Lynda were trying to calm me down.

Then when Richard Hatch showed up, we were ordered to line up to go on stage. We were number 13, so we didn't have to wait too long.

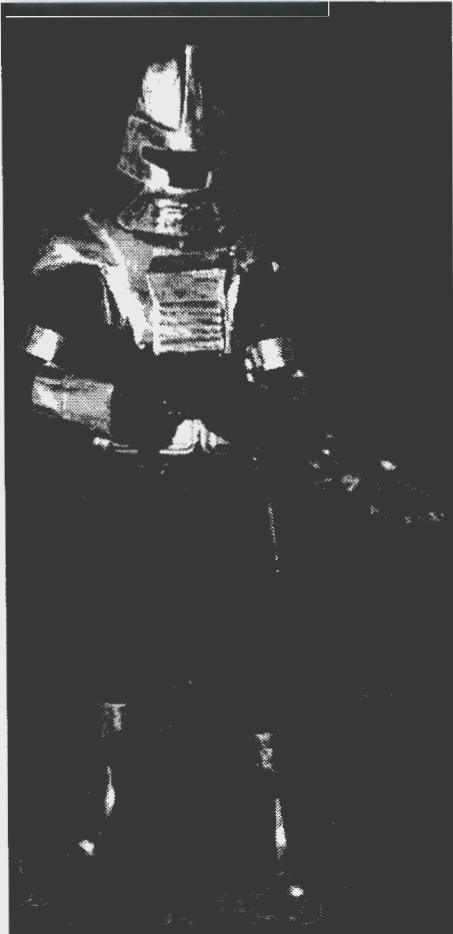
My heart started pounding so hard that I thought everyone else could hear it as well as me. I started having second thoughts about going on stage. I always do, but I have never backed out yet. I always question myself as to why I go through with this every year. I am always relieved when it's over.

Finally our number was called. I managed to make it up the stairs without incident and was able to get my helmet on before they called us. The stairways are usually so dark that it's very hard to see, especially with a helmet on. Thank God this year they had the brains to put little Christmas lights along the edge of the stairs to light them up.

The M.C. announces the title of our costumes and I go out first. I was so nervous but as soon as I saw the bright stage lights and heard the roar of the audience, my nerves disappeared. With the thought of Richard Hatch being somewhere in the audience, I got such a rush, and I really started getting into my character. I lost any fear that I had. I was even smiling underneath the helmet, although I knew nobody could see, but I had such a good time.

I had no trouble getting down the stairs and once all of us had exited, we all congratulated each other for making it through the skit. I was so excited and happy that they couldn't shut me up. I was ready to go out and do it all over again. This always happens to me every year (with the exception of last year) and this is the reason why I go through with it.

We made our way back to the green room. Lynda said she was



One of the masquerade contestants dressed up as a Cylon—Richard Hatch really liked this one!

going to go out and sit in the audience and watch the rest of the masquerade. Joel and I remained in the green room a little bit longer to remove some of the armour before going out to cheer on our fellow contestants, because we were unable to sit down in our costumes.

Lynda told me later that while she was watching the rest of the masquerade, she noticed that Richard Hatch was sitting in the row of seats just ahead and to the right of her. She said he seemed very enthusiastic about the fan costumes and started to cheer wildly when somebody in a Cylon costume went on stage.

When the masquerade was over, we went out into the hallway to pose for pictures. We were a big hit. A lot of people wanted our picture. I felt like a celebrity. This is another fun aspect of the masquerade. When a lot of people ask to take my picture, I

know they really liked the costume.

I loved all the comments I was getting, especially a line from the first *Star Wars* movie: "Hey, aren't you a little short for a stormtrooper?" I didn't mind that at all.

I found out later that we won an award for "Best Workmanship" although I must give credit where credit is due. Joel Burdick was really the winner since it was him who made the two stormtrooper outfits. *Congratulations, Joel, you really deserve it! You did a fantastic job!* Lynda Pelley is credited with thinking up and recording the skit (Thank you, Lynda, I could never have come up with one as good as that.) And finally, I contributed my homemade Jawa costume to the group.

On the Sunday we were congratulated by several people but the one which blew me away was from Richard Hatch. I was talking to one of my friends in the hallway when Richard walked by. He must have recognized me from when I was walking around in my costume the night before (I had the helmet off most of the time) and said "Hey, congratulations!" I yelled back "Thanks." I felt so proud that he remembered our costumes.

I also have to thank Joel and Lynda for having the patience to put up with me and my nerves during the whole ordeal. Now I have to start thinking up another costume for next years' masquerade...

CON•CEPT/BORÉAL: A REVIEW OF '98'S CON AND MUSINGS ON POSSIBLE NEW APPROACHES

by Keith Braithwaite

Con•Cept, again teamed with the French-language Boréal convention, played host to the 18th annual Convention last year over the October 2-4 weekend. And what better con than bilingual Con•Cept/Boréal, in bilingual Montreal, at which to hold Canada's national SF/F convention? I was

surprised, however, to learn that a Convention had never before been held in Quebec. Two solitudes, indeed.

The highlight of any Convention is the Aurora Awards ceremony, which Con•Cept/Boréal scheduled for the Sunday afternoon. Local talent fared quite well, picking up several of the coveted trophies (MonSFFAn Jean-Pierre Normand scored an impressive *third* consecutive win in the Artistic Achievement category). But unfortunately, proceedings were marred by inept planning. Presenters found themselves struggling through a badly formatted and therefore practically unreadable script that they'd had no opportunity to properly rehearse, resulting in numerous misreadings and awkward pauses. Presenters and audience alike were lost trying to decipher which nominees were nominated for what in which categories. The con *really* dropped the ball on this one. There is simply no excuse for allowing so prestigious an event as the Auroras to suffer such shoddy organization.

The rest of the weekend's activities ran smoothly enough. The usual minor glitches that any con must deal with remained unobtrusive, although Operations often seemed understaffed, which meant that it sometimes took a little longer than it should have to get things done. Programming was plentiful and in keeping with this con's habit, widely varied, offering panel topics from the mainstream to the eclectic. The dealer's room was nicely stocked with interesting wares and was one of the busier areas on the convention floor. Not so busy was the art show. The model-display/fan-club room was equally quiet. Saturday evening's fun began with the masquerade, which treated the crowd to some dozen or more above-average entries. I found it hard to hear the presentations from my position at the back of the room, however. A few room parties ran upstairs while local DJ John Zmrotchek spun a great dance



MonSFFa's own Jean-Pierre Normand receives his third Aurora award for Artistic Achievement. Photo by Jennifer Brown.

downstairs, well into the AM. The con suite, which occupied the hotel's bar, was a favourite spot for many, although the cigarette smoke got a bit thick at times.

The con's guests were kept hopping, courtesy the programming people, and seemed to be having a good time of it. The guest list included star Canadian SF writer Robert J. Sawyer, venerable sci-fi fan and memorabilia collector Forrest J. Ackerman, homegrown talents Yves Meynard (author) and Mario Giguère (artist), and perennial Con•Cept/Boréal MC Larry Stewart. Returning for their second visit in as many years were Toronto-based fans Lloyd and Yvonne Penney, attending this time as the CUFF delegates (they were Con•Cept/Boréal's Fan GoHs in '97).

I enjoyed myself at Con•Cept/Boréal '98 and I'll certainly be back for the '99 edition. But I note with some concern that attendance was perhaps the lowest it has ever been (250? 200? Fewer?). I hope the con managed enough of a draw to cover its expenses. So why are less people coming to Con•Cept/Boréal?

To begin with, the con's guest list lacks a media star. Most fans today enjoy the opportunity a con gives them to meet the actors who play their favourite sci-fi characters on TV or in the movies. They are media fans and they want their media guests. However, even minor league media personalities cost a lot of

money to bring in, and Con•Cept/Boréal simply doesn't have the budget. Perhaps some kind of corporate sponsorship is the answer. Should the con somehow find the funds needed, I'd say go for it. A bigger crowd (more revenue) is virtually guaranteed, including many folk for whom organized fandom is something new (potential recruits). And the very addition of a media star to the roster brings a fresh, reinvigorating element to the con. Many local fans (the con's primary market) would be thrilled to see Con•Cept/Boréal go this route. Bigger is better, they say. Not that small is bad. Frankly, I don't mind that Con•Cept/Boréal is a small con. It's a good party and I like a good party.

Media guest or not, mind you, the con should consider revamping itself in order to address complaints of its having become stale, routine. My interests are diverse and so I've always enjoyed the omnibus approach to programming taken by Con•Cept/Boréal. But I can see the point of those who say that by trying to be everything to everyone, the con ends up rather diluted.

As a fix, I recommend a tighter focus. Some cons feature a different theme each year. Most (though not necessarily all) of the con's activities are built around the theme. A few years ago the vampire thing was cool. A few years before that, Klingons ruled. Today it might be *Star Wars* or *Babylon 5*. A carefully selected theme, capitalizing on whatever is popular that year, might have people taking more notice. But regardless of any theme programming, the con should scrap panel topics which attract fewer audience members than panelists. Obviously, no one will miss them. Trim the number of panels, as well. Instead of four tracks, run with two. Yes, there will be fewer panels but they will be the cream of the crop. Programmers will be compelled to schedule only their very best stuff. To make the cut, a topic will have to measure up in terms of its potential to draw an audience. This does not



Larry Stewart and Chris Chartier pose with their Aurora awards. Both won for Fannish Achievement—Larry in the "Other" category as an entertainer and Chris in the "Fanzine" category for Warp Factor. Photo by Jennifer Brown.

have to spell the end of specialized topics. The challenge will be to frame these topics in such a way as to attract enough mainstream interest. I'll venture that such steps will result in a boost in per-panel audience numbers. And it can't hurt, by the way, to spice up panels as much as possible by including visual presentations—displays, slides, video clips.

Further, maybe its time to outright dump some of the traditional activities that are no longer generating much spark. In this day of specialty cable channels like Space, does a con really need to run videos? I've noticed over the past several years of conventioning that video rooms are all but empty most of the time. Come up with something new in place of the outdated.

I've noticed, too, that Con•Cept/Boréal's art show, while consistently showcasing some very fine work, nevertheless seems to be of less appeal to patrons with each passing year. Maybe it's time to rethink the art component of the con. Perhaps a few artists set up in a live demonstration of their skills would pique interest. People are fascinated by creative talent at work. They like to see how it's done. If doing away completely with such a con fixture as

the art show is too drastic a move to contemplate, then retain some of what the art show does by scheduling an auction or operating a print shop out of the dealer's room.

The modest one-day event begun by MonSFFA in 1989 now enters its 10th anniversary year with local consensus seeming to be that some sprucing up is needed. Perhaps my suggestions, or others received from other quarters, will help. Ultimately, of course, it falls upon local fandom to pitch in in a meaningful way to make the con click. Armchair quarterbacks should think about becoming actively involved. After all, this is our con, and we all have to take care of it and support it if we want it to be there for us in years to come.

EMPIRECON '99:

A NEW HOPE

by Carl Phillips

Ace Lopes of Empire Comics (a participant in MonSFFA's discount

program) could not have timed it better. His Empirecon '99, Montreal's first *Star Wars* convention, was staged at the downtown Holiday Inn Plaza over the weekend of January 23-24. With the opening of *Phantom Menace* on the horizon, the local Jedi population was pumped for this and turned out in great numbers. Estimates put attendance at somewhere between 2500 and 3000, which makes this con one of the biggest ever to hit town.

For most, the thrill of meeting stars David "Darth Vader" Prowse, Jeremy "Boba Fett" Bulloch, Phil "Owen Lars" Brown, Caroline "Mon Mothma" Blakiston, and Maria "Greedo" De Aragon was more than enough. But the con offered further enticement. Recreations of a couple of Imperial costumes stood on display amid a dealer's section that was stocked to the rafters with *Star Wars* collectibles. The *Phantom Menace* trailer plus a couple of *Star Wars* specials were screened and MonSFFA's own Lynda Pelley presented her slide-show tour of the

Smithsonian's Magic of the Myth *Star Wars* exhibition. MonSFFA was one of the local fan clubs represented, our recruiters talking up the club and handing out hundreds of flyers from behind a table nicely situated just outside the main programming hall. A trivia game ran in one room and costumed fans roamed the corridors between main programming events. Saturday evening featured two special activities, a costume contest and, for those who had bought premium-priced VIP passes, dinner with the stars. A planned dance never came off, though. Maybe next time.

And there will certainly be a next time. Ace is said to be looking at a second outing later this year. Word on the street is that Mark "Luke Skywalker" Hamill may headline.

Empirecon '99 brought *Star Wars* fans together for a wonderful weekend of fun, and with the promise of more fun to come, a new hope that the media sci-fi con has returned to Montreal.

MonSFFA's costumers pose with Empirecon organizer Ace Lopes. Left to right: Dominique Durocher, Theresa Penalba, Michèle Berry, Ace Lopes, Lynda Pelley, and Ernst-Udo Peters.



RUMOURS OF THE JEDI

RATING *STAR WARS* RUMOURS... BY KEITH BRAITHWAITE

Sci-fi fans love to ferret out as much information as they can about the next big thing coming from Hollywood's genre producers. It's a sport to us. We revel in rumours. We seem genetically incapable of waiting until premiere night like normal people. We've just got to know as much as we can before buying our tickets. We troll the newsstands, surf the Net looking for press releases and production stills. And if these do not provide us with enough scoop, we frantically pounce on even the tiniest morsel of information, dissect it, extrapolate from it all kinds of stuff and promptly create buzz. And from our buzz is created more buzz, and from that buzz still more, adjoined to an ever expanding whirlwind of hype.

The next big thing coming our way is *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*, which premieres May 21st. It is widely expected to be not only the most monumental event of all time in the SF/F field, but indeed, in all of pop culture. Accordingly, the rumour mill has been working full-tilt since George Lucas announced in 1995 that he was making another three *Star Wars* films, *Phantom Menace* being the first. I've collected for your enjoyment some of the most interesting and outlandish *Star Wars* scuttlebutt I've come across these past couple of years. Stop right here if you want to avoid spoilers, for some of these details I figure to be genuine.

I've checked into and graded each entry for authenticity. My rating system is as follows:

★★★

Right on the money; very likely accurate in most respects and sometimes confirmed by George Lucas himself

★★

A good bet; while not entirely factual, carries much reliable information

★

Long shot; most likely inaccurate, but may contain some small kernel of truth

✗

Sucker bet; false and in some cases a deliberately misleading piece of disinformation put out by Lucasfilm to throw snoops off the trail

The most recent information here dates to February '99. I've included older items the accuracy of which has since been revealed to provide a measure of the veracity of fandom's rumour mill. Last chance to bail if you want to avoid spoilers. Okay, here we go:

1. *Episode I* will be called *Star Wars: The Balance of the Force*.

✗ No it won't, as we now know. Other possible titles floated at one time or another include *The Beginning*, *Genesis*, *Fall of the Republic*, *Hope of the Jedi*, *Guardians of the Force*, *Knights of the Force* and *The Clone Wars*. Until deciding upon *The Phantom Menace*, George Lucas referred to the film in interviews simply as *Episode I*.

2. Kenneth Branagh will star as young Obi-Wan Kenobi.

✗ No he won't. This was one of the first major rumours to circulate. It's doubtful that Branagh was ever seriously considered for the role, as he's a few years older than the twenty-something actor the casting people were seeking. *Trainspotting* star Ewan McGregor ended up with the part, signing on for all three movies.

3. Morgan Freeman is cast as Jedi master Qui-Gon Jinn.

✗ Wrong again. Several reports had him vying for the role against the

man who in fact has the part, Liam Neeson. A British newspaper went so far as to list them both as cast.

4. Yoda leads the 12-member Jedi Council, which includes a female knight, a cyborg, Samuel L. Jackson's Mace Windu and the pink-skinned Yaddle, who is of the same race as Yoda.

★★ Numerous reports support this one, though not all are clear on Yoda as leader. You can add an Asian Jedi who levitates a trio of meditation orbs to the Council's roster. Further, these 12 Jedi, who make important decisions on Jedi affairs throughout the galaxy, have as their meeting place a palatial building on the planet Coruscant, political seat of the Republic.

5. Darth is not a name but a title used by members of the Sith, an evil Jedi cult devoted to the dark side of the Force.

★★★ True enough. *Episode I* features two Darths (see next item).

6. The "phantom menace" alluded to by the film's title is a character named Darth Sidious, who appears only as a fuzzy hologram throughout.

★★★ Sidious is the story's high-level bad guy, lurking in the shadows for the moment. His right-hand man is Darth Maul (Ray Park), he of the red-and-black painted devil-like face. Maul goes down for the count before the end-credits roll. Sidious will return in *Episode II*.

7. An awesome double-beamed lightsaber is Darth Maul's weapon of choice.

★★★ Our confirmation, here, is that we've seen Maul in the trailer wielding this thing.

8. Senator Palpatine, who will one day rule as the black-hooded

Emperor, sides with *Episode I's* heroes against the Sith lords.

★★ Palpatine is an ambitious, crafty politico in *Episode I*. As the series progresses, we will witness his rise to power through increasingly corrupt means until he reaches the point of penultimate evil. While script details remain secret, some sources state with near certainty that Palpatine does, at the outset, support the good guys.

9. R2-D2 and C-3PO are to appear in all three of the prequels.

★★★ Indeed they will, though they won't be as front-line as they were in the original trilogy. Undergoing extensive repairs (at the hand of young Anakin) after he's rescued from a scrap dealer, C-3PO is a minor player in *Episode I*. R2-D2 gets a little more screen time, including a crucial role in the film's climactic space battle.

10. Boba Fett will make a heroic appearance in *Episode I*. Unmasked, we'll discover that he is actually a she (Jodie Foster) who pilots a Corellian freighter like the *Millennium Falcon*.

✕ Where did they get this one? Neither Boba Fett nor Jodie Foster appear in *Episode I*. But Lucas has confirmed that the popular bounty hunter will be prominently featured in *Episode II*. My guess is that he'll be introduced as a Mandalorian soldier, adversaries of the Jedi in the Clone Wars.

11. Charlton Heston will be featured in a small but pivotal role as a Jedi master.

✕ Here's another wacky rumour. Wackier still was the suggestion that Heston would voice Yoda! And how about country star LeAnn Rimes crooning a few tunes in a Tatooine cantina? Or the cameo castings of Harry Connick, Jr., Ben Veeren and Carol Channing?

12. A substance called midichlorian courses through young Anakin Skywalker's bloodstream and is the reason that he is so strong with the Force.

★ This one appears to have originated on a fan-run Net site, but a couple of magazines have reported on it as well. Supposedly, we'll see a scene in which Qui-Gon tests Anakin's blood to determine if the kid has got what it takes. Lucasfilm spokespeople are keeping mum.

13. Qui-Gon believes Anakin to be the galactic savior of ancient Jedi prophecy, but Yoda and the other Jedi masters have their doubts.

★★★ This is a script detail reported by two solid sources and largely confirmed by dialogue snippets in the trailer. Qui-Gon, described as something of a maverick Jedi not always in sync with Council thinking, couldn't be more wrong. Luke Skywalker, of course, turns out to be the one who brings balance to the Force.

14. ILM will handle the effects for all three prequels.

★★★ Did you ever doubt it?

15. John Williams will score all three prequels.

★★★ Did you ever doubt it?

16. *Phantom Menace* being a prequel, we'll glimpse a brand spanking new *Millennium Falcon* in one scene.

✕ This one may be an offshoot of number 10 and is just as bogus. Perhaps someone speculated that Jodie Foster's ship was not just any Corellian freighter, but the *Falcon* itself, fresh out of the showroom.

17. It will be revealed that Chewbacca is not a Wookiee but an Ewok suffering from gigantism.

✕ Puh-leez!

18. A less corpulent Jabba the Hutt is featured, along with she-Hutt Sebulba, his long-and-dark haired moll.

★★ We'll definitely see Jabba but the presence of a she-Hutt is not quite as certain. Look for the Hutt(s) during Anakin's pod race, his victory in which wins him his freedom from

slavery.

19. *Stomp* dancer Ahmed Best will "play" alien sidekick Jar Jar Binks, a Gungan, aquatic beings who live in a city hidden beneath the deadly swamps of Naboo.

★★★ Jar Jar is fully a CGI creation, with Best providing his voice and choreographing his movements. He's the bass-mouthed, rabbit-eared critter you've seen in the trailer.

20. Kate Winslet (*Titanic*) was at one point under consideration for two roles, either Queen Padme Naberrie Amidala or Mon Mothma.

✕ Winslet's agent was asked if this was true and issued a terse denial. The role of Padme, the picture's female lead, went to Natalie Portman (*Mars Attacks!*). Mon Mothma probably won't appear until *Episode III*, so it's doubtful that Winslet or anyone else has yet been cast.

21. Sir Anthony Hopkins was a possibility as Prince Bail Organa, future adoptive father to Princess Leia.

★ In all likelihood, Hopkins was never on the short list for the part. I won't dismiss this one completely, however, because at least one report has Lucas approaching Hopkins about it and the actor later declining. Enter Adrian Dunbar, who is signed for all three pictures.

22. *Episode I* finishes with a space battle over Naboo. Anakin pilots an N-1 fighter, sporting a hotrod-like paint job, to victory over attacking battle droids. He is accompanied by Bravo 5, the first female pilot featured in a *Star Wars* film.

★★ Several plot synopses I've checked jive with this one and a cast list published in *Cinescape Insider* includes the name Celia Imrie beside the character name Bravo 5. However, the questionable "hotrod-like paint job" part of this rumour keeps me from rating it three stars.

23. After 20 years, George Lucas will again sit in the director's chair for *Phantom Menace*. He will also direct episodes *II* and *III*.

★★★ We've known almost since day one that Lucas would direct the first prequel. Nothing new, there. When pressed by reporters, more recently, about whether Steven Spielberg, among other name directors, might helm the next film, Lucas named himself as the one who "probably will" direct episodes *II* and *III*.

24. Nearly half the *Phantom Menace* footage shot was found to be out of focus, requiring extensive reshoots and causing the budget to balloon to some \$115 million.

✕ Lucas isn't working with *Plant 9's* crew, here, people! This one is clearly a crock.

25. *Episode II* will deal mostly with the Clone Wars.

★★ Many sources agree on this one. The film will end with the marriage of Queen Padme and Anakin.

26. In *Episode II*, Obi-Wan, in an effort to fool the Sith lords, creates three clones of himself, designating them OB1, OB2 and OB3. We will discover that it is not the real Obi-Wan, but the OB1 clone, who Luke hooks up with in the original *Star Wars*, the saga's fourth episode.

✕ Nobody's buying this one, which no doubt stems from all this Clone Wars business.

27. *Episode III* covers Palpatine's rise to power and the fall of the Jedi.

★★ Same sources agree here, too. After Jedi pals Anakin and Obi-Wan have a falling out, Palpatine enlists Anakin's help in hunting down and slaughtering most of the Jedi. Anakin and Obi-Wan face off in a lightsaber duel that leaves Anakin disfigured. Bail Organa and Mon Mothma lead a revolt against Palpatine, planting the seeds of the Rebel Alliance. Luke and Leia are born to Padme and Obi-Wan spirits the queen and her babies away to safety as Anakin begins his transformation into Darth Vader.

28. *Episode III* culminates with the transformation of Anakin Skywalker into Darth Vader. James

THE FANDOM MENACE

STAR WARS RUMOURS SPOIL THE FUN FOR SOME FANS

We are but a couple of months away from, arguably, the biggest sci-fi event ever. The excitement is palpable. *Star Wars* fans like me have waited half their lives for this, our fears that it would never come allayed the day George Lucas announced that he was returning to that galaxy far, far away to tell the story of Darth Vader's origins. *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*, the first of three new *Star Wars* films, prequels to the original trilogy, premieres May 19th. When the *Phantom Menace* trailer hit theatres in December, *Star Wars* enthusiasts packed the multiplexes to see the two-minute teaser. Many of them, even though they'd paid for a ticket, didn't bother to stick around for the featured attraction. They'd seen what they came to see. *Entertainment Weekly* reports that one "rabid fan group" plans to line up at theatres "a full month before the picture opens." We are witnessing the rise of an almost religious fervor.

But while many of us snap up every magazine that features a *Star Wars* article or surf the Net devouring the latest news and speculating on the most recent rumours, there are those fans who have shielded themselves from any information about *Episode I* (not an easy thing to do with all the hype flying about). They don't want to know who Mace Windu is or whether we'll see 3PO "naked." They want to be able to go into theatres on May 19th with no advance knowledge of the movie, all the better to savour the experience. Knowing too much spoils the fun, they say.

Now I consider all of the pre-release chatter to be part of the fun, but I do see their point. I remember going to see *Raiders of the Lost Ark* with nary a clue as to what to expect. I came out of there humming that theme music and just all kinds of impressed. Would I have been as wowed had I advance knowledge going in? Maybe not. So I can sympathize with fans who choose to remain blissfully oblivious of *Phantom Menace*. And I can understand their frustration at being bombarded from all sides by *Star Wars* news, particularly as much of it comes from the very fandom of which they are a part.

Fandom is one of the greatest generators of inside dope, rumour and conjecture, and, through our rumours panels at conventions, our fanzines and especially the fast and far-reaching Internet, we are certainly the greatest distributors of same. We are a menace to anyone who just wants to wait and see it for themselves.— *Keith Braithwaite*

Earl Jones will provide a few minutes of voice work.

★★ Cool!

29. *Phantom Menace* will open only in select theatres equipped with state-of-the-art projection and sound equipment.

★★★ This was reported in the industry press. It means that the film will have to set any box office records without benefit of the kind of wide release most big summer

movies enjoy. *Godzilla*, for example, opened last year on a record 7363 screens (not that it helped much). Estimates have *Phantom Menace* bowing on some 2500-3000 screens.

30. Production of the remaining two prequels will take place in Australia at Fox's new Sydney studios.

★★★ No more august a publication than *Warp* ran this news last issue in "Sensors," so it must be true. Plus, Lucas said so.

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CAPTAIN'S CHAIR CD-ROM

REVIEWED BY SYLVAIN ST-PIERRE

We are all waiting for the day when holodecks will have replaced the TV set as a means of entertainment. While it will probably take a few years before we reach that stage, our quaint little modern-day Personal Computers are valiantly trying to emulate the feats of *Star Trek's* positronic giants.

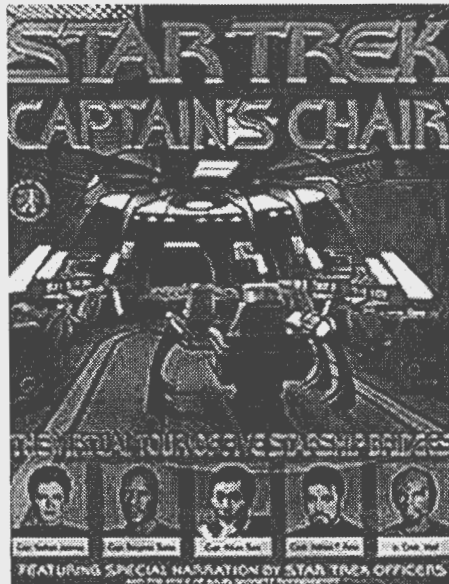
One nice piece of Virtual Reality software that came out early this year is Captain's Chair, a CD-ROM by Imergy; the same people who put the Okudas' *Star Trek* Encyclopedia on disk.

No shoot'em up scenario, no Borg attack, no diplomatic puzzle to solve. Just a very thorough exploration of the bridge area of the five major *Trek* starships: the original *Enterprise*, the D and E incarnations of same, the *Defiant* and the *Voyager*. *Enterprise-D* and *Voyager* also include the adjoining conference room, and Picard's Ready Room can be visited in the D as well. Other areas cannot be visited at this time, but I suspect that they may be in the works.

One can take either a guided tour or roam at will. The interface has a well done *Next Gen* look, and you can jump from one ship to another at the click of the mouse. Diagrams of the various vessels can be called at will, and the sound effects are straight from the original shows. The controls can be examined from up close, and you can even manipulate a great many of them, although most times you only get a beep. After a bit of fumbling, you can launch photon torpedoes, engage the warp drive, or activate the deflector shields. You may peek in Spock's scanner or view the bridge of *Voyager* from Tuvak's perspective.

The ability to observe the various bridges from angles that you hardly ever see on TV is one of my favourite features. I don't think that

the area to the front right of Kirk's chair has ever been shown, because this is where the camera was generally positioned. Some of the viewscreen diagrams are also quite fascinating, giving a minute—if somewhat cryptic—view of a number of aspects of all five ships. You can, for instance, look at the *Enterprise-D* fresh from its shipyard and rotate the view to see Mars in the background. Everything is perfectly accurate, having been put together by the same people who designed the equipment



seen in the series.

The crews must have just been abducted by aliens, because there is no one to be seen. A number of objects are still lying around, and you can pick them up and examine them at leisure. I found a phaser, a medkit, a tricorder and several PADS. I am pretty sure that I will find others if I look closely enough. All of them are functional in some way; the phaser can be rotated 360 degrees in all directions and the tricorder can be opened and activated.

Motion is accomplished simply by using the pointer or the arrow keys on the keyboard. The bridges can only be viewed from about eight key locations each but, once there, you

can smoothly pan all the way around and even have considerable latitude up and down, in addition to being able to zoom back and forth with great precision. While the image is not as sharp as the box cover would let you believe, it is nevertheless very good for a CD-ROM of this sort. When something needs to move, a smaller window opens on screen and presents a mini movie. This takes away some of the illusion of being there, but I suppose that current technology has its limitations.

The computer directions are voiced by Majel Barrett herself. The guided tours are given by Sulu, Worf, Riker, Sisko and Janeway, and messages from the actors in their real life personae pop out if you press the right button (I have not found them all). The lack of clear labels on the scores of blinking keys is a little annoying, but this is how the sets were designed. I suppose Star Fleet cadets must receive special training to handle them all.

There are a few minor flaws, like commentaries that pause at awkward moments while the PC loads a section into RAM, or occasionally slow reaction times, but all in all this is a superb technical achievement. The minimum requirements to be able to enjoy the program to its fullest are quite high. I have a 200 Megahertz Pentium-based PC clone with a huge live memory, and I still see tiny jerks in the motion once in a while.

One thing for sure: there is an enormous amount of stuff crammed on that CD. I discover something new every time I access the program, and I am sure I still have much to see. Being able to explore at leisure, without the annoyance of a Cardassian attack or a commercial break, is quite enjoyable and it will be a while before I get tired of this CD-ROM.



It Came From The Sci-Fi Modeler's Desk

DEATH STAR

BY DOMINIQUE DUROCHER

One of the most powerful vessels ever seen on film, Tarkin's technological terror was the size of a small moon and packed a big enough punch to vaporize a planet! Twenty-one years after it's screen debut in *Star Wars*, we finally have a model of the Death Star.

AMT's kit is quite simple, it is after all, basically a 9-inch sphere. It consists of eight segments, four for each hemisphere. One includes the super-laser and a second the mounting slot. They are held together by a series of tabs, as this kit

AMT's 9-inch Death Star model, built and photographed by Dominique Durocher.



is designed to be assembled without glue. The instructions recommend using tape on the inside faces, but I found this unnecessary. I would still recommend cutting all the tabs off and gluing the segments together for a sturdier model.

An interesting feature is the two stands. One is the usual base and support strut, while the other is intended for wall-mounting the kit. Make sure you decide which you want before assembly as this cannot be changed after the kit is glued together.

Overall fit of this kit is not great. The tabs cause gaps along all edges, and particularly at the poles. The parts are also slightly warped, which is not much of a problem for a snapped together model, but requires quite a bit of work to align the edges properly for gluing.

Detail is also somewhat poor, but what would have been required would be too small for injection molding anyway. The surface is covered in large panels which have a rough texture best sanded off. It will be lost anyway during seam-filling. Unfortunately, the equatorial docking bay trench is not represented, as assembly tabs would run through it. What will really make a difference on this model is the paint. A good job with washes and dry-brushing will really bring out it's character.

Although I feel it's a little expensive for the amount of plastic in the kit, a little work will turn out a good representation of the Death Star. A 9-inch sphere may not sound impressive, but it is quite a presence sitting on the shelves.

MIR

BY DOMINIQUE DUROCHER

Although not actually a science-fiction subject, the Russian space station Mir (Peace) has been featured in an expanded configuration in *Armageddon* as well as more recently in *Virus*. In orbit and constantly inhabited for over a decade, it will soon be taken down from orbit.

Revell-Monogram's kit is based on their earlier release for the movie *Armageddon*, minus the extra module. Other minor differences are the repositioning of the capsules to their proper docking ports and modifications to the end caps of three modules. The kit has much the same characteristics as it's previous incarnation, namely decent fit and detailing. The main inaccuracies are the undersized solar panels and barely adequate Soyuz and Progress capsules. The Soyuz capsule should be rotated 45 degrees to the left for it to be properly oriented. The Sofora girder also needs to be angled 10 degrees towards the crossed modules.

This model is now a Snap-Tite kit, not requiring glue to assemble; but I would still recommend using some. This and the inclusion of paints and a brush, both best discarded, indicate it is aimed at younger modelers. While this gives the impression that the kit is cheap, it does not lack in any respect and can be made into a very nice model. I understand RealSpace Models will be releasing a set of photo-etched brass, taken from their own resin model of Mir, as a detailing set for this kit. It will provide better solar

panels and various girders and antennae that are too flimsy for injection moulding. This is for more experienced modelers, though.

With decent fit and detailing, easy assembly and a good price, the Mir model is definitely worth getting.

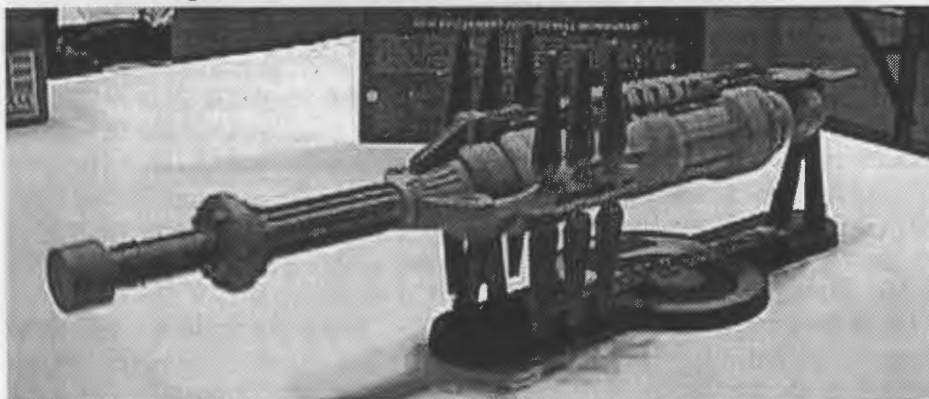
BABYLON 5

BY DOMINIQUE DUROCHER

The last, best hope for peace, *Babylon 5* was meant as a free port for all species to resolve their problems amiably. This unfortunately didn't quite work out. The series, on the other hand, did complete its intended run and we eventually got models from it, although only in its last year.

Although a little short at around 15 inches long, the B5 station model is very nicely detailed. The shapes look right and the fit is good, even if a little cleanup along most edges will help. Finely raised lines show areas of different colours. The rotating section is moulded separately from the support frame, so it is possible to add motion to the station; but this conversion is far from obvious. The biggest problem with this kit, which also complicates the previously mentioned modification, is that part of the stand is moulded directly into the station's structure. This makes for a relatively sturdy assembly, but complicates both assembly and painting. The station's spine and solar panels are very nicely detailed,

The Babylon 5 Station model. This one was on display at the 1998 IPMS-USA National Convention in Santa Clara, California prior to its release, as advertising at the Revell-Monogram booth.



MODEL COMPETITION/CONVENTION NOTES

NorEastCon '99 :

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Clarion Hotel, Niagara Falls, NY

For more information check their website:

<http://www.buffnet.net/~tonym/noreast.htm>

IPMS Ottawa Capcon '99 :

September 18th, 1999.

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For more information check their website:

<http://www.igs.ipmsottawa/>

MODEL NEWS AND UPCOMING RELEASES

Babylon 5:

Although there are rumours that the next *Babylon 5* model to be produced by Revell-Monogram will be the Minbari War Cruiser, other sources suggest that the manufacturer may instead produce the *Excalibur*, the ship from the B5 spin-off series *Crusade*.

Star Trek:

Next up for Amt/Ertl's *Star Trek* line is the *USS Yamaguchi*. This is an Ambassador-class starship, similar to the *Enterprise-C*. The important differences: an extra sprue of new parts for alternate detailing, and the whole thing will be molded in clear plastic making it easier for those who want to light their model. There will be decals for a choice of several starships, including the *Enterprise-C*.

Star Wars:

Four initial model kits will be released by Amt/Ertl to accompany the opening of *The Phantom Menace*. Exactly which ships/vehicles they are is being kept tightly under wraps. It has been suggested that the models will be available in mid-April, an entire month before the movie opens!

but have hollow supports which remain visible, particularly on the spine. Decals are supplied to supplement painting, as they carry

the complex surface texture of the station. This was a very nice idea as it can save one from serious headaches. Unfortunately, the colour used is a light purple where it should have been a medium blue. There is also an error in the painting guide. The docking bay sphere is described as gray with blue squares, when it should be blue with gray squares.

Even if it is a little short, this kit can be made into a very nice representation of the last of the Babylon stations. It is relatively easy to put together and even more so to paint if one uses the supplied decals. This is one kit that deserves a place in any SF modeler's collection.

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PRODUCERS OF *BABYLON 5* TAP JPL'S BRAIN POWER FOR NEW SERIES

Through a unique technology transfer program, space scientists and engineers have begun sharing their brain power with producers and writers at Babylonian Productions, producers of *Babylon 5* and the new science fiction television series *Crusade*.

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory will provide *Crusade* producers with new visions of technology and will assist them in portraying science and astronomy as accurately as possible, forecasting science and technology issues circa the year 2250.

The producers, whose *Crusade* debuts on Turner Network Television (TNT) in January (*now June—Ed*), were able to tap JPL's expertise by participating in the lab's Technology Affiliates Program, through which businesses form strategic alliances with JPL either to license intellectual property or to gain access to JPL's engineers

and scientists to help solve technological problems. To date, more than 120 companies, large and small, have utilized the program to solve upwards of 200 specific technology challenges.

"It's exciting for us to be able to share knowledge from the space program in order to help ensure the realism and accuracy of popular science fiction programming," said Joan Horvath, a business alliance manager with the Technology Affiliates Program.

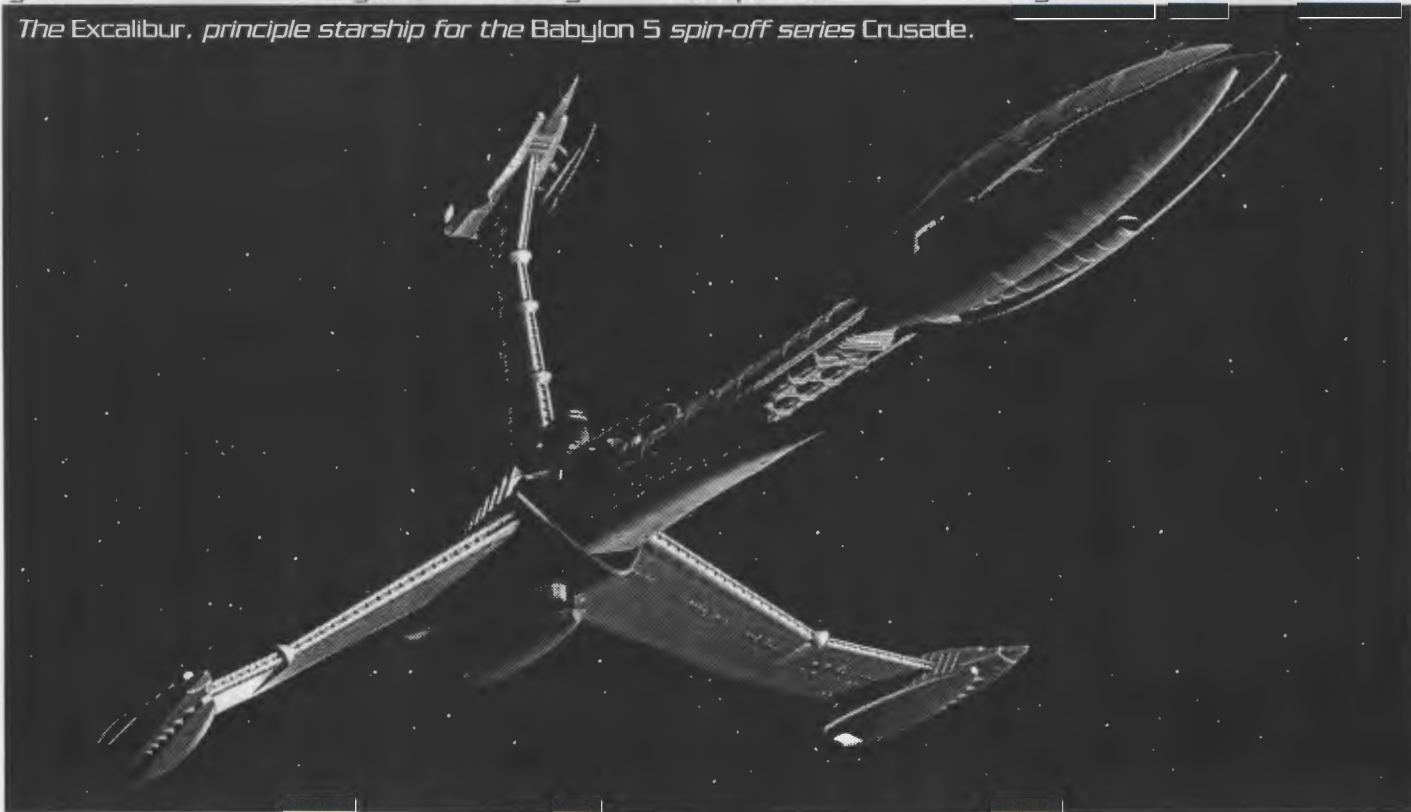
"We have a very challenging task before us on the production side, visualizing and creating different planets and planetary bodies complete with civilizations, flora and fauna," said *Crusade* producer John Copeland. "The scientists and engineers at JPL will be advising us on how to depict the future."

Copeland became aware of JPL's capabilities in large part through his acceptance of an

invitation by the Caltech Management Association (CMA) to speak about *Babylon 5* to JPL employees last spring. JPL engineer Michael Eastwood, a CMA events co-chair, explained, "As a thank-you, we gave the *Babylon 5* team a lab tour. John Copeland was excited and impressed with what he saw and called me two days later asking how we might all work together more closely. The Technology Affiliates Program was a perfect fit."

Crusade and *Babylon 5* are produced in association with J. Michael Straczynski's Synthetic Worlds, Ltd. and Netter Digital Entertainment, Inc. under Babylonian Productions. JPL is a division of the California Institute of Technology. More information about JPL's Technology Affiliates Program is available at the Commercial Technology Program web site at <http://techtrans.jpl.nasa.gov/tu.html>.

The Excalibur, principle starship for the Babylon 5 spin-off series Crusade.



BABYLON 5: GOODBYE TO OLD FRIENDS

BY JOSÉE BELLEMARE

This December we said goodbye to *Babylon 5* and its citizens.

On that last episode we were all surprised to see J. Michael Straczynski doing a guest appearance and most of us got a little choked up or misty-eyed when, in a highly symbolic gesture, we saw JMS himself pull the switch that turned off all the lights, the last ship leave, and the station explode into space.

For the past five years, some of us have been faithfully following a different kind of drama. *Babylon 5* was a series you knew would only last five years—and there were times that we wondered if it would last that long—but from the start, Straczynski, or “The great Maker” as some have started calling him, had a specific story arc in mind and stuck to it: *B5* was his baby and stayed that way.

In an unprecedented move in Hollywood, JMS kept complete control of his creation. Everything had his stamp of approval from scripts, scenery, and costumes, to the computer graphics used on the show.

The story itself was different from other sci-fi shows in the

past. Somehow it was more real, grittier. If a character had a problem, you knew that it would take more than one episode to get through it, if at all.

You found yourself getting involved with the series. Who among us wouldn't have loved to crush Bester under our heel or didn't cheer that time the station was under attack from Earth Force and Delenn came out of hyperspace with all those Minbari ships as backup and told Earth Force ships to leave.

Another thing that made the series interesting was the parallel between the Shadow War and WWII. By seeing it in a different setting it gave us a better understanding of our own history: not just the major conflicts, but the lesser known aspects as well. An excellent example of this is the episode where Vir helped Nam refugees escape to safety. With the movie fresh in our minds, everybody recognized *Schindler's List* as the inspiration for the story.

Some of the supporting characters didn't stick around for very long, but that didn't lessen the impact they had on the show: the Ranger, Marcus and

his love for Ivanova, Talia Winters and her evolution into a decent human being before the Psi Corps got its hands on her again, or Byron and his struggle to help his people.

Not to be forgotten are the villains we loved to hate: Bester at the top of the list, Mr. Morden, and of course President Clark—we never saw him, but we certainly couldn't ignore him.

Even if it was set several hundred years in the future and out in space, the series dealt with real situations: personal growth and change, difficult decisions, love, complicated relationships, substance abuse, struggling with your conscience, duty versus living with yourself—all things you can find every day here and now.

Babylon 5 was less a science fiction series than a good drama set in space. The effects added to the story rather than competed with it. With a second series warming up and ready to go, let's hope Straczynski can keep delivering the top quality entertainment we have come to expect from him. Until then, we all say farewell to *Babylon 5*.

GOODBYE TO CRUSADE, ALSO?

The reason we've been waiting so long for news is that the Sci-Fi Channel has been crunching numbers for weeks, trying to make the deal work with WB, and doing their level best. The programming folks there loved the show (and special thanks has to go to Programming Head Tom Vitale at SFC who worked hardest to make this work).

The problem is simply this: the money to fund a series is a *big* chunk of change. SFC had already allocated its budget for the year as of January 1st, and there simply wasn't enough left in this year's budget to pull it

off. Also, the emphasis now is on spending money on shows where one owns a piece of it, and *Crusade* is owned entirely by WB. At the end of the day, they just couldn't make the dollars work, though they tried their damndest, and are only to be thanked.

I'm told that if the ratings are good on the 13 which TNT will still air—all the episodes made so far will be shown starting June 9th, 1999—there may be a second season, but we'll see.

Meanwhile, I'm taking the day off. There have been seven offers for overall deals and multiple network pilot deals with

both networks per se and studios on my desk for about a year now, ever since *B5* ended, which I've been putting off to do *Crusade*. Now I'll pick one of those deals and make it. So the next thing from me you see will almost certainly be on one of the major networks.

I'm going back into the deep water again...

Meanwhile, my thanks to all those who e-mailed and wrote and called and supported. It's a good show, as will be seen when the shows are aired, and I'd rather lose a show I believed in than keep one I didn't believe in.—JMS (via e-mail)

SENSORS

FACT, RUMOUR AND SPECULATION FROM AROUND SF/F-DOM

Tests of the information in this column show high levels of midichlorian.

STANLEY KUBRICK, 1928-1999

Acclaimed director Stanley Kubrick passed away on March 7 at his home in Hertfordshire, England. He was 70. Kubrick had just completed editing *Eyes Wide Shut*, a psychosexual thriller starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman that took over a year to shoot. The film will be released this summer.

The famously perfectionist filmmaker insisted on total control of his projects and was not adverse to shooting as many as 100 takes of a scene. He is known to genre fans for the films *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *The Shining* (1980), based on the Stephen King novel, and of course the classic *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), which set a new standard for motion picture special effects.

SONY LANDS STAR WARS SOUNDTRACK

When the soundtrack for *Star Wars - Episode 1: The Phantom Menace* lands in stores later this year, it will be carrying the Sony Classical Music label, according to *Variety*. Sony, which recently scored major hits with two *Titanic* albums, has already announced plans to release a radio single from the new *Star Wars* soundtrack, which features John Williams conducting the London Symphony Orchestra.

Williams is a familiar name to *Star Wars* fans for his work on the original *Star Wars* score, which earned him two Grammy Awards and an Oscar.

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA FEATURE FILM NEWS

Keeping up with Hollywood's obsession with the small screen, producer Todd Moyer and creator Glen Larson are putting together a \$40 million indie feature production of the TV series *Battlestar Galactica*.

The film is scheduled to start shooting in September in Luxembourg with indie financing. No studio is attached yet to distribute, but Moyer expects that one will step up. His production of *Wing Commander* was made as an indie and 20th Century Fox ultimately acquired the project as a negative pickup.

Moyer, and Larson, who created the original *Battlestar*, will jointly produce the *Battlestar* feature. Mike Finch, who penned several drafts on the *Wing Commander* script, will write the screenplay. Moyer and Larson are also in discussions with Universal Merchandising to license the feature's characters.

The film, which starts where the series left off, will explore Commander Cain's mission to find the lost *Battlestar*, *Galactica* and the tribe of humans that he thinks may have reached Earth during pre-historic times aboard the first great *Battlestar*, the *Atlantis*.

The TV series saw a limited run on ABC in 1978-79 seasons. But it developed a cult following on the Sci-Fi Channel and spawned a number of sci-fi novels and comic books. On the Internet, at least 2,800 web sites are dedicated to the show. *Battlestar Galactica* has an illustrious history, a huge fan base and enormous potential to be a successful motion picture.

Larson had been approached several times to make a feature about

the series but chose Moyer as a partner because he was impressed by the visual effects of *Wing Commander*.

Moyer plans to create the visual effects with his own shop, No Prisoners/3DFX. His team of effects experts includes visual effects supervisor Chris Brown, Erik Strauss, and several other artists who worked on *Wing Commander*.

Moyer, a former executive VP and producer for Dark Horse Entertainment, has produced or co-produced such pics as *Barb Wire* and *Timecop*. He is currently in development with *Jason and the Argonauts* for DreamWorks and *A Scanner Darkly* for Jersey Films and Universal.

Actor Richard Hatch, who played Captain Apollo in the *Galactica* TV series, recently directed and starred in a promotional trailer designed to pitch a possible *Galactica* film project to producers and/or studios. It is unclear at the moment what involvement he will have with the Moyer/Larson team.

CAPTAIN ABANDONS SINKING SHIP

Kate "Captain Janeway" Mulgrew has announced that she'll be leaving *Star Trek: Voyager* when her contract is up next year in order to return to the New York stage, where her career began. Taken aback by the news, Paramount flacks have been deflecting queries about how her departure will be handled. But with the insipid *Voyager* languishing in the ratings and the future of the UPN network itself in some question these days, the matter may be moot. One has to wonder if the show will even survive until next year.

Even if it does, Mulgrew's announcement comes as just one

more nail in the coffin for the floundering *Star Trek* franchise. *DS9*, also a ratings dud, wraps for good this year and no one, it seems, will miss it. And the latest *Star Trek* movie, *Insurrection*, came and went without leaving much of an impression. One indicator of falling fortunes is that *Trek* toy sales are down dramatically. Some stores don't even stock the line anymore and prior to *Insurrection's* release, toy industry experts were predicting lukewarm interest in toys tied to the movie. Tellingly, fan interest has waned steadily since the heydays of TNG. With such quality TV SF as *Babylon 5* available, *Trek* finds itself sadly lacking. It is true that *Trek* has been written off many times before, only to bounce back, but it really is looking to most observers like *Voyager* will be the franchise's swan song.

X-FILES NEWS

The X-Files will go one more season, a seventh, but not likely an eighth. Cast and crew are working on the assumption that season seven will be the last, according to series creator Chris Carter. The show's writers are planning to have everything wrapped up by Spring 2000 (or at least as wrapped up as things get on *The X-Files*). There is another X-movie in the works—for release summer of 2000 or 2001—so the story could continue for years yet on the big screen.

CRUSADE COMES TO THE IMAGINATION STATION

After months of bated breath and rabid anticipation, we can confirm that the sequel series to *Babylon 5: Crusade*, will have its Canadian premiere on SPACE: The Imagination Station in June.

Saturday, June 12th, at 7:00 pm tune in to follow the exploits of the crew of the *Excalibur*, led by Captain Matthew Gideon (Gary Cole). Gideon and his crew have 5 years to find a cure for a deadly biogenetic

plague that threatens Earth's 7 billion inhabitants. The crew of the *Excalibur* includes Lieutenant John Matheson (Daniel Dae Kim), the mysterious Dureena Nafeel (Carrie Dobro) and the even more mysterious Galen, (Peter Woodward), a member of a race of technomages, who use science and technology to simulate magic.

Crusade will run on Space weekly, Saturdays at 7pm with a repeat Sunday at 2am. There are 13 episodes.

CRUSADE CANCELLED?

TNT has elected not to purchase additional *Crusade* episodes at the present time. This leaves the new show hanging with only 13 episodes.

Until recently Warner was in talks with the Sci-Fi Channel in hopes that they would pick up *Crusade*, however, they were unable to fit it into their budget for this season. Given the lateness of TNT's announcement, SFC's money had already been allotted.

TNT's cancellation of *Crusade* follows months of rumours that the network wanted changes to the show—including more violence and more T&A—and that series creator JMS had refused. Apparently *Crusade*, in its current format, was not the type of show that TNT wanted to do.

QUICK NOTES: TV SCI-FI

Buffy the Vampire Slayer fans can look forward to a spin-off series next fall. *Angel*, described as a drama, is hoping to attract a slightly older audience than does *Buffy*. As its title suggests, the show focuses on Buffy's vampire lover, Angel (David Boreanaz).

Fans of UPN's *The Sentinel* were pleased to hear that the network reversed its decision to cancel the series. Eight new episodes were ordered and they began airing early in February. But the future of the show remains uncertain. UPN must now decide if they'll commit further

and they've made no promises.

Meanwhile, UPN's ER-in-space series *Mercy Point* lasted only a few episodes before the plug was pulled, and the interesting but low-rated *Brimstone* (Fox) will not return next TV season.

UPN IN DANGER OF FOLDING?

Adding insult to rating injury, a major Hollywood studio has asked UPN to guarantee that the network will not go out of business before it sells any new series. The studio, Columbia TriStar, (producers of *Dilbert* and *Malcom and Eddie* on UPN) is the network's largest supplier of new fall pilots, and wants insurance that the low rated network will still be around next year to pay bills, according to reports.

UPN—jointly owned by Viacom's Paramount division and boat manufacturer Chris-Craft—has been plagued all year long with reports that it was suffering huge financial losses after expanding its schedule to five nights a week and speculation is that it may not finish out the season.

MONTREAL GROUND ZERO FOR BATTLEFIELD EARTH

One of Scientology's most famous adherents, John Travolta, was in Montreal recently scouting locations for a proposed \$120 million sci-fi flick based on SF writer and Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard's novel, *Battlefield Earth*. Travolta was sufficiently impressed and local press reports suggest that cameras will almost surely roll in Old Montreal, perhaps as early as this summer. An abandoned mill on the harbour front seems to be the key location. Travolta will star as the story's evil alien leader.

Battlefield Earth would be the most expensive movie ever filmed in Montreal, which early this year surpassed Toronto in terms of dollars spent on film and television production.

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The Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA) is a Montreal-based non-profit organization dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of all activities which engage and support the interests of science fiction and fantasy fans. The benefits of membership in MonSFFA include:

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MonSFFA is administered, on behalf of all of its members, by an executive committee, who are empowered to appoint officers and advisors to assist them with the operation of the club. Executive committee members are elected annually by vote of the general membership; any member in good standing may run for office.

The fee for a one-year membership in MonSFFA is currently \$20.00.

Please address all correspondence to: MonSFFA, P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2W 2P4.

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 Jeux de rôles _____

Autres _____

Il arrive que d'autres organismes nous demandent la liste de nos membres afin de les contacter. Veuillez indiquer ci-dessous si vous nous autorisez à transmettre les renseignements inscrits sur ce formulaire à ces organismes.

Je vous autorise à transmettre ces renseignements.
 Veuillez ne pas transmettre ces renseignements.