

WARPF 47

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



Inside This Issue: *Star Wars* stuff, The Empirecon Experience, Book Reviews, Movie Reviews, Model Building, the latest SF News, and More...

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COVER UP:

The frenzy surrounding the official release of *Phantom Menace* merchandise at the beginning of May inspired MonSFFA's Keith Braithwaite to bang out this cartoon. We liked it and decided to feature it on our cover this issue.

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
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1999 EVENT PROGRAMMING*

June 27 - Star Wars: New Versus 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 - Credibility? Humour? Sometimes a rocket is just a rocket!

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...Lunar travel: from science fiction to reality.

October 17 - Costuming

1:00pm: The worst and most outlandish costumes in SF/F.
2:30pm: Are you having a bad hair day? The strangest and probably most uncomfortable hairstyles we ever saw!

November 21 - The Millennium Bug

1:00pm: Trust the computer, the computer is your friend...Is MonSFFA Y2K approved? Computers in SF literature and media.
2:30pm: Game: Paranoia

December 11 - MonSFFA Christmas Party

7:30pm: Saturday: Place to be announced.

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

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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. "The ability to speak does not make you intelligent."—Qui-Gon Jinn to Jar Jar Binks in *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*.

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>

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR



The Phantom Menace sure is big! Like last issue, *Warp 47* has a lot of *Star Wars* content. There may be a bunch more next issue, too—it's what everyone is still talking about these days.

For our part in the *Star Wars* phenomenon, MonSFFA organized a group outing to see *The Phantom Menace* at the midnight opening show. There was 47 of us in this group! It included a mix of MonSFFA, *Warp 9*, KAG, and some friends. A small group of us worked together to purchase the required number of tickets, and to keep places in line on the day in question, so that we all had good seats. It was no longer just a group of us going to see a movie—with the hours waiting in line, it became an event more like a mini-con, complete with costuming and gaming! We were hot and tired and excited, and we had a good time.

The other big event that got MonSFFA members into the cinema was the Dimension SF film festival. The cinema in question was the Imperial, and over the course of two weeks, I sat through 35 movies. I have fond memories of the Imperial stretching back over many years and many great movies. Through the film festival, I got to relive some of those memories, plus I got to experience some of the old classics for the very first time. It was wonderful, but let me warn you, the seats at the Imperial aren't what they used to be. My bum went numb!

Next issue will probably have a more complete report on Dimension SF as well as some movie reviews from it.

Last issue I complained in this column about the lack of information regarding some of the major conventions. I have since received the flyer for Toronto Trek, and Hobbystar has updated their web site. I have included the advertising for these conventions within this newsletter.

If you are planning to attend Toronto Trek however, you should have pre-registered and booked your hotel room already. The flyer arrived later than usual this year. Now that we have a more complete list of the guests, it looks like it will be another good year for T-Trek. I'm going, and I expect I'll see some of you there.

The new Hobbystar SFX show is starting to take shape, and it seems like it has the potential to be a good event. I would like to go, but I'm not sure whether I can yet. If not, I hope someone will at least write a review!

Yes, MonSFFA members, keep those articles coming!

Lynda Pelley,
Editor

July 9-11
1999

9-11 July 1999

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"BABYLON 5"



**STEPHEN
FURST**



**ANDREW
ROBINSON**

GARAK
"DEEP SPACE 9"



**LENI
PARKER**

DA'AN & AUGUR
"EARTH: FINAL CONFLICT"



**RICHARD
CHEVOLLEAU**

Technical Guest:

Lolita Fatjo - Star Trek Pre-Production Co-ordinator

Author Guests:

John Vornholt - Babylon 5, Earth 2, Star Trek
Julie E. Czerneda - "A Thousand Words for Stranger"

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NovaD - "Mistress Janeway"
and **Larry Stewart** - Master of Ceremonies



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

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H2W 2P4.

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

Dear MonSFFen,

As your very able editor informed you all last issue, my company, Galaxy Enterprises, has closed. I would like to thank all the folks who supported us over the years. The best part of running a small business like ours was all the customers that became friends. We will be back for Con•Cept '99 this fall as fans. For those of you who can make it to Toronto (Trek) in July, look for us there, also.

If there is someone still looking for a left-handed sworlock turbo thingy, drop me a line at my e-mail address (paul.bennett1@sympatico.ca) and I will help you with your request.

I will leave you with those great words of wisdom from the famous Yogurt: "Look...Mer-chun-dise." Me thinks this will be very true this summer.

Peace,

Paul Bennett
Grimsby, Ontario

We thinks you be correct on that one, Paul. Good to hear from you and thank you for renewing your MonSFFA membership, by the way. We are pleased to hear you'll be attending Con•Cept this year and we all look forward to sharing a pint. The collectors among us will be pleased to hear of your offer to help them track down that rare item.

The only great words of wisdom

that come to mind as I write this are as follows: "He who finishes with the most toys wins." Thanks again for helping a lot of us play the game.—Ed

Dear MonSFFen:

Thanks for issue 46 of *Warp*. The new *Star Wars* excitement is starting up in earnest, and even the guys in my office can't wait for it. Here's some comments about that issue...

A little more information on TT 13...Andrew Robinson has been confirmed as a guest. I'm sure that as a dressmaker, Yvonne would like to meet him. He portrays Elim Garak, the Cardassian tailor on *Deep Space Nine*. "You'd be surprised at the things you can learn while doing alterations..."

After reading about the Hobbystar convention, I decided to hit the web to see what I could find. Hobbystar Productions hosts the Canadian National Comic Book Exposition and CNAnime each year, and it looks like they've added the ComicFreek show to it. They also stage Toronto Comicon each year. I haven't heard anything about a mediacon aspect to it, but given how lucrative Creation was for a while, I wouldn't be surprised if they advertise all the guests the report lists. They should advertise more in the summer, so the flyer table at Toronto Trek should yield more information.

Information on Ad Astra 19! The con has been postponed, and has shifted its date to February 18-20, 2000. It will be downtown for the first time, too, having found that rare combination of downtown location and affordable hotel. The con had to reschedule because of the demand on hotels for June events, like weddings. These events crowded the con out, and it is expected that the con will stay in February from now on. Hey, it can neatly deal with cabin fever, so come out for it! Keep checking its web site, and I'll distribute flyers as soon as I can get my hands on some.

Keith, you're right, the CanVention had never been in Montreal before. But then, it is a bid-for convention, and it was the first time Montreal had gone after it. Not two solitudes, but a sign that more

and more fans were learning about the idea of Canadian national fandom.

I don't think Keith's spoilers will spoil the new *Star Wars* movie for me. We can now say the film comes out next month. I've seen portions of the two trailers, but when I see the film, I know I'll enjoy it. I got into fandom around the time of the premiere of *Episode IV*, so this will also provide me with a good jolt of nostalgia.

Our next stops...Eeriecon 1, a new annual (we hope) convention in Niagara Falls, New York April 16-18, and the weekend after is the 3rd Annual Fantastic Pulp and Paper Show at the Lillian H. Smith branch of the Toronto Public Library on April 24. Yvonne and I will be running Toronto in 2003 Worldcon bid tables at both events.

That's all for now...with Ad Astra postponed, I guess I'll be seeing a lot of you at Toronto Trek, so see you then.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney
Etobicoke, Ontario

We thank you for your letter of comment. It is always nice to have feedback and additional information.

In the time between the arrival of your letter and the printing of this issue, both Toronto Trek and the Hobbystar SFX con have confirmed additional guests. SFX (Canadian National Science Fiction Expo) has also unveiled their pricing structure, hotel information, and a basic schedule. We are keeping a close watch on both conventions' web sites.

Moving Ad Astra to February may actually be a good thing. That way it will not be scheduled so near to Toronto Trek. Those who could not afford to attend two conventions that close together may finally get to Ad Astra next year.

You will be seeing a lot of us at Toronto Trek regardless of the status of Ad Astra. As far as out-of-town conventions go, T-Trek is by far the most well-attended by MonSFFA members. The Hobbystar SFX con is also starting to look quite good these days, so you may see some of us there too, providing you attend.

Good luck with the Toronto in 2003 Worldcon bid.—Ed

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MonSFFAandom

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RECENT MonSFFA MEETINGS

March

The 21st of the month saw our group celebrate spring with a wide-ranging discussion of the season as viewed through an SF/F filter. Cathy Palmer-Lister moderated, beginning with a quick take on the astronomical workings of spring. Procreation, evolution, the idea of rebirth, youth and various other themes related metaphorically to spring were written down on flipchart sheets and the audience encouraged to list SF/F books, films and TV shows that made use of them. Spock's resurrection in *Star Trek III*, for example, went under rebirth. The animated discussion was soon all over the map, beyond the genre and delving into religious teachings and the world's great mythologies. Mention of the Easter Bunny at one point led to a brief sidebar on pets in SF/F. What critters like *Lost in Space's* ridiculous CG space monkey have to do with spring was by this time irrelevant!

The mid-meeting break came just in time and we regrouped after the afternoon's raffle to talk about and review recent genre movies (of which there were few) and the latest episodes of our favourite television series. We looked ahead as well, anticipating coming sci-fi fare, including, of course, the annual crop of summer blockbusters, not the least of which this year is *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*.

April

This month's meeting took place on a sunny 18th, opening on the subject of time travel. The audience was encouraged to offer fodder for the topic as a series of index cards were circulated seeking lists of favourite stories, dramatic moments, dialogue, desired futures, pasts that

we'd like to change, etc. Keith Braithwaite oversaw the panel, which mostly looked at the various theories presented in literature and film as to how time travel works, and at the interesting paradoxes created. Works cited included H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, Harry Turtledove's *Guns of the South*, Keith Laumer's *Dinosaur Beach*, Ray Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder," Poul Anderson's *Time Patrol* stories, the films *Somewhere in Time*, *Time After Time*, *Timecop*, *Final Countdown*, the *Terminator* and *Back to the Future* movies, numerous episodes of TV's *Star Trek*, and such shows as *Time Tunnel* and *Quantum Leap*.

Joining Keith at the front of the room for the second part of the meeting was Krikor Ajemian, shifting gears to examine SF/F's approach to recreating ancient eras. Time travel stories that visit the ancient world generally aim at a historically accurate rendering came the segue from the previous topic. Now what if extraterrestrials visited Earth thousands of years ago and influenced the peoples of that time, perhaps lending advanced technology to the building of structures like the pyramids? SF sometimes uses ancient civilizations as a jumping-off point for the telling of these kinds of fantastic, futuristic stories. Attempts at adapting myths and legends to the screen usually focus on the best-known telling of the tale. It was noted that historical accuracy, while playing a role in such productions, is often a secondary consideration. The many campy examples now popular, like the *Hercules* and *Xena* TV series, play fast and loose with history and the myths themselves, borrowing liberally from all sorts of sources and mixing and matching to suit their action-adventure requirements. The discussion closed on speculation that today's reports of close encounters with UFOs might, thousands of years from now, be viewed as we, today,

view ancient Greek and other myths.

The club thanks those MonSFFen who provided the programming for these two meetings, and everyone who helped out in support.

FEDEX FILES DELEGATION VISITS OTTAWA SF CLUB

Four members of our *FedEx Files* production company made their way to Ottawa on Sunday, February 28th, MonSFFA having accepted an invitation from that city's science fiction club, the Ottawa Science Fiction Society, to screen *The FedEx Files: "Moxie"*. Writer/director/executive producer Keith Braithwaite, stars André Poliquin and JJ Sobey, and editor/CGI effects artist Sylvain St-Pierre were our representatives. They offered the OSFS folk a quick overview of the *FedEx Files* projects along with a "Moxie" trivia quiz, and fielded questions about the production of "Moxie" and its predecessor, *Plant 9 From Outer Space*. Keith reports our efforts well received and our stock of *FedEx Files* videos and posters depleted by a few more units.

Word on MonSFFA's visit was quite positive in a subsequent issue of OSFS's monthly newsletter, the *Statement*, which also published an article about the *FedEx Files* films prepared for the occasion by Keith. Coverage continued in their next issue with reviewer Lionel Wagner's appraisal. He described "Moxie" as "an unusually good amateur video production," giving us points for "tight edits, sustained action and a good story" that made the "hour-long episode look like the real thing." He felt that experience gained on *Plant 9* resulted in our creating a "better video" the second time around. "Amateur productions of this calibre are rare," wrote Lionel, "and worthy of maximum support."

MonSFFA appreciates OSFS's invite and we thank our four

delegates for making the trip on behalf of our club.

The Fedex Files: "Moxie" has been well received in the fannish community whenever we've screened it. MonSFFen Stephane Marcotte, André Poliquin, and JJ Sobey will represent the club and the production at Toronto Trek in July. Their two-hour panel will feature a showing of the video followed by a group discussion.

LASER TAG OUTING

Space being tight, we'll just say here that MonSFFen enjoyed a laser tag outing some weeks back and let Josée Bellemare illuminate you on the event in her report appearing later in this issue.

CLUB'S THANKS TO DONATORS

MonSFFA takes a moment to thank, first, local genre retailers Nebula Books, Empire Comics and Capitaine Québec, who periodically donate items to the club as raffle prizes or auction items. So, Debra and Keith at Nebula, Ace over at Empire, and Myles at Capitaine Q, please know that we greatly appreciate your generous contributions to our fund raising efforts.

The club also wishes to thank those many MonSFFen who regularly supply us with all kinds of nifty raffle/auction stuff. Give yourselves a pat on the back, people. Your support of the club ranks above and beyond.

The revenue generated by these fund-raisers plays a pivotal role in the financing of the club's activities.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

The cost of running MonSFFA rises from year to year and your membership renewals are *vitally important* 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.

LASER TAG 99

Report by Josée Bellemare

In Montreal fandom one might consider this event as a rite of spring.

When the weather warms up, warriors, klingons and humans alike, get restless and need to blow off some steam, hence the Laser Tag event each year at this time. So it was again: on Saturday, March 27th they met on the field of battle.

This year, instead of holding the event on a Sunday afternoon, it was held at night: starting late Saturday night and finishing at about five o'clock Sunday morning.

The competitors were basically klingons and friends against co-workers of John Zmrotchek, who organized the event this year. Most of these people were Laser Tag virgins or, in klingon thinking, fresh meat.

The space marines, who competed against the klingons last year, were well represented, but rather than standing apart, they joined ranks with the klingons this time. While the newcomers defended themselves admirably, in this year's competition the klingons (and friends) ruled.

On a personal note: my scores dramatically improved. I was no longer at the bottom of the food chain and, as a new klingon recruit, I earned my first kill stripe and got my first taste of Moxie.

After having played both Lasertron and Qzar, most players agreed that they preferred the Lasertron: the guns were easier to handle and it was easier to keep track of personal score, shots fired, and lives spent.

For a physically demanding competition that lasted all night, I was surprised that nobody fell asleep during the breaks. It was dawn when we finally called it quits!

All things considered this year's event was a success.



Look at the Evidence...

Extracts from the Reading Diary of John Dupuis

FORWARD THE FOUNDATION

by Isaac Asimov

We've all read the *Foundation Trilogy*, right? Usually at a very young age so our current impressions of it are clouded by the mists of time and the somewhat immature literary tastes of our youth.

Asimov wrote the three original novels as a series of novellas in the 1940s and early 1950s, when they were first collected in book form. They were great books in their day; they helped define the parameters of the Galactic Empire sub-genre. But, in retrospect they suffered from all of Asimov's typical faults: too talky, somewhat contrived plots, flat characterizations, and settings that invariably boil down to New York circa 1941.

In the 1980s Asimov began to add to the series and began to tie the *Foundation* series to his other main work, the *Robot* series and the *Empire* series. *Forward the Foundation* is the last of the books that he added to the series, fittingly also published as a series of novellas in the early 1980s, just before he died.

Even though it is the last book to be written in the *Foundation* series, it actually takes place chronologically before the original trilogy. It follows Hari Seldon's efforts (from the age of about 40 until his death in his 70s) to develop psychohistory and set up the *Foundation*. Along the way, he has many adventures, survives numerous assassination attempts and coups, and saves half his family from certain death. At various times he experiences the travails of family life, university life and then bureaucratic life, and then old age.

In many respects, *Forward the Foundation* is no different from that original trilogy: talky, overly familiar settings, unlikely situations, and little feel for the strangeness of the future. You know, the Asimov

stock faults. In many other respects, it is immensely different: it is a very mature work, adult work. It is concerned with families, mortality, coming to terms with one's place in life. Hari Seldon does something that is so rare in science fiction in any form, he goes through all of the experiences and emotions that are part of normal life: love, loss, grief, joy, and jealousy. He gets to age gracefully, to see and appreciate the growth of his family, and to grieve the passing of family and friends. To have ups and downs in his life's work over the course of his whole life, not artificially condensed to meet some sort of dramatic arc.

Overall, I have to say that this is a mature work by an author at the height of his powers, coming to grips with his own mortality. I enjoyed this one in spite of its obvious flaws.

Not to be missed!

DIVINE INVASION

by Philip K. Dick

This is by far the most confusing and scrambled of any Dick work I have ever read, and anyone who has read any amount of his work will know that's saying a lot. Of course, it continues the philosophical obsessions of the previous volume of the *VALIS* trilogy (and most of the latter part of Dick's oeuvre), ie: the nature of God, the uncertainty of identity, and the screwed up human condition.

Although it gets a little better in the second half, Dick's ruminations in this one are nowhere near as entertaining, interesting, or funny as they were in *VALIS*. I wish I could describe the plot in some form of coherent manner, but that may be impossible.

Skip this one, but please do try *The Man in the High Castle*, *VALIS*, *Martian Time-Slip*, or any short story collection. When I get around to reading *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, the third in the informal trilogy, I will let you know what it's like.

ROADS NOT TAKEN

edited by Gardner Dozois and Stanley Schmidt

This is a solid collection of alternate history stories, all taken from well known science fiction magazines *Asimov's* or *Analog*. Briefly, some of the best stories are by Michael F. Flynn, Robert Silverberg, L. Sprague de Camp, Gregory Benford and the ubiquitously alternate Harry Turtledove.

Michael Flynn is a great new writer and "Forests of Time" from 1987 shows him at his best. His tales combine a libertarian outlook, a strong hard sf bent, and close attention to the emotional lives of his characters. This example of a scientist lost on one twig in a forest of alternate realities is a brilliantly done example of economic alternate history: what if the political map of the world had developed without any large countries?

WAKING THE MOON

by Elisabeth Hand

Elisabeth Hand is one of those funny cases. You know how there are some authors that you just can't seem to read—the words just don't seem to transfer from the page to the brain. In one eye and out the other ear. For some reason I have the same reaction to Alexander Jablovkov.

Anyways, I'd attempted to read several of Hand's short stories and novels in various places over the years but had never been able to finish any of them. I'd more or less written her off for any future consideration. But then *Waking the Moon* was published and the reviews started to pour in. They were great reviews, giving the impression that this was a different kind of story from the others. More accessible, a dark fantasy rather than sf. Set in the past rather than the far future.

What the heck, I thought, give her work one more chance. Boy, am I ever glad I did. *Waking the Moon* is a classic example of a novel black

magic, mysterious goddess cults, and murder.

In 1975, Sweeney Cassidy goes to Washington, DC to study Anthropology at the University of the Archangel and St. John the Divine, where she meets and falls in love with an angelic young man named Oliver and a mysterious young woman named Angelica. Unfortunately, Oliver and Angelica also seem to be in love and they are both also members of the mysterious group, the Benandati. On a school retreat, everything comes to a head: Oliver kills himself, Angelica disappears, and Sweeney is alone.

Skip to 1995, Sweeney has a steady museum job but no life. Suddenly, Angelica appears. It seems she is an up-and-coming figure who has written a few bestselling books and is founding a goddess cult. Of course, she is surrounded by mysterious murders and disappearances. Sweeney even meets and falls in love with Angelica's eighteen-year-old son. As you can imagine, it all comes to a head at the end with Sweeney being forced to overcome her doubts and make a choice.

Not to be missed!

THE NEW HUGO AWARDS, VOL. 4
edited by Gregory Benford

This is one of those books where I'd already read most of the stories elsewhere before picking it up. The ones I'd read elsewhere which I found memorable are those by Charles Sheffield, Nancy Kress and Connie Willis. The ones which were new to me—and which I mostly bought the book to read—which I found to be memorable were by Harry Turtledove, Lucius Shepard, Geoffrey Landis and Isaac Asimov.

To be perfectly honest, I mostly bought the book to read Turtledove's "Down in the Bottomlands," which I found to be a fine story of political intrigue and human failing in an environmentally devastated future (What, Harry, no alternate history?). But the surprise for me was Asimov's fine story, "Gold". It's a wry, self-deprecating look at a writer (in a 1950s New York-style future, natch) who would love to get one of his books filmed properly and the

troubles he goes through to get it done. Looks like I'm becoming a bigger Asimov fan as I get older, eh?

ON SPEC: THE FIRST FIVE YEARS
by The On Spec Editorial Collective

This is a pretty good collection of Canadian SF stories from *On Spec* magazine. It has some fairly familiar names, such as Robert J. Sawyer and James Alan Gardner (both with very good stories from before they were famous), but it also features several less well known authors with very strong entries such as Derryl Murphy, Sally McBride, Erik Jon Spigel and Jason Kapalka. On the other hand, some of the items carry the weight of their small press origins with poor writing, "one-liner" surprise endings, and a large dose of self-important "weighty" prose. Some also bear out the stigma

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of Canadian SF being grim and humourless, more literary and much less fun than its American counterpart. All in all, worth reading for the good ones, but beware the clunkers.

Some of the other books that I've read recently and enjoyed:

Lie to Me
by David Martin

Primary Inversion
by Catherine Asaro

Hyperion
by Dan Simmons

Poison
by Kathryn Harrison

(Title this time around inspired by the book *Look at the Evidence* by John Clute.)

CONVENTION REVIEWS

As promised last issue, here is the in-depth account of Empirecon I through the eyes of Theresa.

THE EMPIRECON EXPERIENCE

review by Theresa Penalba

The weekend of Jan 23-24, 1999 the Holiday Inn Plaza in downtown Montreal held its very first *Star Wars* convention ever. This con was made possible by Ace Lopes of Empire Comics. On the guest list was: David Prowse (Darth Vader), Jeremy Bulloch (Boba Fett), Phil Brown (Uncle Owen Lars), Caroline Blakiston (Mon Mothma) and Maria deAragon (Greedo).

This is my third time meeting David Prowse, second for both Jeremy and Maria and I have never met Caroline and Phil before. Even so, there was no way I was missing this convention since I was the one who got this con started in the first place. I managed to get Ace in contact with the people who put on the Men In the Masks tour in North America. And for that I was given a VIP pass which included reserved seating for the weekend and a Saturday night dinner with the stars.

Saturday

Just before 9:00 am Lynda (who was wearing her Princess Leia costume) and I arrived at the hotel before the doors opened and there was already a good fifty people in line. We picked up our program books and free t-shirts. (Everybody who volunteered at the con was given free t-shirts.)

Both the program book and t-shirt were beautifully done. The shirts were printed on both sides. The front showed the right half of Darth Vader's mask blended with the left half of Boba Fett's helmet, with the Empirecon logo on top. The back showed the cover of the program book with Montreal, Que and the date of the con written on it. Ace spared no expense on these.

Lynda, Dom, and I had to arrive at the hotel early because we were setting up the MonSFFA table. Marc



Wayne Glover, Theresa Penalba, and Dominique Durocher at the MonSFFA table. Photo by Lynda Pelley.

Durocher and Wayne Glover were the two club representatives for the Saturday. Ace gave us a great spot—just outside the doors and off to the side of the main auditorium. Later on we *really* found out what a fantastic spot it was! Our little alcove was the waiting spot for the guests just before they went on stage!

By 10:00 am we were all set up, but some of the dealers were not quite ready. At 10:07 am the doors were opened. Not bad timing, considering that most cons I've been to lately almost never open their doors on time.

The people started piling in quite fast. There was a *huge* line up at the door which extended outside the hotel and all the way down the block! Now considering this was the first con that Ace had ever put on, the only problem was that it took quite a while before everybody made it inside. This had a minor affect on the timetable—Ace had scheduled the *Star Wars* card tournament to start at 10:00 am. Perhaps the card tournament should have started at 10:30 am or the doors should have been opened at 9:30 am to allow people time to go through registration. But hey, you learn these things for the next time. All in all, the con got off to a smooth start.

At 10:30 am the guests came

walking down the hallway to a secondary room behind the main auditorium to begin signing autographs. As soon as I saw them I got so excited! I immediately got into "con mode".

There was quite a crowd waiting already so I decided to get my autographs later. I put on my Boba Fett costume and walked around a bit. The guests were going to sign all day so I had plenty of time. Just after the signing started, Dom told us that he was to be Lord Darth Vader's assistant for a half hour or so. I was so envious of him.

At 11:00 am, people were still lining up and waiting to get in so Ace asked me to help out at the entrance. I was still in my Fett costume and dying of heat by then, but I was getting a lot of compliments and stares. At 11:30 am we finally got everybody in and things went well from there. At that point I had to take off my costume because I was dripping with sweat. I had worn it for a little over an hour and was going to put it back on later.

At 12:00 noon I got to be "food person" for Phil Brown and his wife. I jumped at the chance. Ace had asked me if I would go downstairs to the restaurant to get a hamburger with everything on it, a side of fries, some fruit and two juices. He gave

me \$20 to cover it. I had to wait at least 15 minutes for the order, and while I was waiting, one of the waiters looked at me rather funny and asked if I was with the convention. I of course said "yes." The reason he looked at me funny is because I was still wearing the bottom half of my Boba Fett costume!

Also at noon, Lynda and Dom were scheduled to do the Smithsonian Slide Show. Since I had missed the beginning of it, I decided to catch it on Sunday.

I figured now was a good time to get my autographs. I had brought my *huge*, gigantic 2-sided poster banner advertising the *Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition* on video for a limited time. It shows the heads of some of the SW characters like Chewbacca, R2-D2, C-3PO, Yoda, a Stormtrooper, and Darth Vader. One of my friends who works at Blockbuster Video had found the banner in the garbage. He knows how big of a *Star Wars* fan I am, so he rescued it from the garbage and gave it to me. So now I make this banner the item to get signed every time I meet a SW guest.

The first actor to sign my banner was David Prowse. He was impressed with the banner and knew I was a huge SW fan and then asked how I acquired it. I told him the story and he signed it "To Theresa, May the Force Be With You, Darth Vader, Dave Prowse". I then thanked him, shook his hand, and told him it was a pleasure to meet him.

The second actor I got to meet was Phil Brown. I went up to him and noticed he was eating his lunch (the lunch I got for him). I said "Hi, oh, you're eating. I don't want to disturb you so I'll come back later". I felt bad that I had disturbed his lunch but he said, "No, no, no, it's ok" and he put his lunch aside. He and his wife saw my banner and thought it was something! Since Phil is 82 years old, he has trouble writing a lot, so he only signed it "Phil Brown (Uncle Owen)". I didn't mind though. I thanked him, shook his hand and said it was a pleasure to meet him.

I then proceeded to meet Caroline Blakiston and Maria de Aragon at the same time since they

were sitting side by side. Caroline took one look at my banner and went "Wow, you must be a big fan! Where did you get it?" I then recounted the story to both of them to which Caroline replied "Thank heavens it was rescued from the garbage. Imagine throwing something like this out." She then signed it "For Theresa, Best Wishes, Caroline Blakiston, Mon Mothma". I thanked her and said it was nice to meet her. She reciprocated by saying it was nice to meet such a big fan.

Maria was next to sign the banner and remarked, "Wow, what a nice poster. Two sided and everything." She then asked me my name. When I told her she remarked, "Hey, that's my middle name." I went, "Oh, wow, cool!" She signed it "Oota Goota, Theresa, Maria de Aragon, Greedo."

While Maria was signing my banner, I had asked her if she remembered meeting me in Toronto last year at the *Star Wars/Babylon 5* convention. It was at that show she mentioned she would like to do a book signing or something like that, where she could meet the fans in Montreal, since she was born and raised in Montreal. I then got a business card from the people who did that con and gave it to Ace to contact them, and Empirecon was born. She *had* remembered me because she remarked that I was the only fan whom she had met with the

same name as her middle name. She was glad to have the opportunity to finally meet the fans in Montreal.

My final stop was to meet Jeremy. Since my banner is so big, I had a little trouble putting it up on the table. Jeremy saw it and remarked "Wow, I think this is the biggest item I've ever signed. You must be a big fan." I of course replied, "Yes, I love *Star Wars*" and then went on to explain how I acquired the banner. He signed it "To Theresa, Be on the Dark Side, Jeremy Bulloch, Boba Fett" just underneath David's autograph. I thanked him and said it was a pleasure to meet him once again and I told him that I had met him in Toronto at the Men Behind The Masks tour in October '97. I don't think he remembered me from then, but I figured once I put on my Boba Fett costume and showed him, he probably would.

About 20 minutes before Maria and Caroline were to do their speeches, I ran into the bathroom. When I was in the stall, I heard this voice speaking in French which sounded familiar but I wasn't sure if it was someone I knew or not. When I exited the stall and went to wash my hands, I recognized who it was. It was Maria de Aragon. She was touching up her make-up and hair and getting ready to go on stage. I started talking to her and complimented her on her French.

Caroline Blakiston (Mon Mothma) and Maria de Aragon (Greedo). Photo by Lynda Pelley.



She speaks it well, considering she has been living in California for approximately 30 years.

I found out that she left Montreal to go to the States when she was 16 years old. She does return to Montreal whenever she can to visit her family who live in the Lac St. Jean area. She said she had been in Montreal the week prior to the con visiting her family. We were talking for a good five minutes when I figured I better not bother her too much longer. She thanked me for talking to her for so long because she said that she loves to talk to people. I said it was no problem and that if there was something that she needed, to just ask any person who had on the black Empirecon t-shirt and they would be glad to do it. She thanked me once again and I told her I would see her on stage.

At 2:00 pm (and on time I might add) both Maria and Caroline were introduced on stage by Matt, the MC. They were given a warm welcome by the audience.

When Maria started speaking to the audience she spoke in French which really impressed the locals. Even Caroline who is British was able to speak a little French. Caroline told us that it was her first visit to Canada and that she really likes it here. She also mentioned that her son is marrying a Canadian and that her daughter is also going to marry a Canadian, so she will have several Canadian in-laws which will be nice. Maria mainly spoke to the audience in French including answering the questions in French and translating for Caroline when she was asked. Maria talked about how she got the part for Greedo and how it took three days to film some of her scenes. She also talked about other stuff she did after *Star Wars* and one thing in particular was the job she did as a chauffeur to some of the stars. Caroline said after *Star Wars* she did a lot of theater work but it was ironic that she is best known for her part in *SW*. She and her grandchildren went to see *Return of the Jedi* in the cinema and timed her appearance in the film. It turned out she was only on screen for 29 seconds! They were given a warm round of applause and cheers at the end of their presentation.

Next on the schedule was the

broadcast of the 1979 *Star Wars Holiday Special*, followed by *Troops*. I skipped both of them because I already have both on videotape.

Around 3:30 pm, Ernst and Michele decided to get into their costumes. Ernst had bought custom-made armour for his impressive Imperial pilot outfit and Michele wore an Imperial officer's uniform which she had made herself. Dom also got into his costume which was only half finished. He had an x-wing fighter pilot costume. Lynda was still in her Princess Leia outfit since the morning and I started to get back into my Boba Fett costume.

Some reporters from the *Gazette* and *La Presse* were there and asked Lynda, Ernst, and Michele if they could take pictures. They agreed and began posing. Lynda's picture appeared in the *Gazette* the next day. I wasn't asked because at that point I didn't have my costume back on yet.

After that was done, Lynda and I decided to get our picture taken with some of the guests. There were a lot of people waiting for David and Jeremy's autograph so we ended up only getting a picture taken with Caroline and Maria. For some reason I was nervous getting my picture taken with them—I look like a dork in my photo. Lynda's photo with them came out nice.

I walked past Jeremy in my Boba Fett outfit and he gave me this mean look, pointed to me and said,

"You...I'm going to kill you!" I pointed and waved my finger back at him. I know he was only joking around with me because afterwards he gave me a smile and also, he did the same thing with me when I met him in Toronto. Probably then, when he saw my costume, he remembered meeting me in Toronto in '97.

I tried to have my costume on when Jeremy was to do his speech but I felt like a walking sauna so I had to take it off.

I went to take my seat for Jeremy's speech and a few minutes before 5:00 pm, Matt came on stage and told the audience we were in for a treat. Most had no idea what they had in store for us, but I knew. Jeremy was probably going to pick ten people from the audience to come up on stage for a mock audition for the part of Boba Fett. The chosen audience members would have to put on the Fett helmet, walk around, and say one of his lines from the movie.

Sure enough when Jeremy was introduced, he had in his hand the helmet. At this point I wished I had on my Fett costume. Oh well, I would have been more than a little uncomfortable and hot sitting in my seat for an hour.

Jeremy then told the audience what he was going to do and asked for volunteers. I put my hand up right away. He picked a kid from the audience, a couple of guys, and then

Theresa points an imaginary bounty hunter gun at Jeremy Bullock on stage during a mock audition for the part of Boba Fett. Photo by Lynda Pelley.



since it was mainly guys who had their hands up, he asked for some women. I started waiving my hand back and forth frantically because I *really* wanted to go up. He searched the audience again for some woman and then he spotted me. He called out "OK, you with half the Boba Fett costume on." I was quite surprised he saw the bottom half of my costume from the stage. I was seated in the 2nd row a little to his right but he probably recognized my face and wanted me up there. Either way I was willing and glad to go.

As I passed Lynda and Dom, I told them to take pictures of me on stage doing the routine. I had to get proof of this since probably no one would believe it, considering I am terrified to get up on stage in front of people.

I was about the fourth or fifth person in line and was only one of two girls up there. I was quite nervous. I kept practicing what line I was going to say in my head and I tried not to look at the audience, but it was hard. There were a lot of people out there! Oh boy. I hoped I wouldn't look or sound like a complete idiot up there.

The first couple of people did a good job. The audience cheered and clapped, and at times laughed. Then it was my turn. I got up on stage and Jeremy said "hi" and asked me my name. I had to speak into a microphone. I said my name and then Jeremy said, "I've met you before, haven't I?" I replied yes and then he said, "And you have a Boba Fett costume of your own, don't you?" I said, "Yes, I do" and then he asked, "Would you like to use your helmet or do you want to try this one?" I replied, "I'll use this one." I figured it looked big enough to wear with my glasses and sure enough I was able to. He handed it to me and I put it on. Wow, was it ever big. My head was swimming in it.

I then proceeded to walk around the stage pretending to hold a gun. I looked around, walked back and forth in front of the stage, then stopped and pointed the gun at Jeremy! (Everyone else pointed their gun off to the side or to the audience.) He jumped, looked in back of him and then brought the microphone over to me to put underneath the helmet. I then said

the line "As...You...Wish..." and the audience laughed. I cracked up too under the helmet because I knew I sounded so stupid. I also realized that I didn't do the voice deep enough and I spaced out the words too much. He told the audience that it's a little harder for women to do the voice and told me to try it again. I tried it again, this time deeper but I still had a bit of a pause between each word. I knew I still didn't do it quite right. The audience cracked up again and Jeremy even said that I sounded like I was out on a tree branch (or something to that effect). "Try to say the line a little bit slower." I laughed and then tried for the third time and managed to do a good job. I got a round of applause and Jeremy even remarked "There, that was better." He smiled, thanked me, and shook my hand.

I got off the stage and went back to my seat. Lynda, who was sitting in the row ahead of me turned around, and I told her I sounded so stupid on stage. She said I sounded fine.

After the ten people tried their hand at being Boba Fett, it was Jeremy's turn to put on the helmet and act out his scenes from the movie. I took about five pictures of him doing the various movements. So did a lot of people. He then did one of the lines which got cheers and a round of applause. Finally, he took off the helmet and took questions from the audience.

During his speech he talked a bit about the other films he did besides SW. We found out that he had a small part in three of the James Bond films (Q's assistant). I don't recall what the titles are off hand.

He also mentioned that besides playing Boba Fett in *Empire*, he appeared in a scene without a helmet as the Imperial officer taking Princess Leia away to the shuttle.

At one point he mentioned that when he was young he wanted to become a football (soccer to us) player but decided on becoming an actor instead. He said he still likes watching games. When I heard that, I sat up fast and smiled (I am a *huge* soccer fan). Dom who was sitting in the row in front of me turned around and looked at me. He knew I'd be excited.

Jeremy also told us a little bit

about the costume. He said that it was pretty heavy to wear. The jet pack and armor weighed about 30 pounds and he had to be careful how he stood. If he leaned too far back, he would lose his balance and fall backwards. He also mentioned it was hard to see at times especially in the carbon freezing chamber with all that steam. In the scene when Fett walks behind Vader going down the stairs, Jeremy said his helmet got fogged up from the steam and at one point he stepped on Vader's cape and almost made David fall!

He also mentioned that like David, his voice was not used in the movie, either. Because of all the noise on the set and wearing a helmet which muffles an actor's voice, the microphone was not able to pick up what Jeremy said, so he told us that when he had flubbed one of his lines, no one heard the mistake. The flubbed line was "Put Captain cargo in the Solo hold."

Jeremy also told us of how now, with the sudden surge of interest in SW, he is able to meet some of the other actors in the films that he never got to work with. Like for example, Caroline Blakiston. He said that they sat together on the plane from England and it was fun to be able to do conventions together like this. He also made a joke saying that when they travel together, he passes her off as his mother! (She is only a little older than him.) When he told the audience this we all laughed, and he said that probably Caroline had heard and that he was going to get it later. This turned out to be true.

Saturday Night VIP Dinner and Costume Contest

The dinner was the highlight of the convention for me. Not only was I going to have my costume judged by the guest stars themselves, but I and 159 other people were to have dinner with the stars.

Originally there were supposed to be only 100 VIP tickets available but Ace was bombarded with requests for more tickets and in the end added another 60 places.

There were 16 tables with 10 people at each. The room was set up like a wedding reception with the guests sitting at the head table facing the audience. There was room right

in front of the head table for the contestants of the costume contest to show off their work.

The dinner was to start at 7:00 pm but was running a bit late. At 7:20 pm we were able to go to our tables. The people who were participating in the contest were already in their costumes. Lynda and I convinced Ace to have the contest before we started to eat. This way I could enjoy my meal better without worrying about going up in front of so many people. Also, it would be easier to eat with the costume off instead of having to sit all through dinner in it and die of heat.

Lynda, Dom, Ernst, Michele, David James, and I all sat together at a table. We had three friends or acquaintances of Dom's sit at our table to fill it up and Ace's girlfriend also sat with us. We were really close to the head table and had a great view.

Once all the fans were seated, the guests and organizers were introduced. First up was Doug and Pam Murray, who put on the Men Behind The Masks tour. Then Phil Brown and his wife Ginny were introduced. They got a nice round of applause. Maria and Caroline were next, but the two biggest applauses and cheers were reserved for Jeremy and David. They were the fan favorites. Then Matt gave a special introduction for Ace and everybody cheered and applauded, and gave him a standing ovation. At one point it felt like I was at a rock concert with it being so loud, but Ace really deserved all that praise since he had done an excellent job in organizing the convention.

We then proceeded with the costume contest. People in costume were asked to step up to the front of the stage area. Six people from our table went up. Ernst, Michele, Dom, Lynda, and I were all in costume plus one of Dom's friends. Well, originally it was only five because Dom, who had only half of an X-wing fighter pilot outfit, originally wasn't going to go up since it wasn't finished, but Matt and Ace and a lot of others persuaded him. So in the end there were 10 of us up there. Besides the five from our table, there were two Darth Vaders, complete with flashing lights and everything, an Emperor's Royal Guard (from our

table), a Jedi knight, and a Dark Jedi.

We all stood in a group off to the side of the guests' table and were introduced one by one in front of the audience and judges. Dom had gone up in the beginning and so did the Emperor's Guard and the two Vaders. One of the Vaders got high marks (ranged from 1 to 10, with 10 the highest) but I was quite surprised that David himself only gave a 9. The reason was because David thought he was a little too short. This Vader was shorter than me!

Ernst was judged next and was given pretty high marks, even higher than the previous Vader. When Michele went up, she told the judges that she had made the entire costume herself from scratch. The judges and the audience were impressed. Lynda was next and then it was my turn.

I approached the judging area and waited to hear my score. I also had to do a complete turn around so the audience and judges were able to see my costume. Phil gave me a 9, Maria gave me a 10! and Caroline gave me an 8.5 (she gave everyone

The Emperor's Royal Guard. Photo by Dominique Durocher.



that mark, I guess she couldn't really pick a favorite). When it came to Jeremy's turn, I guess he really liked my costume because he gave me a 23! I don't know if that was counted as such or counted as a 10 instead. David gave me an 8 or 9, I wasn't sure because after Jeremy's mark, I was in shock. The audience gave me a nice round of applause.

We all had to wait on the opposite side of the room to find out who won. Ace had the honor of giving out the results. Second runner up was one of the Darth Vaders and first runner up was Ernst as the Imperial TIE fighter pilot. When Ace said who the first runner up was, for some reason I thought the first runner up was the winner. I personally thought that Ernst would win and was quite shocked when Ace announced me as the winner! It took a few seconds for it to register and then I screamed under my helmet. Thankfully, everybody was clapping so nobody heard me scream. I went to stand in front of the judges and the audience and bowed to all of them. Then Matt, the MC, came over with the microphone and asked me if I could take off my helmet. When I did, he had a look of shock on his face and went, "Hey, Boba Fett's a woman!" I knew he was only joking because he laughed afterwards. He then proceeded to ask me my name and how I made the costume. When I explained to the audience that I made the armor and jet pack out of duct tape, bubble wrap, cardboard, and paint, I looked towards the guests for their reaction. Jeremy seemed quite impressed and so did Maria. Then Matt asked me, "So...which helmet are you going to chose?" and then he looked at the audience with this look of "isn't it obvious?" on his face. I hesitated for a minute and said, "Um...I guess I'll take the Boba Fett helmet." What I really wanted to say was "Well, with all due respect to David Prowse, I will take the Fett helmet since I already have an original 1977 Darth Vader Don Post mask already signed." I then bowed to the audience and to the guests one more time and went back to my table to eat.

I was so excited during the meal that I wasn't able to eat much. I still couldn't believe that I had won the

costume contest. The meal consisted of a salad as the entrée, followed by a main course of roast beef with two potatoes, and carrots and beans. For desert, chocolate moose was served. At one point during the meal, I happened to look up at the guest table and saw Maria looking at me. She mouthed congratulations to me and I mouthed back thank you. I guess she was really impressed with my costume.

During the meal, Ace had a trivia game going on. Each table consisted of a team and each team had to have a name. Our table was called Emperor's Glove. Dave James picked our name. He thought of that name because just about everyone at our table wore gloves as a part of their costume.

Each team was given 10 points for answering correctly. If only one person knew the answer, the whole table was to put their hands up and the one who knew answered the question.

The first points were a give away. Ace said the table who could make the loudest noise was awarded the points. No sooner had he said

that, the entire room started making noise. People were banging on the table, screaming, and waving their arms. Some people even got up on the chairs and screamed. At one point it was so loud that Phil Brown had to turn down his hearing aid. Even Michele blocked her ears. We didn't win the points. Instead it went to a table full of guys.

Some of the other questions were quite hard. At one point, to make it more fun, Dave Prowse asked the audience a couple of really hard questions like who played the tail in Jabba the Hut? One in particular (which was a trick question) was "Darth Vader is Lord of the Sith. What is the 'Sith'?" Everybody racked their brains but couldn't come up with the answer, which was: if you rearrange the letters, you get 'shit'. So Vader was Lord of the Shit!

A couple of times, instead of a trivia question, we had to do impersonations. One in particular was of Mon Mothma and it was Caroline who was to be the judge of that. About five women tried, but in the end it was a toss up between

Hilary, who replaced Ace's girlfriend at our table, and someone else. They were both so good that Caroline herself couldn't decide which team should get the points. She had to put the cloth napkin over her face and make each of them say her line from the movie. I took a picture of Caroline with the napkin over her face. I just couldn't resist. In the end Hilary from our table won.

Sometime during the supper, Jeremy once again—like he did during his speech on stage earlier—joked about Caroline being his mother. She, in all good fun, got up from the table and stood behind him and whacked him a couple of times with her napkin. He put his hands up in defense but she still managed to hit him. Everybody cracked up. I tried to take a picture of this, but I was not fast enough.

After the trivia, the guests talked a little bit about themselves. They each said where they were born and where they are now living. I enjoyed the talk.

Afterward, the members of the audience were each to get a polaroid picture taken with the group of

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.



guests. Each table group went out into the hallway one by one. There was a couch set up, and both David and Phil were sitting on each end with room in the middle for each person from the dinner to sit down and get a picture taken. Caroline and Maria sat on either ends on the armrests of the couch with Jeremy leaning on the back of the couch.

I got dressed into my costume because I definitely wanted a picture with them with my winning costume on. The only thing I didn't have on was my helmet. I wanted people to be able to recognize me in the photo. I went to sit down and tried to figure out where to put my helmet. I was going to hold it in front of me but then Jeremy said, "Here, give it to me, I'll hold it." I said ok and got my picture taken.

What a sight to behold. Imagine having your picture taken with not one, or two, but *five Star Wars* stars at once! Where else would one get an opportunity like that. I was in seventh heaven. Once my picture was developed, I studied it carefully. I had the biggest smile on my face and so did Jeremy. He even got my Fett helmet in the photo, too.

That night after returning home, I had a lot of trouble falling asleep. I was too excited.

Sunday

Once again Lynda and I arrived at 9:00 am. I don't know how I was able to get there that early since the previous night I had only about two or three hours sleep.

We had to set the club table back up because on the Saturday night we had to move everything off to the side to let the hotel staff get the large, round tables for the dinner into the main room. Wayne and Keith were the representatives for the MonSFFA table this time.

About 9:30 am I went walking around the dealers tables to see what they had to offer. I bought a few original *Star Wars* action figures to add to my collection. I didn't have much money to spend and what little I did have, I saved for autographs.

At 10:00 am the people piled in again. This time they managed to get almost everyone in by 10:30 am. I don't think they had quite as many



people on Sunday as on Saturday.

Also at 10:30 am, the guests showed up to start the all day autograph session. I was pretty surprised to see that they didn't look all that tired. At least not nearly as tired as me.

Keith got the honour of doing an interview in French with a local TV station and since I had just put on my Stormtrooper costume, was asked to stand just behind Keith in the background while he did this interview.

I took it pretty easy after that. I just walked around a bit in my costume and got approached to do a TV interview in French with the TVA station. I was quite surprised that I was able to do it. Usually when I am very tired, I completely forget how to speak in French. I did manage to misunderstand one question though. The reporter asked me how much had I spent so far and I thought she

said how many people had shown up. She repeated it and then I understood it.

Around 11:30 am, and still in costume, I decided to pay another visit to the autograph line. I was standing a couple of people away from the beginning of the tables when all of a sudden, I felt these two hands pat me on the shoulders from behind. I kind of jumped and then turned around expecting to see one of my friends. Instead I had a nice surprise. It was Jeremy Bulloch! He had gone to the bathroom and was coming back to the table when he spotted me in line. He asked me how I had enjoyed the previous night, to which I replied that I had a blast and had so much fun that I couldn't sleep after that.

He noticed that I had on a different costume than yesterday. I told him that this was one of three *Star Wars* costumes that I have and

that I am currently working on a forth. I also told him that one of my friends made me the Stormtrooper outfit. He was quite impressed with it. I got some more autographs including a nice Boba Fett pencil tin brought over from England. I also got a picture taken with him in my trooper outfit. I thanked him and told him that I would see him later.

I then proceeded to meet Phil Brown and his wife. They were also surprised to see me in another costume and his wife was curious how I made it. I told her my friend made it and I explained how he did it. In the end, I was talking to her for almost five minutes.

I met Caroline and Maria again and they both asked me how I enjoyed the night before. They were quite surprised to see me wide awake and full of energy after having only about two hours of sleep. I told them that usually at cons, I get very little sleep and I mostly run on adrenaline. They also liked my costume.

For David Prowse, I had brought my Darth Vader action figure carrying case for him to sign. I found him to be not very talkative. He was probably tired from the night before—he kind of looked it. I did manage to get a picture in my trooper costume with him. I went behind the table, and bent down beside him. He then suggested, "Why don't you put your arm around me," which I did. I then thanked him and shook his hand.

At 12:00 noon Lynda and Dom were doing their Smithsonian slide show once again so I ran to see it this time. I had only missed the first 10 or 15 minutes of the beginning but saw all the rest. It was very fascinating and neat to see all of the costumes and props they used in the trilogy. Quite a crowd had shown up for it. I estimate at least 500 people.

At 2:00 pm, Maria was scheduled to go on stage. Five minutes before she went on, I saw her waiting and sitting on a little ledge behind our club table! I found out that that was the place where all of the guests were waiting just before going on stage. There is a door just off to the left of the ledge where the guests could enter. It was kind of like their own private entrance. (The audience entered and exited through

the bigger doors.) I then thought to myself that this was the perfect place to have our club table. I was so glad we were able to have that location.

I only caught the first five minutes of Maria on stage. I had to run downstairs in the lobby to go to the bank machine. It was at this point when I ran into two guys who had come up from somewhere in New York. They wanted to take a picture with me in my costume.

How they managed to hear about Empirecon was on Friday one of them happened to be surfing the net and came across the convention's web site. They decided on Saturday night after work (around midnight) to drive eight hours to come up and catch the second day! I thought it was something to drive all that way just to see Jeremy and David. (Although I probably would have done the same thing.)

Meanwhile, Maria, on stage alone, was running out of things to say. So Phil Brown, who was next on the schedule, started earlier.

I ran (well, walked as fast as I could in my costume) to stand off to the side of the stage. I was not able to sit down in my costume.

Considering Phil is 82 years old, he still has a great memory and he was able to do a great talk. He told us about how he got into show business and warned us to never get

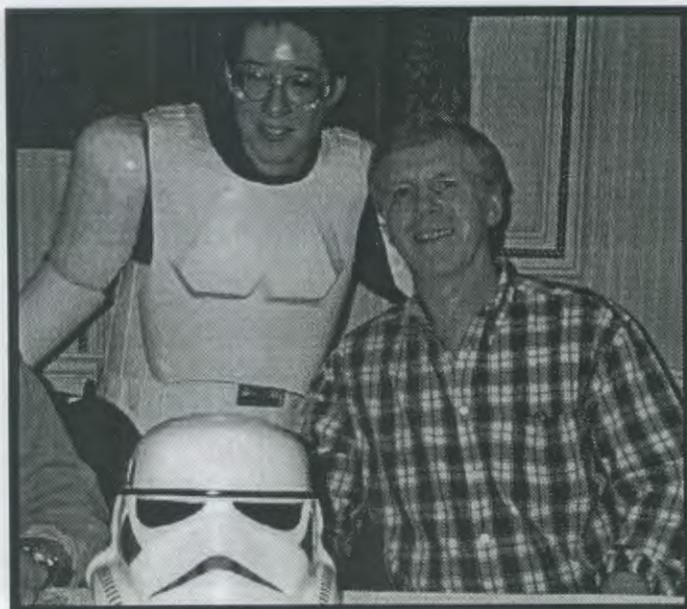


Phil Brown—he sure looks a lot like Alec Guinness, even more so now than when he was in Star Wars. Photo by Lynda Pelley.

into it. It is not as nice a business as everyone imagines it is. He also talked about how he got the role of Uncle Owen. George Lucas wanted to cast an actor who looked like Alec Guinness to play Kenobi's younger brother and Phil got the part. It's uncanny that as Phil got older, how much Alec and Phil look alike. It's almost like they are really brothers. Even now, Phil looks like Alec did in *Star Wars*.

Lynda Pelley and Dominique Durocher giving their slide show, The Magic of The Myth: Star Wars at the Smithsonian. Photo by Theresa Penalba.





Sunday: Theresa showing her stormtrooper costume to Jeremy Bulloch (left) and David Prowse (right). Photos by Lynda Pelley.

Since I wasn't able to sit down, I went back to the club table to take off my costume. I then found out that Jeremy was going to join Phil on stage so I kept it on. Jeremy and Ace had walked past the table on the way to the bathroom. I went over to Ace who stood in front of the men's bathroom door while Jeremy was inside. I asked Ace if I could escort Jeremy to the stage. He said it's all up to Jeremy so when he came out of the bathroom, I asked him and he said it would be his pleasure.

We had to wait behind the club table for about five minutes before Jeremy went on stage. It was then that I was able to talk to him for a bit. I asked him whether he found sci-fi fans really weird, especially when we all dress up in costume. He replied that no, he didn't think there was anything wrong with people dressing up and having fun. I agreed, and told him that I love to make costumes and that I was working on making a Biker Scout and a Darth Maul costume.

I went to put on my helmet since it was almost time for him to go on stage. I can hardly see or breathe in that thing and mentioned this to Jeremy. He decided to have a little fun with me and proceeded to pretend to throw a few punches at my face. Then someone from the club table said, "Hey, I thought you guys were supposed to be on the same side." I just laughed and Jeremy started to punch at me

further. I even got in on it and pretended to get into a fist fight with him. He then put his face right up in front of my helmet. Then he withdrew and then came forward once again. I think he wanted to know if I could see him. Either that or he was trying to see into the eye pieces which are dark like sunglass lenses. I had fun clowning around like that with him.

Finally it was time for me to escort him on stage. He was introduced and started walking real fast to the stage. I tried to keep up with him but couldn't walk that fast in my costume so I ended up only half escorting him to the stage. Oh, well, it was a thrill to be able to do just that.

It was nice to see both Jeremy and Phil up on stage together since they never worked in a scene on screen together. At one point during the speeches, Jeremy decided to have a little trivia contest of his own. He mentioned to the rest of the audience how the night before the VIP ticket holders had a great time with the trivia contest. He said, "The first person who can tell me what city I was born in will win an autographed Boba Fett pencil tin. These tins came all the way over from England and are pretty hard to find, so can anybody tell me the city?" There were a couple of guesses and eventually someone guessed it. I had already bought a pencil tin when I met him earlier.

The last question that was for Jeremy was asked by Matt, the MC. He said, "If Boba Fett and Darth Vader were to have an arm wrestling contest, who would win?" Jeremy thought about it for a minute and then went to the audience "I think Boba Fett would, don't you agree?" Most people in the audience agreed and Matt replied, "You really think Boba Fett would win?" and Jeremy replied "Oh yeah, for sure!" Then Matt said, "Ok, so when Darth Vader comes up on stage later, you wouldn't mind arm wrestling him?" He replied, "No problem." I couldn't wait to see this!

At 3:00 pm they ran the *Star Wars Holiday Special* like the previous day so I decided to walk around the dealers room once more and then take a much needed rest. I was getting a little tired due to the lack of sleep.

At 4:50 pm, I ran to get my seat—I wanted to get a good view of the arm wrestling match.

At 5:00 pm, when Dave Prowse walked to the stage, they played the Imperial March and everyone clapped and cheered. For the first half hour of his speech, he talked mainly about his career prior to *Star Wars*. When he finally did talk about SW, he mentioned how the press had gotten him into trouble with George Lucas. He got blamed for leaking the big secret that Vader is really Luke's father. As a result of the falling out between George Lucas

and himself, *Return of the Jedi* was a less-than-pleasant experience. Looking back on it now, Dave told us that filming that movie had bittersweet memories for him.

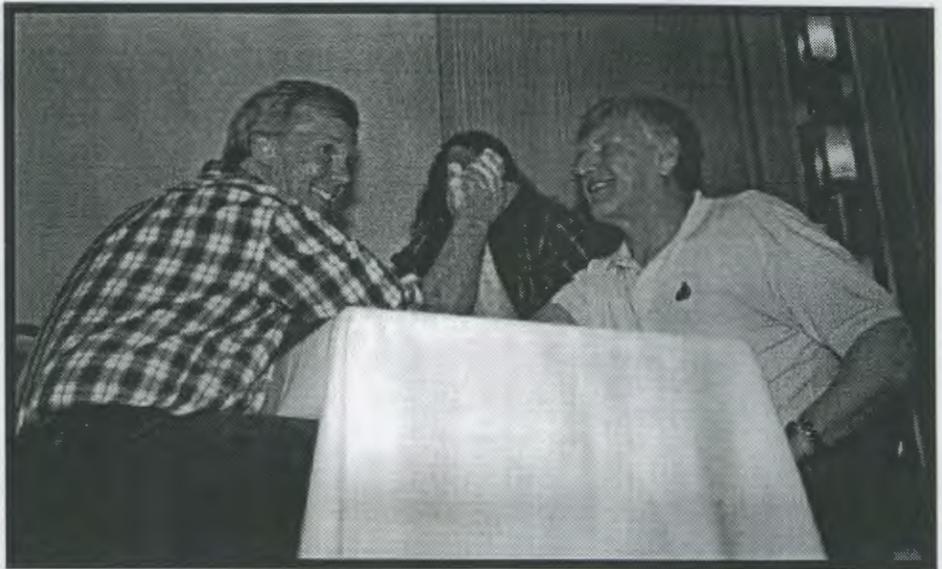
Finally, at 5:55 pm, Matt asked Dave the same question that he had asked Jeremy. Of course, Dave said Darth Vader would win, so Jeremy, who was standing behind the audience at the back of the room, came toward the stage and Matt told the audience, "Ok, now we're going to finally find out which one is right."

A table was brought out on stage along with two chairs. At this point, most of the VIP section got out of their seats and went and sat very close to the stage and some sat in the isle. Everybody had their cameras ready including me. I had just put in a fresh roll of film so I had 24 shots to capture this moment.

They sat face to face with Jeremy on my left and Dave on my right. Both got into position and off they went. For the first 15 seconds, there was no movement from either one of them, then Dave started bending Jeremy's arm back a little and I swear, a hundred flashes went off. Then a few seconds later, Jeremy managed to move Dave's arm back a little. And again a hundred flashes went off. This went on for a bit with flashes going off with every movement. Finally Dave slowly had Jeremy's arm nearly touching the table and just after delivering the final blow, I swear a *thousand* flashes went off. Vader had won! It felt almost like the Oscars with all the flashes going off. Nobody in the audience wanted to miss this moment, including me.

I had taken about 12 pictures of the contest. Looking at my pictures once they had been developed, you can see weird lighting and shadow effects. That is the result of a lot of flashes going off at the same time as mine. It looked kind of cool in a way.

Once the arm wrestling match was over, both Jeremy and Dave shook each other's hand and stood side by side with Dave's arm around Jeremy's shoulder. Both received a tremendous cheering and applause. Then they clapped and thanked the audience for having them there and said they would love to come back



It's Fett versus Vader as Jeremy Bullock challenges David Prowse to an arm wrestling match and loses! Photos by Lynda Pelley.



sometime. Then all of the VIP ticket holders came toward the stage to get handshakes and both Jeremy and Dave shook hands with most. I was nearer to Jeremy so I stuck out my hand. He shook it and said, "Hey, Theresa, hope to see you again sometime" or something like that. With all the noise going on I couldn't quite hear him. Then they both left the stage together.

I found out later that all of the guests had a great time in Montreal and would all like to come back, Especially Dave and Jeremy. They said that Montreal was the biggest and best reception they ever had.

This convention wouldn't have been great without the help of all of the volunteers, the MC, and Ace's staff. The biggest thanks goes to Ace Lopes of Empire Comics. Ace, you did a fantastic job!

Expect Empirecon II in November!

Note: Empirecon II is scheduled for November 27-28, 1999 with the guest list including, so far, Anthony Daniels (C-3PO) and Kenney Baker (R2-D2)—Ed.

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Advance Purchase Adult Rate: \$20 Cdn (\$15 US), children 5 and under are free, children 6 to 13 years old are \$10.00 (\$7.50 US). These rates apply to memberships received by July 15, 1999. After July 15th memberships may be purchased at the door on the day of the event for \$25.00 Cdn. for adults, and children 6 to 13 years old are \$12.00. All children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Membership fees are non-refundable. For information regarding transfers of memberships please call the info # below. Make cheque or money order (do not send cash) payable to "Costume Conference North" and mail to : 300 Coxwell Ave, Box 3026, Toronto, Ont., Canada, M4L 2A0. If you have questions and/or require more information please contact us by phone: (416) 699-0479; FAX: (416) 699-5512, or e-mail: schofield.miller@sympatico.ca. Long distance phone calls will be returned collect.





It Came From The Sci-Fi Modeler's Desk

THE MODELS OF STAR WARS EPISODE I: THE PHANTOM MENACE

BY DOMINIQUE DUROCHER

With the release of the latest *Star Wars* movie, it was inevitable, and quite anticipated by SF modelers, that many models would also be made available. The results, so far, from model manufacturer Ertl, have been both good and also somewhat disappointing.

NABOO STARFIGHTER

This model of the starfighter used in the defense of the planet Naboo is, unfortunately, a "snapfast" kit, meaning it was meant for kids. It is moulded in yellow and chrome at a scale of 1:48, making the model about nine inches long. There are a few small decals included in the kit.

The ship itself has little surface detail, so the lack of it on the model is not a surprise, but what detail is there is actually not bad. The pilot figure, which is Anakin, is acceptable for the size, but the R2 unit could use more detail.

Parts fit is not great, as large gaps are left along most seams. This appears to be a byproduct of the kit's biggest problem—part of it is chrome plated. While this makes for a shiny finish and a model that does not require paint, which is good for kids, the chrome is scratched on all of the kits I've seen or heard of. Also, some of it will be unavoidably lost around the seams during the trimming and gap-filling stages performed by the more advanced modelers. The chrome, which may have been an after-thought by kit manufacturer Ertl, seems to make it difficult to fit the parts together—it's

thickness interferes with what might have been a very well-fitting model. I would recommend cutting all of the alignment pins off, removing the chrome with Easy Off oven cleaner or a similar product, and painting the parts with a metalizer paint instead.

It took me about 20 minutes to build it as a snap together kit—fixing it up will take somewhat longer. Overall, it is a good representation of the Naboo starfighter, as the shape and proportions look right, with only the chrome plating being a real problem.

A die-cast metal kit of this fighter is also available. It is the same scale, but basically an unassembled die cast toy. I have not bought it and as such cannot comment on it's quality.

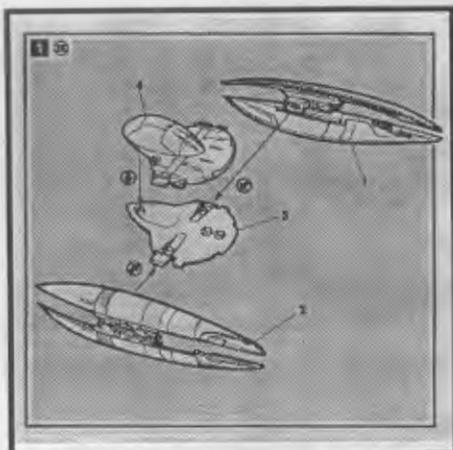
TRADE FEDERATION DROID FIGHTERS

This model could have been the best, but turned out rather disappointing.

First, it is also a "snapfast" kit, in the same scale as the Naboo starfighter. This means they can be posed together, unlike the original models which were all different scales. Unfortunately, it also means the droid fighters are a mere three inches in length, made up of four parts each. The box includes three fighters, but this still leaves the kit rather overpriced for what it contains.

The good news is that they are very good representations, with crisp moulding and nicely recessed panel lines. Very little clean up is needed and about five minutes are required





Yes, the above image is actually the assembly diagram for the extremely simple Droid Fighter model kit (right). Only four small pieces—what a rip off!

to assemble each fighter. Other than their small size, this may be the better of the new kits.

ANAKIN'S PODRACER

Strangely enough, the podracer was chosen as the subject for the true glue-together model kit in this series. At least, Ertl did a good job on this one.

The engines are moulded in quarters, which may complicate assembly, but this design improves detail greatly. They also have a multitude of small parts for actuators and piping. The forward flaps have actuators to mount them in either closed, partially open, or fully open positions, but I can't recall seeing them in any other position than closed during the movie. The intake and exhaust detail is also excellent, but one might want to work up something better than the



blanking plate inside the exhaust. As for the pod itself, it is nicely moulded and detailed, again with many small detailing parts. A figure of Anakin is included. It is somewhat bland but can be made to look decent.

The model fits together pretty well, but the ridges intended to align engine and pod sections need to be removed, as they unfortunately have the opposite effect. The poorest parts of this kit are the energy binder beam, reproduced with a clear pinkish twist of plastic that just looks too thick and fake; and the connector cables, which are moulded in two parts and may turn out to be a weak link.

The kit seems to fit well so far,

and with a little work and filling should turn out quite well. The windshield is a flat piece of acetate, hidden in the same small bag as the wire stand supports. It should get it's proper curve once installed. An extra piece of clear frosted plastic is included in the kit, but no one seems to know what this is for. Decals are included for the logos on the pod and flaps. This kit, while a subject I would have made as a "snapfast" rather than a full kit, is very nice and has the potential to be an excellent display piece.

Overall, the most disappointing thing about these new *Star Wars* models has been the choice and style of subjects. The podracer would appeal most to kids, and should have been the "snapfast" subject; while the others should have been full kits. In fact, in view of their small size, they should have been a larger scale as well. What has been truly lacking is the large ships, which are so much a part of *Star Wars*, of which there are no models. Some are scheduled for release later in the year, but only as mini-kits—snap together and pre-painted. The larger ships should have been large models, on a par with Ertl's *Star Trek* starship kits. At least there are the Estes flying rocket models, but those will be covered in a future issue.

MODEL COMPETITION/CONVENTION NOTES

IPMS Ottawa Capcon '99 :
September 18th, 1999.
St-Elias Centre, Ottawa
For more information check their website;
<http://www.igs.ipmsottawa/>

Salon Model•Expo '99 :
October 23, 1999.
Charlesbourg/Quebec City
For more information:
gremlin@sympatico.ca



3^{ème} Édition

Samedi le 23 octobre 1999

Cher(e)s Ami(e)s

Une fois de plus, il nous fait plaisir de vous inviter à participer à cet événement majeur dans le modélisme au Québec. Afin de vous y préparer dès maintenant, nous vous faisons parvenir la liste des catégories et des thèmes spéciaux pour cette édition.

5740, 3^e avenue ouest #10
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Catégories régulières pour les plaques or, argent et bronze

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| • Automobiles anciennes (avant 2 ^e guerre) | • Automobiles modernes (après 2 ^e guerre) | • Automobile de course |
| • Camionnettes | • Camions remorques | • Véhicules lourds |
| • Avions à Hélices | • Avions à réacteurs | • Hélicoptères |
| • Bateaux à voiles | • Bateaux à moteurs | • Sous-marins |
| • Figurines militaires et historiques | • Figurines fantastiques et science-fiction | • Vignettes |
| • Dioramas militaires | • Dioramas civils | • Véhicules militaires à roues |
| • Véhicules militaires à chenilles | • Véhicules de science-fiction | • Véhicules spatiaux réels |
| • Motocyclettes | • Trains | • Hors-catégories |

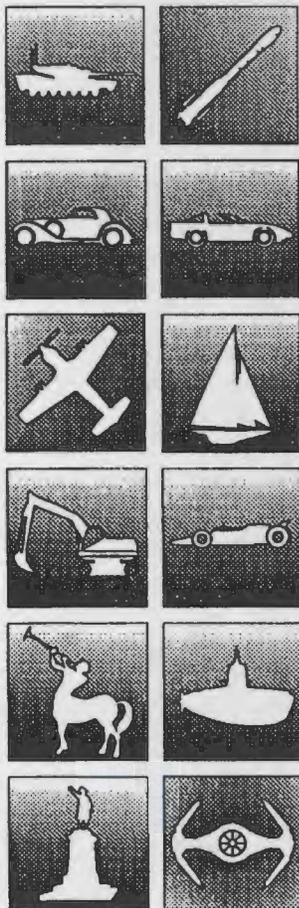
Thèmes spéciaux

- | | |
|--|---|
| • La Coccinelle: d'hier à aujourd'hui (Beetlemania) | • Camions à devant plat "Flat noses" |
| • Avions "gueules de requins" (Flying sharks) | • Dioramas de mécaniciens (réparation, entretien) |
| • Le Sherman et ses variations | • Figurines antiquité (Jusqu'à 500 Après Christ) |
| • Locomotives | • Le Titanic et ses sœurs (& Sister ships) |
| • Véhicules et figurines de la Série télé COSMOS 1999 (SPACE 1999) | |

Veuillez prendre note que cette année, nous ferons tirer comme Grand Prix un aérographe (airbrush Badger 150) et son compresseur parmi tous les participants qui auront inscrit un modèle en évaluation.

Nous vous ferons parvenir de plus amples informations au cours de l'été, mais si d'ici là, vous désirez en connaître plus sur l'exposition, ou si vous voulez vous joindre à notre équipe, contactez-nous à l'adresse, au téléphone ou au courriel inscrits sur cette page.

Au plaisir de vous revoir au Salon Model•Expo de la part de toute l'équipe.



IN GEORGE WE TRUST...

Comment by Keith Braithwaite

It's hard for SF fans today to be anything but cynical about the movies Hollywood churns out under the science fiction banner. Such recent dreck as *Lost in Space*, *Godzilla*, *Armageddon* and *Wing Commander* only reinforce the growing belief among our number that Hollywood doesn't know how to do sci-fi anymore, or doesn't care to. What we've been getting more often than not is the kind of vacuous rot that features little more than big stars and/or a lot of flashy special effects. The most important elements—story, characters—are fashioned cardboard-thin. Again and again we find ourselves disappointed by what is marketed as the best sci-fi movie of the year, or the decade, or a film sure to become a classic of the genre. We instinctively know better. And when the hype surrounding a movie is ratcheted up to *Godzilla* dimensions, we feel safe invoking the following rule: the level of a movie's hype is inversely proportional to that movie's quality. Consequently, when we hear news of an upcoming flick, we don't get excited, we wonder just how they're going to screw it up. It has sadly gotten to the point of our plainly not trusting Hollywood with our favourite genre. Worse, we suspect they're not even really trying.

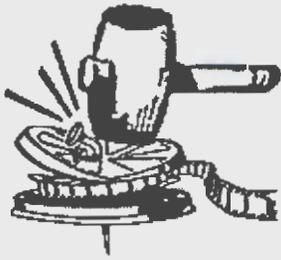
But we trust George.

I've noted with interest that, quite in opposition to what I've just outlined, fandom has enthusiastically embraced everything about the new *Star Wars* film (which opens around about the time you'll be reading this). What little negative buzz there has been about *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* has been quickly dismissed by fans certain that George Lucas can do no wrong. So why, with so much *Phantom Menace* hype out there leading up to the film's release, haven't we applied the "inversely proportional" rule? Well, much of that hype has come not from a studio promotional department, but from fans themselves. Essentially, though, we simply trust George to deliver the goods. He's done so before and he'll do so now. Blind faith? Actually, we've got good reason to trust him.

First of all, you can't argue with his track record. And the deservedly popular *Star Wars* universe is a creation that he has remained passionate about for all these years. Lucas is not out to make a fast buck with some lame retread of past glories. He is completing the saga that he envisioned 25 years ago. His dedication to his vision is steadfast and we know that he won't allow some studio suit to fiddle with that vision. They did that to him early in his career and he's resented it ever since. Today, he's in a position to call all the shots. He alone is footing the entire bill for *Phantom Menace*. That makes him the one and only boss, beholden to no one and able to put up on the screen exactly the film he wants, undiluted by the Hollywood system he has shunned. We know there was no committee of marketing mavens and bean counters overseeing *Phantom Menace*. It was all George. So we are confident of seeing on opening night a work of cinematic art from that rarity in Hollywood circles, a filmmaker of uncompromising artistic integrity.

And that's why we trust George.





MOVIE REVIEWS

THE MATRIX Reviewed by Keith Braithwaite

Upon hearing the tragic news out of Colorado last month, I flashed to a scene in this movie. Keanu Reeves' character, wearing a long, black trench coat, enters a building with an accomplice and they blast away at everything in sight with an endless arsenal of big, kick-ass guns. In this story, they are the good guys.

The excessive gunplay, along with much gravity-defying (literally) kung-fu action, pays homage to ultra-violent Hong Kong action films.

Okay.

Most of us can take that at face value. It's chilling to think that maybe those two deranged high school kids took it as a how-to demonstration. I don't know if they even saw the flick, mind you, and I don't believe that violent entertainment *makes* someone go out and blow away their home room (although it certainly strongly influences and often triggers those twisted few who are psychos just waiting to explode).

Thing is, *The Matrix* didn't need all the over-the-top violence to tell its story. But Hollywood knows this stuff sells, so I guess that's why they put it in. *The Matrix*, in fact—and much to my surprise and delight—has a pretty interesting science-fictional idea behind it that puts the film a cut above most of what passes for SF in theatres these days (I won't spoil things for you by divulging what that idea is).

I'm disillusioned by contemporary sci-fi cinema, most of which is long on style and short on substance, merely offering slick special effects and a hip soundtrack. Story? Lame, if you get one at all. Compelling characters? Nada.

So when that rare SF movie comes along that gives its audience

credit for some intelligence—a movie like *Contact*, or *The Matrix*—it's a treat and well worth the price of admission.

STAR WARS: THE PHANTOM MENACE Reviewed by JJ Sobey

Why is it that the *Star Wars* Universe is so full of places where you can "fall forever"?

I was too young to see *Star Wars* in 1977. In fact, I saw it for the first time in 1995—on the same night that I had already watched *Terminator 2*, *Aliens*, and *Jurassic Park*. Next to those modern spectacles, I'm afraid it didn't do much for me. Top it off with the fact that I'd already seen *Jedi*, and all the big secrets had already been revealed to me, and you might begin to see why I didn't understand what all the fuss was about.

Not having been a fan of the original trilogy, I'm not sure what, exactly, I expected to get out of *Episode 1*. But the rest of you were all so excited, it got a bit contagious. So I bought my tickets ahead of time, stood in line on opening night just to get a good seat, and in I went—hoping for some of Lucas' magic to dazzle me.

The special effects were exactly what we've come to expect from ILM—Cool. The CGI sets were beautiful. The soldier droids were really spiffy, and the CGI characters were more believable than I thought they would be. Speaking of which, Jar Jar Binks was on the screen for a mere 30 seconds before I decided I already hated the character. What worried me even more though, was that we will certainly see people trying to make a costume to look like him. *shudder* The upshot was that, by comparison, Yoda seemed much less annoying. (A green Miss Piggy, that

really didn't age well? Think about it).

The action scenes were plentiful, and the fight scenes looked much more authentic than in the original trilogy. I liked the fact that even though I knew certain sequences included CGI shots of the characters, I couldn't tell by looking at it. They appeared seamless to me.

The pod race had enough "wow-factor" to please any 12 year old boy—I can see how there will be video games from this. (The merchandise machine is out of control, and the tie-ins are outrageous, but I must admit they are creating some of the funniest commercials on TV lately.)

Costumes: drool, drool, drool...

The acting calibre certainly improved with this one. Natalie Portman could act circles around another unnamed actress portraying royalty. The kids in this movie (including young Anakin) were cute without being cutesy. Jake Lloyd's not a bad little actor. Samuel L. Jackson's considerable talent was wasted in this movie—not that he looked bad—just that he had so little to do, we couldn't see what he was capable of. But, there's always the possibility that we might see more of him in *Episode 2*.

The movie was well directed. George Lucas knew exactly what he wanted from the actors and knew just how to get it. Clichés aside, the climax was attention grabbing, and included some surprises.

So, after all was said and done, what did I think of it? Time went very quickly for those 2+ hours. The movie was well paced, and kept my attention. I forgot that I had to go to the bathroom. I thought it was worth the price of a Friday night ticket, and there aren't many movies that I would pay full price for these days. I liked it. Forget the hype and go see it. What do critics know, anyway?

SENSORS

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

Information for this column reaches from the inner mind to the outer limits.

DEFOREST KELLEY, 1920-1999

DeForest Kelley, best known as Dr. Leonard "Bones" McCoy on the original *Star Trek* series and for his oft-repeated line, "He's dead, Jim," died Friday afternoon, June 11, at the Motion Picture and Television Fund Hospital. He was 79.

He'd been confined to the hospital for the previous three months with a lingering illness (*We've heard it was either stomach or liver cancer—Ed*), and he had been looking forward to going to UCLA for some experimental treatment.

Although his role as the cranky Dr. McCoy secured him a place in the pop culture annals, Kelley started acting in 1947, starring in *Fear in the Night*. He also had supporting parts in *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* with Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas, and *Raintree County* with Elizabeth Taylor, as well as dozens of television roles.

He had been in a lot of things and Gene Roddenberry saw him and put him with Leonard Nimoy and William Shatner in *Star Trek*.

Nimoy, who played Mr. Spock on the 1966-69 science fiction series, recalled Kelley's kindness: "He represented humanity and it fitted him well," Nimoy said. "He was a decent, loving, caring partner and will be deeply missed."

After the series ended, Kelley's jobs were mostly limited to *Trek*-ian fare, including all six *Trek* movies and a guest appearance on an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (in which Leonard McCoy had finally been promoted to Admiral).

He also did voice work in the 1998 animated movie *The Brave Little Toaster Goes to Mars*.

Kelley is survived by his wife of nearly 55 years, Carolyn, who was

with him when he died. She had been in a room next door at the hospital for 15 months with a broken leg and other complications.

JANEWAY STICKING AROUND

Star Trek: Voyager fans need not worry about Captain Janeway exiting her ship before the series ends at least for a little while.

While talking to WOR-TV in New York (via the Mania website), actress Kate Mulgrew revealed that she had signed on board through the series seventh season. Perhaps she is feeling that those "rumored" shifts of writing personnel from *DS9* to the lost *Voyager* are a sign of good things to come. Supposedly Ron Moore has signed on with the writing staff now that *DS9* is over. (So now it's only Jeri Ryan who hasn't yet signed for the 7th season.)

Kate Mulgrew married former Cleveland politician Tim Hagen at the end of April. Our best wishes for tons of happiness to the new couple!

MORE COMMERCIALS, LESS VOYAGER

Starting what is sure to become a bad new trend in television broadcasting, UPN is cutting *Voyager* to 41 minutes starting now. This applies to:

- 1) new episodes that have been filmed but not yet broadcast
- 2) all future episodes
- 3) all current year re-runs
- 4) all past year re-runs which will be syndicated this fall

So this means that all the episodes we've already seen will have scenes cut from them, some shows that have already been filmed but not aired will have scenes cut before we ever get to see them, and all future episodes will be only 41 minutes long.

To protest, write:

Mr. Dean Valentine
UPN President
11800 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90025

SORBO LEAVES HERCULES FOR RODDENBERRY

Kevin Sorbo is quitting his role as the star of the syndicated series *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* to headline one of two TV projects based on ideas by *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry. Variety reported that Sorbo will have his pick between the two shows—Gene Roddenberry's *Starship* and Gene Roddenberry's *Andromeda*—which are both under development at Tribune Entertainment.

Starship is said to be a *Star Trek*-like series that focuses on the adventures of the crew of an exploratory space vessel, which is helmed by a dynamic captain.

Andromeda tells the story of a scientist on the planet Korkyra who has to find his way back in time after accidentally being sent 500 years into the future.

Both series are being developed under the guidance of Roddenberry's widow, Majel Barrett Roddenberry, who helped Tribune launch the successful syndicated show Gene Roddenberry's *Earth: Final Conflict* in 1997.

FREE ENTERPRISE

Entertainment Tonight recently announced that *Star Trek* actor William Shatner has signed on to star in a low-budget independent film titled *Free Enterprise*. Apparently one of the main characters in the film is a *Star Trek* fan and Shatner will play himself or, more likely, a parody of himself. In an *ET* interview, the actor said that he originally turned down the film project, but reconsidered

after having so much fun with his over-the-top performance as The Big Giant Head on *Third Rock From The Sun*. Shatner's role in *Free Enterprise* includes singing and reading Shakespeare. Expect plenty of ham.

GALACTICA NEWS FOLLOW-UP

We previously reported that actor Richard Hatch had directed a trailer to pitch a *Battlestar Galactica* revival to Universal. Subsequently, we gave some details of a possible *Battlestar Galactica* independent film in the works by Glen Larson, Todd Moyer, and the *Wing Commander* crew. If this seemed like conflicting information, it was! These are two separate projects. The Larson/Moyer team wants to do a feature film. Richard Hatch wants to do his version of the *Galactica* follow-up as a syndicated TV series. Things could get interesting...

FOX SNARES THE PHANTOM MENACE

Thanks to the Fox Network, you might be able to see *Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace* on television uncut and commercial free as soon as November 2000. The Los Angeles Times reported that Fox nabbed the TV rights to the film for an undisclosed sum and is planning a special free TV presentation of the blockbuster movie.

FIRST FRONTIER

A new British SF TV series called *First Frontier* is supposedly in the works. If everything went according to the proposed schedule, the 90 or 120 minute pilot began shooting this spring, with a late 1999 air date planned.

This new series stars Claudia Christian (Ivanova, *Babylon 5*) and Jeremy Bulloch (Boba Fett, *Star Wars*).

Details about this new show are scarce at this time and we are unsure what the plans are for distribution in North America, if any.

BABYLON 5 FANS REJOICE

We learned recently that Kitt Peak Observatory in Tucson, Arizona, has just formally named an

asteroid discovered by them in 1992 "8379 Straczynski" in recognition of B5. (This is the formal designation, as per the Astronomical Union.) Suffice to say, that's a tremendous honour!

BABYLON 5 ON DVD

Mike Finnegan, Warner Home Video VP of Editorial and Programming Services, announced that there are plans to release *Babylon 5* on DVD this fall. Whether it will be in widescreen format is still undecided.

CRUSADE NEWS

The B5 spin-off series *Crusade* is close to, but not quite, cancelled yet. Creator J. Michael Straczynski still bears some hope that *Crusade* might change networks, but if Sci-Fi does finance a second season, they have to decide by the 15th of July, and have production begin again before the cast's option expires. By that time the first four or five episodes will have aired on TNT. It has been suggested that TNT might not provide a good advertising campaign for a show they will not be keeping. This could cause *Crusade* to have poor ratings and affect Sci-Fi's decision.

JMS was so disgusted with the treatment he received from TNT that he wanted to use the pseudonym "Eiben Scrood" for his "Created By" screen credit on the *Crusade* episodes.

TIME TUNNEL MOVIE

Time Tunnel: The Movie may be in the works. George Clooney is listed as producer of this film and it is scheduled for 2000.

ANOTHER ID4 LOOKS LIKELY

Twentieth Century Fox and filmmakers Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin are in talks to produce a sequel to the 1996 box-office hit *Independence Day*, according to Variety's Michael Flemming. Flemming reports that Emmerich and Devlin have hit upon an idea for a second film that will likely reunite *ID4* stars Will Smith and Jeff Goldblum. More importantly, Fox, Emmerich and Devlin may have found a way to put aside the bad

blood that arose when the two filmmakers left Fox and signed a long-term deal with Sony Pictures.

Independence Day, the third highest-grossing film of all time, took in a whopping \$814 million at the box office.

HARSH REALMS CAST SET

The casting for the pilot episode of *X-Files* creator Chris Carter's new SF series *Harsh Realms* has been finalized, according to Variety. Scott Bairstow of *Party of Five* will play the lead role, a soldier named Hobbes who is sent into a computer program used by the military to simulate wars. D.B. Sweeney has been cast as Mike, another soldier who was sent into the same program five years earlier and who now lives in a virtual reality underground. Terry O'Quinn will play the man both Mike and Hobbes are supposed to kill, the supposedly evil leader who created a utopian society inside the simulation. Rounding out the cast are Samantha Mathis, Max Martini, Rachel Hayward and Sarah Jane Redmond.

Fox has ordered 13 episodes of the series—which is based on the comic book of the same name—for a fall premiere.

STARGATE SG-1 NEWS

In *Stargate SG-1*'s third season Teal'c will no longer be bald but have hair, in an attempt to fit in more here on Earth.

There might be an *SG-1* movie coming up in the future. Jonathan Glassner, one of the *Stargate SG-1* producers had this to say: "Our ultimate goal is to do six (or more) years on television first, and then segue into an *SG-1* movie franchise. But it's way too early for us to start planning the film."

GREAT NEWS FOR XENA FANS

Coming soon to a video store near you...It turns out that Lucy Lawless, a cult favourite for her *Xena: Warrior Princess* persona, had an earlier career in which she starred in a couple of X-rated movies, of the type featuring no males. The two titles, *Peach* and *A Bitter Song*, will both be distributed across the U.S. We don't know what the availability will be like in Canada yet.

MonSFFA Membership Benefits

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:

Membership Card

Your MonSFFA membership card identifies you as a MonSFFA member, allows you free admittance to the club's monthly events and entitles you to certain discounts at SF/F-oriented retailers participating in MonSFFA's discount program!

Monthly Events

Attend MonSFFA's regularly scheduled events, held about every month (except during the summer), and meet other SF/F fans! Share interests, exchange ideas, view current and classic SF/F movies and TV shows, enjoy guest speakers and special presentations, participate in workshops and discussion panels, get involved in various club projects, and more!

Discount Program

As a member of MonSFFA, you are in a position to save on your SF/F purchases, and your membership pays for itself within the year! If you buy an average of only \$4.00 worth of SF/F books, comics, collectibles, gaming and hobby items, etc. per week, your yearly MonSFFA membership will pay for itself in discount savings within the year! Full details of the discount program are printed in each issue of MonSFFA's newsletter.

Newsletter

You will receive a one-year subscription (six issues) to MonSFFA's newsletter, Warp! Produced by our

members for our members, Warp keeps you up to date on club activities and brings you general news from around the greater SF/F community! Warp is also a forum for you, the members—we want your book and movie reviews, opinion columns, short fiction and humour, artwork, etc! And, as a MonSFFA member, you are entitled to place (non-commercial) ads in Warp at no charge—sell your old SF book collection, announce that you're looking for gaming partners, or whatever!

As a MonSFFA member, you'll enjoy these benefits and more!

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.

MonSFFA Discount Program

Listed on this and the next page are the SF/F-oriented retailers/dealers participating in the **MonSFFA Discount Program.** *We encourage members to frequent these establishments.* A valid MonSFFA membership card must be presented in order to take advantage of the discounts offered under this program. (Note: Certain exceptions with regard to the MonSFFA Discount Program may exist at some of these establishments. Conditions subject to change.)

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Place Alexis Nihon

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Montreal, Quebec

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If you would like to join, please fill in the membership application and mail it to **MonSFFA**, along with a cheque or money order made out to **MonSFFA** for the amount of \$20.00. Feel free to write us for more information.

Si vous voulez vous joindre au club, veuillez remplir le formulaire d'adhésion et nous le faire parvenir à l'adresse si-dessous avec un chèque ou un mandat-poste, payable à l'ordre de l'**AMonSFF**, au montant de 20,00\$. N'hésitez pas à nous écrire si vous avez besoin de plus amples renseignements.

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

AMonSFF
 C.P. 1186, Place du Parc
 Montréal (Québec)
 Canada, H2W 2P4

The Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA): Membership Application

Formulaire d'adhésion à l'Association Montréalaise de Science-Fiction et de Fantastique (AMonSFF) :

Name _____
 Birthdate (optional) _____
 Mailing address _____
 Apt. _____ City/Town _____
 Province/State _____ Postal Code _____
 Telephone (home) _____
 (work) _____

Nom _____
 Date de naissance (optionelle) _____
 Adresse _____
 App. _____ Ville _____
 Province/État _____ Code Postal _____
 Téléphone (rés.) _____
 (trav.) _____

Interests

- Science Fiction _____
- Fantasy _____
- Horror _____
- Movies/TV _____
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Intérêts personnels

- Science-Fiction _____
- Fantastique _____
- Horreur _____
- Films/TV _____
- Écriture _____
- Art _____
- Jeux de rôles _____

Others _____

Autres _____

We are sometimes approached by other organizations interested in soliciting our members. Please indicate whether or not you give your permission to pass on the information contained in this application to any such organizations.

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.

- You have my permission to pass on said information.
- Please do not pass on any of said information.

- Je vous autorise à transmettre ces renseignements.
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