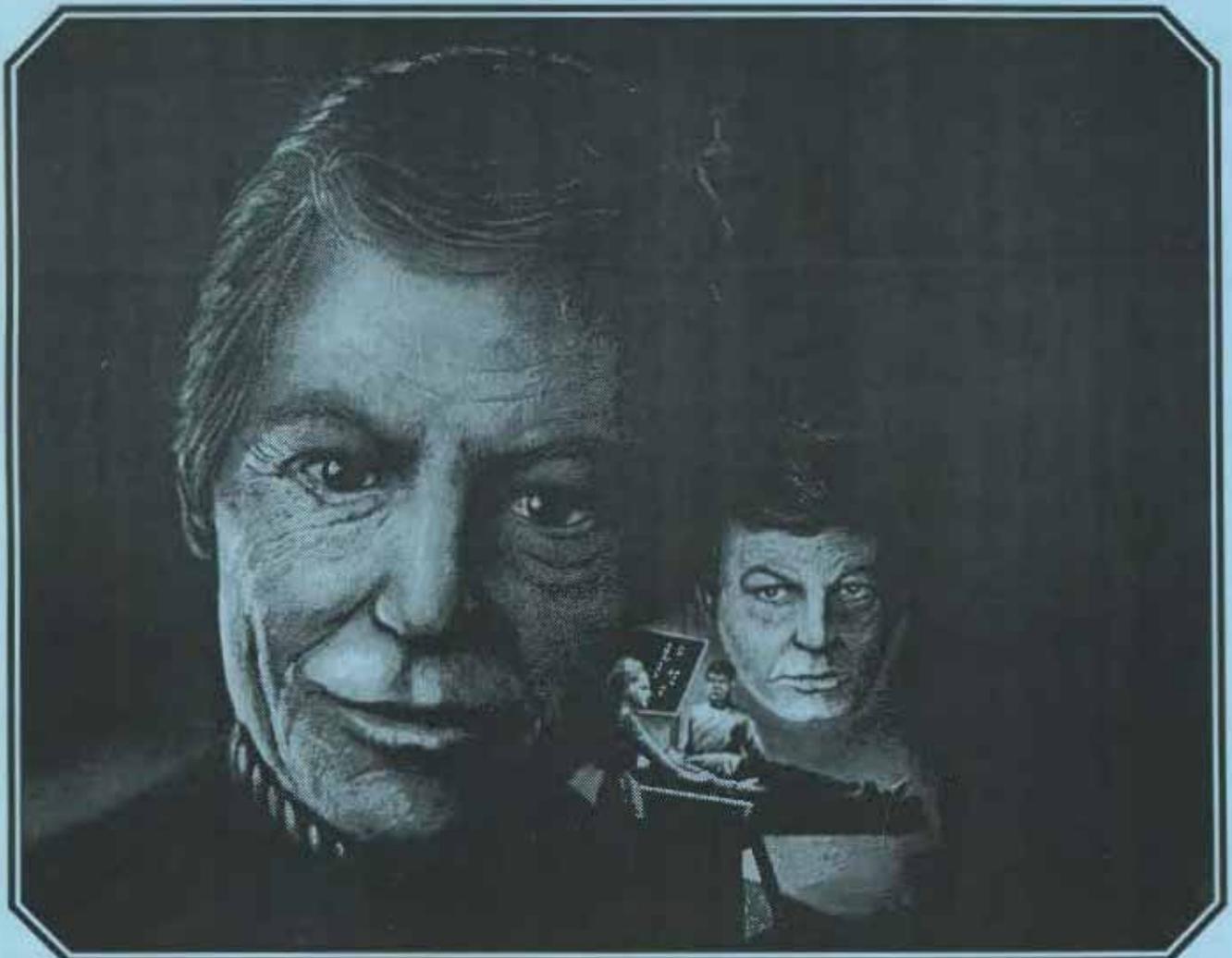


AUGUST 1999 (VOLUME 13, NUMBER 4)

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WARPF 48

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



Inside This Issue: Tribute to DeForest Kelley, The Digital (R)evolution, Book Reviews, Movie Reviews, Model Building, the latest SF News, and More...

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COVER UP:

DeForest Kelley as *Star Trek's* Dr. McCoy, rendered in chalk pastel and pencil by Keith Braithwaite in 1988. It was to have been a cover for *Final Frontier* magazine, but the publication went belly-up that same year before an interview with the actor and this accompanying portrait could see print. *Warp* has resurrected both the interview and portrait from the club's archives as tribute to the late DeForest Kelley, who passed away in June.

1999 MonSFFA EVENTS SCHEDULE

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

1999 EVENT PROGRAMMING*

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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MAY

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JUNE

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AUGUST

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SEPTEMBER

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OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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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—verbatim, 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 great thing about getting older is that you don't lose all the other ages you've been."—Madeline L'Engle

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MonSFFA's Web Site is at: <http://www.odyssee.net/~draken/monsffa/monsffa.html>

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR



Welcome back from the summer break, MonSFFen! I hope everyone had a good vacation. Over the summer there were lots of films to see, so this issue contains two extra pages of movie reviews. A lot of us went to Toronto Trek in July, and our usual in-depth coverage of the convention is currently in the works. There wouldn't have been room for it in this issue anyways, even if everything promised had materialized. (Some of us still don't have all of our photos developed...)

We'll soon be heading into fall, so for those who take their TV watching seriously, it may be time to make some decisions. If so, I suggest that you read through the Digital (R)evolution article. It contains some useful information that may help you. If you are thinking about buying a satellite dish or signing up for Look-TV, now (August) is the best time to do it. You'll want to have your new system operational in time for the season premieres of your favourite SF shows or in time to check out the new ones, but more importantly, the leaves are still on the trees. Satellite dishes and microwave receivers are line-of-sight devices. The best time to install them is when the path of visibility is at its worst; when the trees are in full bloom.

I was forced to make this decision in June, when my existing Videoway cable box broke down. After considering the installation fees and my need for future mobility, I opted for digital cable. Be warned: the demand for digital cable decoders may exceed the current inventory! Even though my area was already wired with the fiber-optic lines, I had to wait five weeks for a decoder! But it was worth the wait. I have a rather average 27-inch TV, but the difference in quality between analog and digital reception is definitely visible in the picture. And I get lots of good channels now, including Space: The Imagination Station.

Digital cable is reliable most of the time, but the decoders are very, *very* sensitive to heat and humidity. If the room gets too warm, the box will malfunction and produce a variety of digital artifacts, like really big, square, frozen pixels, on your screen. Yes, I tried watching TV in July! Overall, I'm happy with my digital cable. I wish the bill was a bit lower, but at least I get Space!

I have tried to keep *Warp* on a fairly regular schedule, publishing an issue about every second month and trying to time them to be deliverable for usually every second meeting. So far, I seem to be succeeding, but I don't get much sleep on the Saturday night before the meetings in question. The main reason is the lateness of the submissions. Several people routinely submit essential material only a day or two before the newsletter needs to be printed. You know who you are! Please, Please get your submissions in earlier.

The next issue, *Warp* #49, is planned for the October MonSFFA meeting. Please submit your material at the September meeting, or if sending it by e-mail, before the end of September. Thank you.

Lynda Pelley,
Editor



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OF HONOUR

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and lots more!

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

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

Dear Lynda and all MonSFFAnS:

Many thanks for issue 47 of *Warp*. Time to catch up on the mountain of unanswered fanzines on the table beside me, and this fine fanzine has finally risen to the top.

Keith's cover is spot on. As much as I enjoyed *The Phantom Menace*, the merchandising opportunities were just too obvious. We've seen the movie once, and hope to see it again before it leaves the theatre. (Has anyone gone to see it 17 times the way we did when the original came out in 1977? Didn't think so...) It's a little too long, and yet, a little too fast. Our two Jedis, Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan, were just too humourless...same as it ever was. It's fantastic eye candy, and a marvel to see how much detail was generated in all the CGI scenes. This is a great first episode of George Lucas' six-part edition of a Republic serial. I hope he will listen to the complaints about this movie, and apply them to *Episode II* and *III*.

We will be at SFX the end of August...the Worldcon bid has a table there, and we'll be there the entire weekend. At Toronto Trek, we spoke to the current Ad Astra 2000 committee...they are preparing a new website with their own domain name. Look for www.ad-astra.org soon.

Toronto Trek was a good time all around for many people. Even though Yvonne and I were at the bid

table there for most of the weekend, nearly the entire convention came past us, and we saw a lot of old friends. Even made a new one by the name of Antoinette Penney...not sure if we're related, but even if we're not, we've been calling each other Cuz ever since. That good feeling spread all through the convention, and especially into the dealers' room, where the dealers made some money this year. The convention committee tried their best to avoid the bad situation last year of dealers going without sales because of the actor guests selling their autographed glossies direct to the convention public. I gather attendance was around 2000 people.

Gonna wrap it up and fire this letter off into the ether of the Infobahn. Take care, and I'll see lots of you at SFX, I hope.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney
Etobicoke, Ontario

We at MonSFFA are glad that you think so highly of our newsletter. A lot of work and care goes into the production of Warp to maintain the quality level that our members have become accustomed to over the years.

I don't know of anyone having seen The Phantom Menace 17 or more times. Based on the people I've talked to, the average number of viewings seems to be about two or three. It's a very busy, flashy film—one almost needs to see it twice just to get a good look.

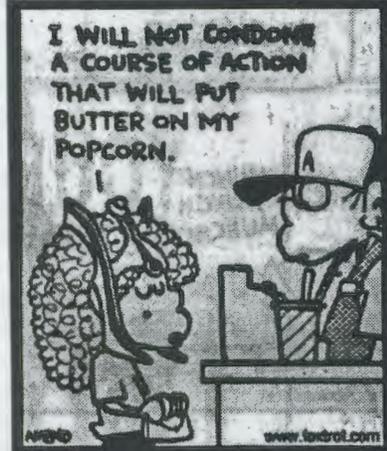
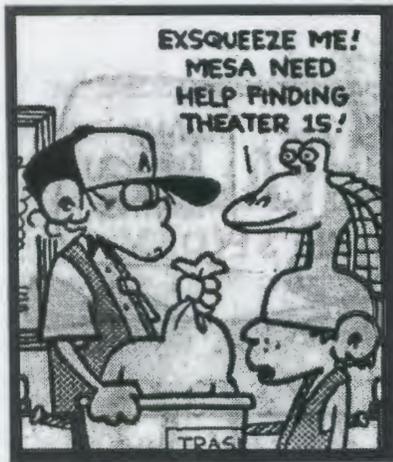
Having your Worldcon bid table in a high traffic area of Toronto Trek does encourage the many fans who know you to stop by and chat—I was one of them! And wearing those Hawaiian shirts makes you very visible...

Word of mouth here is that everyone who attended Toronto Trek had a good time. The group I travelled with certainly did—the details will be forthcoming in the next issue of Warp. Some of us don't have all of our photos developed yet!

The dealers at Toronto Trek made money!? Not from me, they didn't. I thought the selection of merchandise was rather poor. Of course with collectors there's no accounting for taste; to each their own, I guess.

Some of us will see you at SFX, maybe.—Ed





Dare we compare...
The Cartoon: Fox Trot by Bill Amend (left)



The Photography: MonSFFA members at the premiere of The Phantom Menace.
(Photos by Dominique Durocher)



MonSFFAandom

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

RECENT MonSFFA MEETINGS

May

With the Dimension SF sci-fi film festival set to open in two weeks, our own Berny Reischl, one of the festival's organizers, gave the 30-35 MonSFFen gathered for the club's May 15 meeting a quick overview of the films to be presented.

That done, we got on to the afternoon's principal topic, the "Golden Age of Science Fiction." Panelists Keith Braithwaite and Bryan Ekers engaged their audience in a discussion of the genre's film legacy, offering opinion on which movies qualify as Golden Age material. Generally, those films that made the cut were of good overall quality and were ground-breakers (or if not ground-breakers, then definitive renderings) in terms of science fictional concepts and/or special effects. But one person's Golden Age may not coincide with another's. The point was made that we tend to be quite fond of the films (or TV shows, or books) that introduce us to the genre and first make an impression. Perhaps our panel's title should have read the "Golden Ages of Science Fiction."

John Dupuis joined the panel in the second half of the meeting to focus on literary SF's Golden Age. He put forth that the very best SF writers in the history of the genre are those working today, and that the genre's Golden Age should be defined as the period during which the best stuff is being produced. We are living through that period right now, says John. But science fiction literature's Golden Age is generally accepted to be that late-1930s-mid-1940s period that saw *Astounding* editor John W. Campbell, Jr. working with many of the best writers of the day and developing a stable of newcomers, some of whom would go on to become giants of the genre

(Asimov and Heinlein, to name two of the biggest). The Golden Age has to do not necessarily with literary quality, but with the burgeoning and defining of the genre. Science fiction's flowering took place back then and that period rightfully owns the designation Golden Age. By discussion's end it was agreed that, to be fair, there is no single period alone that can be said to be science fiction's one and only Golden Age. The genre has, in fact, had several Golden Ages, if only because the different media in which SF is created—film, television, the written word, etc.—each boast their own.

Raffle prizes this meeting included a few tickets to the Dimension SF film festival, kindly donated by Berny Reischl, whom we thank. And, we were pleased to welcome a visitor to our meeting, one Gary Lee of montreal.com, who had come to gather information about the club for this online resource's Web site.

MonSFFA thanks the May meeting's program participants, and those members who saw to our raffle and snack table.

June

The June 27 meeting was devoted to *Star Wars*, beginning with a critique of *The Phantom Menace*. Seeking a cross-section of opinion, panel moderator Keith Braithwaite called upon Berny Reischl, Bryan Ekers, Sylvain St-Pierre, Lynda Pelley, Theresa Penalba, Cindy Hodge, Sébastien Mineau, and Stephen Toy to sit on the dais and offer their thoughts on George Lucas' return to that galaxy far, far away. A few gave glowing reviews, others said they were disappointed and that the film lacked a certain something, that special spark the original *Star Wars* had. The rest fell somewhere in between. A couple found the story too busy, while several were offended by what they saw as racial

slurs in the accented speech of some of the aliens, notably Jar Jar and the Trade Federation boys. Everyone loved the superbly choreographed lightsaber duels. Most would have liked to have seen a meatier role for the coolest looking villain in years, Darth Maul. Most were impressed with the design of the film and its special effects. Most thought the cast was quite good, with the possible exception of Jake "Anakin Skywalker" Lloyd. One reviewer didn't like the idea of midichlorians being the means by which one becomes strong with the Force (sounds like any scruffy-looking nerf herder could simply inject himself with a gallon of this stuff and suddenly be able to really kick ass). Everyone hated Jar Jar, prompting an audience member to leap to the goofy Gungan's defense. All are looking forward to *Episode II*. Also examined were the peripheral aspects of the movie—the pre-release hype, line-ups for premiere tickets, box office performance, the merchandise, etc.

The latter half of the afternoon tested the trivia skills of the crowd as Krikor Ajemian and Sébastien Mineau hosted a round of the *Star Wars* Trivial Pursuit game.

A copy of said game (value: about \$50) was very generously donated to the meeting's raffle by Kevin Holden and we thank him muchly. Also included in the raffle were several full-size Dimension SF posters, donated by Berny Reischl in the wake of the just-completed sci-fi film festival. Thank you, Berny. And we mustn't forget a nod to all of our panelists and our two gamemasters, as well as to those members who did raffle and snack-table duty.

July

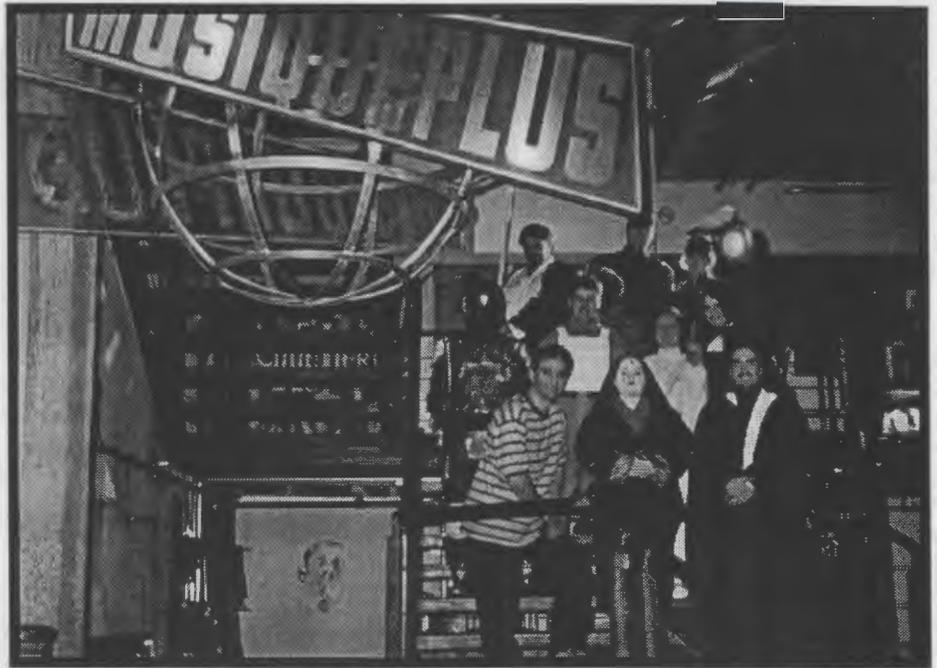
MonSFFA's custom is to take a mid-summer vacation break; there was no July meeting.

MonSFFA MEMBERS ON MUSIQUE PLUS

Local cable TV station Musique Plus contacted MonSFFA (via science fiction webzine *Astronef's* editor Stéphane Bossé) asking for help with one of their shows, *Monsieur Net*. A few days after the premiere of *The Phantom Menace*, *M. Net* was doing a special show featuring *Star Wars* computer games, web sites, and collectibles. They wanted a group of fans to show up in costume and mingle around the set as extras to provide "atmosphere". MonSFFA participants included Michele Berry (Imperial Officer), Dominique Durocher (Rebel Pilot), Marc Durocher (Jedi Knight), Sébastien Mineau (Jedi Knight), Lynda Pelley (Princess Leia), Theresa Penalba (Boba Fett), Ernst-Udo Peters (TIE Fighter Pilot), and Barbara Silverman (Jawa). Although in the background, the MonSFFA costumers received quite a bit of screen time and had their names in the end credits of the show, a perk not usually given to extras.

MonSFFA MEMBERS ENJOY NEW DIMENSION

Montreal's first science fiction film festival took place from June 4-20 at the venerable Cinéma Impérial. Dubbed Dimension SF, the festival screened classics of the genre, Hollywood blockbusters, obscure gems, lesser-known recent releases, old B-movies, and included the premiere showing of several episodes of the new made-in-Montreal TV series *The Secret Adventures of Jules Verne*. Numerous MonSFFA members could be seen in the audience at many of the 60-some screenings. A few of our group practically lived at the Impérial for the run of the festival! Club members Berny Reischl and Alain Essiembre were part of the team that put Dimension SF together and Berny reports that attendance was pretty good for a first-time event, likely good enough to see Dimension SF return next year. We look forward to it and congratulate the festival's organizers on providing an excellent showcase for sci-fi film.



"We're ready for our close-ups, Mr. Lucas..."

MonSFFA members pose for a photo opportunity, after filming the special Star Wars episode of Monsieur Net at Musique Plus. Photo provided by Theresa Penalba.

"MOXIE" SCREENED AT TORONTO CON

MonSFFA's *The FedEx Files: "Moxie"* was screened last month at Toronto Trek, Canada's largest annual fan-run media convention. "Moxie" stars André Poliquin and JJ Sobey, along with Stephane Marcotte, an extra and the production's lighting crew chief and gaffer, hosted the screening and afterwards took questions from a curious audience. JJ reports that the video-film was well received and tells of an enthusiastic American fan who bought a copy of both "Moxie" and its predecessor, *Plant 9 From Outer Space*, with the intention of introducing his friends back home to the wacky adventures of FedEx special agents Meddler and Scurry.

LATEST MonSFFA VIDEO PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION

Merlin 2000 (a working title), the club-sponsored video-film currently in production, is expected to complete shooting by the end of August or thereabouts. Equipment problems encountered early on have been overcome and a brief visit with the production company one

afternoon this summer allowed a peek at the work in progress. The crew have done an impressive job of creating sets, props and costumes, running some tricky lighting and, in one case, rigging pyrotechnic effects. Cast members, meanwhile, were having a lot of fun improvising bits as they worked through their scenes and have turned in some pretty good performances. Josée Bellemare and Marc Durocher head up the production, a comedy that sees legendary medieval wizard Merlin transported forward in time to a modern-day fantasy convention. Post-production/editing is to take place in the coming months and the video will be released under the MonSFFilms banner late this year or early next. This will be the third MonSFFA-produced video-film in as many years.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

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

Time and Chance...

Extracts from the Reading Diary of John Dupuis

REVELATIONS

by Douglas Winter

You-all may have noticed that I tend to read a lot of anthologies of short fiction. Well, that's true and there are two very good reasons for that. First of all, I commute a lot and I generally have a book going just for my travel time. I hate reading novels when I commute; it just takes me too long to read a novel at 20-30 pages a day. So, short fiction fits the bill. Second, for many years I tended to read hardly any short fiction at all, so I feel that I'm sort of catching up. The third of my two reasons is that, for some reason, I don't like reading the fiction magazines: maybe it's the format, the variability in quality; I don't know. It's just the way I am. So, short fiction anthologies play a large part in my life.

Which brings me to *Revelations*, a long book of long short fiction. The novella (stories between 17,500 and 40,000 words) is a venerable form in science fiction. Many, myself sometimes among them, consider the novella to be the ideal format for sf: long enough to develop both a convincing science fictional setting and a good story, but not so long to become boring or repetitive. Not too hot or too cold, but just right. Great taste and less filling. *Revelations* qualifies on all counts.

It is an excellent collection of ten dark fantasy stories revolving around a rather loose theme. The theme is that the century we are just finishing has been a long and bloody one, with many more dark and evil moments than moments of happiness and light. The stories make a very convincing argument: each one is set in a different decade of the century, starting with the 1900s and ending with the 1990s.

The lead-off story is one of the strongest: "The Big Blow" by one of my favourite writers of gonzo, over-the-top horror and mystery, Joe R. Lansdale. The setting is Texas, the event is a boxing match between a

decent black man trying to make a life for himself in the post-slavery south and a hired-gun killer meant to teach him a lesson. Then comes the storm of the century to mix it all up. This story is so wild and crazy it was almost a shame that it was the leadoff.

None of the other stories really live up to its promise. This is not to say that there are no other good stories in the collection. Canadian David Morrell gives us a great story set during the influenza outbreak just after WWI. F. Paul Wilson's tale of the rise of Nazism in 1920s Berlin is equally mesmerizing and frightening. Poppy Z. Brite and Christa Faust take us into the mysterious world of Chinese opera at the outbreak of World War II; this story's bizarre mixture of gay passion, transvestism, organized crime, and drug running is something to behold. Whitley Strieber's "The Open Doors" is about the long shadow of the Manhattan Project and how one particular scientist learns to live (and die) with himself. Elizabeth Massie's "Fixtures of Matchstick Men and Joo" and Richard Christian Matheson's "Whatever" (yes, he's the son of Richard Matheson of *Twilight Zone* and *The Omega Man* fame) take their inspiration from the hippie paranoia and rock & roll culture of the sixties and seventies. David J. Schow and Craig Spector's story, while ultimately disappointing, is a chilling look at the rebirth of the Nazi Movement in Germany. Finally, the 1990s story is of particular interest to us sf fans. Ramsey Campbell's "The Word" is a devastating look at fandom and how we are all a bunch of deluded losers who give up way too much of our lives to the worship of frivolous pastimes. He casts a rather critical look at a guy who writes a fantasy novel that really does change the world and the loser fanzine editor and book reviewer (cough, cough) who hates and haunts him. Bizarre but fun, in a masochistic sort of way.

What this collection really shows is how the Holocaust and Second

World War, with its fifty million dead, really define this century. The first half of the century fans the flames of the conflict, the second half is still living with its consequences: frequent and ever bloodier genocides, Bosnia/Kosovo, nuclear terror, neo-nazis taking over the Internet. The list goes on. Read it and weep.

BLUE LIMBO

by Terence M. Green

Just imagine if murder victims could be revived long enough to tell who killed them. Just imagine if a rogue cop went crazy enough to try and clean up the dirty streets of a dystopian future Toronto all by himself. Just imagine a combination of hard-boiled detective violence a la Dirty Harry with high-tech noir wizardry a la *Bladerunner*. Mix it all up with a healthy dose of the sentimentality and heart we've come to expect from Green after *Shadow of Ashland* and you get some idea of what *Blue Limbo* is all about. This short but powerful novel is a keeper from one of Canada's best.

BEGGAR'S RIDE

by Nancy Kress

Nancy Kress is one of the best sf writers going these days and she proves it with the finale to her *Sleepless* trilogy. In a world where people are divided into various camps, ranging from the Donkeys (the powerless, nomadic common people) all the way up to the genetically altered Supersleepless (who have many times the intelligence of regular humans and need no sleep), a huge confrontation is shaping up for control of the genetic destiny of the human race. Who will win this Darwinian struggle for survival of the most genetically fit? Tune in to the trilogy and find out. This is definitely a case where you have to read the earlier volumes for any of this to make sense; they are *Beggars in Spain* and *Beggars and Choosers*.

The *Nebula Awards* series is another one whose volumes I check out every year. Unlike most fiction collections, say Hartwell's *Year's Best*, one of the main attractions here is the non-fiction: recently the *Nebula* series has kicked off each volume with a bunch of essays summing up the particular year in sf as well as a sort of State of the Union view of the genre.

This volume has great, if occasionally depressing, essays by Elizabeth Hand, Lucius Shepard, Keith Ferrell, Ian Watson, Terry Dowling, Sean McMullen, Norman Spinrad and Robert Frazier. It's particularly interesting to compare Hand's essay on how SF and the mainstream are merging with Shepard's and Spinrad's essays on how the corporate bottom line is ruining that same SF. Their gestalt seems to suggest that literate SF is in pretty good shape, but you just have to know how to separate the needle from the chaff, not to mention locating the wheat in the haystack.

But of course, I didn't buy the book for the essays, I bought it for the stories. And fine stories they are. As with many books of this type, there were a couple of stories in particular that I wanted to read: the novellas "Da Vinci Rising" by Jack Dann (the Nebula winner) and "Yaguara" by Nicola Griffith (standing in for Griffith's award-winning novel *Slow River*, one of the best novels of the 1990s and perhaps the best sf novel ever written about sewage). Dann's is an alternate history about Leonardo Da Vinci actually building the flying machines he so meticulously designed. Griffith's is sort of like Pat Murphy's *Nadya* from last time, a tortured story of lesbian love and transformation in an extreme wilderness: this time it's big cats in the jungle instead of werewolves in the desert. If this sounds like I'm blowing it off as dull or derivative, that's not the case at all. Like all of Griffith's work, it's well done and interesting; she treats the sexuality of her characters like it should be treated: casually and part of the background as opposed to being what the story is about.

There is one other story that I

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and Canadian Fandom**

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for the
1999 Aurora Awards**

For Details

<http://www.sentex.net/~dmullin/aurora/>

want to point out and that is Paul Levinson's "Chronology Protection Case." It's a wild and wooly gonzo kind of story, sort of a cross between Greg Egan and Terry Pratchett.

A GAME OF THRONES
by George R. R. Martin

I hate big fantasy series. With a passion most people reserve for the Toronto Maple Leafs. Oh sure, I read a few in my youth, like David Eddings' *Belgariad*. *The Lord of the Rings* is an exception. Can't blame the parent for the excesses of the children. But overall, I have no time for the twenty volume saga of Sir Elvin Lightsmith Cornflakes and his quest for the One Ring That Rules All The Kraft Dinner. I just don't, so shoot me. Then along come George R. R. Martin and *A Game of Thrones*, the first of a projected six part series. Needless to say, I was skeptical.

Basically, two factors conspired to get me to give this a try. On the one hand, I'm pretty familiar with Martin's other work. *Fevre Dream* and *Armageddon Rag* are classics of their respective genres, the vampire novel and the Rock & Roll fantasy. *Tuff Voyaging* is a solid, gritty space

opera. "Sandkings" is a classic SF horror story, made into a pretty good two-parter on *The Outer Limits*. On the other hand, the novel got a lot of really good reviews from reviewers I respect. Keith at Nebula pushed it on me. Finally, I gave in.

A Game of Thrones is a brilliant story, a headlong ride from page 1 to page 800. Martin keeps lots of balls in the air, occasionally dropping one big surprise on you to keep you honest. This is a gripping, brutal novel which never lets up and never cops out; it is fantasy written as if it were reality. Volume two, *A Clash of Kings*, just came out. I'll keep you up to date.

Some other books I have read recently and would like to recommend:

Illegal Alien
by Robert J. Sawyer.

Gladiator-at-Law
by Frederik Pohl
and C.M. Kornbluth.

Ancestral Hungers
by Scott Baker

The Fantasy Hall of Fame
edited by Robert Silverberg

COVER STORY:

Interview With DeForest Kelley

by Keith Braithwaite

In the spring of 1988 several members of MonSTA, the Montreal Star Trek Association (soon to become MonSFFA), journeyed across the U.S. border to a *Star Trek* convention at which DeForest Kelley was a guest. We were a fledgling club back then and the whole, wonderful fandom experience—monthly gatherings and activities, going to cons, publishing fanzines—was new to just about every one of us.

The *Star Trek* phenomenon was in full swing at that time. The *Trek* movies were well established and going strong and a new TV series had begun, featuring the adventures of *Trek's* next generation of space heroes. DeForest Kelley had helped to launch this new crew with his memorable cameo appearance as an aged Admiral McCoy in *Star Trek: The Next Generation's* premiere episode.

Kelley held a press conference at the con, fielding questions from local reporters and fans alike, including the MonSTA contingent. Our people taped the press conference, later transcribing it and readying it as an article destined for publication in *Final Frontier*, a semi-pro *Trek/sci-fi* magazine they had created with club support. But *Final Frontier* did not take off as had been hoped and folded after only three issues. The Kelley piece was never published and has remained in the club's archives ever since. We bring it to you now as our tribute to the recently deceased DeForest Kelley, beloved as the original *Star Trek's* Dr. McCoy.

As any *Star Trek* fan, and indeed many non-Trekkers know, DeForest Kelley plays the part of Dr. Leonard "Bones" McCoy in the *Star Trek* movies, as he did years ago in the original television series.

A singer in his very early career, Kelley's move from his native

Atlanta, Georgia, to California steered him into acting. During World War II he was spotted in a U.S. Navy training film by a Paramount talent scout. This resulted in a screen test and a contract. Over the ensuing years he gained experience in motion pictures, theatre and television. He distinguished himself as a villain in Westerns.

In 1965 Kelley played the part of a lab specialist in the pilot of a proposed TV series called *Police Story*. The show was being written and produced by a former airline pilot and policeman named Gene Roddenberry. It didn't sell, but network brass were impressed by test-audience reaction to Kelley and this paved the way to his being cast as a doctor in another Roddenberry project, a science fiction series called *Star Trek*.

DeForest Kelley is Dr. McCoy. It is hard to imagine any other actor in the role of the original starship *Enterprise's* Chief Medical Officer. This is, no doubt, because Kelley put so much of himself into the character of McCoy. Much of McCoy's personality was developed by Kelley and, quite naturally, the good doctor's outlook is a reflection of Kelley's own.

On April 17 of this year, Dreamwerks Productions put on a convention in Syracuse, New York. DeForest Kelley was one of the guests and he fielded questions from a small gathering of reporters at a press conference. Among the reporters were Chris Daly and René Marchand, representing this magazine.

Question: Rod Serling was born in Syracuse. Many of the *Star Trek* people did Serling material—*Twilight Zone*, etc. Did you ever do any Serling material?

Answer: No. I never did *Twilight*

Zone. I did *Playhouse 90* but I never met Rod. I had great respect for him. When I first picked up on Rod Serling I was in New York doing live television. We were all trying to get into Rod Serling shows, but I never had the opportunity, unfortunately.

Question: Did you try out for any of his shows?

Answer: Never. I was never called. I was doing a lot of Westerns at that time and everyone had me pegged as a bad man in cowboy pictures.

Question: Do you collect any of your early material on video?

Answer: I have a great deal of it, yes.

Question: How many movies have you done in all?

Answer: I really don't know. I've lost count. I was a very young man and I was playing young psychos or ne'er-do-wells—that sort of thing—before I did my first Western, *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* (1957). When the studio people saw it, why it just threw me into a whole other category and I was hung in Westerns for 12 or 13 years. I did an enormous amount of television shows—loads of Westerns in those. I did a couple of science fiction shows. I was never a science fiction fan and didn't quite know how to deal with *Star Trek* when I got it, to tell you the truth. I didn't like it! It was crazy, but naturally, after I got the series I learned a lot.

Question: *Star Trek* grew on you?

Answer: Yes. The wonderful thing about *Star Trek* was that we never knew, from week to week, what the writers were going to come up with. Even if a show was not quite what we hoped it would be, it always contained something exciting. That was marvelous and made it more fun to go to work.

Question: Gene Roddenberry once described *Star Trek* as a Western set in outer space. As someone who has done a lot of Westerns, do you concur?

Answer: Well, yes, I see what he meant to a certain degree. Somebody said it was *Gunsmoke* in space and you can draw that parallel. They were explorers and so were we. However, I think what Gene really wanted to do when he brought *Star Trek* to the screen was to put a very high-class science fiction show on.

Question: Which of your films would you say is your favourite?

Answer: Tough question. I did some work for Edward Dmytryk in a film called *Warlock* (1959) that I enjoyed very much, and I've always had a soft spot in my heart for the first film I ever did, *Fear in the Night* (1947). Every now and then it pops up on television somewhere. I don't know... When you've done different films you get confused because you ask yourself which one you enjoyed doing the most and it has nothing to do with your performance. But I really can't look at any one and say

that it was my very favourite film. I haven't made that one yet! I'd still like to get one that I could say is my favourite.

Question: The sense I got from watching the old series was that Dr. McCoy was pretty much the direct opposite of Mr. Spock. While Spock was the cold, unemotional one, you were full of emotion, like the average guy. Would that be a correct interpretation?

Answer: (Chuckling) Pretty much so, I think. Yes. We were on opposite ends. I think it was kind of a love/hate relationship. It made an interesting combination.

Question: Was that by design or did it evolve as the series went on?

Answer: It evolved as the series went on. One of the writers had inserted a piece that created a small disturbance between the two of us and we made a little bit more out of it through expressions and attitudes. They saw that in the dailies and it amused them somewhat, so the writers began to expand upon it. We've had a lot of fun with it and it seems to be very

appealing to the fans out there looking at us.

Question: I'm sure you're asked this question all the time: do you have a favourite *Star Trek* episode and if so, which one and why?

Answer: My favourite episode would have to be "City on the Edge of Forever." I say that because I think it was the best ensemble piece we did and it had a mood about it that I don't think was really quite completely captured in any other episode. That episode won a Hugo Award so I must be right about it in there somewhere.

Question: Did you enjoy doing your cameo in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*?

Answer: Yes, it was fun. Gene had asked me to do it and I hesitated at first because I didn't know whether any one of us should be a part of the new generation. But Gene has been so influential in my career—I've known him since 1960—that I thought it would be a nice thing to do, as kind of a favour to him. That's the way I ended up doing it, really.

MonSTA/Final Frontier's Chris Daly (left) and René Marchand flank DeForest Kelley at Trek con 11 years ago. (Photo by Jay Kay Klein)



Question: Given the chance, would you appear in the new series as another character, a character other than Dr. McCoy?

Answer: No, I doubt that very seriously.

Question: Would you appear again as McCoy?

Answer: I don't really care to. I've done that... No, I doubt it very seriously.

Question: Do you think the other original cast members should do cameos in the new series?

Answer: Yes, if they wish and the situation is right. If I were a studio head I would give it a great deal of thought, though. My personal opinion is to let it alone. Let these new characters grow with the fans. Don't bring back any memories.

Question: What are your impressions of the new show?

Answer: I have seen one episode. Guess which one. (Laughter) I saw part of another. I really tried to look at it, but... Whether I like the show or not has nothing to do with the show itself. As I told my wife while looking at the show, you know, there's something very weird about looking at this show. It's like looking at something that we have already done. I can't relate to it other than as a strange dream and I don't *enjoy* the show.

Question: Have you ever heard yourself dubbed in another language?

Answer: I saw myself in a *Bonanza* years ago that was dubbed in Japanese. (Chuckling) That was really very interesting.

Question: We watch you in French in Montreal and your voice is quite different.

Answer: I get that from Germany, too—that the voice is different. Incidentally, the original series is just beginning to be really shown a great deal in France. I'm beginning to get a lot of mail from France. They write me and tell me that we're 20 years behind.

Question: Have you ever visited Canada?

Answer: I was in Toronto once. I did a show up there. That's the only time I've ever been to Canada.

Question: Would you like to come to Montreal?

Answer: One of these days.

Question: Do you speak French?

Answer: No. I'll need an interpreter up there. (Chuckle)

Question: How many cons do you attend in a year?

Answer: After *Star Trek IV* came out I began to get a lot of calls to go. The past two years have been my heaviest. Before that I had not attended too many of them. I'm going to slow down again soon.

Question: Do you enjoy them or are they somewhat of a bother?

Answer: I've enjoyed each and every one of them. I have been very fortunate, I guess. I find that it's an enjoyable experience to communicate with the fans. That is what they're really most interested in. And hopefully, somewhere along the line, I might say something that will influence them, or give them some encouragement and help them along the way. I think conventions are a wonderful thing in as much as the friendships that are formed. They're a great service, really, to America's youth.

Question: Do the *Star Trek* blooper reels making the rounds of conventions bother you?

Answer: They don't bother me too much. If people enjoy seeing that and have fun with it, that's great.

Question: Have you ever read any of the *Star Trek* novels put out by Pocket Books?

Answer: I've never read any of them, no.

Question: Has the script for *Star Trek V* been completed and have you seen it?

Answer: I haven't seen a completed script. I saw a first draft but it's in a complete rewrite so I don't expect to see an awful lot of what I read retained. I understand that they had accomplished a great deal before the writers' strike and hopefully it will be set to go in September after Leonard (Nimoy) is free of his Disney obligation.

Question: How has Leonard Nimoy's directing been different from all of the previous directors you've worked with in the *Trek* movies and in the original series?

Answer: Well, I always had great faith in Leonard as a potential director, even during the series. As a matter of fact I had spoken, at that time, to a friend of mine who was a producer on the Paramount lot and had tried to get him to hire Leonard to direct a motion picture, but he wouldn't even think about it. So I never had any doubts about Leonard being able to direct *Star Trek*. After all, no one knew the show any better. He's an exceptionally bright guy and has a great knowledge of film.

Question: How did he differ in style from the other directors?

Answer: It's difficult to compare. Each director brings something to a show that another one doesn't have. Leonard knew us all so well and knew the show so well that, except in rare circumstances, he knew how we were going to do something. So there was a feeling of complete confidence, almost like having a parent guide you as opposed to someone who steps in from the cold. He had the advantage, in the first picture he directed, of not being in it until the very end and that relieved him of a great responsibility. It's very difficult to have a heavy role in a show and direct yourself and all of the others about you.

Question: How do you think William Shatner will fare directing *Star Trek V*?

Answer: Nobody can say, but I'm sure that Bill will do an equally good job.



DeForest "Dr. McCoy" Kelley, Syracuse, New York, April 1988. (Photo by Jay Kay Klein)

Question: Do you see production of the *Trek* movies coming to an end anytime soon, or will they be made for sometime to come?

Answer: I felt, oddly enough, that each movie was the last. (Laughter) I feel that, perhaps, this one may be the last. You have to be realistic. Then again, there's the motion picture executive's way of thinking: Paramount Pictures will not care how old we are or how we look up on the screen if the picture makes \$80 million! (Laughter) They'll wheel us out in wheelchairs. (Laughter) And I'm sure they'll try to bring the next generation in to replace us. When the take drops, that's when they'll say, well, we better cool it.

Question: Other than *Star Trek V*, do you have anything that you'll be doing in motion pictures or television in 1988?

Answer: Nothing at the moment. I have had some offers which I have turned down simply because I didn't

feel that they'd be anything that anybody would look at and say, gee, it was fun to see him in that, or that they gave me any kind of stimulation. I hated to do it but I've turned down a number of shows because of that.

Question: It's been over 20 years since the original series first aired. Can you explain the staying power, the appeal of *Star Trek*?

Answer: I don't know. It's such a complex thing. *Star Trek* hit during the hippy generation and the youth began to pick up on it because they saw a lot of hope. They were really our very first fans. *Star Trek* showed them a group of people who cared very much about each other and were not ashamed to express love, affection, caring and loyalty. The youth saw that, perhaps, there was somewhere to go, another kind of life. It's difficult to capsulize... It embraced so many different ideals that it touched some chord with everyone all along the way.

Question: Do you feel that *Star Trek* has been a help or a hindrance to your career?

Answer: It's been a mixed blessing. There is no way in the world that I would say that it did not affect my career. But I am basically a very lazy guy—I'm my own worst enemy—and I have not pursued my career as strongly as Leonard or Bill. I don't know if that's because I'd been in pictures for so many years. Had I not done what I have in motion pictures, I would be very disappointed with only having hit *Star Trek*. It's been an experience that I wouldn't have exchanged for anything else in the world.

Question: Have you any regrets?

Answer: None whatsoever. I have no regrets. I feel that I'm a very lucky human being to have been a part of it all.

Question: If you could give a short message to all your fans, what would it be?

Answer: Well, I would have to say that they are a very unique group of people, and they all don't have antennae sticking out of their heads. (Laughter) I've received a lot of mail that has been very satisfying to me, some from young people who have entered the medical profession as a result of being influenced in some way by McCoy. I would simply say to my fans, thank you, you've been wonderful.

Question: Do you think *Star Trek's* popularity will ever die down?

Answer: No... I don't know how long the so-called hot popularity will go, but I think *Star Trek* has made a niche in history. I don't think there'll ever be another show like the original *Star Trek*. There'll never be another show that will create the kind of phenomenon that it has. I think it's unique in that way and that you will be seeing old photographs of us long after I'm gone.

The Digital (R)evolution

by Stéphane Thériault

In the left corner: Look-TV and its adaptable package. In the right corner: Vidéotron and its digital counter-offensive. And somewhere, floating in the middle, the reception by satellite. Here's how to find your way there, and especially, which system is the best for obtaining one of the most desirable channels for MonSFFen: Space, The Imagination Station...

(Note: even if you don't live in the Montreal area and/or the companies mentioned do not offer the services in a region near you, you will still find this information useful for the day when you do have to face this kind of choice.)

How do we choose between the cable, the satellite or the microwave transmission? Such a headache for many of us! For once, the competition, which is said to be ferocious, seems to have some benefit for the consumer, if only for the prices. But faced with all of the promotions offered these days by the four providers: Bell ExpressVu, Star Choice, Look, and Vidéotron; we don't know which saint we should dedicate ourselves to. We might as well compare apples and oranges, because each technology has its strengths and its weaknesses. All depends, in fact, on expectations and the situation of the viewer. Moreover, it is necessary to choose the one that will be able to provide us with our favourite channel, Space, at an accessible cost.

Analog? Digital? What's that?

Why all this fuss about digital service? Before going further, let's explain the difference. Presently, there are two main kinds of transmission: analog and digital. The analog signal is broadcast over the air or carried by wires, and is

composed of two principal parts: the carrying signal and the information signal. The carrying signal is a frequency which is unique to each television channel. Each time a channel is changed, we select another carrying signal. As for the information signal, it is part of the carrying signal and varies in amplitude (its signal strength) around its own frequency. These are the variations which provide the sound and the image that we receive. The great disadvantage with this practice is that the television set must be very sensitive to all of the variations of the information signal and that includes the signals that are too weak (snow/white noise) or otherwise degraded by interference (ghost images, lines, white and/or coloured spots, etc...).

It's here that digital has the advantage. It also has a carrying signal, but the information signal has only one variation: the presence or the absence of its signal. A digital receiver, therefore, does not need to be sensitive to all of the small variations. In short, there is a signal or there's nothing at all. This is what makes it extremely reliable and easy to create, not to mention that it requires less power. We can easily imagine the difference in quality by comparing the sound of a vinyl disc (analog) with that of a compact disc (digital).

To start with, almost all of our television sets are analog. The same applies to the very large majority of broadcasters, who have not yet embraced the new digital technology. Hence the need for a signal decoder, if we want to receive all of what is being broadcast digitally. And unless one has a giant screen, the viewer will not really benefit from the extreme quality of the digital images. Similarly, unless one has a home theatre system, one will not taste all of the richness of the digital sound. So in the short term, the interest in digital is more for the greater choice of channels than for the improved image and sound quality.

Digital not everywhere!

According to whether we live in the city or the countryside, some choices are imposing themselves. In an urban environment, we can easily choose one or the other of the four providers, but in rural or remote areas, the satellite television with Bell ExpressVu or Star Choice remains the only possible choice.

Those fortunate enough to live in a zone in which such services are offered, could also choose between Vidéotron cable or the Look microwave system. In the latter case, however, no obstacle must intervene in the line of sight between the provider's transmitter and the customer's receiver, which is unfortunately not the case for 20% of the population. However, the test to determine if the waves reach your living room is free. Between now and the end of the year, the Look microwave system should begin serving the Outaouais, Estrie, Laurentides, Quebec, and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean zones.

Vidéotron, too, is not without limitations. You will not be able to change from the ordinary, analog cable to digital unless the fiber-optic lines are installed in your area. The Montreal region is the first to benefit from this service (however, part of the West Island still doesn't have it!), and the other communities should follow gradually during the year.

Other points to be considered...

Owner or tenant? Depending on whether one owns a residence, or whether one is a tenant who might have to move out, the choices arise from another angle. Whereas the Vidéotron cable always remains in place, the parabolic antennae and those of Look will have to be dismantled, moved along with you, and reinstalled. In addition, owners and landlords concerned about the external appearance of their property may have certain reservations

towards one or all types of antennae.

Maintenance and repair: you may find it very beneficial to pay attention to the after-sales service of the providers. In the case of an option to buy, will you obtain all of the assistance necessary for installation and familiarization with the system? In the event of a problem, will it be necessary to pay for the technician to come to your residence? As for any electronic device, it is better to take note in advance of all the terms of the guarantee.

Your way of life: statistically, Quebecers are the most devoted television viewers in the country (our eyes are glued to the small screen 25 hours per week!). However, we should not lose sight of the fact that this is an average. If you have your remote control in hand more than 50 hours per week, even an expensive service will seem to you a cheap leisure. On the other hand, if you do not have 30 minutes per day to watch television, it will not be the 100 channels offered that will slow down your rhythm of life.

The weather is a factor which should not be neglected either. For reception by satellite, the parabolic antenna must be outside, so it needs to be checked regularly to be sure that snow or rain does not accumulate there. The wind should not be a problem if the antenna is well installed. The same thing goes for Look: it's a square grid parabolic antenna which is installed. As for Vidéotron, it is much less influenced by the climactic changes, but it's not completely protected from bad weather either, as we saw at the time of the ice storm.

The necessary equipment... (and its invoice!)

With digital, it is impossible to record a show while you watch another, unless you have more than one decoder. Vidéotron enables you to lease a decoder for \$10 per month (no purchase for the moment) or \$100 for the year. It's all that you will need, even if you have several television sets. They have predicted the need: with the digital cable, you will receive the channels of the package chosen in analog mode for

Look's Gears
By choosing Look, you must install a antenna (140\$), provide yourself with a decoder and maybe some optional accessories.

The cones
With Look, wired two TV sets on one decoder require a pair of little transmitters in shape of cone at 59,95\$ plus taxes or rents 2\$ per month.

Look's decoder

Grid parabolic antenna

Square plate in plastic

Half-meter rod

<<Crystal Ball>>

The antenna is connected to a decoder of the size of a video tape recorder wired with your TV set. If you live in a building than 12 residences, your owner must authorize in writing the installation of the antenna of Look. In the largest buildings, it is the company which must negotiate with the owner. The antennas of Look are generally installed on the roof of your house and can take four forms, according to the result of the tests of the technician.

Above: The various components required to set up a Look-TV system.

your other television connections. You will spend \$5 per month for an additional connection, or \$7 for two connections or more, and all of your television sets will be independent. And for all those who are already subscribed with the analog service, the installation of the digital one is free. If not, new subscribers will have to spend \$70, which is the current fee for any installation.

For Look, the invoice can be heavier. From the start, the installation of the antenna costs \$140. And then there is the lease of the equipment, more accessible at \$7 a month. To connect all of your television sets on your Look decoder, you will need one transmitter per device; they are sold for \$59.95 a pair

or leased for \$2 a pair per month. However, all of your televisions will show the same channel at the same time. If you want totally independent television sets, it will be necessary to lease a second decoder for \$10 per month, or to buy one at \$300.

For reception by satellite, it can be even worse. Both for Bell ExpressVu and for Star Choice, you will have to spend between \$100 and \$200 for the installation and between \$400 and \$600 for the purchase of the equipment! And if that isn't enough, Star Choice does not yet offer the option of leasing, but it juggles with a financing agreement. On the other hand, at the end of three years of leasing, Bell ExpressVu offers an option to buy. Did I forget to mention

	Look	Vidéotron	Bell ExpressVu	Star Choice
Installation	140\$	70\$	100\$ to 200\$	100\$ to 200\$
Purchase	500\$	Coming soon	400\$ to 600\$	400\$ to 550\$
Renting	7\$ / month	10\$ / month 99\$ / year	12,50\$ / month	None
Basic service	13\$ / location 155\$ / purchase (1 year)	10\$ / month	8\$ (french set) 9\$ (english set)	9\$ (french set) 20\$ (bilingual set) 15\$ (english set)
Basic channels	22 video 30 audio	19 video 30 audio	9 video 32 audio (french set) 12 video 32 audio (english set)	13 (french set) 18 video 0 audio (english and bilingual set)

that it might be necessary to spend more than \$100 to buy a good surge protector in case of lightning?

Keeping our budget in mind, then comes the question of whether to purchase or lease the equipment. Do we prefer to immediately invest a few hundred dollars and benefit from reduced monthly payments or do we pay a little more each month without having to buy the equipment? In either case, it does not go without consequences. We can end up feeling captive to the bought equipment, just as we can regret the ongoing payments for hardware whose cost goes on long after said equipment has been amortized. Only Vidéotron does not yet offer the possibility of purchasing the equipment, but the company is negotiating with its manufacturers. Table-1 compares the cost connected to each one of the providers for the installation, the purchase, the lease, and the basic service.

The available channels... and Space?

Those who detest choosing channels all packaged in advance will fall back on Vidéotron or Look which are the only ones that really offer television "à la carte". Thus, you will not be obliged to take and pay for the Country Music channel if you want to have the Space channel! The sports addict, the film enthusiast, the documentary and news maniac, the bilingual (or non-bilingual) viewer, and most importantly to us, the science fiction fan can choose exactly what they wish to have on their screens—and nothing more. Vidéotron offers \$12 per month for 15 channels with \$1.50 for each additional channel. However, to comply with the rules of the CRTC, you must choose an equal or higher number of Canadian channels. Look's package makes it possible to choose the channels in groups of 10, and you can choose the channels you want for each group. You can regularly modify your choice of channels without charge, within reason. The very undecided ones could thus receive an invoice after some changes.

Some advice: Only basic stations (SRC, TVA, ABC, etc.) interest you? The package "Look Basic" will let

Table #2
A

LOOK TV	Vidéotron digital	Vidéotron analogic (ordinary) East	Vidéotron analogic (ordinary) West
BASIC SERVICE			
20\$/ month (rented equipments incl.) 22 channels	20\$/ month (rented decoder incl.) 19 channels	23\$/ month 26 channels	20\$/ month 28 channels
SRC	SRC	SRC	SRC
TVA	TVA	TVA	TVA
TQS	TQS	TQS	TQS
Télé-Québec	Télé-Québec	Télé-Québec	Télé-Québec
CBC	CBC	CBC	CBC
Global	Global	Global	Global
CTV (CFCF-12)	CTV (CFCF-12)	CTV (CFCF-12)	CTV (CFCF-12)
CTV (CJOH-08)	CTV (CJOH-08)	CTV (CJOH-08)	CTV (CJOH-08)
Canal Savoir	Canal Savoir	Canal Savoir	Canal Savoir
MétéoMédia / Weather Network	MétéoMédia	MétéoMédia	MétéoMédia
CJNT (canal ethnique)	CJNT (canal ethnique)	CJNT (canal ethnique)	CJNT (canal ethnique)
RDI	RDI	RDI	RDI
CBC Newsworld	CBC Newsworld	CBC Newsworld	CBC Newsworld
ABC	Viewers Choice	ABC	ABC
NBC	Chambre des communes	NBC	NBC
CBS	Assemblée nationale	CBS	CBS
PBS (WETK-33)	Canal Indigo	PBS (WETK-33)	PBS (WETK-33)
Viewers Choice	Télévision communautaire	PBS (WCFE-57)	PBS (WCFE-57)
Fox	The Weather Network	YTV	YTV
Canal D		TV5	TV5
CTV SportNet		Chambre des communes	Chambre des communes
Canal Indigo		Assemblée nationale	Assemblée nationale
		Télévision communautaire	Télévision communautaire
		Country Music Television	Country Music Television
		Événementiel Bourse	Événementiel Bourse
		Canal Famille	Canal Famille
			Vision TV
			The Weather Network

D

LOOK TV	Vidéotron digital	Vidéotron analogic (ordinary) East	Vidéotron analogic (ordinary) West
SET 3			
Look Total 40\$/ month (rented equipments incl.) 61 channels Basic + all of 39 offered	Telemax Ultra 50\$/ month (rented decoder incl.) 71 channels Basic + Telemax 1 + Telemax 2 + 21 below	Nothing comparable	Nothing comparable
	Treehouse TV		
	Home & Garden		
	WTN		
	Game Show		
	Golf Channel		
	CNN Headline News		
	TNN		
	Prime TV		
	Outdoor Life		
	Headline Sports		
	MuchMore Music		
	The Comedy Network		
	TBS		
	CNBC		
	SpeedVision		
	Food Network		
	Black Entertainment		
	The Family Channel		
	MoviePix New Classics		
	Télélatino		
	TVO		

B			
LOOK TV	Vidéotron digital	Vidéotron analogic (ordinary) East	Vidéotron analogic (ordinary) West
SET 1			
Look + 10 29\$ / month (rented equipments incl.) 32 channels Basic + 10 of 39 below	Telemax 1 39\$ / month (rented decoder incl.) 40 channels Basic + 21 below	Telemax 30\$ / month 38 channels Basic + 12 below	Telemax 31\$ / month 52 channels Basic + 22 below
Le Canal Nouvelle	Le Canal Nouvelle	Le Canal Nouvelle	Le Canal Nouvelle
Télétoon français	Télétoon français	Télétoon français	Télétoon français
MusiquePlus	MusiquePlus	MusiquePlus	MusiquePlus
Musimax	Musimax	Musimax	Musimax
Réseaux des Sports	Réseaux Des Sports	Réseaux des Sports	Réseaux des Sports
The Learning Channel	The Learning Channel	The Learning Channel	The Learning Channel
TSN	TSN	TSN	TSN
Discovery Channel	Discovery Channel	Discovery Channel	Discovery Channel
CTV News 1	Canal D	Canal D	Canal D
TV5	TV5	CTV SportsNet	CTV Sportsnet
Canal Famille	Canal Famille	Canal Vie	Canal Vie
The Family Channel	CTV SportsNet	Fox	Fox
CNN	Country Music Television		CTV News 1
Country Music Network	Canal Vie		CNN
Teletoon English	PBS (WETK-33)		Teletoon English
Life Network	PBS (WCFE-57)		Life Network
Home & Garden	CBS		MuchMusic
YTV	ABC		Space, the Imagination Station
MuchMusic	NBC		Bravo!
Space, the Imagination Station	Fox		Showcase
Canal Vie	YTV		History Channel
TFO			A&E
Bravo!			
The Comedy Network			
Showcase			
OLN			
History Channel			
CNBC			
The Golf Channel			
TLN			
MétéoMédia			
The Weather Network			
MoviePix New Classics			
HGTV			
WSBK Boston			
Women's Television Network			
SpeedVision			
Treehouse TV			
Food Network			

you save \$3 per month compared to the ordinary cable; its installation however costs \$140 plus taxes instead of \$70 plus taxes at Vidéotron, a difference of \$70 which will require 20 months of subscription before generating any savings.

What if you are already subscribed to Vidéotron's analog Telemax package, but you would like to replace some channels? For a little less, "Look + 10" will let you choose 10 channels according to your taste, but you will have on the whole six channels less and will have to pay the installation of \$140 plus taxes.

Table-2 compares the channels and packages offered by Look and Vidéotron (including some separate columns for the analog and digital service from Vidéotron). Sorry, but for those who are interested in the channels offered by Bell ExpressVu and Star Choice with parabolic antenna systems, you will have to contact the companies directly because the prices, the channels available, and the packages differ according to the place where you live, the selected language, and lately, the constant addition of new channels.

But what interests us the most is the Space channel, isn't it? Then, Table-3 indicates how much it will cost per month with each provider to receive at least this channel in particular. Significant note: you will notice that at Vidéotron, the Space channel is available only digitally for the subscribers who live in the East end of Montreal. Also, they must spend \$43 to obtain approximately the same number of channels (although digital) as those in the West, in the former CF Cable territory, where they pay only \$30 per month (in analog). Thus, the inhabitants of the East section of Montreal—Vidéotron's original territory—are less privileged in spite of being wired for digital cable!

The best advice: think and compare!

Whatever the situation, the tastes, the habits, and the incomes, the best advice is to compare before making the choice. And if we are still not ready to decide today, we can always console ourselves with the certainty that digital television is not about to disappear.

C			
LOOK TV	Vidéotron digital	Vidéotron analogic (ordinary) East	Vidéotron analogic (ordinary) West
SET 2			
Look + 20 34\$ / month (rented equipments incl.) 42 channels Basic + 20 of 39 offered	Telemax 2 43\$ / month (rented decoder incl.) 51 channels Basic + Telemax 1 + 11 below	Nothing comparable	Nothing comparable
	CTV News 1		
	CNN		
	Teletoon english		
	Life Network		
	MuchMusic		
	Space, the Imagination Station		
	Bravo!		
	Showcase		
	History Channel		
	A&E		
	Vision TV		

E			
ook LOOK TV	Vidéotron digital	Vidéotron analogic (ordinary) East	Vidéotron analogic (ordinary) West
SET 4			
Nothing comparable	Prestige Individual price for each channel	Nothing comparable	Nothing comparable
	Super Écran 12\$/month		
	TMN 12\$/month		
	Playboy Channel** 13\$/month		
	WSBK Boston** 2\$/month		
	WGN** 2\$/month		
	ATN 15\$/month		
	Fairchild TV 20\$/month		
	OTN 15\$/month		
	** Must be taken with one of the following: Super Écran, TMN, Family Channel or MoviePix		
SET 6			
Nothing comparable	Self-service 12\$/month for 15 channels (available to everyone) 1,50\$/month for each channel (reserved for customers who choose Telemax 1,2, Ultra or the Self-service)	Nothing comparable	Nothing comparable

Useful addresses:

Look
1-800-356-5665, (514) 529-5665
<http://www.look.ca>

Vidéotron
1-800-361-9350, (514) 281-1711
<http://cablo.videotron.com>

Bell ExpressVu
1-888-759-3473
<http://www.expressvu.com>

Star Choice
1-888-554-7827
<http://www.starchoice.com>

If you have questions, corrections, or comments you can contact Stéphane Thériault by e-mail

at crazycat@globalserve.net

References:

Le Journal de Montreal:
December 8, 1998, page 61;
February 6, 1999, pages 8-9;
March 30, 1999, page 26-27 & 62.

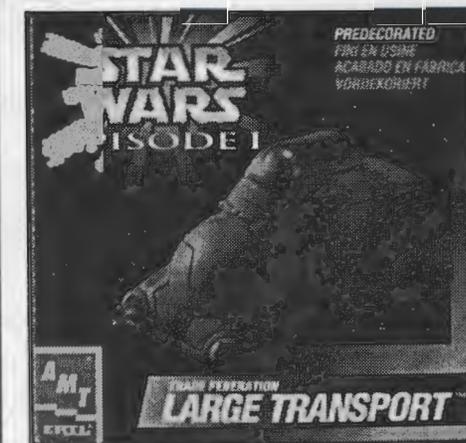
Le Devoir:
January 29, 1999, page A-8.

Protégez-Vous:
January 1998, page 9-15;
March 1999, page 27-29.

A special thanks to Marc Nadeau for coming up with the title for this article, and to Cathy Palmer-Lister for the correction of the english version.

	Look	Vidéotron East	Vidéotron West	Bell ExpressVu	Star Choice
Equipment Renting	7\$/month	10\$/month	None	12,50\$/month	\$400 to 550\$ (purchase only)
Channel set needed	Basic Look + 10	Basic Self-service	Basic Telemax	Basic (Starters) Fine Dining	Basic (Bronze) Tunes, Laughs & Klingons
Total price	29\$/month	32\$/month	31\$/month	15\$/month (french) 16\$/month (english)	15\$/month (french) 26\$/month (bilingual) 21\$/month (english)
Total channels (including Space)	31 channels	28 channels	52 channels	19 channels (french) 21 channels (english)	20 channels (french)** 25 channels (english and bilingual)**

* Installation fee not included
** Those refers to channels set options, not the channel's language





It Came From The Sci-Fi Modeler's Desk

THE MODELS OF STAR WARS EPISODE I: THE PHANTOM MENACE PART 2

BY DOMINIQUE DUROCHER

Continuing on the theme of last issue's column, I will cover more *Phantom Menace* models that have been released since then. The next phase of AMT's model tie-ins includes a series of mini-kits. These were released about two months after the film premiered. A competing set of models by Estes, which are actually rockets intended for flight, were available within weeks after the movie was released, but they are pricier than their static model counterparts and risk being overlooked by all but the advanced scale modeler.

AMT "MINI-KITS"

AMT recently released a set of four mini-kits. These are small, Micro-Machine sized, snap-together, pre-painted models. While a little lacking in size, ranging from 2.7 to 3.1 inches, their detail is most impressive, to the point of rivaling their larger cousins.

The smallest subject, the Sith Infiltrator, is the largest model. Consisting of five parts, it captures the sleek shape of this craft perfectly, and is nicely detailed with decent engraved panels.

The next largest subject is the Trade Federation Large Transport. This armored, multi-troop droid carrier is the most impressive model of the bunch, with a lot of very finely engraved paneling and grills. It is also the most complex at eight parts, and is decorated with a simple wash that enhances the moulded detail wonderfully. The exit hatch is moulded as a separate part, in case anyone is crazy enough to want to build an interior.

Next is the Republic Cruiser. Having five parts, I found this model

to be the least impressive. Detail engraving is comparable to the Infiltrator but there are fit problems and mismatches that need to be fixed. The plastic is also very soft, making it easy to mess up the two antenna towers. It is also the smallest model.

The largest subject, and second largest model, is the Trade Federation Landing Ship. This five-part kit is also very finely detailed and the parts fit almost perfectly. Unfortunately, the colors are completely off and it definitely needs repainting.

As these models are inexpensive, at about \$4 each, and much better looking than the similar sized and sure-to-be-coming Micro-Machines, they are not a bad deal. They are also perfect for making small dioramas. Scenes such as the Republic cruiser landing in a Trade Federation battleship hangar could be recreated at only a few inches in width. This is the format that the droid starfighters should have been sold in, rather than the 3-in-1 kit which is currently offered. It would have been more economical that way.

FROM ROCKETS TO DISPLAYS...

Estes is the industry leader in model rocketry, making all sorts of subjects both real and fictional. Having produced a few *Star Wars* rockets before, they continued this series with subjects from *The Phantom Menace*. They are designed both for flight and to look good sitting on a shelf.

The first is the Naboo Starfighter, which Estes made in two sizes. The smaller one is comparable to AMT's model kit, so I didn't bother with it. The larger one is about twice the size. They both look nice, but as the available kit is sufficient for me, I haven't bought either one. They also produced a large Droid Fighter, which could be interesting, but it is only sold in a package with all of the launch gear, and is therefore

somewhat expensive, if you only want the model. The next three are the really interesting ones.

The Naboo Royal Starship (Queen Amidala's cruiser) is also available in two sizes, with the larger being about 17 inches in length. It is very nice looking, if not as shiny as it should be. To make a good display model of this one will require little work. There are two projections on the underside for the launch rail that must be removed, and four slots in the engines for stabilizer fins that must also be filled. The biggest job on this one is the rocket exhaust, for which the complex curves of the ship's rear must be completely rebuilt. It would be a good idea to replace the engine stingers as well. They are made of a rubbery material and simply cannot be made to stay straight.

Next is the Trade Federation Battleship. At 8 inches in diameter, it is the smallest of the rocket models, but has some great potential. The vertical edges of the outer ring need to be detailed, as stickers represent the structure on both the inner and outer faces, but little else needs to be done. With the addition of some extra antennae and several dishes around it's edges, this model can also be made into a Droid Control Ship.

The Sith Infiltrator, my favourite of these rockets, is also the best detailed and the most impressive. A plug in the nose, where a longer probe must be inserted for flight, needs to be glued in. There is a hole and a slot for the launch rail, both easy to fill, but the engine needs to be rebuilt. This last part is relatively easy as the shapes to reproduce are simple. The wings also need to be bent in towards the middle, as they were made more vertical for better stability in flight. They also require some detailing on the inner faces, where paneling was not included. Even just sitting as is though, straight out of the box, it still has quite a menacing profile.

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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.

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(418) 561-5076

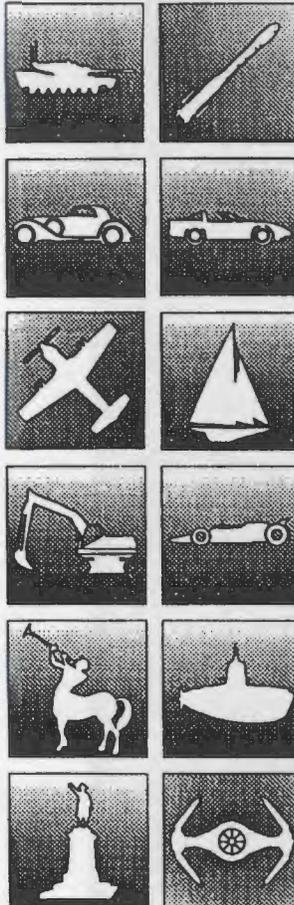
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Catégories régulières pour les plaques or, argent et bronze

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| • 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)
- Avions "gueules de requins" (Flying sharks)
- Le Sherman et ses variations
- Locomotives
- Véhicules et figurines de la Série télé COSMOS 1999 (SPACE 1999)
- Camions à avant plat "Flat noses"
- Dioramas de mécaniciens (réparation, entretien)
- Figurines antiquité (Jusqu'à 500 Après Christ)
- Le Titanic et ses soeurs (& Sister ships)



Veillez 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.

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Star Trek Voyager

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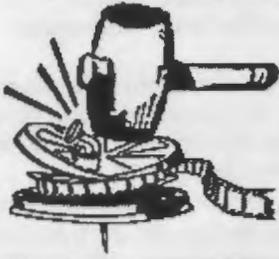
Lou
Ferrigno
Incredible Hulk



Kevin
Smith
Chasing Amy,
Clerks, Dogma

Mercedes Nqoh Return of the Jedi

Paris Themmen Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory



MOVIE REVIEWS

DIMENSION SF FILM FESTIVAL Reviewed by Dominique Durocher

Montreal kicked into summer with its first ever Science Fiction film festival. Dimension SF had a good representation of what SF is, both the good and some of the bad. It was a great opportunity to catch many classic SF movies, some rarely seen on the big screen anymore. They came in various formats, from video student shorts through to 16 and 35mm, right up to a couple of 70mm blockbusters. I and a few others bought the festival pass, and intended to make full use of it.

The first highlight was the series of classic '50s movies, with *War of the Worlds*, *Forbidden Planet*, and *Earth vs The Flying Saucers*. Unfortunately, a mix-up at one of the distributors resulted in some unknown, non-SF film reels being shipped in the boxes for *20 Million Miles to Earth* and *Earth vs The Flying Saucers*. The latter was presented the following day from laser disc, but *20 Million Miles to Earth* could not be shown.

The two biggest events were the *Metropolis* presentation and a Silent Film night. For *Metropolis*, the soundtrack was replaced by a live mix of alternative and electronic singing. This was simply incredible, although the *Gone With The Wind* bit could have been omitted. The Silent Film night was a presentation of five silent classics, including *Le Voyage dans la Lune* by George Méliès; complete with an in-theater piano player, just like the old days. Combined with the general atmosphere of the Imperial cinema's classic decor, it gave an impression of what movies must have been like at the turn of the century.

Many other rarely seen movies were also presented. These included *The Andromeda Strain*, *Colossus: The Forbin Project*, *Logan's Run*, and

Solaris.

A James Cameron tribute included the *Alien* and *Terminator* movies, and *The Abyss*.

There was an even-numbered *Trek* movie marathon, which turned into a DeForest Kelley tribute, since he had just passed away the previous day. It ended with his '70s B-movie *Night of the Lepus*, about giant killer bunnies, which was unintentionally hilarious.

Another treat was George Lucas' *THX 1138 4EB*, the student film that he later remade into a feature which launched his career.

There were many premieres at the festival. The best of these were four episodes of an upcoming television series: *The Secret Adventures of Jules Verne*. In this production, a young Jules Verne, in the company of two British Secret Service agents and their servant Passe-Partout, lives the stories he would later write about. The episodes we saw were fabulous, both for story and visuals, and if the rest of the series is comparable, it is absolutely not to be missed! An added attraction for us is that the series was shot completely in Montreal. Other premieres included a variety of made-for-cable movies; and while one was actually good, it became painfully clear why these had not been slated for theatrical release.

There was also a student film evening. What can be said about the featured producer was that a future Lucas he is not.

There was very little anime at this festival, and I understand there will likely be even less in the future, so as not to reduce interest in the FantAsia festival a month later. There were presentations of *Parasite Eve* and *The End of Evangelion*, both well attended. There was one another Japanese movie, a '50s live-action one, *Warning From Space*. It bears

some common points with *When Worlds Collide* and *Deep Impact*, with an imminent collision threatening mankind; but in this one, aliens actually come to help. A very badly faded print, almost exclusively in shades of pink, and truly ridiculous alien costumes—star-shapes made from white sheets with a central eye pasted on, looking like rejects from a Klan meeting—did not help the slow pacing of what could have been an interesting story.

All in all, this was an excellent film festival. There were a few mix-ups, a few delays, and some changes, but it was an event that was definitely worth attending. A few people, myself included, must have left permanent imprints from all the time spent in those seats. It can now be said that this festival was the first of what is to be an annual event.

THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF JULES VERNE

Reviewed by Josée Bellemare

I can't say enough good things about this series: if the rest of the episodes are as good as the four that I saw during the Dimension SF film festival, the producers have a hit on their hands.

Every aspect of the show is top rate. The scenery was filmed entirely in Montreal. It is fascinating to see how they used the older parts of the city to imitate the streets of London and Paris of the mid-1800's. Personally, I would love to know the name of the place they used to simulate Versailles.

The effects were brilliantly done: they fit in the story, not compete with it. However advanced they may be for the time, the inventions that our heroes come up with in the series are not so far fetched. You can easily believe that they could make their ideas work using the resources available at the time.

The stories are well written. When you read the description in the program book, the various episodes sound a bit outrageous, but somehow the writers make it work.

Last but not least, the characters, and the actors who portray them, are believable and well defined. You can tell that there is more than meets the eye for each one.

The spotlight is well divided between the four leads, with each one getting a fair amount of screen time.

Jules Verne (Chris Demetral) is in his early twenties. He is young, full of ideas, and eager for the experiences that life has to offer. Verne is lucky enough to have fallen into the company of people who can appreciate his creative genius and can help him achieve his full potential.

Phileas Fogg (Michael Praed) is a handsome hero. He is equally convincing as a man of action, or as the fop that he pretends to be in public, as part of his cover. You can tell that there is a lot more depth to this character that we have yet to see. Judging by the comments I overheard in the theater, there are many ladies in this city that would love to be rescued by this hero.

Rebecca Fogg (Francesca Hunt) is cousin to Phileas. She is part of the British Secret Service. An intelligent, capable woman, who, when it is necessary, can really kick butt and enjoy it. The men will definitely like this character, especially when she is wearing leather, but women will appreciate her as well for her strong personality. Even Queen Victoria respects and admires her courage.

Finally, Passepartout (Michel Courtemanch—a local actor) is the valet and much more. At times clumsy, at times brilliant, he is loyal to the Fogg family and is often a great deal more useful than anyone realizes.

If the networks give it a fair chance and give it a good time slot, *The Secret Adventures of Jules Verne* has the potential to become a great hit. It has something to appeal to every age group, and the writing stimulates your intelligence and imagination, rather than insults it. Part of the fun is recognizing how bits and pieces from Verne's books have been worked into the episodes.

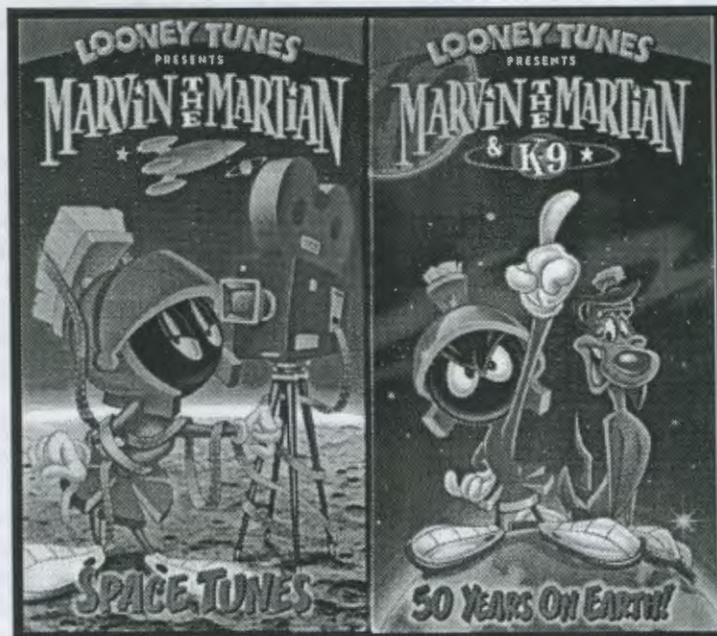
The fact that this series was made in the first place proves just how timeless the works of Jules Verne really are.

**MARVIN THE MARTIAN:
SPACE TUNES AND
50 YEARS ON EARTH**
Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre

Tired of seeing your favourite Martian Toon's adventures being cut by well-meaning, but misguided Saturday Morning TV censors? Well, then rejoice! To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of his first appearance, Warner Brothers has released the complete collection of the pint-sized alien's adventures on two video tapes, with a few extras thrown in.

Each cassette includes six full-length cartoons. Although edited—or rather, mangled—versions of these classics have been seen a zillion times on TV over the years, it has been a long time since anyone has been able to watch these treasures the way they were originally presented in the cinema; the way their creators meant them to be; with all of the original explosions, kicks, punches, screams, stars, and falling anvils! Not a split second has been removed, from the opening credits to the "That's All, Folks!" closing line.

Each tape sells for about \$20, and is well worth the price. They just don't make them like that anymore (sigh...).



MUPPETS FROM SPACE
Reviewed by Josée Bellemare

As the club's muppet expert, it was my responsibility, and pleasure, to go see this movie and write the review. So here it is.

This movie finally answers the question many of us have asked ourselves for years about Gonzo: "What is he?" Well, now we know: he's an alien from outer space. That explains a lot.

People familiar with the muppets will see a few old favourites such as Kermit, Miss Piggy, Fozzie, and of course, Gonzo; but we also see a few relative newcomers: Pepe La Prawn, Rizzo the rat, and Bobo the bear.

This time out, Henson Associates went back to the beginning. Rather than taking a third turn at classic literature (*The Muppet Christmas Carol* and *Treasure Island*) or musicals (*The Great Muppet Caper* and *The Muppets Take Manhattan*), we see the muppets interacting in the real world just as they did in *The Muppet Movie*.

One notable scene, in particular, shows them waking up in the morning and getting ready for breakfast. Imagine, if you're brave enough, a dozen characters of various species all waiting in line for the bathroom, or what that bathroom might look like... Animal's blow dryer looks like it's been modified by Tim Allen! And why would Kermit wear pyjamas to bed, a bathrobe to the breakfast table, and then walk around naked the rest of the day?

In the middle of a summer full of special effects blockbusters, *Muppets From Space* is a breath of fresh air. It's a low-tech bit of silliness, entertaining for the whole family. A must see for the young and the young at heart.

THE SUMMER MOVIES Reviewed by Keith Braithwaite

I went to the movies during my summer vacation this year and I thought I'd offer an opinion on the flicks I saw. Here are my brief reviews:

LAKE PLACID

I was drawn to *Lake Placid* by the promise of good, quirky writing by TV's David E. Kelley (*Ally McBeal*, *The Practice*), and by a pretty cool-looking giant crocodile. While Kelley did manage to script a couple of amusing one-liners, this movie is one big croc. The monster reptile is an impressive special effect and has several killer scenes, but alone isn't enough to carry the picture.

STAR WARS: EPISODE I THE PHANTOM MENACE

Yes, I saw this one way back in May with the rest of you, but I went to see it again during my vacation, and you know what? It's better the second time around. In May I was too caught up, perhaps, in the thrill of seeing a new *Star Wars* adventure for the first time. The whole experience was more like going to a big party than going to a movie. With that behind me, now, and knowing the story, I was able to relax and catch nuances in the performances, and the little details that I missed the first time. Somehow, the quick pace of the film and the hectic plot didn't seem as quick and hectic upon a second viewing. This time, I understood a lot more of what Jar Jar was saying, not that this made me any less annoyed by him. And those lightsaber duels are still just as electrifying as they were in May.

AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME

The Austin Powers movies are better appreciated if you're familiar with the James Bond films that they brilliantly spoof. Like the original, this second Powers abounds with dumb, juvenile toilet humour. But it's clever dumb, juvenile toilet humour! This is supposed to be mindless entertainment and Mike

Myers doing Austin and Dr. Evil (as well as obese henchman Fat Bastard) is so over-the-top that you can't help but laugh at the silliness of it all. And Heather Graham's Felicity Shagwell is sure easy on the eyes, baby, yeah!

SOUTH PARK: BIGGER, LONGER & UNCUT

I'm not a major *South Park* fan, but the show does have its moments. The movie is worthy of the tasteless, filthy, foul-mouthed, and regularly offensive weekly cartoon series, and then some. This is a very, very vulgar piece of work, but that vulgarity serves to drive home the film's point. Put up with all the obscenities and you'll be rewarded with a hilarious, bang-on satirical stab at censorship and American culture. Canada plays a prominent role in the story, so we hosers can enjoy the movie on an additional level.

THE HAUNTING

Overblown, state-of-the-art special effects fill the screen with the kind of stuff we've all seen before in any number of haunted-house movies. We are left, in the end, unsatisfied because this movie just isn't scary. To add insult to injury, the story is weak and the characters are cardboard. Now if you want to be scared shitless, go see...

THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

The Blair Witch Project is the polar opposite of *The Haunting*. First of all and most obviously, it successfully scares its audience while *The Haunting* does not, proof that a great concept trumps a big budget any day of the week. *Blair Witch* was made for what it costs for the coffee service on a big production like *The Haunting*. And secondly, the reason it so successfully scares its audience is that it lets their imaginations do all the work. No high-priced special effects of the kind employed in *The Haunting* can ever match the power of your own imagination when it comes to drumming up real, bone-chilling terror.

But the thing about *Blair Witch* that I found most interesting is how it effectively blurs the line between Hollywood fantasy and docu-

mentary-realism, to the point of causing us to wonder if what we're watching might actually be real. Orson Welles managed the same kind of deceit on radio in 1938 when his famous Halloween broadcast of *War of the Worlds* had thousands of listeners believing that America was being invaded by Martians. There is no Blair witch, but if there was, this movie is what an encounter with her would look like. Jerky, hand-held camera work; shots out of focus or improperly framed, unedited; no fancy special effects; an unadorned soundtrack, devoid of all but the frightened voices of the actors and the strange sounds in the woods—elements designed to convince us that what we are watching is just what the film's publicity campaign says it is: reels of raw footage found deep in the woods that shed light on a mystery.

Three film students who had been shooting a documentary about the Blair witch vanished without a trace a year earlier. Their footage now reveals their horrifying fate. We know that a Hollywood horror movie, with all the camera tricks, creepy mood music and gory make-up, is ultimately just a movie. The audience at the *Blair Witch* screening I went to wasn't so sure that what they were watching was just a movie, and I'll bet they didn't sleep much when they got home.

DEEP BLUE SEA

I have an irrational fear of sharks (which is why I'll never so much as dip a toe into the ocean), but at the same time, I am fascinated by them. Shark movies like this one allow me to come face to face with these awesome predators from the safety of my theatre seat.

Despite a couple of unexpected twists that made things a bit more interesting, the story, here, is pretty standard fare for a movie of this type: monsters get loose and pick off trapped people one by one. The cast was competent if not outstanding, but it's the sharks that are the real stars of the show. They are well realized and plenty frightening. Director Renny Harlin knows his way around an action sequence and has put together some exciting stuff that makes for an entertaining ride.

SENSORS

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

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

SHATNER SUFFERS TRAGEDY

Star Trek's William "Captain Kirk" Shatner arrived home late Monday night, August 9, to find his wife, Nerine, face down at the bottom of their swimming pool. He dove in, pulled her out and tried to revive her on the pool deck, to no avail. He called 911 and paramedics were dispatched to the scene, but they, too, were unable to revive the 40-year-old model and aspiring actress. Foul play or suicide were ruled out by local police, who are calling Nerine Shatner's death an accidental drowning.

A devastated Shatner spoke to reporters gathered outside the couple's Studio City mansion the next morning, saying that his wife meant everything to him and that "Her laughter, her tears and her joy will be with me for the rest of my life."

CLASSIC TREK ON DVD

The original *Star Trek* series will be released in DVD format beginning August 17th. Two episodes will be on each DVD disc. This DVD release has been expected by fans ever since the episodes were remastered a couple of years ago for the Sci-Fi channel.

STAR TREK: FLIGHT ACADEMY

Viacom Chairman Jonathan Dolgen apparently wants "the *Star Trek* franchise to be re-imagined and made cheaper." So how do they intend to go about that? Chuck out the more expensive older actors and bring in hot, new, and cheaper talent.

It appears the next *Star Trek* TV series (the fourth spin-off from the original) looks set to join that most

late 90s of trends—the teen drama.

Brannon Braga and Rick Berman are rumored to be currently writing a two-hour *Top Gun*-esque pilot for a new *Trek* series to take over the now empty slot left behind by *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. If successful, it may be the launching basis for the next series of films, taking over the cinema franchise from the *Next Generation* crew. Currently there are no plans for a tenth *Trek* feature yet despite rumours to the contrary, though one hopes the TNG crew will make one last cinematic voyage.

So will the new youth-invigorated *Trek* series fly high? Possibly, then again when you consider the most recent low-budget sci-fi adventure featuring lots of "young hot talent" was the bomb that was the *Wing Commander* movie, one has to worry. In the meantime though, many insiders and outsiders alike are having fun playing wordgames to come up with titles for the show—*Buffy: The Klingon Slayer*, *She's All That & A Romulan To Boot*, *Dawson's Black Hole*, and *Never Been Assimilated*.

NEW TREK SERIES CONFIRMED

Paramount confirmed press rumors that another *Star Trek* TV series is in development. Rick Berman and Brannon Braga are working on the project. Braga, however, specifically denied that the theme of the show would revolve around Starfleet Academy. Paramount does not expect a pilot for the new show before 2002.

RODDENBERRY TALKS EARTH

Eugene W. Roddenberry, son of Gene, and technical advisor of *Earth: Final Conflict* gave some insight into recent discussions to bring back first season star Kevin Kilner and the effect it would have on the program. While talking to the upcoming *Earth:*

Final Conflict Galactic Newsletter, Roddenberry revealed, "In bringing him [Kevin Kilner] back, it is something that would be done specifically because my mother [Majel Barret Roddenberry] has pushed it so hard. But as much as bringing him back would work, I also think it could work against the show."

Roddenberry further explained his reasoning saying, "At first, I was very much for bringing him back, but then concerns popped up like how our two leading men [Kilner and current series star Robert Leeshock] would react to each other, and how fans would feel if we just teased them by putting him in one episode, only to pull him out again. All I can tell you is that the decision was made, and it wasn't mine. I'm just saying that we've put our foot in our mouths before, and I don't want to stir the pot."

THE FULL WOOKIEE?

George Lucas is considering casting Robert Carlyle, the star of *The Full Monty*, in *Star Wars: Episode 2*, according to published reports in Britain. The reports, which appeared in several tabloids, said that Lucas was "impressed" with Carlyle's work and wants to work with him in his next film, although he hasn't figured out what role he would like him to play.

Carlyle recently completed filming *The World Is Not Enough*, the next James Bond movie, in which he plays the villain Reynard.

JAR JAR JOINS SHUTTLE CREW

NASA unveiled its latest plan to renew flagging interest in its unpopular Space Shuttle programs: Jar Jar Binks, a character from the popular *Star Wars* series of motion pictures, will join the crew of the USS Columbia for an upcoming mission.

"NASA is pleased to welcome aboard the first completely computer-generated character aboard a United States spacecraft," said NASA administrator Daniel S. Goldin. "We hope that the presence of Jar Jar Binks will raise school children's interest in outer space exploration."

During the mission, the crew of the Columbia will deploy the \$1.5 billion Chandra X-Ray Observatory, a space exploration vehicle and astronomical observatory that is expected to uncover data on the early origins of the universe. Chandra will spend at least five years in a highly elliptical orbit which will carry it one-third of the way to the moon to observe invisible and often violent realms of the cosmos containing some of the most intriguing mysteries in astronomy ranging from comets in our solar system to quasars at the edge of the universe.

"But kids don't care about all that crap," said NASA administrator Daniel S. Goldin. "They just want to see Jar Jar eating space food with his long, disgusting tongue."

Accordingly, a number of "hilarious hi-jinks" have been planned, in which the affable Gungan will help personalize the unfamiliar, alien environment and zero-G gravity aboard an orbiting shuttle. This is expected to help keep children's short attention spans from wandering while the astronauts perform seemingly tedious but important experiments, such as determining if ants can be trained to sort tiny screws in space. For example, Jar Jar will have trouble zipping up his spacesuit before going on a space-walk, or find himself tangled up in his space hammock, NASA suggested. And he will make a "really, really gross face" when he first tastes the specially prepared Space Dinners, said Goldin.

Cooperating with NASA in this new venture is LucasFilm, the creators of *Star Wars* and the Jar Jar character. "LucasFilm is pleased to assist NASA in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, renew children's interest in outer space, and create new marketing opportunities in space," a spokesperson for LucasFilm said.

Actor Ahmed Best will be reprising his role as the popular

Gungan, once again donning the faux Jar Jar suit which aids the animators at Industrial Light & Magic in later adding the digital character. NASA video transmissions of activities inside the Shuttle will be tape-delayed 72 hours to give the computer animators time to "paint in" the CGI character over the footage of Best. A laugh track will also be added to the Shuttle flight recordings, timed for Jar Jar's pranks.

NASA expects this Shuttle mission to have the highest Nielsen ratings of any launch yet.

(Is it just me or has NASA sunk to a pathetic new low?—Ed.)

RAIDERS TO BE RETITLED?

According to The Digital Bits DVD websites Rumor Mill column, George Lucas has decided to make a slight change to the classic *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. No, as far as we know, there are no plans for a Special Edition to digitally "correct" anything from the film. The site reports simply that Lucasfilm is retitling the film *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark* for DVD release.

WARNERS BACK IN TRENCHES FOR MATRIX SEQUELS

Warner Brothers is in discussions to make a second and third installment of *The Matrix*, possibly with the pictures shooting back to back next year. Sources confirmed that the studio is exploring budgets and timing in order to be able to green light the films, with Keanu Reeves again to star for writer-directors Andy and Larry Wachowski. No script is in place, however. *The Matrix*, which opened March 31, has taken in \$167.9 million at the domestic box office, making it the studio's biggest hit this year.

ANDERSON CONFIRMED FOR DR. WHO

The British magazine SFX reports it has confirmed that *Event Horizon* and *Soldier* director Paul Anderson will direct a new *Dr. Who* film. The BBC verified that it is indeed working on a *Who* film and that it expects to make casting announcements in August.

TRON TO BE REMADE?

ZDNet reports that either a remake of or a sequel to the '80s sci-fi classic *Tron* may be in the works. Citing an unnamed source, the site tips that the new *Tron* project could get rolling as soon as *Toy Story 2* sees release on November 24th, with John Lasseter at the helm. This makes a certain degree of sense since Lasseter has indicated that *Tron* was an inspiration for him, having said of the film, "It was the future. It was the potential I saw in computer animation." Way back in February of '98 Cinescape Online first reported rumblings of new *Tron* project. Time will tell whether it pans out.

STARSHIP TROOPERS ANIMATED SERIES

The *Starship Troopers* animated series is taking elements from the Robert A. Heinlein book as well as the Verhoven film—and some new elements that the animation writers and producers will add.

The series is going to be all CG (like *Beast Wars*). A digital house has not been selected yet, although Netter Digital (owned by Douglas Netter-Producer of *Babylon 5*) looks like the leading candidate.

There are 40 episodes being produced for strip syndication. So it will be aired Monday-Friday. The entire series will be aired over a period of 8 weeks. The series is an arcing story-line and will have closure by the end of the 40th episode. In each week of the series the mobile infantry will travel to a new planet (or other location) and that week's episodes will mostly take place there.

Characters such as Johnnie Rico, Carmen, and Sgt. Zim will be in the series, but they are part of the regular cast (Zim is only written into 5 episodes as far as we know). There are about 10 voice actors who make up the regular cast of the series; no big names have been cast in any of the lead roles.

It seems like the story line starts before the events that happened in the film, when humans are fighting the bugs, but not having a full scale war with them. But the story arc seems to end long after the events of the film.

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

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!

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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!

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

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

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

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

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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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