

MARCH 2000 (VOLUME 14, NUMBER 1)

PRICE: \$5

# WARPF 49

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



**Inside This Issue: The Aurora Awards, Cosmodome Conference, A Never-Produced *Crusade* Episode, Book Reviews, Model Building, the latest SF News, and More...**

**MONSFFA'S  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

Cathy Palmer-Lister  
President

Stephen Toy  
Vice-President

Sylvain St-Pierre  
Treasurer

**MONSFFA'S  
APPOINTED OFFICERS  
AND ADVISORS:**

Keith Braithwaite  
PR, Membership

Sylvain St-Pierre  
Membership

Dominique Durocher  
Stephen Toy  
Web Site Administrators

Wayne Glover  
Audio/Video

Marquise Boies  
Marc Durocher  
David James  
Ernst-Udo Peters  
Barbara Silverman  
Maureen Whitelaw  
Advisors Without Portfolio

**NEWSLETTER STAFF:**

Lynda Pelley (Editor)  
Editing, Word Processing,  
Layout, Photo/Art Scans,  
Production Manager  
e-mail to: [pellyn@odyssee.net](mailto:pellyn@odyssee.net)

Keith Braithwaite  
Editorial Consultant,  
Word Processing

Murphy  
Typos, Misspellings  
and Other Errors

**COVER UP:**

This issue's cover photo features the Aurora award won for best fanzine by *Warp* and its editor, Lynda Pelley. More details about MonSFFA's Aurora award winners in MonSFFAandom.(page 6)

**2000 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

**2000 EVENT PROGRAMMING\***

**March 12 - Mars and Genre Bending**

1:00pm: SF War - Things that go BOOM in the night!  
2:30pm: Crossover genres for the SF/F fan.

**April 16 - Day of The Lepus**

10:30am: Movie: *Night of The Lepus*  
1:00pm: Some unlikely candidates for sci-fi monsters, and what it takes to create an effective monster.  
2:30pm: Workshop: interactive monster making.

**May 7 - Wells, Verne, and Lucas**

10:30am: Movie: *Time After Time*  
1:00pm: The works of H.G. Wells and Jules Verne  
2:30pm: Game: *Star Wars* Script Challenge

**June 11 - Remakes and Finales**

1:00pm: If it ain't broke, fix it anyways: remakes vs the originals.  
2:30pm: Series finales we never saw...

**July - Summer Break - No Meeting**

**August 20 - Books and Storytelling**

1:00pm: What's new on the bookshelf?  
2:30pm: Round Robin: choose your own adventure; and a short, short story competition.

**September 17 - Effects of Technology**

1:00pm: What's so special about special effects?  
2:30pm: How has technology affected fandom?

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

JANUARY
16
FEBRUARY
20
MARCH
12
APRIL
16
MAY
7
JUNE
11
AUGUST
20
SEPTEMBER
17
OCTOBER
22
NOVEMBER
19
DECEMBER
9

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

MonSFFA's Address: P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2W 2P4  
MonSFFA's Web Site is: <http://www3.sympatico.ca/draken35/MonSFFA/index.html>



# FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR



I'm still surprised that *Warp* won! Yes, I'm referring to the Aurora Award pictured on the front of this issue. Not that *Warp* isn't a consistently high quality fanzine deserving of an award, but our newsletter has been routinely nominated for years and never wins. Of course, it is an honour to be nominated, and to make the short list of the top five, but it is much nicer to finally win.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who are familiar with *Warp*, and who appreciated the effort that goes into producing it enough to fill out the ballot, pay the voting fee, and select it as your fanzine of choice. Enough people actually voted for our newsletter this year! Many thanks.

When a fanzine wins an Aurora, it is the editor who receives the award, but although it is my name that is printed on the trophy, I alone cannot take credit for it. A newsletter such as *Warp* is produced by a team of regular contributors who provide articles, artwork, photographs, and technical expertise. I would especially like to thank Keith Braithwaite, Josée Bellemare, John Dupuis, Dominique Durocher, Daniel P. Kenney, Sylvain St-Pierre, Theresa Penalba, Lloyd Penney, and Berny Reischl for their ongoing contributions to this fanzine. I, as editor, manage and assemble everything, but a newsletter can only be as good as its content.

I was not the only MonSFFA member to receive a trophy. Ann Methé, Jean-Pierre Normand, John Dupuis, and Mark Shainblum also won awards. In general, Montrealers did well at the Auroras, and most were first-time winners. (See MonSFFAdom for more coverage.)

Regrettably, we didn't have much of a presence at the Convention in New Brunswick and were unable to accept our awards in person.

It has already been announced that the 2000 Convention will be held in conjunction with this year's Toronto Trek. Since it will take place in July—much earlier than the usual fall time slot—expect to see the nomination forms soon. Quite a few MonSFFen habitually attend T-Trek, so here's hoping that voter participation from our fannish community continues at its current level, now that Montreal is finally well-established on the Aurora map.

And keep that excellent newsletter content coming!

Lynda Pelley,  
Editor



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

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

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

Dear MonSFFen,

Here's a letter of comment on *Warp* 48.

A shame about DeForest Kelley...time marches on and you realize just how old you're getting when some of the movie and television actors you grew up watching are passing on. I met De at one of the big *Star Trek* cons in the late '70s in Manhattan. He was always pleasant and cordial, and always willing to talk about *Star Trek*. He knew that *Trek* was the best gig of his life, and it was the fans that gave him his fame.

Yvonne and I will be coming to Con•Cept/Boréal '99. The Toronto in 2003 WorldCon bid will have a table in the dealers' room, and we might be on a program item or two. I urge all who are interested in seeing another Canadian WorldCon to support our bid. With the Australian WorldCon just past, there's less than a year to the vote in Chicago! Sign up and get the price break on the initial cost of attending memberships. We need as many of you as possible to help get us through to Chicon 2000 and the vote.

I hope some of you were at the Canadian National Science Fiction/Animé/Comics Exposition, or SFX, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. We met Cindy Hodge, who had tables there. We were running the Toronto bid's table. The convention was marred by the

last-minute cancellation of Ray "Darth Maul" Park, and the unfortunate cancellation of John "Q" DeLancie, who couldn't get away from a film shoot in Vancouver. However, attendance was rumoured to be about 10,000 and SFX 2000 has already been scheduled for August of next year.

The Aurora ballots for this year are now available. I've been nominated in the category of Fan Achievement (Other), up against Larry Stewart and MonSFFA itself for "*Moxie*." There are plenty of Montrealers and former Montrealers on the ballot. By all means, folks, please vote this year!

Information (in "Sensors") about a new *Star Trek* series is interesting, for it confirms for many of us what Paramount denied it would do: create a *Star Trek: Fleet Academy* series that will become an SFnal 90210. I guess if *Trek* is to survive, it must appeal to a younger audience and that might just leave out the diehard fans who have made *Trek* the cultural icon that it is.

Time to wrap it up.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney  
Etobicoke, Ontario

*Hey, Lloyd. Time warp, again. Your letter arrived prior to Con•Cept/Boréal '99 but is seeing publication post-con. So, of course, we know you and Yvonne made it down to the con and we hope you enjoyed yourselves.*

*We trust your 2003 bid table did some business. The table, and your room party Saturday night, certainly contributed to promoting locally what we all hope will be a fourth Canadian WorldCon. On this you have our full support and our best wishes for success. We echo your words encouraging people to sign on today. The more momentum for the Toronto bid leading up to the vote at Chicon 2000, the better the chance of winning the 2003 WorldCon.*

*This year's Aurora's are behind us, too, as we write this up, and you, Larry, and our "Moxie" crew can console each other on the honour of just having been nominated. But Warp got best fanzine, and Jean-Pierre, Ann, and a couple other MonSFFen scored Aurora gold. The club was solidly represented, this year, at the winners podium and we are,*

*understandably, quite pleased. Obviously, more of our people are taking an interest in the awards and voting.*

*10,000 people! Wow! SFX, along with Toronto Trek, probably brought in as many people this year as every other con across Canada combined! Toronto has become the country's mega-con capital. Impressive. Most impressive.—Ed*

Dear Ms. Palmer-Lister:

I recently discovered the MonSFFA website, and thought you might be interested in receiving a complimentary copy of my novel *Wysard* to read and pass along to other members of your organization. This offer comes with no strings whatsoever attached. I'm a new author, and simply wish to get the word of my first book out to the people who can best enjoy and evaluate it—especially when those people are from Montreal, one of my favorite cities!

*Wysard* is fantasy at its highest and most heartfelt, with archetypal implications, complex characters, and passionate action centering around young lord adept Ryel Mirai's search, first for power in the Art, and next for the truth concerning his origins—a quest that soon deepens and widens to include the world far beyond the walls of his sorcerer-citadel Markul, and embroils him in combat against dread enemies bent on the annihilation of all that he has learned to love.

For more information on the book and myself, I cordially invite you to visit my web page at <http://members.home.net/kephart/>

Hoping to hear from you soon,

Carolyn Kephart  
Nashville, TN

*Carolyn, thank you for sending us a copy of your book. We passed it along to one of our members for a review, which we will publish in an upcoming issue of Warp. We wish you success with your new writing career.—Ed*

# MonSFFAandom

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

## WARP WINS BEST FANZINE AURORA, CLUB MEMBERS SCORE AWARDS IN SEVERAL OTHER CATEGORIES

The 1999 Aurora Award winners have been announced and MonSFFA is proud to pass on the news to our membership of *Warp* having been voted the country's top fanzine. Congratulations to Lynda Pelley, who, as the newsletter's editor, will receive the trophy.

But Lynda is not the only MonSFFAn to score an Aurora this year. Indeed, we rocked in '99! Jean-Pierre Normand takes home his *fourth consecutive* trophy for Artistic Achievement. Ann Methe got the nod in the Fan Achievement (Organizational) category for her chairing of Con•Cept '98. We fared well in the pro categories, too. John Dupuis and Mark Shainblum share honours for their editing of *Arrowdreams: An Anthology of Alternative Canadas*. And in a tie in the Best Work in French (Other) category, John grabbed a second Aurora for an article he wrote for *Solaris* magazine.

The club congratulates all of



*Aurora winners Lynda Pelley (l) and Ann Methe (r) pose with their awards. (Photos by Dominique Durocher and Lynda Pelley.)*

these Aurora Award-winning MonSFFAns, and all of the other winners and nominees. The Auroras are Canada's version of the Hugos, honouring excellence in the SF/F field. Winners are determined by vote, gleaned from SF/F fandom across Canada. (See page 21 for the complete list of 1999 Aurora Award winners.)

## 2000 EXECUTIVE

The January MonSFFA meeting, as is our tradition, saw the club's executive for the coming year take office. 2000's executive is a rerun of 1999's. MonSFFAns expressed confidence in last year's leadership and were pleased to enthusiastically support a continuation of same.

*Four-time Aurora winner Jean-Pierre Normand (l) surrounded by his award-winning artwork, and first-time winner Mark Shainblum (r) with Arrowdreams and the Aurora he shares with John Dupuis. Photos by Lynda Pelley.*



Congratulations to Cathy Palmer-Lister (president), Stephen Toy (vice president), and Sylvain St-Pierre (treasurer).

### MonSFFA SECURES MEETING ROOM THROUGH 2001

MonSFFA successfully concluded negotiations, just prior to the Christmas holiday break, with the Days Inn regarding our function space. We have reached an agreement that secures us our meeting room for the next two years at only a marginal per-meeting price increase. Despite the hotel's new, pricier rate structure, our negotiator, Keith Braithwaite, managed to hold the hike to a still-affordable few dollars more than last year's rate.

We continue to meet on Sundays and remain in our familiar St-Francois room, freshly renovated. Dates for 2000 have been booked; 2001's dates are pending. Refer to the page-2 events calendar in this and future issues for meeting dates, and for details of programming.

The club thanks Keith for a job well done.

### MonSFFA MEETINGS, AUGUST-JANUARY

#### August

This month's meeting took place on the 15th and drew between 25 and 30 MonSFFers. Our lead-off topic: space ship design.

Keith Braithwaite began with an historical overview. He showed stills of designs dating back to the days of Jules Verne, first of fanciful airships, which evolved later into spacecraft, then on through examples from the pulp era, to the sleek rockets of the 1950s, and the starships of more recent vintage.

It was explained that in designing a space ship for an SF story, first and foremost, the design must serve the story. If, for example, the tale involves travel to distant stars, then some kind of faster-than-light propulsion system is likely to be devised. If the crew are to set down on a strange planet, then their ship must either be able to make planetfall itself, or be equipped with smaller shuttlecraft capable of doing so. If an alien monster is to stalk this

crew from deck to deck, then the ship must feature multiple decks. Being science fiction, of course, the greater the degree of technical accuracy in the ship's design, the better, especially to purists. But technical accuracy will quickly be fudged to accommodate a plot element. And sometimes, most often in the movies or on television, a technically improbable design is adopted purely on the strength of its striking appearance.

Keith's presentation also illustrated how many a design over the years was, quite naturally, patterned on the real technology of the day. An illustrator 100 years ago could draw upon the airships or naval ships of that day, and with a little reworking, imagine them as space-going vessels. Or, he might take it a bit further and create a hybrid of the two. The rocketships of the 1950s were based on the real rockets of those days, while spacecraft depicted in several late-'60s movies looked an awful lot like moonshot-era NASA craft. But in at least one period, it was not the conventional craft of the day that served as inspiration, but craft attributed to supposedly real alien visitors! The popular UFO phenomenon of the '50s spawned a lot of saucer-shaped space ships in movies of that decade.

Keith brought his audience right up to the modern era of SF film making, touching on how the space ships, indeed much of the look of a film like *Alien*, for example, is based upon the work of a specific artist, in this case surrealist painter H.R. Giger. Among the more than 100 years worth of sci-fi space ships, a few of the sketches Keith showed were of futuristic vehicles, such as those seen in the film *Blade Runner*. Here's another example of a film that based its look on the work of a specific artist, industrial designer Syd Mead. (Both of these artists, by the way, not only inspired the look of, but worked on "their" respective films.) Keith ended with notes on how designers working on *The Phantom Menace* sought to instill in audiences a visceral fear when faced with the Federation's MTTs. These troop transports were quite purposely shaped to suggest a charging elephant.

Dominique Durocher and Wayne Glover, who had set out a collection of their scale model space ships on a table at the back of the room, then joined Keith on the dais. The three of them expanded briefly on what had been outlined in the presentation, and Dominique and Wayne spoke of space ship design as it pertains to modeling, holding up examples of modified kits and scratchbuilt ships. One of the things sci-fi modelers like to do is to create interesting new space ships by crossing, for instance, an old *Battlestar: Galactica* model with a *Babylon 5* model, or a Federation vessel with a Klingon design.

The second half of the meeting was devoted to an overview of the recently wrapped *Star Trek* television series, *Deep Space Nine*. Keith and Krikor Ajemian presided over a discussion that split the room roughly in half as to whether *DS9* had been an entertaining show to watch and one that will be missed, or a bland and poorly written bore-fest. Those who supported the show argued that the stories involving the Federation's conflict with the Dominion were quite engaging. Some of the secondary characters, like Garak, were cited as the show's most interesting. Another favourite, particularly with the guys, was mirror-universe Kira. And episodes like "Captive Pursuit," featuring the Tosk, and the clever Roswell story, "Little Green Men," were put forth as examples of good SF writing. But the show's detractors found that such episodes were few and far between. Too many dumb, dull, and sappy stories turned viewers off, they opined. The space-station setting was also a problem for some, who found this to be in opposition to what was one of the best things about *Star Trek* in the first place, the idea of exploring strange, new worlds each week.

A brief discussion of MonSFFA's plans for the upcoming Con•Cept/Boréal '99 convention preceded the *DS9* panel.

#### September

With the fictional events of the old *Space: 1999* TV series as our starting point, MonSFFA devoted its meeting this month to the topic of the moon.

We began with a screening of the series pilot, set on Moonbase Alpha in September of 1999 (how timely!), in which the moon is blown out of Earth orbit by a huge explosion. Most found that the 20-plus-year-old show stood up fairly well. Yes, there were considerable lapses in the science, it was noted, but our crowd was quite forgiving, saying that to be fair, erroneous science is pretty common in most sci-fi series.

Cathy Palmer-Lister took the podium for the bulk of the afternoon, offering a scientific primer on Earth's only natural satellite.

She opened with a quick reading of some of the more interesting answers to moon-related questions posed to the group on questionnaires she had posted at the outset of the meeting. What is the moon made of? Limburger cheese was one tongue-in-cheek answer, with the additional explanation of the reason we can't smell it being because the moon is so far away. How big an explosion would be needed to blast the moon out of Earth's orbit? Many guesses; Cathy's best estimate is 17,600,000,000,000 megatons, which would probably result, actually, in lots of moon dust! What does one see in the face of a full moon? The Man in the Moon, of course. One "cheerful" fellow scribbled "the despair of life!"

Moving right along, Cathy corrected the misconception that the moon has a dark side, and dispelled the popular myths that a full moon effects people's behaviour and female menstrual cycles. Using a flashlight and calling upon audience members to represent the sun, Earth, and moon, she demonstrated the lunar cycle. Her talk also included details of how the Earth would have evolved without the moon. She cited a book by Neil F. Comins, *What if the Moon didn't Exist?*, as an excellent resource on this particular subject.

Cathy fielded many questions from her audience throughout her presentation—about the dark areas on the lunar surface, about geological activity, a magnetic field, etc.—and later commented that MonSFFen proved to be quite a bit more knowledgeable about the moon than were the creators of *Space: 1999*.

Several tables-full of moon stuff—astronomy books, maps,

*Space: 1999* items, etc.—were on display for perusal.

Keith Braithwaite capped off the meeting with a brief look at the new sci-fi TV upcoming. He spoke of, among others, *X-Files* creator Chris Carter's latest, *Harsh Realm*, the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* spin-off, *Angel*, and the teen-oriented *Roswell*.

## October

Our meeting of the 17th focused on SF/F costuming, particularly *bad* SF/F costuming. About 30 people were in attendance.

Sylvain St-Pierre screened, from his video collection of convention masquerades, numerous examples of bad costumes and/or presentations. Glaring errors included such contemporary wear as running shoes, glasses, and wrist watches worn with fantasy or period costumes. Poor presentations ranged from those in which the costumer effectively had no presentation, simply walking quickly on and off the stage, to those in which the presentation went on interminably. Other no-no's: unrehearsed presentations, masks through which the costumer's presentation cannot be heard, and unwieldy costumes in which it is near-impossible to move about.

But bad costuming is not only perpetrated by amateurs. Sylvain continued with clips from sci-fi movies and television shows, illustrating how professionals can often bungle things just as badly, if not worse. *Lost in Space* once foisted upon viewers an actor in a carrot suit, with no attempt made to hide the fact that this was just a guy in a ridiculous carrot suit! Even a B-movie should be able to come up with something better than the gorilla suit topped with a deep-sea-diving helmet used in the 1953 3-D clunker *Robot Monster*. Or the dopey martian headgear and ludicrous robot costume of 1964's *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*. And the various alien monster costumes used in an old black-and-white Mexican sci-fi movie were laughable at best. Kids' Halloween bargains plucked from the K-mart bargain bin would have been more convincing!

Joe Aspler was at the head of the room following the mid-meeting

break, showing slides of WorldCon-level costumes and covering, at the same time, Rotsler's Rules of Costuming. These are guidelines developed by Hugo Award-winning fan artist, costumer, and frequent masquerade judge William Rotsler. He advises costumers, for example, to keep their presentations short—and preferably funny—for maximum effect. He notes that no costume is no costume. Nudity is frowned upon in masquerades. And if presenting as a group, remember that your entry is only as good as the weakest costume. The famous "no peanut butter" rule stemmed from an incident in which a costumer coated himself in peanut butter and entered a masquerade as a comic book character named the Turd or some such. The peanut butter, of course, soon began to go rancid, not to mention come off all over furniture, rugs, and other people's costumes, to nobody's amusement. From that day on, masquerades banned the use of peanut butter or any other such messy substances.

Before we got into the day's topic, we welcomed Richard Bertrand, a visitor from the Cosmodome, located up in Laval. Richard came in search of our help with a space festival that the Cosmodome was planning to hold just after Christmas. He hoped, first, to recruit a few volunteers to attend in sci-fi costume, lending the event a bit of atmosphere. Also, a special intergalactic meeting of alien races was proposed, our costumers to play the parts of the various aliens. Richard sought ideas from us, too, as to other interesting eye candy that we might be able to provide.

Several of our costumers responded that they were keen to take part, and we suggested that a collection of SF models and collectibles might make an attractive display. The club could also, of course, use this opportunity to promote itself. Richard was pleased with our enthusiasm and eager to include us in the developing project. Ann Methe volunteered to act as MonSFFA's liaison with the Cosmodome on this. (MonSFFA's participation in this event is covered below; see item "Cosmodome Space Festival.")

## November

The 21st of this month saw MonSFFA explore, during the first half of the meeting, the topic of computers in SF. Also discussed, as the millennial deadline loomed, was the Y2K bug. Part two of the meeting was devoted to updating members on the club's doings.

Kicking off, panelists Keith Braithwaite, Joe Aspler, and Stephen Toy spoke of HAL and other computers depicted in SF, which generally fall into one of two categories: technologically advanced super-machines that greatly benefit mankind and solve our problems for us, or malfunctioning, sometimes malevolent, soulless metal monstrosities that threaten to dominate or destroy humans. Interestingly, prior to the advent of the personal computer now commonplace, the idea of a PC seems not to have occurred to very many SF writers. Huge, central systems of one kind or another tended to be the model envisioned.

As for Y2K, few MonSFFen expected any major problems to result. Despite dire warnings in newspapers, magazines, and on television of power grids going down, electronic banking systems collapsing, and airplanes falling from the sky, the so-called Millennium Bug, predicted panelists and audience members, would cause only minor glitches. Nobody anticipated anything that would prove more than an inconvenience. (Their prognostications proved quite prescient as Y2K turned out to be a big non-event.)

Following, club president Cathy Palmer-Lister reported on the state of the club, covering the BoA, finances, our recent Aurora wins, etc. Upcoming outings, activities, and projects were detailed; suggestions for meeting programming and new undertakings were solicited from the members present.

## January

Our first meeting of the year 2000 featured panelists Keith Braithwaite, Joe Aspler, and John Matthias on the subject of the 21st century. What scientific advances can we expect in the new century? How

will our society change? The discussion was lively as our speakers touched on everything from space exploration, genetic engineering, transportation technology, and the environment to communications, leisure, economic and social systems, and the continuing impact of the baby boom generation. Audience members pitched in with many a comment along the way. Among the panel's predictions of what the 21st century will bring: huge advances in medical science that will see cures for cancer, AIDS, indeed most diseases, and increase the human lifespan; manned space missions to Mars and permanent bases established on the red planet; the continued failure to make contact with any intelligent life out there in the universe; automobiles that run clean, powered by environmentally friendly fuel cells; the demise of nation-states in favour of continental trade blocs; an even faster pace of life than we currently endure; greater spirituality; computers that will make today's top-line machines as archaic as dinosaurs by comparison; and an Academy Award for Best Picture won by an SF/F film.

The latter part of the meeting dealt with psychics, asking why, in this modern scientific age, do people still phone psychic hotlines and consult astrological charts before planning their day? Keith and Joe remained at the front of the room for this one, joined by John Dupuis and Bryan Ekers. All four dismissed psychic phenomena as just so much bunk perpetrated on the gullible by tricksters and frauds. Several audience members allowed that most of it certainly is bunk, but that maybe, in some cases, there is something to it. The panelists argued that the record of accurate psychic predictions makes their case for them. Why did the tabloid psychics miss forecasting the unexpected deaths of both Princess Diana and John F. Kennedy, Jr., two of the biggest news stories of the past few years? Why can't fortune tellers tell you what the winning lottery numbers will be, thus assuring you of a fortune? Seeing into the future is, perhaps, an inexact "science," suggested one audience member. A convenient out for the psychics, replied the panelists, removing any

obligation to in any way guarantee their predictions. A controlled, scientific test of the abilities of psychics *should* provide definitive proof that the phenomena are real. So why do psychics shy away from such tests, proposed for years by debunkers? Because, said the panelists, the phenomena are *not* real. But maybe contemporary science is not able to measure psychic phenomena, came the retort. Science cannot answer all of our questions. At one time, the suggestion that the ebb and flow of tides is caused by something called gravity, exerted on the Earth by the moon, would have been met with ridicule. Are we now ridiculing psychic phenomena that science will one day understand? The panelists remained unconvinced, however, stating that psychics, for better or worse, offer people in our increasingly complex and confusing world the comfort of simple answers.

MonSFFA chose its 2000 executive at this meeting (see item "2000 Executive," above).

## Thanks

The club thanks Keith, Dominique, Wayne, Krikor, Cathy, Sylvain, Joe, Stephen, both Johns, and Bryan for doing all of this programming for us. A second thank-you goes to Wayne and Joe, who provided us with A/V equipment. We also thank those MonSFFen who did raffle and snack-table duty. And a special nod of appreciation goes to the numerous donators, in recent months, of some mighty fine raffle prizes.

## MonSFFA CHRISTMAS PARTY '99

The club switched gears re 1999's Christmas party. Rather than our traditional downtown bar locale, we instead held the party at "Ann's place," Ann being MonSFFAn and Con•Cept chair Ann Methe, who had offered to host festivities this year at her home. She arranged for Con•Cept to provide bar service at less-than-downtown-bar prices, thus benefitting both party-goers and the convention, while MonSFFA saw to the event's usual elements—snack buffet, raffle, collection for seasonal charity, etc.

The party was very well attended and ran well into the wee hours. The buzz of conversation filled the house and people were invited to peruse several rooms full of nifty sci-fi stuff collected by Ann's significant other, Jean-Pierre Normand. An extensive genre video collection proved popular as Jean-Pierre cued up rare SF fare, snippets from laughably cheesy B-flicks, old TV shows, and such. Several large boxes and bags of food items and toys were collected for donation to Sun Youth's Christmas Basket Drive.

MonSFFA wishes to thank Ann and Jean-Pierre for hosting a great party. Thanks to the Con•Cept crew who did bar duty for us, and to the many club members who supplied the various seasonal snacks that made up our buffet. A nod, also, to those who donated items for our raffle, which raised \$96 for the club, and to Keith Braithwaite, who took care of delivering to Sun Youth that which we collected for charity.

#### MonSFFA AT CON•CEPT/BORÉAL '99, EMPIRECON II

MonSFFA was pleased to participate in the 10th anniversary installment of the convention we founded that decade ago. Con•Cept, teamed with the French-language Boréal con (which was celebrating its 20th anniversary), took place on the weekend of October 1-3.

MonSFFA made a particularly strong showing of it, this year. Our club table in the dealers' room was hard to miss (see item "New Promotional Booth..." below), we hosted several panels, which our people report were very well received, and held a rather lively room party on the Saturday night. And while MonSFFA has not been involved in running the con in any official capacity for a number of years, its good to see many of our members involved of their own volition, several holding key positions on the concom.

We salute the con on its 10th anniversary, continue to support it and wish it well as it enters its second decade.

We thank our stable of panelists, our club table crew, and the organizers of our room party for

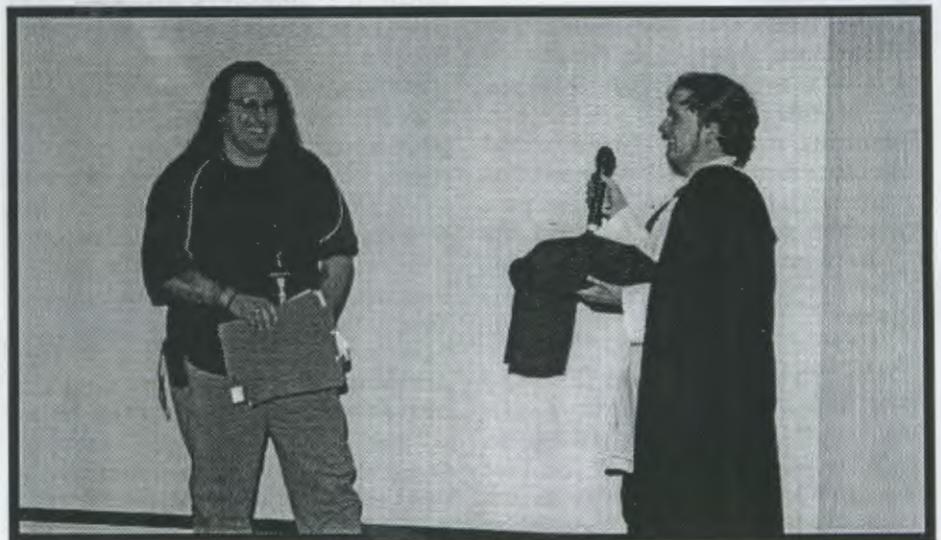


Linda Huntoon (l) and Lynda Pelley (r) pose with photographer Daniel P. Kenney in "The Godzilla Room" at the Christmas party.

doing their part for the club. These include Lynda Pelley, Dominique Durocher, Wayne Glover, Keith Braithwaite, Stephen Toy, Bryan Ekers, Krikor Ajemian, Cathy Palmer-Lister, David James, Josée Bellemare, and Michele Berry.

The club was also present at Ace Lopes' Empirecon II (November 27-28), the second *Star Wars* convention organized in Montreal within a year. Our crew reports that they sold a handful of *Warps* and handed out

Sebastien Mineau (r), dressed in Jedi robes, presents Empirecon organizer Ace Lopes (l) with a lightsaber award of merit for introducing *Star Wars* conventions to the Montreal area. Photo by Daniel P. Kenney.



many MonSFFA flyers, but noted that the crowd was considerably thinner than it had been for Empirecon I back in January, when some 2000-2500 attended.

MonSFFA thanks our Empirecon II crew, as well as Ace, who once again provided us with a prime table location on the convention floor.

#### EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

MonSFFA is in the midst of an image make-over, these days, as we update our flyers, discuss new ideas for the promotion of the club, and begin presenting our new look to the public, notably with the recent introduction of a snazzy new promotional booth to be used at conventions and shows (see next item). While this process has us coming up with all kinds of new concepts, there is, paradoxically, one important area in which we find ourselves going back to an old image: the club's logo.

For reasons of nostalgia, perhaps, there is strong opinion among many members that we go retro and reintroduce our old logo, the one that was phased out (though never completely) in the early '90s in favour of the current design that appears on the club's membership cards. Both logos feature a dragon and a rocket, representing fantasy and science fiction, respectively. Keith Braithwaite, designer of the current logo and co-designer, with

Capucine Plourde, of its predecessor, recalls that he quite purposely carried the dragon and rocket over when drawing up the current logo. MonSFFA's very first logo—used only briefly on a run or two of flyers—introduced the dragon-and-rocket motif and was, in fact, Capucine's rough sketch for the design she would then collaborate on with Keith. This collaboration gave us the second MonSFFA logo, that is, the precursor to the current logo and the very one that we're now bringing back to replace the current logo, which will make it also successor to the current logo. Got all that? Anyway, the dragon and rocket have remained constants.

So, what's old is new again, and our "new" logo will bring back the inverted-triangle field within which is depicted a dragon, sword in hand, hitching a ride on a rocket flying in front of a ringed planet. The old logo only ever existed in black and white, which doesn't quite cut it today. So as we bring it back, we are, at the same time, cleaning it up a little, and giving it the full-colour treatment. Technically, then, our redux is not the exact same logo as before, but the spirit of the original is certainly there.

Keith was working on the redux leading up to Con•Cept/Boréal '99 and provided a near-complete version for our booth at the con. He continues working on the logo, mostly tweaking the colours, and expects to have a final version soon.

### NEW PROMOTIONAL BOOTH MAJOR PART OF CLUB'S IMAGE MAKE-OVER

Business was brisk at MonSFFA's table over the Con•Cept/Boréal '99 weekend and no doubt our newly designed promotional booth can be credited for much of that. We took the opportunity of this convention to unveil a sharp, new look for the club, which we expect will help heighten our profile at such events.

The club's name, in English and French, is run prominently across the top of an arrangement of four 2X4-foot painted wood panels which stand atop a standard-size hotel table. These panels serve to display dozens of photos illustrating what MonSFFA is all about. Positioned

centrally over the panels is a large, full-colour version of the club's logo (see above item). Completing our new booth is a table cloth, colour-matched to the sky blue scheme of the panels, which drapes over the front of the table and finishes the booth off quite nicely. Add to the table a couple of small stand-ups of the logo, our flyers (now printed on sky blue stock), and various issues of *Warp*, displays of models, videos for sale, etc. and we're ready to market MonSFFA like never before.

The club has member Michele Berry to thank for spearheading this promo-booth project. She proposed the idea at a BoA meeting at the end of August and lit a fire under everyone in order to see the project carried out in just over a month, in time to have the booth up at Con•Cept/Boréal. Michele came to the task with extensive experience as a sign painter, and with the experience of having built such a booth for a Vancouver-based *Star Trek* club she was involved with before coming to Montreal.

Working from a graphic design provided by Keith Braithwaite, she painted and lettered the panels. She then stitched the table cloth. Next came the gathering of photo material and its preparation for display on the

panels, Michele here assisted by Lynda Pelley, Dominique Durocher, Berny Reischl, and Ernst-Udo Peters. Keith supplied the large club logo that topped it all off.

We are all solidly impressed with the result and offer kudos to Michele and her team on a job superbly done.

### MERLIN 2000: LAST-MINUTE DELAYS NIX SCHEDULED COMPLETION OF SHOOT

We reported last issue that *Merlin 2000*, the club-sponsored video-film currently in production, had expected to complete shooting by the end of August or thereabouts. Unfortunately, eleventh-hour gremlins resulted in the production having to scrub the scheduled shooting of the remaining few scenes. An indoor location to be used for a major scene became unavailable and matters were complicated further when lead actor Krikor Ajemian moved to Toronto! Meanwhile, David James suffered a work-related accident that left him in a leg cast and unable to film his final scene.

Co-Producer Marc Durocher rescheduled, shooting a few sequences over the Christmas break, with the remainder to be completed

*MonSFFA's new promotional booth, set up here with a Star Wars emphasis for Empirecon. Photo by Daniel P. Kenney.*



by early summer, when Krikor can get back to Montreal for a couple of weekends. Dave is up and walking again and he'll be ready to step in front of the lens for outdoor location shooting once the snow has melted.

We are reminded of similarly frustrating glitches that impeded the timely completion of the club's last video project, *The FedEx Files: "Moxie."* But that project was, eventually, finished and so will be this one. Chins up, Marc and crew!

*Merlin 2000* is a comedy that sees legendary medieval wizard Merlin transported forward in time to a modern-day SF/F convention.

### COSMODOME SPACE FESTIVAL

Some two dozen costumed MonSFFen, joined by several friends from other local fannish organizations, took part in a space festival put on by Laval's Cosmodome (Space Camp Canada) from December 26 to January 9. Costumed as various sci-fi characters, our crew walked the exhibit hall providing "atmosphere," as the Cosmodome people put it, and giving visiting children something fun to look at. On the closing weekend of the festival, our whole contingent converged on site for an "intergalactic conference," a goofy live performance scripted by Sylvain St-Pierre in which various planetary governments discussed the need to blow up the Earth because it's blocking a good view of Venus. Sylvain and Sebastien Mineau videotaped this "Space Camp Khitomer" conference for posterity. We plan to screen the tape at a future club meeting so that those who took part can relive the experience, and those who could not attend have opportunity to see all the silliness. We also featured, throughout the run of the festival, a few small displays of spaceship models and SF collectibles. The Cosmodome people were thrilled with our involvement and hope that we'll be back next time.

MonSFFFA thanks, most importantly, all of the costumers who participated. Thanks, specifically, to Ann Methe and Cathy Palmer-Lister, who liaised with the Cosmodome and coordinated things; Sylvain for scripting the conference;



Mid-week during the Cosmodome's Space Festival, Robert Bonchune (l), special effects supervisor for *Star Trek: Voyager*, was invited as a guest speaker. Originally from Beaconsfield, he brought his Emmy award to show to the local fans, which he recently won for his work on *Voyager*. The Cosmodome presented him with a small meteorite, which he is examining in this photograph. Photo by Dominique Durocher.

Sylvain again, and Sebastien, for videotaping the event; and Richard Bertrand and the guys at the Cosmodome, who invited us to take part and facilitated us in doing our bit.

### MonSFFen WORK PLEDGE DRIVE FOR PBS STATION

Twice during the past few months, a small group of MonSFFen

travelled down to Plattsburgh, New York, to help the local PBS TV outlet, WCFE, during the station's pledge drive. Our crew served as phone volunteers, taking pledges from viewers calling in to support Channel 57. We enjoy a long-running relationship with WCFE, having done this duty many times over the years. WCFE were kind enough, on these most recent occasions, to interview one of our people briefly on air, allowing us to plug the club.

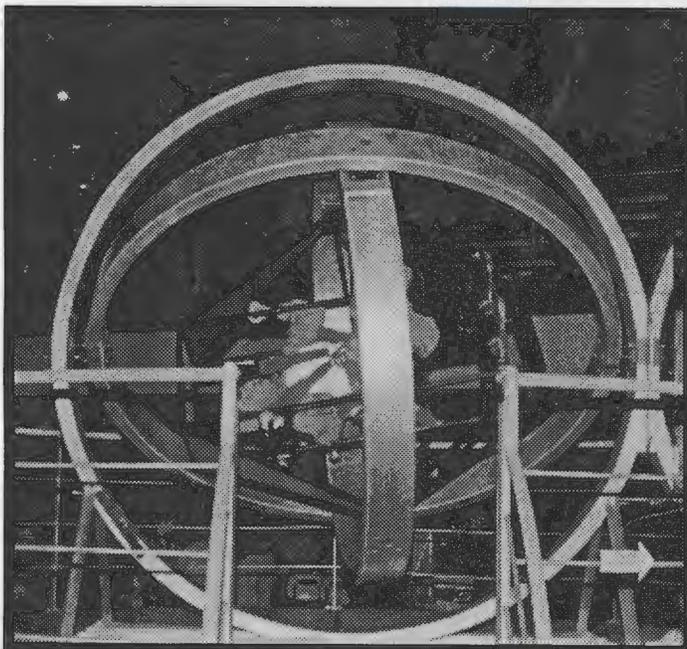
Daniel P. Kenney snapped this photo of MonSFFFA's WCFE crew from his TV set: Top (l-r): Gregory, Cathy, André, JJ. Bottom (l-r): Keith, Fran, Cindy, Berny.





*Above: Barbara Silverman poses at the entrance to the space shuttle simulator at the Cosmodome.*

*Below: Dominique Durocher gets turned upsidedown and all around in a gyroscopic device designed to test for orientation and dizziness in space (and/or for potential to be space sick). Photos provided by Dominique Durocher.*



## The Intergalactic Federations Diplomatic Conference:

### Commentary on the Press Coverage of 'Kamp Khitomer'

by Josée Bellemare

I thought the conference went very well. What I found disappointing was the lack of media coverage, or more precisely, english media coverage.

Always hopeful, I taped Pulse at 6:00 PM on the Saturday in question. The conference started at a little after 1:00 PM. If they had wanted to, they could have filmed some of it and still have had time to edit their footage before the 6:00 o'clock news. What happened!? Instead of promoting an event put together by local clubs, both french and english, to increase tourism at a local space museum, CFCF-12, in it's questionable judgement, aired footage of an Elvis Presley birthday party held in Houston, Texas.

Recently, CFCF-12 has repeatedly ignored all fandom activities in Montreal and the surrounding areas. This is a station which has broadcast such SF shows as *The X-Files*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *Babylon 5*, plus its TV movies and spin-off, *Crusade*. They are currently running *Stargate SG-1* and *Star Trek: Voyager*—a fact which is advertised all over the STCUM bus and metro stations. Considering this, it seems odd that the station would ignore an event where all of these series were represented. Common sense would suggest that coverage of the conference might increase viewership of such shows through curiosity, and certainly their loyal audiences for these SF shows would at least be interested in this event.

On the other side of things, special thanks should go to TQS for showing up and not only filming the entire conference, but also doing interviews with some of the participants.

It should be mentioned that TQS runs french versions of *The X-Files* and *Stargate SG-1* as well as other shows of interest to science fiction and fantasy enthusiasts.

I would especially like to thank their news anchor, Jean-Luc Mongrain, for the recognition he gave fandom when he not only used the proper words and gestures, but acknowledged them as a Klingon greeting. It may have been done all in good fun, but it is appreciated none the less.

# Dancing at the Edge of the World

## Extracts from the Reading Diary of John Dupuis

### THE SPARROW

by Mary Doria Russell

Prieeeeeeests in Spaaaaaace!

Mary Doria Russell's Tiptree-award winning novel takes a rather different approach to the first contact novel than we're used to: an astronomer and his Jesuit priest friend, Emilio Sandoz, discover intelligent life on other planets by decoding a signal sent from that civilization. Ok, so this part isn't so unfamiliar. The real curveball here is that they don't tell anyone but the priest's superiors. The Society of Jesus then proceeds to plan and execute a secret mission to that planet, before anyone else figures out what is going on and decodes the signals from that far-off planet.

As you can see, this is somewhat similar to Sagan's *Contact* at the beginning, and in fact *The Sparrow* was aimed at a mainstream audience just like *Contact* was.

Given that this novel has received such an unbelievably positive response, I feel a little guilty taking such a nitpicking approach to it (somewhat akin to the way Tom Godwin's *The Cold Equations* was picked apart in the pages and letter columns of the *The New York Review of Science Fiction* a few years back). I have to say that I found it somewhat disappointing. (As far as I can tell, Claude Lalumière and I are the only people on the planet that didn't like this novel.)

But first, a bit more of the plot: there are two parallel stories going on here. The first is the story of the discovery of the signal and the eight-person expedition out to the planet, which turns out to be called Rakhat. The second, and in some ways more interesting, begins with Sandoz returning alone from Rakhat and the slow unraveling of the traumatic events that lead to the death of the rest of the party, his total emotional collapse, and subsequent return to Earth. So, you actually know what is going to happen at the end, at the

beginning, with only the details of what caused Sandoz's final breakdown to be revealed at the end of the trip-to-Rakhat thread.

The science fictional parts of the novel are really some of the least interesting aspects. This is more of an exploration of faith in times of adversity: Sandoz functions very much as a Job-like figure, trying to figure out if he really believes in a god that can inflict so much suffering on him as part of any kind of plan.

Another problem I had with the novel is that Rakhat and its culture are rather Star-Treky in their blandness and predictability. Russell's background is in anthropology and it shows in the humanness of the culture: they have ports and farms and brothels and class structure and all kinds of other hallmarks of human culture. It feels like she took bits and pieces from different anthropology texts and stitched it all together.

Also, the ultimate explanation for Sandoz's collapse, while understandably emotionally devastating, feels a little too engineered by the author—too much *deus ex machina*. This could be, in part, because the flashback style tells us from the beginning the results of his ordeal, but not what triggered his collapse. After all that build-up, nothing Russell could have come up with would have seemed satisfying.

And some of the science is pretty lame. For example, how could any organization hide the fact that they were converting an asteroid into the first-ever interstellar vehicle? On the other hand, some of the other preparations for the trip seem a little amateurish for an organization that Russell implies is ultra-competent—like not really bringing any weapons or only bringing one lander with a low fuel capacity. How about everyone going down to the planet at the same time? Not to mention the ultra-competent engineering guy making an obvious and fatal error. The crew also seems a little unlikely—average age too high, not enough cross-competencies, too many friends from

before the discovery. They are also too overwhelmingly, unrealistically lovable. These people are adolescent idealizations of friends: too kind, too generous, and too understanding. They laugh at each other's lame jokes too much; they are just too supportive of each other. They just aren't real.

The only way that I can explain the raft of genre awards this novel has won is that it appealed to our collective inferiority complex: a good novel published outside the genre must be a great genre novel.

To sum up, I have to say that, even with the flaws, this is really a pretty good novel. Russell's dramatic flair, strong storytelling skills, and sympathetic hand with characterization keep you turning the pages (even, in my case, sometimes with clenched teeth). It also functions a lot better as a futuristic retelling of Job than as a regular SF novel. After all, it is the author's first novel, and one that shows potential. It is even perhaps one of the best SF novels ever written from outside the genre and, therefore, divorced from its nitpicking expectations (*mea culpa*). I'm looking forward to reading the sequel, *Children of God*.

### TRADER

by Charles de Lint

I really haven't read much de Lint in the past, and what I have read I really haven't found to my taste. His brand of modern fantasy—while intellectually I can see its merits—is just not my cup of tea. But the reviews for this one were a little different, implying that *Trader* might appeal to a broader audience. And they were right.

This is certainly the most enjoyable de Lint I have ever read. It takes the tried-and-true premise of body exchange and updates it into the present. Responsible, hard working, yet dull luthier (guitar maker) Max Trader wakes up one day to find that he has traded bodies with ne'er-do-well loser Johnny Devlin. In the process of getting back

his own body, Max comes to terms with his past life and the chances he never took. This is a fun and engaging novel with a lot to recommend it to any reader.

#### YEAR'S BEST SF 4

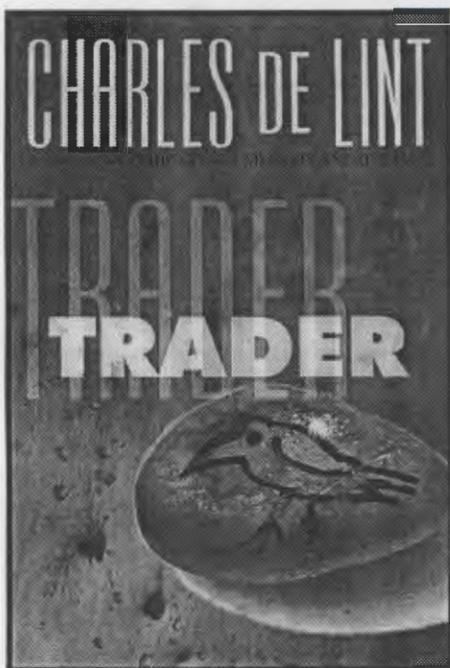
edited by David G. Hartwell

Another strong volume from Hartwell, concentrating on good old-fashioned SF, mostly of the hard variety. Hartwell's traditional definition of the genre is very welcome these days and complements Dozois' more expansive definition in his year's best volume (hopefully reviewed next time). No recommendation other than "must buy today" is really needed.

#### A CLASH OF KINGS

by George R. R. Martin

This is a great follow up to *A Game of Thrones*. Like any second-of-a-six-volume-series, it advances the plot without answering too many questions. Like the first volume, it's brutal, violent, and realistic, with only slight touches of fantasy. It's a hard book about a hard world, with no compromises, and lots of surprises. As the title implies, this volume concerns the shattering of the old, monolithic kingdom into competing claims for the throne, and the backstabbing and political wrangling that follows.



#### HYPERION and THE FALL OF HYPERION

by Dan Simmons

I'm not sure how to write a capsule review of these two landmark works of 1980's SF, so I won't really try.

The first book tells the story of seven travelers and their journey to the planet Hyperion. Each in turn tells their story and the circumstances that lead them to undertake the trip, for on Hyperion they hope to encounter the mysterious being, The Shrike, hoping that it will grant them what they wish.

The second volume, and by far the most interesting and exciting, tells the story of just how awful and wonderful (especially awful—remember Simmons is also well known for his horror) it is to be so close and yet so far from what you really need. As the Time Tombs open, all of the travelers are tested...

#### THE WEB 2027

by Stephen Baxter, Stephen Bowkett, Eric Brown, Graham Joyce, Peter F. Hamilton, and Maggie Furey

This is a collection of six young adult novellas, originally published separately in Britain and now collected in one volume.

The premise is quite good: in the future virtual reality technology has become quite common place, especially amongst those ultimate early-adopters—teenagers! VR instruction has replaced regular classrooms, as well as hanging out at the mall. But all is not so peachy-keen. There is a mysterious presence on the Web and this woman is up to no good. She sets up secret areas on the web, cracks into other areas, and even kidnaps kids in the real world. She must be stopped! And who better than a bunch of kids!

These six novellas tell the story of how a series of kids uncover bits and pieces of the plot and ultimately stop the bad guy in her virtual tracks. Each episode stars a new kid,

*Charles de Lint, whose latest book is pictured left, is confirmed as the Literary Guest of Honour at this year's Con\*Cept, Oct 13-15, 2000.*

but each also has some kids overlapping in minor roles from previous episodes. Overall, the plot is very well constructed and each installment is quite good. It's light reading, of course, but it would be great for a long bus trip.

I do have to make note of one particular episode, "Untouchable" by Eric Brown. All the other episodes focus on happy-go-lucky, reasonably prosperous First World kids, as is typical with most SF. So where does Brown set this story? In the slums of Calcutta. The hero, Ana, is a very poor girl, begging on the street to save money for an operation for her younger brother. Suddenly he is kidnapped and she must rely on help from a rich kid who has access to the Web to help her find him. This is a great story, by far the best in the collection, because it reminds us that while technology may be great, not everyone in the world has the same access to it that we do. And that this is unlikely to get any better in the future—probably only worse.

Other books recently read and recommended:

#### Reliquary

by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child

#### God's Fires

by Patricia Anthony

#### The Neutronium Alchemist Vol 1

by Peter F. Hamilton

#### Expiration Date

by Timothy Powers

#### The Cure for Death by Lightning

by Gail Anderson-Dargatz

#### Times Square Red, Times Square Blue

and *Bread and Wine*

by Samuel R. Delany

(This time around, the title of this column is inspired by the essay collection *Dancing at the Edge of the World* by Ursula K. Leguin)

# JOE'S BOOK REVIEWS

*ISLAND IN THE SEA OF TIME*  
AND  
*AGAINST THE TIDE OF YEARS*  
By S.M. Stirling

Reviewed by Joe Aspler

The archetypal castaway-in-time story is Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Now imagine thousands of Yankees in the Bronze Age. As the result of The Event (an inexplicable night of strange storms and lights in the sky), the island of Nantucket, off the coast of New England, gets moved back to 1250 BC. The Nantucketers have to use their knowledge and limited resources to survive.

Fortunately, they have a few cards up their sleeve. Libraries, plenty of random 20th century know-how, a few doctors, the local Police Chief (who turns out to be a natural leader blessed with a mass of common sense), an inventor-type with a fully equipped machine shop, and incredibly rich resources in Bronze Age America and in the waters around. To quote Robert A. Heinlein: give a chemist sulfuric acid, and he can make anything.

They also have the *Eagle* (a real US Coast Guard training ship, one of the last of the tall ships) caught off Nantucket during The Event. With the *Eagle* comes her crew: Captain Marian Alston, a black, gay, woman (The US Coast Guard, in today's America, doing something that tolerant? Well, this is science fiction). She is tough and capable; an expert on sailing ships (just the thing for the Bronze Age), and an expert with a sword (even more useful). One of her officers, William Walker, turns renegade, tries to set himself up as a king in Bronze Age Britain, and the story is off.

The first book sets up the series. The Nantucketers must trade with Britain, if they are to avoid starvation in their first winter. And that puts them in the position of defenders

against a sort of Viking invasion, nearly 2,000 years ahead of time. They also have to worry about a few of their own religious fundamentalists and eco-types who come to a very bad end.

The second book starts about eight years after The Event. The Republic of Nantucket has prospered, spreading (in the words of one character), "potatoes and sanitation". Their sailing ships are trading around the world, their allies in Britain provide raw materials and immigrants, and they've managed to maintain a semblance of modern technology. No Uzis, but pretty good 19th century cannons and guns. Their old nemesis, William Walker has set himself up as king in Greece, and the Nantucketers must ally themselves with the King of Babylon. If the first book is the story of a few thousand Americans trying to survive an unimaginable event, the second book is mostly a military and maritime adventure, with battles abroad in aid of their new Babylonian allies, and at home, defending their island from Mediterranean invaders.

A great adventure series. I'm looking forward to *Volume III*, which looks like it will take place at the Siege of Troy. Yes, that Troy.

## *NORTH OF INFINITY*

Edited by Micheal Magnini

Reviewed by Joe Aspler

Twentieth century SF has been dominated by the USA. Oh, there have been European—especially British—contributions, but the commercial, big name market has been largely American. Most of the big-name British writers try to sound like Americans. Some of Sir Arthur C. Clarke's early work looked very British, but his later work looks very American. That's where the money is.

Over the last few years, there has

been an explosion of Canadian SF. But what is Canadian SF? Canadian SF can be defined in three ways: SF by Canadians, SF set in Canada, or SF on a particularly Canadian theme. Canadian-born great Gordon Dickson wrote one of the best stories written on a Canadian theme, based on the old French-Canadian ghost story, *La Chasse Galerie*. Would that we had more like that.

While lacking in stories on genuinely Canadian themes, Michael Magnini's collection *North of Infinity* is rich in the first two themes. The book contains excellent stories by Canadians, plus stories set in Canada. All of the stories would be worthy of publication in any of the major magazines.

Of particular note are Colleen Anderson's "All My Family," a west-coast survival story in the ruins of a civilisation destroyed by alien invasion. Edo van Belkom's "Roadkill" is a horror story of the zombie variety, with a suitable surprise twist at the end.

Top Canadian pro Robert Sawyer contributed "Where The Heart Is," the tale of a space explorer, pilot of the Starship *Terry Fox*, returning home to a very different Toronto. The theme of computers assimilating an entire population is an old one—but what if the people want it? What of the ones who don't?

Dale L. Sproule's "Roots of the Soul" presents a cross between a future that the Spanish Inquisition would envy with a few of a, shall we say, rather specialised forests that J.R.R. Tolkien might have thought of. And Leslie Lupien's "The Malthusian Code" shows a particularly unpleasant future, where all human ills and crimes have been settled—or so they think.

An excellent collection, well worth having. Now let's see: when will we have more short stories on genuinely Canadian themes?

# CONVENTION REVIEWS

Paul Bennett has been attending Toronto Trek for many years as a dealer. He was well-known as "Galaxy Enterprises." Now retired as a dealer, he gives us his...

**OBSERVATIONS FROM THE 'OTHER SIDE'**  
review by Paul Bennett

Toronto Trek 13 has just ended and I feel exhausted. This was the first convention that Sue and I attended as 'con-goers' as opposed to dealers.

My first impression after the weekend is that there is a severe time dilation that appears to effect conventions. It was late Saturday afternoon before I realized that I had not seen one guest or attended one panel. We did get to see the Friday

*Paul Bennett and Michele Berry pose in their Star Wars Imperial Officer uniforms. Photo by Theresa Penalba.*



*Paul, in his classic Trek movie uniform, is joined by a Klingon friend.*

night play for the first time (an excellent old style radio show) and I also participated in Laurie Brown's Klingon Fashion Show, after many years of "I'll see". Poor Laurie was reeling, as twenty-plus participants turned up this year.

I must confess that I enjoyed the social side of the convention the most—catching up with old friends and making some new ones. I did slip back into my old ways, as Lloyd Penney commented, "it's in his blood" as he caught me pushing a cart full of equipment. I also came second in the Droid Pushing contest, but that's another story.

My other indulgence this weekend was the costuming. I took to many of Sue's wonderful creations. Several costume changes later, I still did not get through them all. The costumes are great 'icebreakers' as the con-goers will come up and talk to you, and the mundanes in the lobby flee before you to get away from the nutty monk, a.k.a. Jedi. Aren't folk interesting?

I did not enter the masquerade. We tried something novel this year—a nice leisurely supper (a first in ten years) followed by watching all of the masquerade. It was quite

good, with a lot of the old pros in it. I was also pleased to see a high number of novices in the contest this year.

Then I took time out for a quick 'costume change' and was off to the dance at Quarks. After the dance and the obligatory room parties, it was time to crash at 3am. This is when you realize that it was not the best idea to have arranged that early breakfast with an old dealer friend.

Sunday flew by and we finished the convention by going out to dinner with a very large group of friends and acquaintances. This in itself was a remarkable experience. I have never been to a restaurant where the guests rearranged the seating to suit themselves. The staff very wisely did not object. (*Paul dined with the Klingons!—Ed*) Once we were all seated, the meals got underway. This, I decided, was a most enjoyable way to finish the con.

Our farewells said, it was time to head home. Did I miss the dealers room? No! Although a surprising number of people did miss us, which was most flattering. Having dinner with your friends sure beats lifting heavy boxes and packing a van at the end of a convention.

See you at the next one!

# SPECIAL FEATURE:

## VALUE JUDGEMENTS

### (An Unproduced Episode of Crusade)

*The following is supposedly an unproduced script treatment for Episode 15 of the Babylon 5 spin-off, Crusade. (A treatment is a detailed outline of the story, and is the writing step which comes just before writing the first draft of the shooting script.) This was obtained from the internet, so I cannot vouch for its authenticity. However, even if this is just a work of fan fiction, I am printing it so that you may enjoy the story.—Ed*

#### Value Judgments (script) Show #115

Written by Fiona Avery

#### Teaser

The *Excalibur* is waiting outside a space station orbiting Tariff's Colony (a moon). The Governor of the colony wants the *Excalibur* crew to pay a bribe to be allowed on the moon's surface. Apparently IPX was allowed down, but only after making special arrangements.

Gideon strikes a deal with the Governor—they will play a game of poker together. If Gideon wins, *Excalibur's* officers can accompany IPX on the dig for free. If he loses, then they will pay the fee. The Governor agrees and ends the call. Matheson says: "You'd better win," to which the captain replies, "It's Friday. I never lose on Fridays."

Down on the planet, Max is working with 5 IPX people on an alien doorway found in a mining tunnel. He speaks over the link with Gideon, giving him an update on the status of the dig and the translation of the language surrounding the lock.

Just a few moments after their conversation ends, a large shock wave blasts from the door, knocking everyone off their feet and seriously injuring two people. Max quickly calls MedLab for help.

#### Act One

In the MedLab, Dr. Chambers is examining the injured techs while Max is there, asking her how long they will be "out of commission." She replies that they're lucky to be alive, then goes on to explain that they were hit by a telepathic mind blast, causing a massive stroke.

Just then, Lt. Matheson enters the room. From the look on his face, he overheard their discussion but says nothing; instead, he asks Chambers, "You wanted to see me?"

She shows him a reconstructed model of the effect of the accident on the patients' brains, then asks what he makes of it. He confirms that it is a telepathic attack. Max tells him that something behind the door attacked the two people. Matheson examines the screen, and says he believes it is a defense system, a telepathic lock. Max asks if he can disarm it and the Lieutenant says he will have to take a closer look, and he'll get ready to head down. The doctor quizzes Matheson about his going planetside when no crew members were supposed to go down until the captain worked something out. Matheson replies that she's right, but "...it's Friday, so I expect to hear we can go down any time now."

In a dark bar, the Governor and Gideon are playing poker. Gideon lays down his winning hand, and the Governor comments that he's "one lucky son-of-a-bitch, almost too lucky. Telepath lucky." He then goes on to explain that they don't like telepaths there and that there is only one teep on the whole colony. His name is Al and they stay away from him because he is dangerous.

After an interesting conversation about Gideon's name being biblical, the Governor tells the captain that they're free to take their team down to the planet. But he cautions him to be careful.

In the hallway of the space station, Gideon talks to Matheson over the link. The Lt. explains about the injured crew members, the telepathic device, and his desire to go down to check out the device. After some discussion, Gideon denies his request.

Down at the archeological site, two shuttles land—Gideon's and Eilerson's. Max walks up to Gideon, who is standing in front of the alien doorway. The captain asks Max why Dureena is there with him—it turns out she stowed away on the shuttle.

After a little lecture on why being a thief is harder than being a technomage, she says she's there to pick a lock and asks if they're coming. As the three walk towards the artifact, the audience sees a crate of supplies with a camera lens visible through a hole. Back on the space station, they are being observed by a thug who overheard the whole thing. He leaves to tell his buddies.

#### Act Two

On the *Excalibur* bridge, Matheson tells Dr. Chambers that he really feels that he should be on the surface helping. The doctor reminds him of how Gideon is a "hands-on" captain that won't send anyone in harm's way without checking the situation out himself.

At the archeological site, Dureena examines the lock, then tells Gideon that the schematic of the lock's pathways are really feints—dead ends set up to keep people preoccupied until they hit the advanced telepathic "land mine." She advises that Matheson come down to take a look.

On the space station, the thugs have a meeting. They decide there must be something valuable at the dig if Earthforce is getting involved,

and it really belongs to them. They decide to make a plan to get it for themselves.

Back at the dig, Matheson and Dr. Chambers arrive. Gideon instructs Matheson to scan the lock, and the doctor to monitor his readings. He seems to make some progress, but is suddenly hit by a mind blast. He reels back a bit, but fights it off, and the doctor pronounces he is okay. Matheson then says it is comparable to a telepath rated P-10 or higher, and he's only a P-6. They're obviously going to have to find a P-10 or higher telepath. Gideon mentions the governor's remark about the only telepath on the colony and that maybe they could find him; however, all they have to go on is a name—"Al." They set off to find him.

Walking down a hallway similar to B5's Down Below section, Matheson tells Gideon he should be allowed planetside more often. In this particular case he could have prevented the accident at the dig. Gideon goes on to explain that the *Excalibur* and its mission is more important than his own life. When he leaves John in charge, he knows the ship is safe, and he can focus on the task at hand. He then goes on to tell John Matheson how much he relies on him.

Inside an apartment, we see a room with an environmental video of a hearth burning, mementos scattered around the room. A voiceover proclaims a judgment being passed, stripping the room's owner of all rank and commission, and revoking membership in the Psi Corps. The voice goes on to say "You are charged with the innocent slaughter of normal human citizens during your previous employment as a member of the Meta Pol."

The camera moves slightly, showing a pair of feet in black slippers resting on an ottoman, a blanket thrown over the legs.

The voiceover continues as a judge reads the charges, then asks "how do you plead?" There is the sound of a loud and angry crowd yelling and cheering.

The camera pulls back to show "Al" Bester, sitting in a large

wingback Victorian chair, his face in the shadows. He looks peaceful and serene; he hears himself answer "Not guilty."

The memories are interrupted by the voices/minds of the *Excalibur* team approaching his apartment. They come to his door and it opens just as Gideon is about to ring the chime. Bester greets them by name, saving Matheson for last. The camera closes in on Matheson's expression of recognition and alarm as he exclaims: "Al... (beat - horrified) Alfred Bester!"

Gideon turns around, looking stunned, and the scene fades out.

### Act Three

Standing in the hallway outside the door to Bester's quarters, Lt. Matheson insists that the Captain take Bester into custody, as he is a war criminal from the Telepath Crisis. Bester sniffs derisively at the word "crisis," says it was a war, then, a beat later, asks the *Excalibur* crew in for tea. Gideon asks him if that is all he has to say...war, not crisis, and won't they have some tea, and Bester answers yes and goes back into his quarters.

Matheson protests to Gideon that they can't ask Bester for help because of what he did, that he's a war criminal that EarthGov has been trying to catch. Max pipes up that he happens to like tea and steps inside the doorway.

Gideon tells Matheson they should consider all the possibilities before making a decision and, after a moment's hesitation, turns and enters Bester's quarters, the others following, except for Lt. Matheson, who stands angrily in the doorway.

Later in Bester's quarters, Eilerson and Bester are sitting in the Victorian wingback chairs, having tea and discussing why IPX wants him to help.

Gideon steps in and says the price is negotiable, but Bester's turning himself in, if he is indeed a fugitive, isn't. Bester philosophically states that scapegoats must be found and that "history is rewritten from the point of view of those who won."

Matheson enters the room and the argument, challenging Bester about his actions against fellow Psi Corps

members as well as normal humans.

Eilerson butts in, saying that they still need Bester's help to unlock the door and that none of what they're discussing has anything to do with why they're on the planet.

Bester agrees to help, but only in exchange for transport to his next destination aboard the *Excalibur*, no questions asked. Gideon asks for a moment to discuss it with the crew, who are having mixed reactions to this request. Bester asks them to weigh how much they need his help against what is right or wrong, and leaves the room.

Inside a dark ship, we overhear a transmission to the helmeted pilot. It says Bester's presence on Tarriff's Colony is confirmed and a strike mission is being prepared to recover him. The pilot replies that he will send word to "Top Dog." Another ship pulls up alongside the first one, seemingly out of nowhere, and the two ships glide off into space.

In Bester's quarters, the crew are discussing the moral implications of taking Bester versus the good of the mission. They question Matheson on his info about Bester, asking him if he's sure that Bester is guilty. "For a telepath, it's a gut instinct...only stronger. You won't get a clearer signal about someone unless you read their minds."

In the adjacent room, Bester receives a warning from a pocket-com: Warning, pursuit team en route, sighted in this sector.

Gideon is just agreeing to wait to get help and trust Lt. Matheson on how to handle this when Bester walks back into the room, telling them he's decided to help them. Gideon tells him they've already made their decision, but Bester tells them that they *will* take him with them, or he will implicate Lt. Matheson as one of his conspirators during the Telepath Crisis.

Matheson looks like a crushed man, completely at the whim of this devastating, loathsome person as the scene fades out.

### Act Four

The crew enters the archeological dig with Bester in the lead. He warns them that he needs some time to

prepare and that he must not be distracted, or they all will suffer massive brain trauma. Gideon tells Matheson he's starting to understand what the Lt. meant about a "bad gut feeling" and to please remind him not to doubt the first officer's instincts again.

Close-up on Bester's face as he concentrates. We hear gears and mechanisms unlocking from inside the door, the sound of air and steam escaping, and the door opens, slit down the middle in a jagged edge. As Bester steps back, Eilerson peeks in, with the doctor right behind him. Max and Chambers walk in, the doctor scanning the vault. The inner chamber is empty, its walls cut roughly out of bedrock. The sound of running water in the background. Max is disappointed, "This is it?"

However, Dureena knows better. She goes to the far corner of the room where there is a small waterfall tumbling down the rocks. The rocks have turned emerald green and translucent where the water has hit them. Dureena reminds Max and the doctor that there are natural alternatives to medicine, such as fire, wind, and water. Chambers agrees and the two women collect samples of the water and the green stones. They walk out of the vault when they are finished, but Max is still inside, looking on the ground for anything that might be valuable.

The door has started closing, but Max has found something in the dirt, a scroll case, and is digging it out. Gideon yells at him to get out. Eilerson tells him he found something.

The captain turns to Bester and asks him if he can keep the door open, to which the telepath replies, "No. It's closing because you got what you came for."

Max manages to unearth the scroll and throws himself towards the door, just managing to get out before getting crushed. Gideon asks him what he has. "I don't know. I'm hoping it's instructions."

They leave via the shuttle, but receive a message from the station that the governor wants to see them before they proceed to the *Excalibur*. The crew disembarks in the Cargo Bay, Bester being the last out, when

they're attacked by 12 thugs, most of whom have weapons. A fight ensues. Gideon yells, asking what they want. The thug fighting with him says they want the "loot" from the planet. Gideon tries to tell him they don't have anything, but the thug doesn't believe him. Another thug jumps the captain from behind, holding a knife. Matheson yells out "Matt!" and joins the fight, grabbing the thug off Gideon and restraining him. However, another thug is coming up behind the Lieutenant with a police club raised over his head.

At the last minute Matheson knocks his thug out, and then looks behind him at the second thug.

P.O.V. Matheson (Comp): The thug prepares to hit Matheson, but is suddenly hit by a mind blast, causing severe pain. He drops the club and grabs his head, screaming, then falls to the ground, dead. As the man drops to the ground, just past him we see Bester.

As we pan back to see the whole cargo bay again, Matheson and the others realize Bester saved his life. So do the other thugs, who quickly leave, not wanting to be Bester's next target.

Close-up on Matheson as the realization that Bester saved his life sinks in.

Later, the *Excalibur* jumps into hyperspace.

In the MedLab, the doctor and Dureena are analyzing the stones and spring water that they found. Chambers says it'll take about 48 hours to finish, then they sit in silence and watch the water working its way through the analyzer machine.

Max enters and stops before them. He's been translating the scroll, which says "We left because we no longer needed this sacred place. We had evolved in such a manner that our own bodies were timeless, formless, and perfect. We left our shells behind, we left this spring behind...We do not know where it comes from, or why it is so potent. Only that it helps to prolong life and soothe the sick."

Chambers says again that they have 48 hours until they know what it does. Dureena optimistically says they already know what it's capable

of, but the doctor doesn't want to get her hopes up. Max and Dureena leave as Chambers starts writing in her medical journal.

On the flight deck, Bester is waiting for a shuttle. Matheson comes up to tell him his shuttle is ready. Bester asks him what it's like in Earthforce, and Matheson replies it is even better than he dreamed, and that he's happy. They discuss the distrust and discrimination telepaths receive from mundanes as opposed to the paranoia within the Corps. Then the lieutenant asks Bester why he saved his life. He replies because Matheson is a telepath, and because it was the right thing to do. That even though he is not a Psi Cop anymore, he will still do whatever he has to to protect other telepaths, whether they want it or not.

Matheson asks him if that is why he murdered during the Telepath Crisis. "I did what was necessary," Bester tells him. "There were casualties on both sides of the war. The difference is, when you win the war, you're a hero. When you lose, you're a war criminal." He says he will not turn himself in, as he feels he did what was right. Matheson comments that if he's running, he must be guilty of something. Bester laughs, and says, reminiscently, "I remember being your age. Things seemed more fair then." He goes on to tell about his mentor, Sandoval Bey, who did not run because he felt he was innocent, and thus was murdered by mundanes. He tells the Lt. that he is running from the mundanes.

In the MedLab, Gideon comes to Chambers, asking for the verdict on the water analysis. She tells him it is the most potent pain-reliever humans have ever had, and that it will help ease the pain for people when the virus starts to break out, perhaps even extending life-spans by holding off some of the virus's symptoms.

"All in all then, we did the right thing," the captain says. The doctor agrees, but she's not so sure that taking Mr. Bester to his rendezvous point is the right thing. Gideon says he will keep this promise even if it is "the only honorable thing we've done all day."

## Tag

The *Excalibur* is stopped in hyperspace. In a close-up of the flight deck, we see a simple shuttle, not much more than a life pod, leave the flight deck and sit in hyperspace. On the bridge, Gideon is sitting in the captain's chair, with Matheson behind him, watching the tiny shuttle floating in hyperspace on their view screen.

"Bester's just going to sit there. With 24 hours of life support," Gideon comments. Matheson confirms. If no one comes for him in 24 hours, he will run out of oxygen and die. Gideon comments that perhaps they should put him out of his misery now with one of the ship's forward guns. Given his former position, you expect Matheson to agree. However, he remembers what Bester said about his former mentor, also innocent, who didn't run and was killed by the mundanes. Matheson looks at the tiny lifepod of a shuttle, then shakes his head and says, "No sir. I...We'd just be sinking to his level. One day someone will catch him, and put him on trial for whatever are his crimes. And he'll get what he's due." Gideon agrees, and the *Excalibur* leaves the small shuttle alone in hyperspace.

A few minutes later, a Psi Corps Mothership approaches the shuttle through hyperspace, and the shuttle moves towards it.

Inside the ship, on the flight deck, a rogue Psi Cop is waiting for Mr. Bester. He exclaims it has been 3 years since they last hooked up with Bester. As they walk off together, Bester says it helps to know that the "remaining few death wagons are in good hands." EarthGov will never admit that they built offensive ships for the Psi Corps, so they can't send out forces to find them. The rogue Psi Cop says, "And we have a weapon to strike back with."

"When the time is right," Bester replies.

Back at the space station, the dark ships have reached Tarriff's colony. One of the pilots is in Bester's quarters. He tells the other pilot, over the link, that he's checked the whole station and Bester seems to be gone. There was no record of any

## 1999 AURORA AWARD WINNERS

The 19th annual Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Awards, the Auroras, were presented on October 16 at this year's Convention, hosted by inCONsequential (Fredericton, New Brunswick). The Auroras honour Canadian excellence in the SF/F field. This list of winners is courtesy Aurora administrator Dennis Mullin. The Aurora Awards web site is at: [www.sentex.net/~dmullin/aurora](http://www.sentex.net/~dmullin/aurora)

### Best Long-Form Work in English

*Darwinia* (Tor, June '98), by Robert Charles Wilson

### Best Long-Form Work in French

*Corps-machines et rêves d'anges* (Vents d'Ouest, 97), by Alain Bergeron

### Best Short-Form Work in English

"Hockey's Night in Canada" (*Arrowdreams*), by Edo van Belkom

### Best Short-Form Work in French

"La Demoiselle sous la lune" (*Fantasy, Fleuve Noir*), by Guy Sirois

### Best Work in English (Other)

*Arrowdreams: An Anthology of Alternative Canadas*

(Nuage Editions, '98), Mark Shainblum and John Dupuis, editors

### Best Work in French (Other)

Tie: "L'entreprise de Frankenstein" (*Solaris 126*), by John Dupuis, and critiques (*Solaris 124-127*), by Jean-Louis Trudel

### Artistic Achievement

Jean-Pierre Normand

### Fan Achievement (Fanzine)

*Warp* (clubzine, Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association), Lynda Pelley, editor

### Fan Achievement (Organizational)

Ann Methe, chair, Con•Cept '98

### Fan Achievement (Other)

Janet L. Hetherington, co-curator,  
60 Years of Superman exhibit, Nepean Museum

ships leaving with him on it, though the *Excalibur* was there. The pilot in the ship says he had heard about the *Excalibur* being there, then says Top Dog had just wired in and wanted a full report. The pilot in Bester's quarters tells him to go ahead and tell him the bad news.

On the dark ship, the pilot starts recording a transmission to MarsDome. "This is Under Dog to

Top Dog. When we arrived at the colony, Al Bester was not here. There are no records of him leaving the planet."

In an office on Mars, we see a hand at a desk, turning off a desk link. Mars is visible through a window in the background. The recording continues, "I'm sorry, Mr. Garibaldi. He got away again."

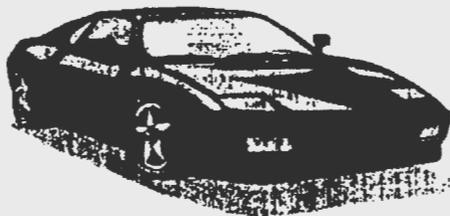


# EXPO-TRAIN-MODELISME APRIL 1 - 2 AVRIL 2000

Plusieurs réseaux en opération.  
Plusieurs exposants et détaillants.  
Toutes les échelles de "N" à "G".  
Modeles "Diecast".  
Figurines, Epinglettes, Meccano.  
Ventes de trains & modeles usagés  
Plusieurs dioramas de maquettes.  
Consultation technique.  
Modeles téléguidés.  
Stationnement gratuit.

Many layouts in operation.  
Many vendors and exhibitors.  
All scales "N" to "G".  
"Diecast" models.  
Figurines, Pins, Meccano.  
Used trains & static models.  
Dioramas of static models.  
Technical consultation.  
Radio-controlled models.  
Free parking.

AU PROFIT DE L'ASSOCIATION  
DES ÉCLAIREURS BADEN-POWELL INC.



**POLYVALENTE GEORGE VANIER  
3995 BOUL. LÉVESQUE EST. LAVAL, QUEBEC.**

SAMEDI/SATURDAY 10:00 - 17:00  
DIMANCHE/SUNDAY 10:00 - 16:00

ADMISSION:

ADULTES/ADULTS \$6.00  
ENFANTS/CHILDREN \$4.00  
SCOUT/GUIDE A.E.B.P. \$3.00

LOCATION DE TABLE

TABLE RENTAL Tel: 625-4230 (450)

M. Piette

Soirs/Nights

METRO HENRI-BOURASSA-----AUTOBUS DE LAVAL #28





# It Came From The Sci-Fi Modeler's Desk

## THE MODELS OF STAR WARS EPISODE I: THE PHANTOM MENACE PART 3

BY DOMINIQUE DUROCHER

### STAP WITH BATTLE DROID, TRADE FEDERATION TANK

Finally, this is what I expected from *Star Wars* models. Although they are not any of the starships, the Stap with Battle Droid and the Trade Federation Tank are large and well detailed, worthy heirs to the legacy of earlier *Star Wars* models.

#### Stap with Battle Droid

This model of the Trade Federation's infantry scout is very nice. Scaled at 1/6, it builds up to be about 12 inches high.

The Stap goes together relatively well, but one must be careful about the assembly sequence of the turret mechanism, as some parts will not fit into others if not done in the correct order. While those struts are quite sturdy, the handle bars are not. One of mine was already broken in the box. Other parts to watch out for are the pedal supports, which will need careful alignment.

Detail is mostly nice, but alignment pins in the guns block off both barrels just inside the muzzle. I recommend that they be removed and filed down before assembly. The panel line engraving is rather wide—so wide that they would scale out to a couple of inches—but at least they are straight and sharp.

One other problem to look out for is that the stand, which uses a metal rod inserted into the bottom of the Stap, may tend to force it open over a long period. I recommend using epoxy on this assembly for

added strength.

The Battle Droid itself is also quite nice. It is again well detailed, with limbs that are for the most part articulated. They are however, plastic-to-plastic joints, not the polyethylene caps typically seen on Japanese robot models. This means that they will loosen up eventually, especially if the model receives a lot of handling. Some of the arm and leg articulations have lock tabs and slots, which will lock the joint in certain positions, but these too will eventually wear out and loosen. The hips are ball-jointed, so that the legs can spread out slightly for either a more natural stance or to line up with the Stap's pedals, but the ankles are fixed. This results in the feet not sitting flat on the pedals, but only contacting on their inner edges.

Detail is good overall, and the parts fit is also generally good. There is one bad mould separation line on either side of the droid's head, where the lines do not match up between the top and the bottom.

*The Trade Federation tank, pictured below, is a worthy addition to the Star Wars model line-up.*



#### Trade Federation Tank

As mentioned above, the Trade Federation tank is quite large. The turret alone is about the size of the earlier Naboo Starfighter model. It consists mostly of a few relatively large hull sections, with about twice as many detail parts. The upper hull fits very well, but the lower sections seem a little warped from the packaging. Once glued together and held with some good tape while the cement cures, they should straighten out.

The overall detail level is nice. Steps and grip bars are moulded separately, unlike the earlier kits, which enhances the overall look of the model.

Probably the most disappointing aspect of the model is that the panel line engraving, which is thick and trench-like, is a definite down after the exquisite lines of the mini-kits.

Both models go together relatively well, and quickly, although a few large gaps on each require some serious filling. Painting on both is relatively simple, with few colours required and little masking. Some good weathering would definitely be a plus on these worn and battle-scarred machines. These models can easily be built up into very impressive displays.

More *Phantom Menace* models are on the way. Recently announced are the SnapFast Gungan Sub and a 3-set of Battle Droids. The Gungan Sub should be about the same size as the Naboo Starfighter, and the Battle Droids are reportedly identical to the one reviewed above. The latter will come in two versions, a regular kit and a pre-decorated one, like the mini-kits.

# IPMS / CHAMPLAIN VALLEY

PRESENTS

## CAN/AM CON I

INTERNATIONAL SCALE MODEL CONTEST



**SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 2000**

**COMFORT INN**

**411 ROUTE 3, PLATTSBURGH, NEW YORK 12901**

ENTRIES: PRE-REGISTRATION - \$2.00 US / \$3.00 CA  
AT THE DOOR - \$3.00 US / \$4.00 CA

GENERAL ADMISSION: - \$1.00

OVER 30 CATEGORIES!!!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

DAN FERGUSON (518) 891 - 6684  
FRANK BAEHRE (518) 561 - 4265



Peel Scale Modelers and IPMS Toronto  
Present

# TORCAN 2000

Saturday, June 3, 2000

Early Registration on Friday Evening, June 2, 2000

The Toronto Board of Trade Airport Centre

830 Dixon Road, Toronto, Ontario

Lots of Vendors

Over 70 Categories Including Junior and Out-Of-Box  
Tons of Raffle & Door Prizes  
Awards Dinner & Hospitality Suite

Theme : The Fabulous Fifties

Armour, Aircraft, Ships, Figures,  
Automotive and Sci-Fi subjects from 1950-1959

Special Award: The Millennium

Anything from 2001 and beyond

Sponsors:

**Borgfeldt Canada**

(416) 493-2004  
[www.borgfeldt.com](http://www.borgfeldt.com)



Aviation World  
1-800-668-1987  
[www.aviationworld.net](http://www.aviationworld.net)

Keith's Hobby Shop  
(416) 222-4721  
[www.keithshobbyshop.com](http://www.keithshobbyshop.com)

Northstar Hobbies  
(905) 566-4758  
[www.northstarhobbies.com](http://www.northstarhobbies.com)

Contact

Paul Roberts, Show Chairman  
[www.inferlog.com/~ipms/torcan.html](http://www.inferlog.com/~ipms/torcan.html)

# SENSORS

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

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

### JOHN COLICOS, 1928-2000

Canadian-born actor John Colicos, a great veteran of stage and screen, passed away early Monday morning, March 6th, at Mount Sinai hospital in Toronto after a series of heart attacks.

Colicos had an extensive background in Shakespearean theatre and film classics, but is best known amongst fandom for his roles as Klingon Commander Kor (*Star Trek, ST:Deep Space Nine*) and the evil Baltar (*Battlestar Galactica*).

Many of us have met him, as he regularly attended Toronto Trek these last few years, and he will be dearly missed.

### JAMES DOOHAN TO BE A FATHER AT 80

*Star Trek* actor James Doohan is getting ready to beam up a baby girl just weeks after his 80th birthday.

Doohan and his 44-year-old wife, Wende, are expecting their first daughter in early April.

Doohan, who played Scotty the engineer on the original series, turned 80 on March 3rd.

### LONE GUNMEN AND X-FILES

Chris Carter is not only still determining if *The X-Files* will come back for one more season, he's also involved in developing a pilot for *The Lone Gunmen* series. While talking to the Vancouver Sun, Carter talked about shifting the occasional characters to their own series, saying,

"We've had seven years of these guys, so it isn't like you have to invent a lot. They have been very successful characters. We've liked writing for them. So this is a natural progression."

Regarding *The X-Files*, Carter says the series' fate is currently in a "holding pattern."

### OVERLOAD

Veteran television actors Bill Mumy (*Babylon 5*) and Tony Dow (*Leave It to Beaver*) are the driving forces behind the proposed independent SF feature film *Overload*, now in pre-production. Mumy and Dow are co-executive producers, and Dow will direct the film, described as a psychological drama in an SF setting.

The film's cast will feature other TV vets, including Mumy's *Lost in Space* co-star Angela Cartwright, *My Three Sons* actor Don Grady, *Father Knows Best* star Billy Gray and *Star Trek's* George Takei. Production is set to start this month; a trailer has already been shot.

The original screenplay is by Mumy and Peter David, who has written several *Babylon 5* and *Star Trek* novels. The film has no distributor yet.

### JERRY DOYLE RUNS FOR CONGRESS

Jerry Doyle, best known as Security Chief Michael Garibaldi on TV's *Babylon 5*, has filed papers to run as a Republican candidate seeking the U.S. congressional seat now held by Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Sherman Oaks, California).

### STAR TREK: THE EXPERIENCE LAWSUIT

Universal Studios is suing Paramount Parks (an amusement company owned by Paramount Pictures' parent, Viacom) and the Las Vegas Hilton over "*Star Trek: The Experience*," an interactive adventure at the hotel. But unlike standard studio battles, the issue isn't the standard copyright or

trademark fight over the lucrative *Star Trek* franchise. That is clearly the property of Paramount, which has long controlled Trekkie film and television rights. Rather, Universal is taking an innovative approach—patent infringement—to try to grind the hotel's tourist attraction to a halt.

In a complaint filed recently in federal court in Los Angeles, Universal claims it owns a patent for a domed projection screen and a moving vehicle that creates the illusion of being part of an action-adventure movie. In court papers, Universal says the *Star Trek* simulator, which has been operated since 1998 by Paramount and Hilton Hotels Corp., infringes on its 1993 patent.

### STAR WARS WEEKENDS AT DISNEY-MGM STUDIOS

For four consecutive weekends beginning May 5, Walt Disney World guests will be transported to a galaxy far, far away as the Disney-MGM Studios presents *Star Wars Weekends*.

Inspired by the four *Star Wars* films—*Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi* and the 1999 box-office smash, *Star Wars: Episode I-The Phantom Menace*—*Star Wars Weekends* bring guests face-to-face with their favorite characters, from the cuddly Ewoks to the evil Darth Maul.

Here's what's in store:

Actors and voice performers from the films are scheduled to appear in daily star conversations and Hollywood-style motorcades. Walt Disney World guests also have the opportunity to get acquainted with the actors behind the masks of many favourite *Star Wars* characters. In addition, 16 characters from the George Lucas films will roam the Disney-MGM Studios greeting guests and posing for photographs.

*Star Wars* trivia contests and

games will be held to test fans' knowledge of "the Force" and a special Video Starcade will feature the best in *Star Wars*-inspired electronic games.

Guests will also have the opportunity to take a flight to the Moon of Endor in Star Tours, an action-packed flight simulator experience that salutes the *Star Wars* series. Synchronizing a stunning film with the virtually limitless gyrations of the simulator, the attraction takes guests on a hair-raising, light-speed trip aboard a careening star speeder.

As the sun gives way to the stars each evening, the excitement rises with a Cantina Street Party from 5:00 PM until park closing.

Star Wars merchandise—from action figures and commemorative posters to costumes, masks and other limited-edition memorabilia—will be available in Tatooine Traders. With a look inspired by scenes in *The Phantom Menace*, the new store is adjacent to the Ewok Village set at the Star Tours attraction. *Star Wars* Weekends launch into orbit May 5 and are held four consecutive weekends (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) through May 28. Activities are included with regular Disney-MGM Studios admission.

#### SMITHSONIAN STAR WARS EXHIBIT ON THE ROAD

The "*Star Wars: The Magic of Myth*" exhibition originally opened at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum on October 29, 1997, and welcomed more than one million visitors through January 31, 1999. The show's popularity led the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service to collaborate with Lucasfilm and bring the exhibition to some of the nation's top museums.

Here is the planned tour schedule:

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts  
February 27, 2000 through June 4, 2000.

The Field Museum, Chicago. July 15, 2000 through January 2, 2001.

(Note to MonSFFen: the Worldcon in Chicago will take place during this period. You might want to plan your trip to arrive a few days earlier or stay a few

days later to see this exhibit.—Ed)

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. March 11, 2001, through June 24, 2001.

The Toledo Museum of Art.  
August 5, 2001 through January 5, 2002.

The Brooklyn Museum of Art.  
February 16, 2002 through June 9, 2002.

The Star Wars exhibition has been credited with helping Washington DC record a banner year for tourism in 1997, according to the Washington Post, and the press also credits NASM's gift shop as the most successful museum shop in history.

#### LUCASFILM ON STAR WARS DVD

Lucasfilm must have been getting a whole lot of e-mail about the fact that none of the *Star Wars* films are on DVD yet—and won't be anytime soon. In a posting on the official *Star Wars* website, the gripes of many are addressed as follows:

Lucasfilm greatly appreciates the enthusiasm of our fans of the *Star Wars* movies and their passion to see the films in the best possible format, as demonstrated by various campaigns by fans asking for an immediate release of *Star Wars* on DVD. Unfortunately, Lucasfilm cannot stop work on *Episode II* in order to concentrate on the DVD release at this time.

There is no plan to release any of the *Star Wars* films on DVD for the foreseeable future and definitely not this year. George Lucas would like to do something special with the DVD release and unfortunately he does not have time to concentrate on the DVD project at this time. George is currently working on the script for *Episode II* and preparing for principal photography that will begin this summer in Australia. The films will definitely be released on DVD. It's just that we don't yet know when.

Lucasfilm's delay in putting the *Star Wars* movies out on the DVD format has nothing to do with the format itself. It is simply a matter of time and availability on the part of George and his creative team at

Lucasfilm.

Lucasfilm is very concerned about pirated DVD copies of *Star Wars*, but finds any suggestion that a delayed official release is an encouragement to bootleg is absurd.

As many know, while a Laserdisc version of *The Phantom Menace* will be released in Japan due to market considerations, there is nothing digital on a Laserdisc except for the soundtrack. While a bootlegged DVD copy from this format would be superior to VHS, it would still not equal the DVD format.

Rumors and speculation that waiting to release DVD versions is motivated by a desire to simply drive up demand, or to force fans to purchase multiple copies are completely false.

#### FEHR TO PLAY SPIDERMAN?

Brendan Fehr, who plays Michael on The WB hit series *Roswell*, was overheard saying he's considering playing the role of Peter Parker in the upcoming feature film version of Marvel Comics' *Spiderman* series. Fehr—who appeared at a *Roswell* fan party on Saturday, Feb. 26, dressed in a *Spiderman* T-shirt—said he had received a copy of the script and was reading it with an eye to the lead role.

Director Sam Raimi has been signed to helm Columbia Pictures' *Spiderman*, which is slated for production in late spring or early summer, for a summer 2001 release.

#### SCOOBY DOO MOVIE

According to NY Daily News gossip columnists Rush and Molloy, Jennifer Love Hewitt has been offered the role of Daphne in the developing *Scooby Doo* movie.

#### BUZZ-LIGHTYEAR COMING TO TELEVISION

*Buzz Lightyear of Star Command*, an animated series based on the Buzz Lightyear character from the *Toy Story* feature films, is coming to television later this year.

*Buzz Lightyear* follows the adventures of Buzz in his persona as a space warrior fighting the evil Emperor Zurg.

# MonSFFA Membership Benefits

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

## Membership Card

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

## Monthly Events

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

## Discount Program

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

## Newsletter

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

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

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

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

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

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

## MonSFFA Discount Program

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

ATTENTION SF/F  
MERCHANTS:  
THIS SPACE AVAILABLE  
(Contact MonSFFA)

ATTENTION SF/F  
MERCHANTS:  
THIS SPACE AVAILABLE  
(Contact MonSFFA)

ATTENTION SF/F  
MERCHANTS:  
THIS SPACE AVAILABLE  
(Contact MonSFFA)

# MonSFFA Discount Program

**1,000,000**  
COMIX

- NEW AND OLD COMICS
- OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

3846 Jean Talon E.  
Montreal, Qc., H2A 1Y4  
(514) 725-1355

20% off on most merchandise.

ATTENTION SF/F  
MERCHANTS:  
THIS SPACE AVAILABLE  
(Contact MonSFFA)

**OAS**

Fred Albert

OAS Rocketry Division.  
Suite 606, 116 Albert Street.  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G3  
(613) 233-1159 · fax (613) 830-5811

10% off on all orders (include your name, MonSFFA membership number and expiration date when ordering).

**COMPUTURE**

10% off on computer game and video game software not otherwise on special. Place Vertu store only, see Mike Masella.

**EL PASO KOMIX**

L'ENDROIT OÙ L'HOMME IMAGINEE  
LIT LES HISTOIRES DE SES  
SUPER-HÉROS FAVORIS

WHERE SPIDEY READS THE  
STORIES OF HIS FAVORITE  
SUPER-HEROES

Ouvert 7 jours/semaine  
Open 7 days a week

2432 Sauvé E., Montreal (514) 385-6714

15% off on most merchandise; does not apply to "series discounts" already offered to customers of this establishment.

TEL.: 514-481-5434

Hobby Works

- HO & N MODEL TRAINS
- DOLL HOUSE MINATURES
- RADIO CONTROL MODELS
- WOODEN PERIOD SHIPS
- ARCHITECTURAL SUPPLIES

1450 SHERBROOKE ST. WEST  
MONTREAL, QC  
CANADA H4A 1V8

FAX: 514-481-5468

10% off (5% if paying by credit card) on models and role-playing games, \$10.00 minimum purchase.

**HANGAR 18 MODELS**  
Science Fiction & Space Model Kits

Catalogue available on our web page:  
<http://www.coldnorth.com/hangar-18-models/index.html>

Email: H18@coldnorth.com  
Tel: (613) 748-9515 Fax: (613) 748-7955

10% off at shows and by mail (include your name, MonSFFA membership number, and expiration date when ordering).

Place Alexis Nihon

JOUETS

**Kangourou**  
HOBBIES

10% off (5% if paying by credit card) on models and role-playing games, \$10.00 minimum purchase.

Role Playing Games  
New & Old Comics  
Bags & Supplies  
Retail & Wholesale

4210 Decarie  
Montreal Que. H4A 3K3  
489-4009

**KOMICO**  
One Block South of Villa Marie Metro

10% off on new issues, 15% off on back orders.

**cosmic**

931, Décarie  
St-Laurent (Québec)  
H4L 3M3  
(514) 744-9494

Comics, Magazines, D & D  
Science-Fiction, "Posters", Etc.

10% off on most merchandise, 20% off on back issues of comic books.

**MARS**

COMICS RECORDS (IMPORTS)  
COLLECTOR'S ITEMS  
CARD'S

BANDES DESSINEES  
SCIENCE FICTION  
CASSETTES VIDEOS  
POSTERS

537 A St-Catherine W.  
metro McGill

844-4329

Between 10% and 15% off on most merchandise.

**NEBULA**

More than a SCIENCE FICTION  
bookshop...  
7 days/week

1928 St. Catherine W. (514) 932-3930

10% off on SF, video culture, adventure and comics.

**1,000,000**  
COMIX

1418 Pierce Street  
Montreal, Quebec, 989-9587

20% off on most merchandise.

ATTENTION SF/F  
MERCHANTS:  
THIS SPACE AVAILABLE  
(Contact MonSFFA)

**1,000,000**  
COMIX

4978C Queen Mary Road  
Montreal, Quebec

20% off on most merchandise.

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

**MonSFFA**

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Apt. \_\_\_\_\_ City/Town \_\_\_\_\_

Province/State \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home) \_\_\_\_\_

(work) \_\_\_\_\_

**Interests**

Science Fiction \_\_\_\_\_

Fantasy \_\_\_\_\_

Horror \_\_\_\_\_

Movies/TV \_\_\_\_\_

Writing \_\_\_\_\_

Art \_\_\_\_\_

Gaming \_\_\_\_\_

Others \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

You have my permission to pass on said information.

Please do not pass on any of said information.

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

**AMonSFF**

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

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

Nom \_\_\_\_\_

Date de naissance (optionelle) \_\_\_\_\_

Adresse \_\_\_\_\_

App. \_\_\_\_\_ Ville \_\_\_\_\_

Province/État \_\_\_\_\_ Code Postal \_\_\_\_\_

Téléphone (rés.) \_\_\_\_\_

(trav.) \_\_\_\_\_

**Intérêts personnels**

Science-Fiction \_\_\_\_\_

Fantastique \_\_\_\_\_

Horreur \_\_\_\_\_

Films/TV \_\_\_\_\_

Écriture \_\_\_\_\_

Art \_\_\_\_\_

Jeux de rôles \_\_\_\_\_

Autres \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Je vous autorise à transmettre ces renseignements.

Veuillez ne pas transmettre ces renseignements.