

I M P U L S E

LE BULLETIN D'INFORMATION DE L'ASSOCIATION MONTRÉLAISE DE SCIENCE-FICTION ET DE FANTASTIQUE, L'AMonSFF

September / Septembre 2015 (Vol. 19, No./N° 8)

NEXT CLUB MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

**Sunday, September 20
11:30AM-5:00PM
St-François Room
Hôtel Espresso, 1005 Guy St.
Downtown Montreal**

MEETING THEME: Heavens Above! Wear a T-shirt, hat, or something adorned with a star, moon, comet, or anything astronomical!

PROGRAMME

11:30PM (early-bird programming)

DON'T TRUST ANYONE OVER 30 YEARS OLD!

We review the mid-'70s sci-fi classic Logan's Run, and discuss the film's themes. Does our youth-obsessed culture devalue old age? At what, if any, peril? What can the different generations learn from one another?

2:00PM

WATCH THE SKY! We talk backyard astronomy, showcase various types of telescopes and binoculars, and marvel at the highly detailed photographs recently taken of distant Pluto!

3:30PM

MID-MEETING BREAK: raffle

3:45PM

GROUP PROJECT: Determined to complete the project, we continue work on our more-challenging-than-we-anticipated stop-motion short film production.

NEXT MONTH'S MEETING:

**Sunday, October 18
Perry Rhodan, Thunderbirds**

CLUB'S STOP-MOTION FILM PROJECT PROVES MORE CHALLENGING THAN ANTICIPATED!

The club's stab at producing a short stop-motion animated film stalled somewhat about halfway into our August "fancraft" meeting as the assembled club members busied themselves with the art of creating paper-craft animation puppets, backgrounds, and various landscape elements required in each of the scenes planned. As we drew and cut and coloured, the five-layer animation stand built for the occasion by Mark Burakoff was set up and tested. We had some difficulty lighting the thing properly, a few stray reflections from the room's ceiling lights and shadows from the stand's supports vexing us. Test footage shot soon revealed that we'll have to further refine our lighting array so as to eliminate ghostly reflections captured on film in the stand's glass sections.

At one point, animation supervisor François Menard, working out the camera positioning and framing, found that the puppets folk were fabricating were going to be too big for our purposes, at least when it came to appearing in proper scale for some of the long shots required. It was back to the drawing board!

But making these puppets at about half or less their original size proved challenging, given the detail involved and the mechanics of building articulated joints out of paper on this smaller scale. A lot of trial and error, here, and lessons learned. The technicalities are currently being reworked in order to arrive at an optimal puppet design that provides for maximum flexibility and ease of movement when animating.

DOES YOUR NAME APPEAR BELOW? CHECK THIS SPACE TO KNOW IF YOUR ANNUAL MonSFFA MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE

The Annual Membership Fees of the Following Club Members are...

Overdue:

BENNETT, Paul
BOOM, Hendrik
DESPLAND, Alexis
HECHTMAN, Ken
NOVO, Alice

Due This Month, September:

ASPLER, Joseph
BOIES, Marquise
BRAITHWAITE, Erin
BRAITHWAITE, Keith
BRAITHWAITE, Scott
DUROCHER, Dominique
HAMMOCK, Christopher
MOIR, L. E.
WHITELAW, Maureen

Due Next Month, October:

PELLEY, Lynda

Standard membership is only \$25 annually. We offer a family rate of \$40. Add \$10 to either of these to enjoy our premium "Platinum" membership level. Please complete the form below, include payment (cheque or money order made out to "MonSFFA"), and mail to:

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4456 Boul. Ste-Rose
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Please print legibly. Cut out form and mail as per directions.

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INTERESTS/INTERETS: _____

As you may have gathered at this point, we did not manage to complete production on our proposed short film during the course of the meeting, as had been, in retrospect, naively hoped! But people enjoyed the experience nonetheless, and the group is determined to see the project through over the coming months. A suggestion has been made that we tackle the various tasks involved in shorter, more manageable workshops as part of the next several meetings, as well as, perhaps, give willing participants specific assignments that could be done at home and brought in completed next time.

But to return to the August meeting for a moment, people were initially inspired by the few seconds of test footage François had prepared as a demonstration, showing a sauropod walking. And Keith Braithwaite's storyboards for the piece, put together as a video, were shown at the outset of the meeting to give folk an idea of what the finished film would look like and provide guidance for those unfamiliar with animation. Keith offered further advice as to artistic technique in rendering visually interesting backgrounds and other elements.

The learning curve turned out to be quite a bit steeper than we anticipated, however! There were also technical limitations that required some last-minute rejigging. And, there were many questions about whether this or that would or would not work. François, being the only of us ever to have actually done this kind of thing before, offered guidance to everyone and explanations of the process, while highlighting the common pitfalls to be avoided, some of which we had already, unfortunately, encountered.

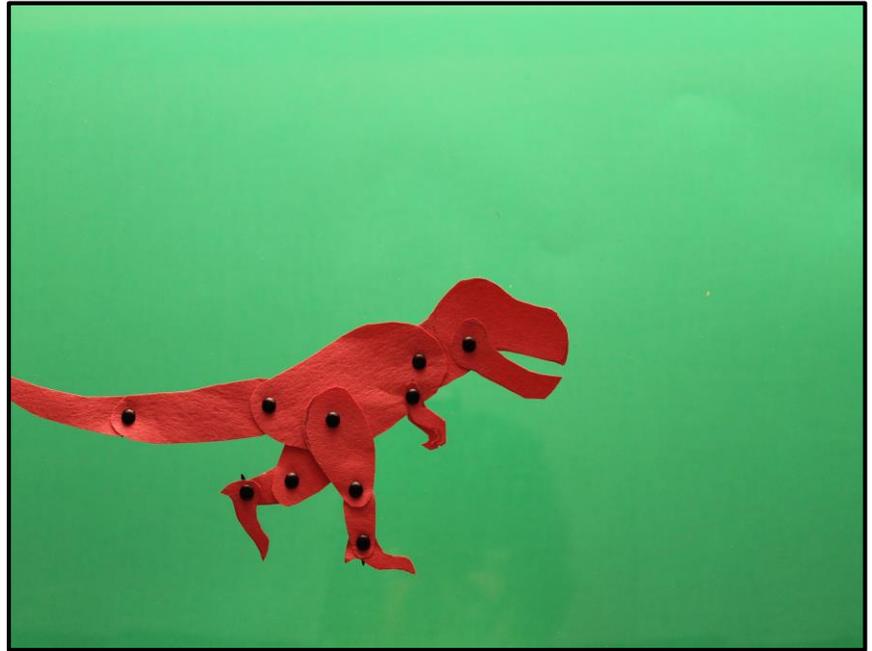
In short, we were not as prepared as we should have been, and we did not expect that the process would be as problematic and quite so time-consuming as we rapidly discovered it was!

Oh, the best laid plans of mice and men!

Allowances, too, for last-minute input on the part of participants in the project were made as folk came up with a few amusing visual gags that might be included. We *do* want to incorporate as many ideas as we possibly can into what is, after all, a group venture.

So, we all learned a little more about the art of animation through practical experience, and trial and error. And, we made a reasonably good, if halting, start of our project. Most importantly, we had fun!

Follow our on-going project's progress in these pages over the coming months.



A paper-craft animation puppet, built to test ease of movement, is filmed against a green screen in this frame from test footage shot at the club's August meeting.

Puppies Shut Out of 2015 Hugos

With “Puppygate” casting its shadow over the Hugo Awards at Sasquan, this year's WorldCon (Spokane, Washington), a record number of voters—some 65 percent more than ever before!—cast ballots for the prestigious sci-fi honour, this in defense of the integrity of the Hugos, suggested writer George R. R. Martin. Writing on his blog prior to the Hugo ceremony at Sasquan, Martin predicted that “This will be the most dramatic Hugo night in WorldCon history.”

When the votes were counted, not a single Puppy-sanctioned candidate won an award! In those categories in which all the candidates were affiliated with the Puppies, voters chose the “No Award” option in a categorical rebuke of the Puppies, who many considered to have gamed the system and stacked the deck to advance their own political agenda, even though they broke no rules in putting forth their nominations.

The Puppies have argued that a left-leaning clique of snobbish and exclusionary “social justice warriors” have co-opted the Hugos of late and repeatedly ignore popular books by conservative writers. They opine that sci-fi has become too holier-than-thou preachy and rather less fun. Their critics accuse them of being sexist, homophobic racists.

In the wake of Sasquan's Hugo ceremony, the most ardent Puppies have stated that the vote results prove their point: political correctness is shutting out those authors the elite consider too right-wing, and science fiction has been politicized and corrupted by their radical leftist philosophy. The fact that trophies were not awarded in so many major categories this year in order to deny a Puppy-supported candidate the prize, seems only to have stoked the Puppies' ire and instilled in them a greater determination to carry on the battle.

This “war” may be just beginning, with the prestige of the venerable silver rocket at stake.

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Impulse is put together monthly by Keith Braithwaite of behalf of MonSFFA and is available on MonSFFA's Web site courtesy Cathy Palmer-Lister. Contact Keith in regards to this publication by any of the following means: In person at a MonSFFA meeting • E-mail: keith1958@live.ca • Voice mail: 450-692-8831 • Via the club's mailing address, to the attention of “Impulse”: MonSFFA c/o 4456 Boul. Ste-Rose, Laval, Québec, Canada, H7R 1Y6

Impulse est préparé une fois par mois par Keith Braithwaite au nom de l'AMonSFF. Il est disponible sur le site internet du club grâce à Cathy Palmer-Lister. Pour toutes questions concernant cette publication, contactez Keith soit: En personne à une réunion du club • Courriel: keith1958@live.ca • Boîte vocal: 450-692-8831 • Par la poste à l'adresse du club, à l'attention de “Impulse”: AMonSFF a/s de 4456 Boul. Ste-Rose, Laval, Québec, Canada, H7R 1Y6