

I M P U L S E

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

March / Mars 2017 (Vol. 21, No./N° 3)

**NEXT
CLUB MEETING
IS THIS WEEKEND****Sunday, March 12****12:00PM-5:00PM****Grand Salon****Hôtel Espresso, 1005 Guy St.
Downtown Montreal***MEETING THEME: In celebration of St. Patrick's
Day, simply wear something green!***PROGRAMME****12:00PM-1:45PM****SUNDAY SCI-FI CINEMA MATINÉE—****FLYING SAUCER EDITION:** Chose for
review one of five vintage sci-fi films on
our list this month, all featuring flying
saucers in honour of last month's guest
speaker on UFOs, Professor Don Donderi!**1:45PM-3:00PM****CAN GOVERNMENT GET ANY MORE****WEIRD?:** The newly installed Orange
Potenat south of the border suggests that
the answer is "No," but SF/F offers us
despotic galactic empires, lottery-based
democracies, post-apocalyptic tribalism,
machine-ruled planets, and more! We'll
examine some of the stranger examples!**3:00PM-3:30PM****MID-MEETING BREAK:** Brief discussion
of club business; fund-raising raffle**3:30PM-4:30PM****SCI-FI CONVENTIONS:** A look at the
different types of Genre conventions on the
schedule from which to choose, big and
small, near and far.**4:30PM-5:00PM****BRAINSTORMING SESSION:** With the input
of MonSFFen, we further hone our 2017
meeting programming and welcome any
additional panel/workshop
suggestions.**PROPOSED
CLUB FIELD TRIP**

Regarding our proposed May 14-club
field trip, it has been suggested that we visit
the West Island's Ecomuseum, a zoological
park located in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, on
Sainte-Marie Road, just north of Highway 40.
We might also cap the outing by taking in a
movie at the nearby Collisée Kirkland cinema
complex, and maybe follow the movie with
dinner at an adjacent restaurant.

The Ecomuseum has recently undergone
an upgrade of some of its exhibits. The facility
features animals native to the Saint-Lawrence
Valley, including deer, caribou, lynx, arctic
fox, wolves, black bears, martens and river
otters. A number of eagles, hawks, and other
predatory birds are also on site, as are housed
a variety of fish, amphibians, and reptiles.

Admission is reasonably priced and car
pools might be arranged so as to allow as many
MonSFFen as may wish to attend to do so.

This recommendation has been noted by
MonSFFA's BoA, which welcomes for
consideration any and all field trip ideas. Let
us know of any proposals you may have for
this year's annual group outing as soon as
possible; May draws near!

**GRAND SALON IS
NEW OFFICIAL MonSFFA
MEETING ROOM**

We reiterate to club members that a recent
downsizing of meeting hall facilities at the
Hôtel Espresso has left our longstanding
meeting room, St-François, no longer available
past 4:00PM on Sundays. As this would cut
into our meetings by some 30-60 minutes, we

**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:**D'ORTUN-BOYER, Lynda
DUROCHER, Marc
GLOVER, Wayne
NOVO, Alice
NOVO, Fernando
WHITELAW, Maureen**Due This Month, March:**MÉNARD, François
SIMARD, Phil**Due Next Month, April:**

NADEAU, Marc

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:

MonSFFA c/o
4456 Boul. Ste-Rose
Laval, Québec, Canada
H7R 1Y6

*Thank you for your
patronage***MonSFFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Please print legibly. Cut out form and mail as per directions.

NAME/NOM: _____ AGE/ÂGE: _____ TEL./TEL.: _____ - _____ - _____

ADDRESS/ADRESSE: _____
No. & Street/N° et Rue Apt./App. City/Ville

Province _____ Postal Code/Code Postal _____ E-MAIL/COURRIEL: _____

INTERESTS/INTERETS: _____

AMonSFF FORMULAIRE D'INSCRIPTION

Complétez lisiblement. Découpez le coupon et postez tel qu'indiqué.

opted to move permanently to the larger Grand Salon, down the hall.

Henceforth, look for us there!

However, on occasion, the Grand Salon may also be unavailable, in which case we'll either hike back to the St-François for a truncated meeting, or relocate upstairs to the 7th-floor luxury suite (room 700), as we did just last month for our February gathering.

Note that such room changes may be last-minute, so if you don't find us in Grand Salon, check the two alternates above mentioned. A quick inquiry at the front desk downstairs in the main lobby will also get you pointed in the right direction.

Providentially, we have secured our new and rather larger meeting room at no additional cost and so have kept the club's room rental budget within parameters.

Flying Saucers in February!

The club's February meeting boasted a special guest speaker, retired McGill University professor Don Donderi, who spoke on the topic of UFOs and alien abductions. Professor Donderi has been fascinated by the subject since childhood. He authored the 2013 book *UFOs, ETs and Alien Abductions: A Scientist Looks at the Evidence*, a few copies of which he had on hand for sale, at our urging; they were quickly snapped up and Don kindly obliged purchasers by autographing their copies.

To set the mood, we opened the meeting with a screening of MonSFFA's 2001 found-footage short film *Encounters of the Very Close Kind*, in which a few sci-fi fans video-taping their own fake UFO sighting using a pie-plate model, are interrupted by the real thing suddenly swooping in overhead! Don found our little amateur production delightful and seemed pleased to be among a group of people who, while not without a measure of skepticism on the matter, were generally open to the prospect of alien visitations, and even excited by the possibility.

His PowerPoint presentation encapsulated the essentials of a course he is currently teaching at McGill called *UFOs: History and Reality*, which puts forth that, beyond reasonable doubt, UFOs are real and of extraterrestrial origin!

He outlined the history of the modern UFO phenomenon, detailing a few of the better-known encounters over the years, beginning with private pilot Kenneth Arnold's 1947 sighting of a formation of UFOs over the Cascade Mountains in Washington State. Press coverage of this incident launched the explosion of public interest in UFOs

and debuted the term "flying saucer," which has been a part of UFOlogy's vernacular ever since. The famous 1961 case of Betty and Barney Hill, who under hypnosis recalled the missing details of their claimed abduction by aliens, was of particular interest to Don, who holds a PhD in psychology from Cornell University.

He noted that while he respects skeptical viewpoints and encourages the rigorous scientific examination of evidence, *he* has concluded that there is definitely something to all of this. While recognizing that some sightings can be explained in conventional terms, and that hoaxes can easily be perpetrated, in general, he believes the overall data collected supports the contention that UFOs are real, that they are extraterrestrial in origin, and that their crews appear to be catching and releasing humans, perhaps for purposes of study. There is certainly enough evidence, at least, to warrant further investigation.

The group quite enjoyed the genial Professor Donderi's talk, and the lively Q&A that followed.

The latter part of the meeting involved MonSFFen in speculations on the society and, specifically, economy of the future. With automation rapidly displacing human workers, even today, what kind of a future can Canadians expect? Will we attain SF's utopian dream of a fully automated society without want or need, or are we staring down the barrel of a dystopia? Will there still be jobs for everyone in a future where robots are doing most, if not all, of the work?

Keith Braithwaite moderated a rather animated discussion of the ramifications of our rapidly evolving automated society and the future that seems to be developing because of it. Many expressed doubt that any kind of utopia would emerge.

Machines, growing exponentially in artificial intelligence and efficiency, will always be better and faster than humans, it was argued. We've already largely done away with assembly-line workers, bank tellers, and are now phasing out even minimum-wage cashiers in fast food restaurants! Automated cars and trucks are said to be just around the corner, which will eliminate the need for taxi and truck drivers. There will be fewer jobs for people in the years to come, it was opined, and without fresh thinking on the redistribution of the national wealth, resultant greater individual poverty. Also, those few holding all of the wealth and influence will not likely surrender control to those increasingly jobless and destitute.

But if all the money and power resides in the hands of only a very few, can a free society such as Canada's continue to function without resorting to some form of Totalitarianism? We may well see the end of Western Capitalism as governments seek to provide for everyone in a largely jobless environment. That sounds a lot like communism, some retorted, which has been tried already, and has failed. And yet, a country that cannot provide a decent livelihood for its citizens is unsustainable! We will *have* to find a way to provide a decent living for everyone.

The idea of a guaranteed income was brought up, but some wondered exactly how such a system would work, and questioned whether debt-saddled governments would even be able to afford such a program. Others noted that human nature drives our need to feel we are contributing to society in some substantive way. Life must have its meaningful rewards. So how will people contribute to the society of tomorrow, and will their efforts be considered of any appreciable value?

The spirited discussion could have gone on for another hour or more but time constraints cut things short as the afternoon drew to a close. We had just enough clock remaining to squeeze in a quick follow-up on the programming brainstorming session we had held in the hour just prior to the start of the meeting.

We thank very much our guest speaker, Professor Don Donderi, for his visit, and MonSFFAn Barbara Silverman for recommending him as a guest speaker. We thank, too, debate moderator Keith Braithwaite and all who participated in our discussion. Finally, thanks to those who helped to plan and run this meeting.

Visit MonSFFA on the Web / Visitez l'AMonSFF sur internet: www.MonSFFA.ca

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 préparée 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