

**I M P U L S E**

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

April / Avril 2017 (Vol. 21, No./N° 4)

**NEXT CLUB MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND**

**Sunday, April 9**

**1:00PM-5:00PM**

**Grand Salon**

**Hôtel Espresso, 1005 Guy St. Downtown Montreal**

*MEETING THEME: It's the Easter season! Contribute a small plate of chocolate bunnies or Easter eggs to supplement our snack table!*

**PROGRAMME**

**1:00PM-2:30PM**

**GUEST SPEAKER ANDREW FAZEKAS:**

We welcome "The Night Sky Guy" for a talk on Star Trek-related astronomy! Science reporter and educator Andrew Fazekas has authored the new National Geographic publication Star Trek: The Official Guide to the Universe, copies of which will be available at the meeting for the sale price of \$30. (See also lead item, right.)

**2:30PM-3:00PM**

**MID-MEETING BREAK:** Brief discussion of club business; fund-raising raffle

**3:00PM-4:30PM**

**SOUND AND VISION—FOLEY AND**

**SOUNDTRACK WORKSHOP:** Foley is a film industry term for the manual creation of sound effects for a movie's soundtrack. We'll set up a makeshift recording studio in order to work together on the sound effects and soundtrack required for our paper cut-out stop-motion animation short film project, creating particular sound effects and editing these into the film's soundtrack. Your participation and creative input is required!

**Next Month: MAY 14**

*Field Trip to Old Port for CSI: The Experience*

**NIGHT SKY GUY TO TALK TREK AT APRIL MEETING**

We are thrilled to welcome to the club's April 9 meeting guest speaker Andrew Fazekas, TV's "The Night Sky Guy" (see events column, left)!

An active member and former president of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, the long-time astronomy columnist for the Montreal Gazette, and a contributing writer for National Geographic, Andrew is a science reporter and educator, and author of the new book Star Trek: The Official Guide to the Universe, published by National Geographic.

In his book, Andrew "takes fans and astronomers alike on an incredible journey into space," delving into the "science behind specific Star Trek voyages," and exploring the "connections between planets and places in the Star Trek universe and their counterparts in the real universe." Andrew will speak on this topic, comparing Star Trek's many fictional M-class planets with the Earth-like worlds astronomers have, in recent years, discovered beyond our solar system.

Copies of Andrew's coffee-table book will be available for sale at \$30 apiece.

**CLUB TURNS TO CRIME!**

Following the suggestion of a visit to the West Island's Ecomuseum zoological park as a group excursion, a second proposal for an outing has been put forth and was, in fact, chosen by club members at MonSFFA's March 12 meeting as the preferred option.

We hereby give notice that on Sunday, May 14, the club will visit the Montreal Science Centre at the Old Port to take in CSI: The Experience, an interactive learning adventure in which folk are challenged to investigate a

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

**Overdue:**

D'ORTUN-BOYER, Lynda  
DUROCHER, Marc  
GLOVER, Wayne  
MÉNARD, François  
SIMARD, Phil  
WHITELOW, Maureen

**Due This Month, April:**

NADEAU, Marc

**Due Next Month, May:**

BROWN, Lindsay  
BURAKOFF, Mark  
REDMOND, Isis  
SICHEL, Danny

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  
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*Thank you for your patronage*

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

**AMonSFF FORMULAIRE D'INSCRIPTION**

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

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INTERESTS/INTERETS: \_\_\_\_\_

“crime scene,” collecting and analysing blood splatter, DNA, and other evidence in order to solve the case! This exhibit is based on the popular CSI television franchise.

Adult admission is advertised at \$23. Lesser prices are listed for children and seniors, and a family rate is also available. Apparently, Canadian residents will benefit from a further discount as part of the year-long celebrations of Canada’s 150th birthday!

MonSFFen will be responsible for their own tickets to the event; food and drink can be purchased on site, and paid parking is available. Complete information on this, our 2017 Spring field trip, will be published in these pages next month, and on the club’s Web Site.

It was additionally suggested that the club nonetheless visit the Ecomuseum, but in July, perhaps on the Sunday following our Summer Barbecue, when the weather is likely to be more amenable to an outdoor jaunt. Details to follow; watch this space.

## March MonSFFA Meeting

The club met in the Hôtel Espresso’s Saguenay Room for its March 12 meeting, which listed a rather busy schedule that began with early-bird programming, namely, another edition of our popular Sunday Sci-Fi Cinema Matinée, this day offering folk a choice of vintage SF movies featuring flying saucers. Our list included a couple of bona fide classics of the genre, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) and *Forbidden Planet* (1956), as well as the abysmal *Plan 9 From Outer Space* (1959), but folk chose for review the perfectly serviceable B-movie *This Island Earth* (1955).

Setting aside the usual sloppy B-movie science and stereotypical characterization with which such films are often imbued, the group was taken by *This Island Earth*’s intriguing story and above-average visual effects. While most had never before seen the film, many recognized the Metalunan Mutant, a bug-eyed monster of 1950s sci-fi that is, today, an icon of the era.

The meeting proper began with Sylvain St-Pierre’s presentation on SF/F’s weird and wacky forms of government, spanning despotic galactic empires, lottery-based democracies, post-apocalyptic tribalism, and planets ruled by machine! Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Huxley’s *Brave New World*, many of Heinlein’s stories, among other examples, see real-world governmental structures and political systems—monarchism, republicanism, libertarianism, fascism, socialism, capitalism, anarchism—taken that few steps further, and sometimes to extremes.

Copiously illustrating his presentation with images from sci-fi books, comics, and films, Sylvain detailed some of the most bizarre forms of government that the Genre’s authors have imagined, including one in which the chosen leader is dispatched upon completion of his term of office!

A quick break followed, during which we discussed a few items of club business and held our usual mid-meeting fund-raising raffle, awarding a number of cool prizes to lucky ticket holders, including premiere passes to the new film *Life*.

The meeting resumed on the topic of science fiction conventions, outlining, for the benefit of MonSFFen, upcoming local events and those in nearby cities, and comparing fan- and pro-run conventions.

It was noted off the top that SF/F conventions, or “cons,” are currently in the throes of transformative change. The decades-long era of fan-run cons, such as Montreal’s now-defunct ConCept and Toronto’s Ad Astra, seems to be coming to an end!

These weekend gatherings, entirely staged by fans themselves, generally boast a few Genre writers as guests and feature a healthy schedule of hourly discussion panels, presentations, and workshops on a variety of subjects. Throw in the other typical elements of these cons, like a dealers’ room, masquerade, art show, and nightly room parties, and you’ve got a lot of fun and interesting things to do, enough to keep the average fan happily engaged for the whole weekend! Such cons typically draw a quite manageable few hundred people, at most, a couple thousand. The annual World Science Fiction Convention—the WorldCon—is the exception, being the science fiction publishing industry’s singular showcase event. Think of it as the Olympics of the science fiction field!

But the advent and proliferation of big, profit-driven super-cons, like ComicCon and FanExpo, is now threatening to drive traditional fan-run cons into extinction! Many of the smaller cons have folded in recent years, unable to compete with the big-budget super-cons.

While there’s nothing particularly objectionable about Montreal’s ComicCon, for instance, many older fans in particular have commented that such events, while offering unparalleled guest lists of major sci-fi screen stars and comic book luminaries, nevertheless fail to hold one’s interest for long. Most can be satisfactorily experienced in just a few hours. These colossal events are, essentially, Q&A’s and autograph signings, and a giant dealers’ room, populated by tens of thousands of fans, many cosplaying as their favourite sci-fi characters, that, admittedly, being pretty cool. A few folk added that lately, however, some of these super-cons are beginning to get a little repetitive—same guests year after year, largely the same merchandise for sale.

Don’t get us wrong! A ComicCon can be great fun, but at the same time a little bit disappointing, definitely exhausting, and very, *very* costly. And there’s simply no getting around the prolonged amount of time spent standing in line waiting to get into the next Q&A.

Think of fan-run cons, if you will, as an intimate concert by your favourite band at a small club venue, and the big super-cons as a stadium show. Different experience, each with its merits, each with its shortcomings.

The afternoon wrapped up with a brief stab at completing our 2017 meeting programme, with panels and panelists slotted into the calendar for the remainder of the year. All subject to change, of course!

A nod to Keith Braithwaite for hosting another of his Sunday Sci-Fi Cinema Matinéés, our thanks to Sylvain St-Pierre for his most entertaining presentation, and kudos to all who helped to plan and run this meeting.

## Briefly:

- ▶ Rainn Wilson (*The Office*) has been cast as a familiar fellow on *Star Trek: Discovery*. He’ll play interstellar con man Harry Mudd! Originally set to debut in January, *Discovery* has now been delayed until late summer or early fall.
- ▶ R.I.P. horror comics artist Bernie “Berni” Wrightson (*Swamp Thing*), dead at 88.

**Visit MonSFFA on the Web / Visitez l’AMonSFF sur internet: [www.MonSFFA.ca](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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*