



Spring 2017

WARPG 98

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On the Cover

Artist and MonSFFA Marquise provides us with our cover this issue, a finely detailed pen-and-ink drawing of a werewolf under a full moon. This illustration, along with her companion drawings of a Vampire and a Zombie, will be featured on playing cards currently being designed specifically for the club's DIY board/card game, War and Feast, which pits the three monsters against each other in a battle for dominion over this world once ruled by man! Marquise's werewolf has received such praise since it was first unveiled that we decided to showcase the drawing as a Warp cover piece.

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YAHOO!

MonSFFA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Except where noted, all MonSFFA meetings are held
Sundays from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Espresso Hotel, Grand Salon, 1005 Guy Street,
corner René Lévesque.

NB: If you do not find us in the Grand Salon, please ask at the front desk. We are sometimes moved to other rooms.

Programming is subject to change. Check our website for latest developments.

JUNE 4

Theme is DRAGONS!

NOON: The SF Cinema Matinee, hosted by Keith.

14:00h Here there be Dragons! We examine the legends surrounding fantasy's supreme beastie while highlighting some of the Genre's most memorable dragons! A presentation by Paula and Fern.

15:30h The Dragon Slayer: A discussion panel moderated by Cathy—Defining the role and character of a hero. Who in SF/F best embodies our vision of the hero?

JULY 16

Picnic in the Park (Jul 23 in case of bad weather)

JULY 23

If we have our picnic on the 16th, we will use the 23rd for a road trip to the Ecomuseum in Ste Anne de Bellevue.

AUGUST 27

NOON: SF Cinema Matinée, hosted by Keith

14:00 h Forever and a Day: Living eternally, or at least for a much longer time than we do now is an old human dream, but would fulfilling it really be an unmitigated blessing? Presented by Sylvain

15:30 The Future of Warfare: We talk about peace on earth, but it seems we don't really expect it to happen. How do we imagine fighting wars in space? Mark Burakoff

SEPTEMBER 17

13:00 h World Con 75-MonSFFA report on their wonderful adventures in Helsinki, Finland!

15:00 h What's with the fairy tales? Fairy tale for adults on TV, in movies, in books, love them or hate them? CPL, Josée, and René explain the persistence of the folktale in our culture.

16:00h The Music of SF/F, the Sequel! Overview of soundtracks, star composers of the genre, sf themes and imagery in pop music—All wrapped up as a game! (Kieth Braithwaite)

OCTOBER 15

NOON: SF Cinema Matinee, hosted by Keith

14:00h Victorian Scientific Romance: A retrospective of some of the more interesting stories of those early days, presented by Sylvain.

16h Judging a Book by its Cover: The art of SF/F

Really Fine Print: WARP is published quarterly by the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA), a nonprofit organization of fans interested in sharing their love of science fiction and fantasy. The opinions expressed in WARP are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of MonSFFA or the editor. To reprint any article, please contact the writer, or ask the editor to pass on your request. The use of copyrighted material is generally discouraged; but sometimes unavoidable; our apologies to the copyright holders, no serious infringement is intended. This is an amateur production, and your tolerance is appreciated by your fans.



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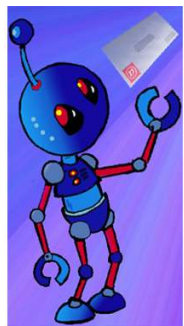


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You've Got Mail!

e-mail received February 15, from Professor Don Donderi, in response to a thank you note for his wonderful presentation on February 12:

Thanks very much, Cathy – you were a lively and very well-informed audience; I liked the informality and the give-and-take. It was a particularly nice surprise to meet up again with Joe Aspler, a colleague

from the pulp and paper industry – we had co-authored a couple of papers and worked very closely together back in the 90s.

Thanks for suggesting a sequel – let's see how things work out later on. I'm not adverse to the idea. It was fun.

Yours,
Don

It was indeed fun! And we will be contacting Prof Donderi for a sequel next year!

e-mail received from Professor Don Donderi, March 13

A belated but very appreciative thank-you to the Science Fiction and Fantasy Society for the gift of *The Aurora Awards: Thirty Years of Canadian science Fiction*. I've read the first two stories: Three hearings on the existence of snakes in the human bloodstream (Gardner) and When the Morning Stars Sang Together (Szpindel). An interesting start: they both have strong religious involvement; and the first one is a clever re-interpretation of history with an equally clever bit of imaginary

molecular biology thrown in. I appreciate the style and imagination in both stories.

The problem I deal with, of course, is the boundary between imagination and reality. My imagination as a teenager was fuelled by novels (not just science fiction); my professional life has been spent detailing certain limited aspects of the reality of how human visual perception and memory work, and now I'm working on evidence that some people consider well over the line into fantasy, but that others, myself included, think should be a very cautionary awakening of human awareness to a new and not necessarily benign aspect of reality.

It's fun to read something that I know doesn't knock on the door of reality, but really does stimulate the imagination!

Yours,
Don

Received March 10 from Lloyd Penney

Dear MonSFFen:

Thanks to all of you, and Cathy too, for an e-issue of Warp 97. It's almost the weekend as I write, so I'd better get with it before we go out for the evening.

There's a Wellsian front cover. Well done, Keith! I find we need more and more reminders of the SF from past eras, for there is so much current SF, the past may be easily forgotten.

Upcoming conventions...well, we won't be at the Toronto Comicon this year, but we will be at Ad Astra, but only for Saturday (we decided not to take a table this year).

Glad we were able to meet up, if only now & then in the hall!

My loc...you must be tired of hearing me say this, but I am STILL job hunting. I had an excellent interview just a few days ago, so hopes are up for that one, and our first vending convention of the year, Genrecon 2017 in Guelph, was a fun time, but sales were poor. We have a number of vending opportunities lined up, and our next convention with a table is CostumeCon 35 in Mississauga. From the look back at Warp 10...for me, a convention is fun where there's something to do, something to participate in. I find many conventions these days, literary or media or other, simply need you as a source of income and as a quiet audience. Comments on this?

We had a discussion at the March MonSFFA meeting about different kinds of convention, and this very topic came up. Mark, whom you know as one-half of the 2WPG, gave us an eye-opening run-down of dealer table costs. For profit cons are certainly profitable!

Worldcon is out of our financial league now, but I admit that I am still interested in what happens to it. To see it in Helsinki this coming August is great. I've always thought that there should be more world in the Worldcon, and Finland certainly fills the bill.


The NASFiC will be in Puerto Rico, so some are angry over the fact neither convention is on the North American continent. In 2018, Worldcon comes to the Bay Area, so the complaints should be silenced by then.

I will be attending World Con 75 in Helsinki, and spending a few more days there to enjoy the city. Because of the expense, I have had to give up last year's con, and next year's as well. It looks like 2019 will be Dublin's turn. At this rate, I will be attending only every other World Con.

One movie we did see, especially for Yvonne, the big Harry Potter fan, was *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. As Josée writes, it is Harry Potter for grown-ups, and there is a steampunk tinge to it, which keeps both of us happy. Based on what J.K. Rowling said, there will be four more movies in this series.

I think that may be it for right now! I see there's a meeting this weekend...enjoy your get together, stay warm, and see you with the next issue.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney. 

Blast from the Past: WARP 11 Summer 1990

Cathy Palmer-Lister



I know it says, "WARP 7" but it is indeed our 11th issue of WARP. The number on the cover refers to the month of publication, an unwieldy system which was changed with WARP 20.

The cover shows a photograph of Berny Reischl's model of the Enterprise NCC 1701 D. According to Berny, it took 7 hours to build and 40 to paint! A closer look at the cover shows a change

in the logo and slogan. Berny reworked the logo: "Retaining the feel of the old logo, he has made the new one bolder and subtly changed the font style. Gone is the 12-part strip which designated the month of publication. It has been replaced with a streak-effect number (the calendar number of the month of publication) tucked in under the "P" in Warp." The slogan now reads: "The Official Newsletter of the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association". There are other changes between the covers, most obvious being the tweaking of titles such as the change from *President's letter* to *From the Centre Seat*.

MonSFFandom: What I find most striking in this report on our activities is the number of participants; few of the named members are still around, and they are still the members most active in the club. Much of the meetings was taken up by Con*Cept planning and fundraising. I can see why the club eventually chose to send the con off on its own warp engines—it must have been a terrible drain on the club's time and resources.

Lynda Pelley wrote a long article entitled *Drydock: Last Minute Preparations for a Model Show*, in which she describes the work she and Berny Reischl put into preparing 15 models over 3 days, the problems encountered and mostly surmounted. The article is accompanied by several photographs of the work in progress.

Later in this issue, we find a review of the model show written by Berny, also amply illustrated with many photographs of the models in competition.

Two short, short stories, winners of the contest at the May meeting, were reprinted. Participants had been given a sheet of paper, a pencil and eraser, a title – "The Cloud" – and one hour to write an sf or fantasy story around that title. The winners were Bryan Ekers and Sylvie Beaulieu. Both stories are worth your time—do read them! Bryan's story is sf: the cloud is protecting him from the harmful rays of the sun: "Humans had conceived this machine, designed and built it. And here he was in its shadow." Sylvie's story is fantasy, the PoV character is a romantically inclined 16-yr old girl, but she turns the tables on the stereotype by slaying the dragon lord and presenting his head to the prince, subject of her crush.

Then there are two pages of "stuff that appeared in the *Edmund Scientific Catalogue*. Along with the usual—Sea Monkeys and Lava Lamps – there are bits of foam painted to look like rocks (\$4.95), Flash Rocks : (\$3.95) "Just scratch together firmly in a dark place and weird light flashes will occur". I remember doing this as a kid—with a couple of stones found in the driveway.

Colleen Magnussen's opinion piece on the difference between fans and fen strikes a chord:

It was during my experiences on the Con-cept '89 con-com that I became aware of something that I think threatens-maybe that's too strong a word; hinders might be more appropriate-fandom: fen! Yes, fen, which I distinguish from fans. Fen, I think, are responsible for fandom's becoming stifled by its own traditions, its way of doing things. They tend to hold to those traditions, whereas fans seem to be more open to new ideas. Fen tend to be more cliquish and it has been my observation that they display a certain "snobbishness" for lack of a more accurate word. Not a conscious snobbishness, I'm sure, but a snobbishness nonetheless.

In the latter days of Con*Cept I was still having to deal with the same arguments, such as food and bheer in the consuite should be free. Sure, it can be done, but at twice the cost of the membership fee. The fen didn't get it then, and they still don't.

Sylvain St-Pierre eulogised Elizabeth Pearce who passed away May 19: *Elizabeth was not only an art show director extraordinaire, she was a fan in the best sense of the word; always looking for that spark that is present in every one of us and nurturing it whenever she found it.*

Trudy Mason wrote about Dr Roberto Bondar and the experiments she will be conducting on the space shuttle. Trudy also wrote a review of **Callahan's Lady** by Spider Robinson. It's

“fatally flawed”, but “the dialogue sparkles”.

Sensors highlights includes the passing of Jim Henson, Hubble's blurred vision, lots of books being published that summer, and a really wild rumour that Picard was going to be replaced as captain of the Enterprise by Riker, and his first officer would be Shelby. Would have been an interesting scenario!

Viewscreen features art by Keith Braithwaite, Berny Reischl, and Alain Essiambre, all three of whom presented their own designs for new Star Trek vessels—Federation, Romulan, and Klingon.



Upcoming Conventions and Events

Lloyd Penney, Lynda Pelley

Abridged, consult our westie for more complete listings.

June 4, 2017 – Montreal ToyCon, 10AM to 4PM Courtyard Marriott Hotel, 7000 Place Robert-Joncas, St Laurent, QC (Near Mega-Plex Speheretech 14 – Cinema Guzzo) Admission \$5 http://site.toysonfire.com/montreal_toy_con/montrealtoycon.html

June 11, 2017 – Quinte Toy Con, Quinte Sports & Wellness Centre, Belleville. <http://www.quintetoycon.ca>.

June 16&17, 2017 – Yeticon 2017, Blue Mountain Conference Centre, Collingwood. ON. <http://www.yeticon.org>.

June 24, 2017 – Toronto Sailor Moon Celebration, Ontario Science Centre, Toronto. <http://www.sailormooncelebration.com>.

July 7-9, 2017 – ComicCon de Montreal, Palais de congres, Montreal. www.montrealcomiccon.com .

July 14-16, 2017 – TFCon, Hilton Mississauga Meadowvale Hotel, Mississauga. Transformers convention. <http://www.tfcon.ca>.

July 16, 2017 – Mississauga Collectors Expo 2017, Hilton Mississauga Meadowvale Hotel, Mississauga, <http://www.ontariocollectorscon.com>.

July 28-30, 2017 – ConBravo!, Hamilton Convention Centre & Sheraton Hamilton Hotel, Hamilton. <http://2017.conbravo.com/> .

July 28-30, 2017 – What The Fur? – Getting Medieval, Holiday Inn Pointe-Claire, Montreal. Furry convention. <http://www.whatthefur.ca>.

August 4-6, 2017 – Otakuthon, Palais de Congres, Montreal. <http://www.otakuthon.com>.

August 9-13 World Con 75, Helsinki, Finland, GoH: John-Henri Holmberg, Nalo Hopkinson, Johanna Sinisalo, Claire Wendling, Walter Jon Williams <http://www.worldcon.fi/>

August 12, 2017 – Coldwater Steampunk Festival, Coldwater, ON. <http://www.steampunkfestivalcoldwater.com>.

August 25-29, 2017 – Camp Feral! Algonquin Park, ON. Furry camp. For more information, <http://www.campferal.org>.

August 31 – September 3, 2017 – Fan eXpo Canada, Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Guests: Tim Curry, many more. For more information, <http://www.fanexpocanada.com>.

September 15-17, 2017 – Animara Con, Delta Hotels by Marriott Sherbrooke Conference Centre, Sherbrooke, QC. For more information, <http://www.animaracon.com>.

September 23m 2017 – Capcon Model Competition, Ottawa, ON <http://www.ipmsottawa.com/capcon/>

September 22-24, 2017 – 2017 Grand Canadian Steampunk Exposition, Fort George, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON. Steampunk event. <http://www.canadiansteampunk.com>.

September 30 – October 1, 2017 – Hamilton Comic Con, Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, Port Hope, <http://www.hamiltoncomiccon.com>.

October 12-15, 2017 – Bouchercon XLVIII, Sheraton Centre Hotel, Toronto. World Mystery Convention. Guests: Louise Penny, Chris Grabenstein, Twist Phelan, Gary Phillips, Megan Abbott, Christopher Brookmyre, Margaret Cannon. For more information, <http://www.bouchercon2017.com>.

October 13-15 – Can-Con, Sheraton hotel, Ottawa, Guests include Steven Erikson, Sheila Gilbert <http://can-con.org/cc/>

October 15, 2017 – Action Figure Expo, Hilton Mississauga Meadowvale, Mississauga. For more information, <http://www.ontariocollectorscon.com>.

November 5&6, 2017 – Geekfest Montreal, College de Maisonneuve, Montreal. <http://www.geekfestmtl.com>.

December 1-3, 2017 – Smofcon 35, a con for conrunners, Boston, MA. <http://www.smofcon.com>



Starfleet Treachery

Barbara Silverman

The story so far: Captain Janeway is ordered to stop the impending coalition against Starfleet and the Federation. She ambushed the Maquis, capturing Chakotay. A conversation with him left Janeway puzzled as to his motives, and the ease with which he was captured.

Then Janeway was assigned to exploring the Gamma quadrant. It appears there may be an alliance between the Cardassians and the Dominion, and if so, the Federation needs to know if it's an alliance of mutual protection, or aggression. Chakotay may hold some answers, so Admiral Janeway was bringing him to Starfleet HQ for a meeting but Chakotay was beamed out of the shuttle craft. The admiral assigns his daughter to search the badlands for the Maquis leader.

Immediately on entering the Badlands, Janeway's vessel is detected and scanned by Chakotay's ship. Negotiations are interrupted when both are hit by a massive displacement wave. Heroic efforts bring the engines back on line, but crews of both ships are transported to what appears to be a cornfield, but is in fact an immense space station. Declaring a truce in the face of a greater enemy, the two captains consider their options, but then Janeway is transported to a laboratory.

Inexplicably returned to their ships, the captains confer and realize they are each missing a crew member and the bodies of those killed by the displacement wave have disappeared. Cavit is increasing belligerent toward Maquis, to the point of becoming a liability to Janeway. The captains, along with Tom Paris, transport over to the Array. There they meet with an old man who refuses to help them recover the missing crew. Back on the Enterprise, Janeway is informed that a G-type star system is only two light-years away. It has an M-class planet, and oddly, the Array is aiming pulses of energy straight at it.

Janeway leaves Cavit out of the tactical consultation, further infuriating him. Tuvok tells her the missing crew must be dead, but Janeway will not give up. Evans is sent over to assist in repairs on the Starfleet vessel, but Chakotay warns him to be wary of Cavit. We pick up the story as Janeway and Chakotay prepare to search the planet found near the array.

CHAPTER 38

Once in orbit they ran one last short range scan. Bending over the console Janeway studied the readings. "All that energy is interfering with the sensors. From what I can tell those ships landed here. Though somewhat distorted, I'm also reading what appear to be humanoid life signs. I can't be certain with all this electrical energy in the atmosphere."

Leaning closer Chakotay tapped the display. "This would be a good place for the away team to beam into. While still close to those life signs the mountains will offer protection, reducing the possibility of being seen."

The captain studied the indicated area. "It appears to be a safe distance from the landing area of those energy bursts."

Chakotay nodded. "We can do some reconnaissance before making our presence known. It will be a good idea to become familiar with the area around the beam in point. Knowledge of the surrounding terrain can prevent being surprised and aid in escaping, should that necessity arise."

Jerking her head up Janeway looked at Chakotay. "I'm hoping these people will be friendly. That *escape* will not be necessary."



A sad expression passed over Chakotay's face. "I share your hope Captain. However....we are in alien space. Prior to making contact I strongly recommend watching these people, try to learn as much as possible. See if there is a connection to that old man. Knowledge can not only be your best defense but also your best offense."

Thoughtfully Janeway tapped the console. "As much as I hate to agree....I must. We're all alone out here, with no backup, no help, and two damaged ships. I hope to make a peaceful first contact, however, you are correct, we must be careful. I'll send the coordinates to the transporter room."

A small smile eased the severity of her face. "I must admit, there is merit having a Maquis as an advisor. Your suggestions make sense, especially under these circumstances. I never took advanced tactical training. Never thought as a science officer it would be necessary."

Devilment lit up Chakotay's eyes. "Be careful Captain, I might turn you into a Maquis."

She grinned at the Maquis leader. "Not much chance of that. I'm my father's daughter." To hide the mischief in her eyes,

Janeway turned back to the panel. "I understand you taught tactical training at the Academy. In fact...I believe that's where you first met Ro Laren."

Chakotay ran his hand through his hair. "So....you know about Ro. Captain Kathryn Janeway, you and I are definitely due for a long talk."

Clearly showing her amusement, Janeway just stared at the uncomfortable Maquis leader. "Why do I have the distinct impression you are trying to figure just what I know about you and your operations." Chakotay remained silent. Uttering a small laugh Janeway contacted her security chief. "Janeway to Tuvok, assemble the away team."

The Vulcan's reply drifted over the communications system. "The team is ready Captain. The members of Commander's Chakotay's crew have just arrived."

Chakotay muttered something under his breath. Janeway turned to him. "Did you say something?"

"No Captain." Janeway did not see Chakotay's mentally crossed fingers that showed his apprehension.

Janeway turned her attention back to Tuvok. "Chakotay and I are on our way. Prepare for beam-down."

When the commanders entered the transporter room they came upon a heated argument. With his hands clenched at his sides one of the Maquis stood just in front of Tuvok. "No way, traitor! No way will I join you an any Starfleet mission!"

In three strides the Maquis leader was before the young man. Before Janeway knew what had happened Chakotay's fist lashed out. A fraction of a second later the man was sprawled on the deck.

Chakotay towered over his crewman. "Javis, when I give an order I expect you to obey! Do I make myself clear?"

Javis rubbed his chin where Chakotay's fist had left its mark. "Yeah! You made yourself clear! For B'Elanna's sake guess I can stomach Starfleet...for a little while!"

Fascinated Janeway watched the proceedings. There was no doubt as to the hatred this man held, but she also had no doubt that Chakotay would be obeyed. This Maquis leader was not one to be taken lightly. What puzzled her....one look told her this confrontation had come as no surprise to either Chakotay or Tuvok. If they had been expecting trouble with this Javis, why had



her security chief specifically requested that he join the away team? Tuvok never did anything without a logical reason.

Climbing to his feet Jarvis stepped onto the transporter pad. Chakotay beside him. The away team stood in a circle, facing outward with phasers drawn. Completely ignoring the incident Tuvok calmly turned to Janeway. "Captain, the away team is ready." The Vulcan then took his place on the pad, phaser in one hand, tricorder in the other.

Amused, Janeway joined him. Out of the corner of her eye she could see Jarvis rubbing his jaw. The animosity glaring from his

eyes could burn a hole through steel. *So this is the mystery man* thought Janeway. From the listing provided by Tuvok, her father had been able to obtain information on all of Chakotay's crew. All except this Jarvis! Later she would have a talk with one Maquis commander, find out more about this Jarvis and his bitter resentment of Starfleet.

Janeway nodded to the man standing at the transporter controls. "Energize!"

CHAPTER 39

As her molecules materialized Janeway's first sensation was of heat. Dry, hot heat! Thinking she had landed beside someone's old fashion campfire, the captain glanced down. Only the sun-scorched land greeted her eyes. Gasping for breath, her lungs labored to draw in what little oxygen there was. The others fared no better, their clothes already clammy from sweat, faces wet as the air sucked the water out of them.

The high, surrounding mountain peaks offered little protection from the overhead sun. The air hung motionless, suffocating all that it encircled. No vegetation, no birds, not even a lizard. Nothing moving, nothing living.

Too close for comfort, an energy burst striking less than a kilometer away sent an explosion thundering through the air as the ground shuddered violently. Chakotay's powerful hand grabbed Janeway's arm as she and the others were thrown off balance. Even with their view partially blocked by the mountains, dust and rocks could be seen rising high into the air.

Chakotay remarked cynically, forcing words out of a throat already parched and burning, "I would not like to live here. In fact, I would prefer not having to visit."

Janeway knew he was expressing the viewpoint of all the away team. "Tuvok, can you get any readings on your tricorder?"

The Vulcan replied as he clipped the instrument to his belt. "Negative Captain. There is too much interference."

The captain pointed with her arm over to the left. "The life form readings were in that direction. Let's hope they haven't moved."

Chakotay turned to the away team. "Spread out! Keep your eyes open for any sign of movement."



Phaser in hand Tuvok took the lead. Janeway, Chakotay, and Paris following. The rest of the team forming a half circle behind them. Slowly they proceeded over land cracked and tortured from a long absence of water. Using the rocks as shields, alert for the least sign of something alive, they approached their objective. In the oppressive heat each step required extra effort. Each footfall produced small dust clouds around their feet.

Another energy burst caused the ground to buck and tremble. Chakotay moved closer to Janeway. "The sooner we're out of here the better." Looking at the man beside her, the captain silently agreed.

Once they were close enough, Janeway and Chakotay knelt behind a couple of large protective boulders. Using viewers they carefully studied the scene before them. Comprised mostly of

sunburnt, vicious looking men, a small group was camped amid crumbling ruins. The landscape adding to the feeling of desolation and loneliness emitting off the land. Stark reminders of a long vanished civilization, of a time when water flowed and birds sang.

Their clothes were ragged, their hair heaped upon their heads in massive, unkept mounds. Klingon-like ridges graced leathery foreheads on faces burnt black from hours in the sun. The males had weapons slung over their shoulders and various ornaments, either of rank or battle significance, hung their hair. The women, clothes no better than an assembly of rags, faces haggard from years of hardship, were busy preparing their meager meal.



Chakotay whispered to Janeway. "I count around twenty males and six females."

The captain turned her head in the direction of the Maquis leader. Upon her face the disappointment clearly showed. "Like this planet – not very inviting. I doubt they will be glad to see us." Repositioning the viewer she continued to study the group.

Heaving a small sigh Chakotay glanced downwards. "I'm afraid you're right. They're fighters. No other could survive in such a harsh environment. Nothing about their demeanor suggests they are friendly, or would welcome strangers. Just the opposite."

As Janeway lowered her viewer she gave her head a discouraged shake. Sitting down, the captain placed her back against the rock. "A rather fearsome picture. Weapons at their ready, within easy reach a line of one-man short range fighter ships. I don't think we'll be invited for supper."

"Unless we're the supper." Chakotay quipped.

Again the air vibrated from an explosion caused by an energy burst striking not far away. The ground shook and rumbled as it gave a good demonstration of an earthquake. Before turning his attention back to the group Chakotay glanced over at the dust rising up from the terrain. "They're completely ignoring these energy barrages. They must be accustomed to them, which means this has been going on for a long time."

The captain ran a hand along her forehead, which was already feeling the effects of the overhead sun. "How anyone could be at ease with such monstrous power striking so near is beyond me. It might be commonplace to these inhabitants, however, for us who are new to this land, it is just plain nerve raking. I doubt very much there is any connection between these people and the alien on that Array."

Still watching the group, something caught Chakotay's attention

as he slowly moved his viewer over the scene before them. “Hmmm...Take a look over to the left. In the second doorway.

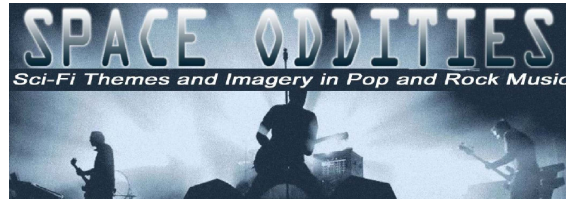
Quickly Janeway shifted her position. Once again kneeling on the hard ground she peered through her viewer. The lips of the captain tightened in anger. “She must be a prisoner. From the appearance of those bruises on her face, she has been on the receiving end of very harsh treatment. Interesting... her species is very different. This girl is so small and slender with golden hair. Everybody else is well built, tall with black hair.”

Chakotay glanced over at Janeway. “Captain, notice how white

her face is. As though she has never seen the sun, or at least, not for a very long time. Perhaps she is not native to this planet.”

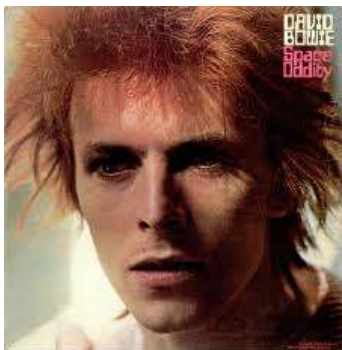
For several moment the captain continued to study the object of their attention. “You could be right. Either that or she has been a prisoner in some dark, secluded place. Or on something like the Array. On this planet avoiding the sun must be next to impossible.”

Suddenly Chakotay uttered a sharp oath. Leaping backwards he disappeared around a set of boulders!



Keith Braithwaite

David Bowie’s popular 1969 tune *Space Oddity* tells the tale of astronaut Major Tom, who ventures outside of his space capsule, only to become stranded in orbit before drifting off through the heavens, his future undetermined.



At the time, many wedded the song to the Apollo 11 moonshot, and, indeed, *Space Oddity* was released to coincide with the historic moon landing. Some reviewers took the song as, plainly, the story of an astronaut who finds himself stranded in space, a possible scenario much discussed in 1969 as NASA prepared to land a man on the

moon. Others have read more into the composition, taking *Space Oddity* to be a space-age representation of the disillusionment of ’60s youth. Still others saw the song as a drug-induced astral trip!

Bowie himself has stated that *Space Oddity* was influenced by the 1968 SF film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the song’s title a play on the movie’s. “I was very stoned when I went to see it, several times,” Bowie discloses, “and it was really a revelation to me. It got the song flowing.”

A short, promotional film designed to spotlight this new

singer-songwriter’s talents included an early version of *Space Oddity* in which Bowie, as Major Tom, is seen stepping through the hatch of his spaceship, relaying to Ground Control that he is “floating in a most peculiar way,” and that “the stars look very different today.” He encounters two beautiful, enigmatic women – angels, higher spiritual entities, aliens, transcendent human beings, perhaps– who encircle him. The astronaut requests of Ground Control, “Tell my wife I love her very much,” and suddenly, communication is broken. Fearing that “there’s something wrong,” Ground Control repeatedly calls “Can you hear me, Major Tom?”

Was Major Tom somehow compelled to abandon his life on Earth, or did he switch off his radio and willingly set out on a new journey “Far above the moon”? Perhaps his unique perspective, looking down upon a troubled world from orbit, caused him such dismay – “Planet Earth is blue / And there’s nothing I can do.” – that he chose to quietly drift away into space.

The song, and the astronaut’s fate, remain open to interpretation.

Major Tom reappeared a few times later in Bowie’s career, reworked a little on each occasion.

Space Oddity is probably one of the best known of pop and rock songs that tap into science fiction or fantasy, employing space motifs, sci-fi references, narratives, or SF/F as metaphor.

At the club’s first meeting of 2017, MonSFFA VP Keith Braithwaite hosted a game in which he challenged his fellow MonSFFen to identify, from just a couple lines of lyrics, a number of Genre-themed pop or rock songs.

We’ve reproduced Keith’s challenge, here, for Warp’s readers. Identify each song, and the singer or group most associated with the tune (answers on page 11):

1. In your mind you have abilities you know
To telepath messages through the vast unknown
2. They got music in their solar system
They’ve rocked around the Milky Way
3. Crossed through the universe to get where you are
Travel the night riding on a shooting star
4. Woke up this morning with light in my eyes
And then realized it was still dark outside

5. I think your atmosphere is hurting my eyes
And your concrete mountains are blackin' out the skies
6. I miss the Earth so much, I miss my wife
It's lonely out in space
7. They'll split your pretty cranium, and fill it full of air
And tell you that you're eighty, but brother, you won't care
8. (All day long, we hear him crying so loud)
I just want to be myself, I just want to be myself,
I just want to be myself, be myself, be myself
9. Mine's broke down
And now I've no one to love
10. Hey mom, there's something in the back room
Hope it's not the creatures from above
11. Oh Space Dude in your space suit
Our love, it takes us to the moon
12. Then the stranger spoke, he said, "Do not fear
I come from a planet a long way from here"
13. On Mercury, they're crazy about my stellar rock 'n' roll
And I always sell out in advance at the Martian Astro Bowl
14. Life is too easy, a plague seems quite feasible now
Or maybe a war, or I may kill you all
15. He was turned to steel
In the great magnetic field
16. Tell me, did you sail across the sun?
Did you make it to the Milky Way to see the lights all faded
17. Encounters one and two are not enough for me
What my body needs is close encounter three
18. And with the top down, we'll cruise around
Land and make love on the moon (Would you like that?)

AWARDS: Nominations are in!

Cathy Palmer-Lister

The final ballots, based on nominations from the fans, have been published for both the Hugo Awards and Canada's Aurora Awards. The Aurora Awards ballot will appear in WARP 99, or you can look it up on the [CSFFA website](#).

Lately, the Hugo Awards have been plagued by Puppies; Sad or Rabid, they are more than annoying and measures to muzzle them took up way too much time at the WSFS meetings. However, it may not have been a waste of time, since the new rules seem to have curbed much of the Puppy Effect. There are many names I don't recognize, but that may be a good thing. My hope is that a younger generation of fans are engaging in fandom. There were 2464 valid nominating ballots received. A sign of changing times: Only 6 were on paper. The 2017 Hugo Awards will be presented August 11 at Worldcon 75 in Helsinki, Finland.

Best Novel

All the Birds in the Sky, by Charlie Jane Anders
A Closed and Common Orbit, by Becky Chambers
Death's End, by Cixin Liu, translated by Ken Liu
The Obelisk Gate, by N. K. Jemisin
Ninefox Gambit, by Yoon Ha Lee
Too Like the Lightning, by Ada Palmer

Best Novella

The Ballad of Black Tom, by Victor LaValle
The Dream-Quest of Vellitt Boe, by Kij Johnson
Every Heart a Doorway, by Seanan McGuire
Penric and the Shaman, by Lois McMaster Bujold
A Taste of Honey, by Kai Ashante
This Census-Taker, by China Miéville

Best Novelette

"Alien Stripper Boned From Behind By The T-Rex", by Stix Hiscock
"The Art of Space Travel", by Nina Allan
"The Jewel and Her Lapidary", by Fran Wilde
"The Tomato Thief", by Ursula Vernon
"Touring with the Alien", by Carolyn Ives Gilman
"You'll Surely Drown Here If You Stay", by Alyssa Wong

Best Short Story

"The City Born Great", by N. K. Jemisin
"A Fist of Permutations in Lightning and Wildflowers", by Alyssa Wong
"Our Talons Can Crush Galaxies", by Brooke Bolander
"Seasons of Glass and Iron", by Amal El-Mohtar

"That Game We Played During the War"

by Carrie Vaughn
"An Unimaginable Light", by John C. Wright

Best Related Work

The Geek Feminist Revolution, by Kameron Hurley
The Princess Diarist, by Carrie Fisher (Blue Rider Press)
Traveler of Worlds: Conversations with Robert Silverberg, by Robert Silverberg and Alvaro Zinos-Amaro
The View From the Cheap Seats, by Neil Gaiman
The Women of Harry Potter posts, by Sarah Gailey
Words Are My Matter: Writings About Life and Books, 2000-2016, by Ursula K. Le Guin

Best Graphic Story

Black Panther, Volume 1: A Nation Under Our Feet, written by Ta-Nehisi Coates, illustrated by Brian Stelfreeze

Monstress, Volume 1: Awakening, written by Marjorie Liu, illustrated by Sana Takeda

Ms. Marvel, Volume 5: Super Famous, written by G. Willow Wilson, illustrated by Takeshi Miyazawa

Paper Girls, Volume 1, written by Brian K. Vaughan, illustrated by Cliff Chiang, colored by Matthew Wilson, lettered by Jared Fletcher

Saga, Volume 6, illustrated by Fiona Staples, written by Brian K. Vaughan, lettered by Fonografiks

The Vision, Volume 1: Little Worse Than A Man, written by Tom King, illustrated by Gabriel Hernandez Walta

Best Dramatic Presentation Long Form

Arrival, screenplay by Eric Heisserer based on a short story by Ted Chiang, directed by Denis Villeneuve

Deadpool, screenplay by Rhett Reese & Paul Wernick, directed by Tim Miller

Ghostbusters, screenplay by Katie Dippold & Paul Feig, directed by Paul Feig

Hidden Figures, screenplay by Allison Schroeder and Theodore Melfi, directed by Theodore Melfi

Rogue One, screenplay by Chris Weitz and Tony Gilroy, directed by Gareth Edwards

Stranger Things, Season One, created by the Duffer Brothers

Best Dramatic Presentation Short Form

Black Mirror: "San Junipero", written by Charlie Brooker, directed by Owen Harris

Doctor Who: "The Return of Doctor Mysterio", written by Steven Moffat, directed by Ed Bazalgette

The Expanse: "Leviathan Wakes", written by Mark Fergus and Hawk Ostby, directed by Terry McDonough

Game of Thrones: "Battle of the Bastards", written by David Benioff and D. B. Weiss, directed by Miguel Sapochnik

Game of Thrones: "The Door", written by David Benioff and D. B. Weiss, directed by Jack Bender

Splendor & Misery [album], by Clipping

Best Editor, Short Form

John Joseph Adams
Neil Clarke
Ellen Datlow
Jonathan Strahan
Lynne M. Thomas & Michael Damian Thomas
Sheila Williams

Best Editor, Long Form

Vox Day
Sheila E. Gilbert
Liz Gorinsky
Devi Pillai
Miriam Weinberg
Navah Wolfe

Best Professional Artist

Galen Dara
Julie Dillon
Chris McGrath
Victo Ngai
John Picacio
Sana Takeda

Best Semiprozine

Beneath Ceaseless Skies, editor-in-chief and publisher Scott H. Andrews

Cirsova Heroic Fantasy and Science Fiction Magazine, edited by P. Alexander

GigaNotoSaurus, edited by Rashida J. Smith

Strange Horizons, edited by Niall Harrison, (& lots more)

Uncanny Magazine, edited by Lynne M. Thomas (& lots more) + podcast produced by Erika Ensign & Steven Schapansky

The Book Smugglers, edited by Ana Grilo and Thea James

Best Fanzine

Castalia House Blog, edited by Jeffro Johnson

Journey Planet, edited by James Bacon, Chris Garcia, (& lots more)

Lady Business, edited by Clare, Ira,

Jodie, KJ, Renay, and Susan

nerds of a feather, flock together, edited by The G, Vance Kotrla, and Joe Sherry

Rocket Stack Rank, edited by Greg Hullender and Eric Wong

SF Bluestocking, edited by Bridget McKinney

Best Fancast

The Coode Street Podcast, presented by Gary K. Wolfe and Jonathan Strahan

Ditch Diggers, presented by Mur Lafferty and Matt Wallace

Fangirl Happy Hour, presented by Ana Grilo and Renay Williams

Galactic Suburbia, presented by Alisa Krasnostein, Alexandra Pierce and Tansy Rayner Roberts, produced by Andrew Finch

The Rageaholic, presented by RazörFist

Tea and Jeopardy, presented by Emma Newman with Peter Newman

Best Fan Writer

Mike Glycer
Jeffro Johnson
Natalie Luhrs
Foz Meadows
Abigail Nussbaum
Chuck Tingle

Best Fan Artist

Ninni Aalto
Elizabeth Leggett
Vesa Lehtimäki
Likhain (M. Sereno)
Spring Schoenhuth
Steve Stiles

Worldcon 75 has elected to exercise its authority under the WSFS Constitution to add an additional category for 2017 only:

Best Series

The Craft Sequence, by Max Gladstone

The Expanse, by James S.A. Corey

The October Daye Books, by Seanan McGuire

The Peter Grant / Rivers of London series, by Ben Aaronovitch

The Temeraire series, by Naomi Novik

The Vorkosigan Saga, by Lois McMaster Bujold

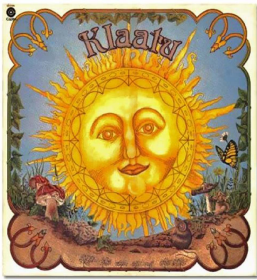
Space Oddities : The Answers!

Keith Braithwaite

Here are the answers to Keith Braithwaite's page-8 quiz on pop and rock songs that comprise SF/F-themes and imagery. Keith asked that each song, and the affiliated performer(s), be correctly identified from the snippet of lyric. The title of each song follows, and then, between parentheses, the name(s) of the composer(s), the year of the song's release, and the vocalist or band normally linked to the tune. A brief word on each song is also provided, along with related trivia.

1. In your mind you have abilities you know To telepath messages through the vast unknown

Calling Occupants of Interplanetary Craft (Terry Draper, John Woloschuk, 1976; original performed by Klaatu, memorably covered by The Carpenters in 1977)



According to co-writer Woloschuk, the idea for this song came from an event described in the book **The Flying Saucer Reader**, published in 1967. The author recounted the tale of an experiment proposed by the International Flying Saucer Bureau in

1953, in which all of that organization's members, at a predetermined date and time, would attempt to collectively send out a telepathic message to space aliens that began with the salutation "Calling occupants of interplanetary craft!"

The tune opens this Canadian progressive rock band's debut album, 3:47 EST. Pop/soft rock duo The Carpenters' cover of the song closes the pair's **Passages** album.

Trivia Tidbit 1: This band was named after Klaatu, the alien emissary portrayed by Michael Rennie in the classic 1951 sci-fi movie **The Day the Earth Stood Still**. Further, the group drew the title for their first album from a detail mentioned in the film noting that Klaatu's spaceship landed in Washington, D. C., at 3:47 PM, Eastern Standard Time.

Trivia Tidbit 2: Star Trek designer/illustrator Andrew Probert provided the sleeve artwork for the single release of The Carpenters' version of the song.

2.They got music in their solar system They've rocked around the Milky Way

Space Truckin' (Ritchie Blackmore, Ian Gillan, Roger Glover, Jon Lord, Ian Paice, 1972; performed by Deep Purple)



Its title sometimes interpreted as a simile for getting high—habitual reading of so many 1960s and '70s rock tunes—when taken at face value, this is simply a song about the jubilation experienced by a space-faring rock band that is touring the solar system bringing music to fervent fans.

It is the closing track on the band's **Machine Head** album, and a concert favourite.

Trivia Tidbit 1: *Space Truckin'* is featured in episode one of the current Starz television series *Ash vs Evil Dead*.

Trivia Tidbit 2: Star Trek's William "Captain Kirk" Shatner covered this tune on his 2011 album *Seeking Major Tom*.

3. Crossed through the universe to get where you are Travel the night riding on a shooting star

Alien (Britney Spears, William Orbit, Daniel Traynor, Ana Diaz Molina, Anthony Preston, 2013; performed by Britney Spears)



To quote Spears, this song "deals with loneliness and how you can be surrounded at all times by friends, family, and adoring fans who you love, and still feel alone." The lyrics are an expression of how isolating the life of a pop star can be, leaving one feeling "like an alien."

The mid-tempo pop piece opens Spears' album, *Britney Jean*, and she rates it as her favourite track on the disc. "We have moments when we feel alienated, shy, or nervous," she continues. "That's what the song is about."

Spears says she wrote the tune to remind herself that she is not, in fact, alone.

Trivia Tidbit: Spears cameos as a "Fembot" singing a re-mix of her 2001 R&B/hip-hop/funk number, *Boys*, in the 2002 James Bond spoof Austin Powers in *Goldmember*. In exchange, comedic actor Mike Myers, portraying his toothy '60s spy character, appears in Spears' *Boys* music video.

4. Woke up this morning with light in my eyes And then realized it was still dark outside

Mr. Spaceman (Roger McGuinn as Jim McGuinn, 1966; performed by The Byrds)



"Won't you please take me along for a ride," requests the narrator of this jaunty ditty about a series of whimsical and weird but friendly visitations by flying saucer aliens.

Mr. Spaceman is an early example of what would come to be known as country-rock. It was the third single taken from of the band's *Fifth Dimension* album.

Composer McGuinn and bandmate David Crosby were hopeful

that communication might be made with space aliens through the medium of AM radio. “I was interested in astronomy and the possibility of connecting with extraterrestrial life,” McGuinn recalls. “I thought that the song being played on the air might be a way of getting through to them.”

He later learned that AM radio waves diffuse much too rapidly to be a viable means of interplanetary communication.

Trivia Tidbit 1: A publicity stunt at the time of the song’s release as a single had it that the band was insured by Lloyds of London against alien abduction!

Trivia Tidbit 2: William Shatner covered the tune on his 2011 album *Seeking Major Tom*.

5. I think your atmosphere is hurting my eyes And your concrete mountains are blackin’ out the skies

I’m a Stranger Here (Les Emmerson, 1973; performed by the Five Man Electrical Band)

This is a “message song” commenting on the failings of the modern world – pollution, rampant urban development, war, synthetic food and feel-good drugs – with mankind reproached for foolishly despoiling the “paradise” in which he was living. Ottawa’s Five Man Electrical Band, formerly The Staccatos, sermonized from the point of view of a visiting extraterrestrial sent to evaluate Earth. His people having made the same mistakes as he sees humanity now making, the alien speaks from experience, and with the knowledge that “the gates of Heaven can close.”

“It’s about the environment,” songwriter Emmerson says, “it’s relevant.”

He wrote the number in late-1972 after the band had finished recording most of the songs for their album *Sweet Paradise*. “I don’t know where it came from. I was watching something on TV,” he recalls, “and I just got this idea of, you know, somebody coming from another planet and watching us, how silly we might look.”

He showed the song to his producer, who liked it enough to suggest the band record it and include the tune on the album. *Sweet Paradise* was released on January 1, 1973, with *I’m a Stranger Here* as the opening track.

Trivia Tidbit: Over the course of their career, the Five Man Electrical Band released a number of singles that did quite well in Canada, but in the U. S. and elsewhere, were not nearly as successful. The exception was 1971’s *Signs*, which became an international hit and is, today, regarded as a rock classic. But *I’m a Stranger Here* climbed to second spot on the charts here in The Great White North to become the band’s biggest domestic hit, outperforming even *Signs*!

6. I miss the Earth so much, I miss my wife It’s lonely out in space

Rocket Man (Elton John, Bernie Taupin, 1972; performed by Elton John)

The titular Rocket Man’s plaint has been taken as a metaphor for one detached from family, or reality, whether by distance, addiction, or maybe the kind of loneliness attendant rock star-like fame.



Lyricist Taupin, animated by his sighting of a shooting star or distant aircraft one night, has explained that the notion of astronauts being thought of, one day, as no longer heroes, but merely ordinary people doing an ordinary job was what led to his writing the song’s opening lines: “She packed my bags last night, pre-flight / Zero hour, nine AM / And I’m gonna be high as a kite by then.”

For some, the phrase “high as a kite” clearly denotes drug use – the habitual reading of, perhaps, too many 1960s and ’70s rock tunes – and so categorizes *Rocket Man* accordingly. Another interpretation infers that the lyrics were sparked by Ray Bradbury’s short story *The Rocket Man*, about a conflicted astronaut who yearns for his wife and son while away on long space missions, but when home, feels the equally aching lure of the stars.

Trivia Tidbit 1: Both *Rocket Man* and David Bowie’s similarly-themed 1969 hit *Space Oddity* share a producer, Gus Dudgeon.

Trivia Tidbit 2: In January 1978, William Shatner co-hosted the Fifth Annual Saturn Awards with actress Karen Black, broadcast as the Science Fiction Film Awards. Introduced by lyricist Bernie Taupin at one point during the ceremony, Shatner performed an abominably naff spoken-word rendition of *Rocket Man*!

Trivia Tidbit 3: He again covered the tune on his 2011 album *Seeking Major Tom*.

7. They’ll split your pretty cranium, and fill it full of air And tell you that you’re eighty, but brother, you won’t care

1984 (David Bowie, 1974; performed by David Bowie)



This song was inspired by George Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Bowie had hoped to turn the famous book into a musical stage show but was refused the rights by Orwell’s widow, who was vehemently opposed to the idea!

1984 and a few other songs Bowie had written for his proposed production migrated to the *Diamond Dogs* album, thematically a loose amalgam of Orwell’s dystopian vision and Bowie’s own glam-rock perspective on a post-apocalyptic future.

Trivia Tidbit 1: A decade after Orwell's widow curtailed Bowie's ambitions, British motion picture company Virgin Films approached him to compose the music for their adaptation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The reasoning was that rock idol Bowie's appeal could only increase the film's market potential, but he wanted more for the job than Virgin was prepared to pay, and eventually, Eurythmics got the gig, and in the bargain, a new wave synth/pop dance hit, *Sexcrime (Nineteen Eighty-Four)*. Released as *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1984, the film starred John Hurt and, in his swan-song performance, Richard Burton.

Trivia Tidbit 2: In addition to a thriving career in music, Bowie found success, too, as an actor, landing roles in, among other productions, a few Genre films. He starred as an alien in 1976's *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, was a vampire's consort in 1983's *The Hunger*, and played Jareth, the Goblin King, in 1986's *Labyrinth*.

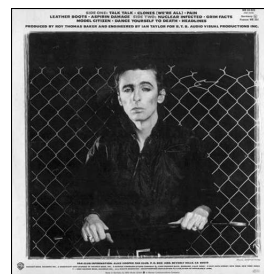
Trivia Tidbit 3: Bowie's son with first wife Angela is sci-fi film director/screenwriter Duncan Jones. Born in 1971 as Duncan Zowie Haywood Jones, his first feature film was 2009's acclaimed *Moon*, which won him the British Academy of Film and Television Arts' Award for Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer. He also helmed 2011's *Source Code* and 2016's *Warcraft*.

8. (All day long we hear him crying so loud)

I just want to be myself, I just want to be myself,
I just want to be myself, be myself, be myself

Clones [We're All] (David Maurice Carron, Adam Jan Narkiewicz, 1980; performed by Alice Cooper)

With his 1980 *Flush the Fashion* album, shock rocker Alice Cooper moved to a fresh, synthesizer-laced new wave sound and scored a minor hit with this song, a statement of rebellion against forced conformity. The lyrics evoke a future in which dehumanized clones have taken over society and are stamping out individuality.



Some consider the song's Six, who is "having problems adjusting to his clone status," as analogous to the character of Number Six in the British cult sci-fi television series *The Prisoner*.

Trivia Tidbit 1: The original Alice Cooper Band is said to have conjured up their handle by consulting an Ouija board, the spirit of a long-dead witch purportedly lending her name to the group. But this is urban legend, of course! In truth, the group was just trying to think off a name that belied their weird image and wild on-stage antics.

And yet, the name "conjured up an image of a little girl with a lollipop in one hand, and a butcher knife in another," cites the band's frontman, who, born Vincent Damon Furnier, would become known as, and in 1974 legally change his name to, Alice Cooper. "There was something axe-murderish about 'Alice

Cooper'." It reminded me of Lizzie Borden. Alice Cooper, Lizzie Borden – that's got a What-Ever-Happened-to-Baby-Jane? feeling to it," he expounds, referring to the 1962 Bette Davis-Joan Crawford thriller. "It had some sort of ring to it, something disturbing."

Trivia Tidbit 2: For the 1986 slasher movie *Jason Lives: Friday the 13th, Part VI*, Cooper, now a solo artist, was in his wheelhouse when he recorded the film's theme song, *He's Back (The Man Behind the Mask)*. Also included on the movie's soundtrack were his tunes *Teenage Frankenstein* and *Hard Rock Summer*. The first two were also released on his 1986 album, *Constrictor*, and all three were collected in the 1999 boxed-set retrospective *The Life and Crimes of Alice Cooper*.

Cooper's macabre persona and stage theatrics make the legendary entertainer a natural choice for stunt casting in fright flicks. In 1991's *Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare*, for example, he portrays the alcoholic and abusive Edward Underwood, adoptive father of horror film icon Freddy Krueger.

Cooper has appeared, over the years and often as himself, in a number of movies and television shows. In the 1970s, he guested on the mystery series *The Snoop Sisters* and played a waiter in Mae West's final film, *Sextette*, a horrible, if not horror, film! The '80s saw him star in Italian horror film *Monster Dog* and appear as a possessed "street schizo" in John Carpenter's *Prince of Darkness*. In 1992's *Wayne's World*, he gave Wayne and Garth a backstage history lesson on the city of Milwaukee! And in 2012, he appeared in the SyFy TV movie *Bigfoot*, as well as the big-budget film adaptation of *Dark Shadows*, which starred Johnny Depp, one of his bandmates in the rock supergroup Hollywood Vampires.

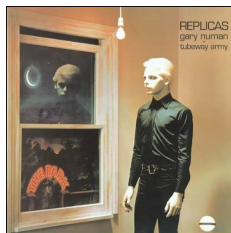
Trivia Tidbit 3: Alice Cooper wrote *Man with the Golden Gun* for the 1974 James Bond film of the same name, but the band was deemed too controversial by Bond producers, who opted instead for another tune employing that title, written by veteran Bond composers John Barry and Don Black, and sung by Scottish songbird Lulu. Alice Cooper decided to include their rejected song on the band's *Muscle of Love* album.

9. Mine's broke down

And now I've no one to love

"Are 'Friends' Electric?" (Gary Numan, 1979; performed by Tubeway Army)

The "friend" in this song is a robot prostitute, Numan has attested, and the song, like all of his work, is about being misunderstood and alone.



Numan was a fan of SF writer Philip K. Dick and Beat scribe William S. Burroughs, and as a teen, wrote his own sci-fi stories, envisioning android companions – friends – that would come to the doors of desperately forlorn people in a bleak future and provide sexual services. "It was a futurist version of getting pornography in the post," Numan outlines. "If the BBC had known what it was about, they would never have played it."

“Are ‘Friends’ Electric?” and the other songs on Tubeway Army’s Replicas album were essentially musical renderings of Numan’s short stories, each about an aspect of what he imagined London might be like in 20 or 30 years.

Trivia Tidbit 1: Seeming automaton-like, the modern electronic music pioneer has contended that he has Asperger’s Syndrome, a type of Autism Spectrum Disorder that manifests as social awkwardness and obsessive behaviour. He has always found social interaction difficult and people, from his point of view, strange and disaffecting, a disposition reflected in his songwriting.

Trivia Tidbit 2: Before Gary Anthony James Webb adopted the alias Gary Numan, he briefly called himself Valerian, a name alleged to have been appropriated from the French sci-fi space opera and time-travel comic book adventure *Valérian and Laureline*. This is not the case, according to Numan himself, who relates that “Valerian” stemmed from a patch of graffiti he’d seen scrawled on a wall while driving to work one day.

Nor is the name Numan meant to represent some kind of robotic “new man,” as is occasionally implied by those who read more into it than was ever intended. The name, in fact, was merely lifted from a listing in the London Yellow Pages – Neumann – the spelling of which the singer simplified to arrive at his desired moniker.

10. Hey mom, there’s something in the back room Hope it’s not the creatures from above

Aliens Exist (Tom DeLonge, Mark Hoppus, 1999; performed by Blink-182)

From their album *Enema of the State*, punk-pop trio Blink-182 delve into UFOs and conspiracy theories, depicting an alien abduction and, as the song closes, alluding to flying saucer lore’s infamous, super-secret Majestic 12 committee of scientists, military officers, and government officials.



Guitarist and band co-founder Tom DeLonge is a true believer, to hear him tell it, entertaining a considerable interest in the subject of UFOs. He has researched the flying saucer phenomenon extensively, launching a Web Site dedicated to exposing the truth about UFOs and combatting the efforts of authorities to keep the public in the dark. DeLonge might categorically be styled rock-and-roll’s Fox Mulder! He has camped out near Area 51, claims to have had his phone tapped by the government, and speaks of having experienced the “lost time” peculiarity commonly reported by UFO abductees.

Trivia Tidbit: After Blink-182 broke up in 2005, DeLonge formed the alternative/space rock group Angels & Airwaves, which evolved into a multi-media art project and in 2011, co-produced and provided music for the science fiction film *Love*. The film was written and directed by William Eubank, with DeLonge serving as an executive producer.

Love screened at a couple of U.S. film festivals before coming here to Montreal for its international premiere at the Fantasia International Film Festival. Angels & Airwaves later organized Love Live, a combination film screening and concert live-streamed to 480 theatres across the U.S.

DeLonge played again with a reformed Blink-182 from 2009 to 2015, but maintained his interest in Angels & Airwaves all the while, and to this day.

11. Oh Space Dude in your space suit Our love, it takes us to the moon

Space Boots (Miley Cyrus, 2015; performed by Miley Cyrus)

From the experimental pop/psychedelia album *Miley Cyrus & Her Dead Petz*, this song about Cyrus’ missing an emotionally detached lost love offers cosmic allegory almost certainly filtered through a bong.



Trivia Tidbit: In 2001, Miley Cyrus was eight years old and living in Toronto with her family while her father filmed the television series *Doc*, a medical drama. After attending a performance of Mirvish Productions’ jukebox musical *Mamma Mia!* at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Cyrus went home knowing that she wanted to be an actress. She was enrolled in singing and acting classes at Toronto’s Armstrong Acting Studios, later landing a minor role under her birth name, Destiny Cyrus, in director Tim Burton’s quirky 2003 fantasy/drama *Big Fish*.

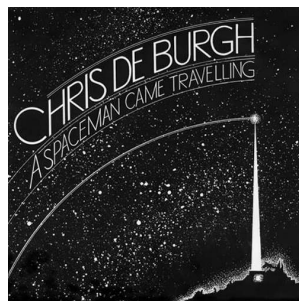
She auditioned opposite Taylor Lautner for the female lead in the 2005 children’s superhero adventure *The Adventures of Sharkboy and Lava Girl* in 3D, then in pre-production, but instead took the starring role in a new Disney Channel teen sitcom called *Hannah Montana*. The show ran from 2006 to 2011 and brought Cyrus international stardom, leading to a lucrative pop music career.

12. Then the stranger spoke, he said, do not fear I come from a planet a long way from here

A Spaceman Came Travelling (Chris de Burgh, 1975; performed by Chris de Burgh)

Part Erich von Däniken, part William Butler Yeats, British-Irish balladeer Chris de Burgh’s sci-fi spin on the birth of Christ some 2000 years ago casts an extraterrestrial “from a planet a long way from here” as the angel sent to announce the arrival of mankind’s Lord and Saviour. The song was not particularly successful upon its initial release, but has since become a staple of Christmas playlists.

While staying with a friend in 1974, De Burgh read von Däniken’s 1969 book, *Chariots of the Gods*, in which the author postulated that space aliens had visited Earth



thousands of years ago. “What if the star of Bethlehem was a spacecraft?” De Burgh wondered afterwards, furnishing him the idea for the song. He pictured the vessel hovering over the nativity scene, and imagined “shepherds in the fields, and this weird, ethereal music...drifting into the air.”

De Burgh’s lyrics were also informed by early-20th century Irish poet Yeats’ elucidation of a complex, esoteric system of intersecting major historical cycles, termed “gyres,” each roughly 2000 years in duration.

Trivia Tidbit: Yeats was a life-long occultist and his young wife, Georgie Hyde-Lee, purportedly brought to light this mysterious system of gyres by means of “automatic writing,” that is, spontaneous writing while in a trance, one’s hand guided by spirits. The poet utilized an image of interlocking, cone-like rotating coils to symbolize these gyres. In 1925, Yeats detailed his system in book form as *A Vision*, in which he professed to mathematically explain the associated philosophical, historical, astrological, and spiritual facets of no less than life itself! He published a second, revised edition in 1937.

Von Däniken’s theories were quickly discredited and he was accused of lifting the idea of ancient alien visitations from a French book, *Le Matin des magiciens*, published in 1960, which in turn is said to have taken almost verbatim the notion of aliens having come to Earth in ancient times from the fictional tales of H. P. Lovecraft, notably *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928) and *At the Mountains of Madness* (1931).

A 1998 German TV documentary about von Däniken made use of De Burgh’s *A Spaceman Came Travelling*.

13. On Mercury, they’re crazy about my stellar rock ‘n’ roll And I always sell out in advance at the Martian Astrobow!

Spaceship Superstar (Jim Vallance, as Rodney Higgs, 1977; performed by PRiSM)

The signature song of Canadian pop/rock band PRiSM, *Spaceship Superstar* was written by Jim Vallance under the pseudonym Rodney Higgs.



The hectic lifestyle of a touring galactic rock star is in the spotlight, here, and while it may be “a giant leap for rock ‘n’ roll,” the song’s protagonist grouches that “it’s too much for just one man.” The adulation of fans “crazy about” his “stellar rock ‘n’ roll” takes its toll on the

Spaceship Superstar, who sings of becoming “so damned tired and uninspired doin’ all these one night stands.”

Vallance did not particularly enjoy the rigours of touring and left PRiSM shortly after the release of the band’s first album, preferring to remain at home writing songs in his makeshift studio. *Spaceship Superstar* is his science fiction-flavoured lament on the hardships endured by a touring rock band.

Vallance would compose a few more songs for PRiSM before

embarking on a long and successful songwriting partnership with Bryan Adams.

Trivia Tidbit: Since the days of the Gemini missions in the mid-1960s, NASA has been transmitting to orbiting spacecraft a daily, morning “wake-up song” to rouse astronaut crews. On the final mission of space shuttle Discovery in early 2011, PRiSM’s *Spaceship Superstar* was chosen as one such tune, selected for the shuttle’s crew by the overnight shift of the mission’s flight controllers and signalling the start of the crew’s last full day aboard the International Space Station. Discovery would undock from the station the following day and begin the return leg of her flight.

Discovery entered service in 1984 and over 27 years of operations, flew 39 missions, more than any other orbiter, circling Earth for just shy of a cumulative 366 days – indeed, a “spaceship superstar!” She deployed 31 satellites, including the Hubble Space Telescope, was the first space shuttle to dock with the ISS, and in 1998, carried Mercury Seven astronaut John Glenn, then 77 years old, into orbit on his second spaceflight.

Discovery was the first orbiter to be retired and is now on display at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Virginia, an annex of the Smithsonian Institution’s Air and Space Museum.

14. Life is too easy, a plague seems quite feasible now Or maybe a war, or I may kill you all

Saviour Machine (David Bowie, 1970; performed by David Bowie)

This early Bowie number, a progressive rock piece about a machine created to solve civilization’s problems, could easily have been a Star Trek episode or an Asimov short story.

When “President Joe” pledges to create a machine that will eliminate hunger, war, and the other ills of society, the public backs the idea. “They called it The Prayer, its answer was law,” Bowie intones. The people soon begin to adore the God-like apparatus, but the omniscient super-computer has quickly become bored, and disapproving of mankind. “Your minds are too green,” it cries, “I despise all I’ve seen. / You can’t stake your lives on a Saviour Machine.” Finally pleading “Please don’t believe in me,” the machine contemplates harshly correcting man’s behaviour.

The song has been perceived as a cautionary tale about our placing too much faith in technology, lest it destroy us – a familiar construct of science fiction in the 1960s and ’70s – or, alternately, as a warning against the populace falling under the thrall of fascistic leadership, the machine, here, standing in for Totalitarianism.

Trivia Tidbit 1: *Saviour Machine* can be found on Bowie’s *The Man Who Sold the World* album, his working title for which was *Metrobolist*, an odd crossing of the title of Fritz Lang’s seminal



1927 science fiction film, *Metropolis*, with the word “somnambulist”, more commonly, a sleepwalker.

Trivia Tidbit 2: A Christian heavy metal band formed in 1989 by brothers Jeff and Eric Clayton took its name from the title of this Bowie tune

15. He was turned to steel In the great magnetic field

Iron Man (Tony Iommi, Ozzy Osbourne, Geezer Butler, and Bill Ward, 1970; performed by Black Sabbath)

Vocalist Ozzy Osbourne described the song’s guitar riff as sounding “like a big iron bloke walking about,” which suggested the song’s title to lyricist Geezer Butler, who wrote his story of a



man who time-travels into the future and beholds a terrible apocalypse. While returning to his own time to alert humanity of the impending danger, his flesh is metalized by a magnetic field and he is rendered mute, unable to convey his warning. When he is ignored and his attempts to communicate are mocked, he

finally becomes angry and takes his vengeance on mankind, causing the very apocalypse which he had witnessed in the future.

“I was heavily into science fiction at the time,” Butler asserts. “Remember, this was the era of the space race. A lot of the stuff I was writing about was inspired by those sorts of stories. I was fascinated by what might happen to a man who’s suddenly transformed into a metal being. He still has a human brain, and wants to do the right thing, but eventually his own frustrations at the way humanity treats him drives this creature to...extreme action.”

Trivia Tidbit 1: Black Sabbath’s *Iron Man* is frequently tied to the American comic book character of the same name, many believing the latter inspired the former, but lyricist Butler sets the record straight. “My parents never let me read American comics when I was growing up,” explains the Birmingham, England-raised musician. “I knew about Batman and Superman, but that’s about it.”

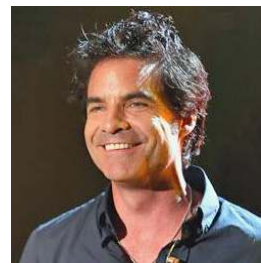
When he wrote the song’s lyrics in 1970, Butler was entirely unfamiliar with the Stan Lee/Larry Lieber/Jack Kirby/Don Heck-created comic book superhero, who debuted in 1963 and is, today, central to the Marvel Cinematic Universe. However, we may note that it’s especially meta to see Robert Downey, Jr.’s Tony Stark wearing a Black Sabbath T-shirt throughout the better part of 2012’s superhero epic *The Avengers*!

Trivia Tidbit 2: William Shatner covered *Iron Man* on his 2011 album Seeking Major Tom.

16. Tell me, did you sail across the sun? Did you make it to the Milky Way to see the lights all faded

Drops of Jupiter [Tell Me] (Pat Monahan, 2001; performed by Train)

Train’s lead singer, Pat Monahan, has stated that this song, awash with astronomical imagery, came about as he dealt with the passing of his mother, who had died of lung cancer, and whose soul he imagined “swimming through the planets” and returning to him with “drops of Jupiter in her hair.” He tells of waking up from a dream with the phrase “back in the atmosphere” stuck in his head, remarking that “it was just her way of saying what it was like.”



With the loss of the most important person in his life topmost in his thoughts, Monahan began composing the song. “The process of creation wasn’t easy,” he remembers. “I just couldn’t figure out what to write.” He asked himself: What if no one ever really leaves? What if she’s here, but different? The phrase that emerged from his dream provided him with the central notion that his mother was again with him, “back in the atmosphere.”

He has further intimated that the song is as much about “me being on a voyage and trying to find out who I am,” advancing that the “best thing we can do about loss of love is find ourselves through it.”

But Monahan did not initially reveal the true story behind his lyrics, providing vague responses when asked about the song’s meaning, saying at one point that it was about a strong woman who had “to find out who she was, and the man willing to let her do that.”

Open to personal interpretation, the ambiguous lyrics have typically been surmised to be about a young woman, a close friend or, perchance, a former lover who leaves a relationship on a journey of self-discovery.

Trivia Tidbit: In *Nelson v. Murdock*, a first-season episode of the ongoing Netflix series, *Daredevil*, this song is used to establish the early-2000s time period during a flashback sequence showing Matt “Daredevil” Murdock and his best friend Franklin “Foggy” Nelson in their freshman year at college.

17. Encounters one and two are not enough for me What my body needs is close encounter three

I Lost My Heart to a Starship Trooper (Jeff Calvert, Geraint Hughes, 1978; performed by Sarah Brightman and Hot Gossip)

This lightweight disco number was designed to cash in on the popularity of the 1977 blockbuster movies *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, referencing both.

It is notable as the debut of then-18-year-old singer Sarah Brightman, who went on to a career as a soprano in musical theatre, and later became a classical crossover artist.



Trivia Tidbit: In 2012, Brightman reportedly paid the private American space tourism company Space Adventures some \$52 million for a ride to the International Space Station aboard a Russian rocket, but in 2015, withdrew from training for the flight, citing “personal family reasons.”

Founded in 1998, Space Adventures, in cooperation with Roscosmos, the Russian space agency, has to date launched seven space tourists into orbit, including, in 2009, billionaire Canadian entrepreneur Guy Laliberté, founder of Cirque du Soleil.

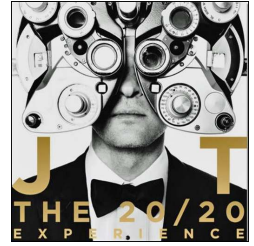


18. And with the top down, we'll cruise around Land and make love on the moon (Would you like that?)

Spaceship Coupe (Justin Timberlake, Timothy Mosely, Jerome

“J-Roc” Harmon, James Fauntleroy, 2013; performed by Justin Timberlake)

In this sci-fi update on the old rock and roll trope of cruisin’ around town in your car and making out with your girl, the town is elevated to outer space, the girl becomes an extraterrestrial, and the car, a spaceship!



Trivia Tidbit: Pop star Timberlake has also enjoyed success as an actor, garnering largely positive reviews. Among his films are the weird 2006 near future/alternate history comedy/drama *Southland Tales*, the 2011 dystopian science fiction thriller *In Time*, and three animated comedy/fantasy hits, 2007’s *Shrek the Third*, 2010’s *Yogi Bear*, and 2016’s *Trolls*.



REVIEWS: Conventions & Events

Ad Astra 2017 Reviewed by Sylvain St-Pierre

To maintain a good record for thirty-six years is a major accomplishment in the field of fan-run conventions, and Toronto's oldest surviving genre event is one of the few to have attained that lofty status.



Please forgive the incoherent ramblings of an old fan, but this venerable con is not what it used to be. We know the routine all too well:

diminishing attendance, rising costs, the greying of fandom, the emergence of new media, the difficulty of finding enough competent volunteers. All this has taken a heavy toll of late, and Ad Astra has become a shadow of its former self.

This is not to say that this particular edition was a bad one, quite the contrary, but there were definitely things missing compared to previous years. The main casualty was without a doubt the Art Show, which weirdly reminded me of the earliest Con*Cept: very few artists, only a handful of items on display and display panels leaning against the wall because the connecting bolts were lost...

Gone too are the days when the Ad Astra Masquerade was the biggest game in town. But to be fair, formal costume presentation has gone into serious decline across the board over the years. There were only twelve entries this time, and most of the presentations were somewhat lacking in lustre. The Lego Room remains an interesting feature, but had far less genre-related entries and the last time I saw it. However,

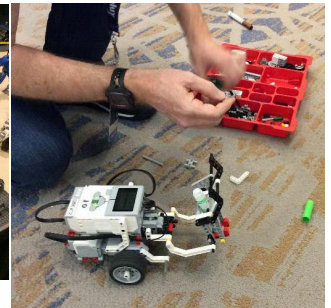


Masquerade

a side panel to the Lego Room involved a robot competition that looked like a lot of fun. Perhaps not surprisingly for a Spring con in Eastern Canada, the weather did not cooperate and the star watching panel had nothing but clouds to look at, and not even interesting ones.



Left: Lego models, right: robot competition



Making up for this was a decent Dealers’ Room, a comprehensive array of panels and a number of special activities



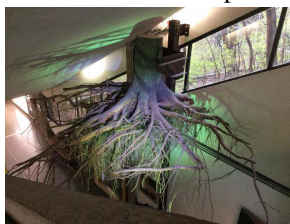
such as tastings and signing sessions. And, of course, the meeting of old friends that you meet only at cons and nowhere else. The Anime Room is less relevant these days than it used to be when Japanese animation was difficult to find, but it did have a couple of series I wanted to have a look at and I was quite pleased to sample them.



Dealer room wares
Below, the Artemis Bridge



start until late in the following afternoon, we settled on going to the OSC as a warm up.



In the Tree Gallery



The site itself is quite remarkable, having been carefully built to follow the contour of a steep wooded ravine to leave a minimal ecological footprint. Inside, the collections are laid in linear fashion, each new section further and lower than the previous one. As befits all modern facilities, the exhibits are very much “hands on”, and thus an obligatory school trip stop for seemingly many light years around



Being fans, I think we had more fun than the kids. I know I greatly enjoyed the various galleries on Forestry, the Great Lakes, Energy and many others. One temporary exhibit on Biomechanics was especially interesting, even if – being a loan from a US museum – the second language on the commentaries was Spanish. It was something of a disappointment to be told that creatures such as Godzilla and King Kong would collapse under their own weight...



Despite the many hours spent there, we did not manage to see everything and are definitely considering another visit.



Side Trip: The Ontario Science Centre

This year, having recently retired and having plenty of free time, I got a ride to Ad Astra with Cathy Palmer-Lister. We arrived at the end of the day on Thursday. Since the con proper would not

REVIEWS: Literature

The Autobiography of James T. Kirk: The Story of Starfleet's Greatest Captain

Reviewed by Joseph Aspler

Edited by David A. Goodman – published by Titan Books
With Foreword by Dr. Leonard McCoy and
Afterword by Spock of Vulcan

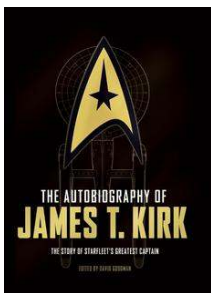
During the Stone Age before the birth of the Internet, the quickie paperback was a literary genre. Immediately after a major world

event, someone would research and write a book. The book would be typeset, printed, and bound in full paperback format. All of this took less than a month. Gary Trudeau of Doonesbury lampooned the genre with a character who promised fast work – adverbs and punctuation at extra cost.

Today, we have *The Autobiography of James Kirk*. The “editor”

David A. Goodwin, assembled the biography from notes written by James T. Kirk before his tragic loss during the launching of the USS Enterprise-B.

Sadly, it reads like one of those 1970s quickie paperbacks. The autobiography does fill in the backstory for various Trek stories: Who were Kirk's parents? Who was the brother killed by those flying parasites? Who was Ruth? Who was Finnegan? Why did Finney have it in for Kirk? Why did Kodos the Executioner do what he did? What



happened after the end of the first Five Year Mission? Spoiler – there was another. Is this canonical? Who knows.

The rest of the book is no more than a collage of 2 – 3 page plot summaries, about as convincing as low-level novelizations. James Blish did it a lot better in the 70s. About 80% of the book is Classic Trek. The last 50 pages or so cover Kirk's life from the end of the TV series into the movies until his final disappearance. A bit of backstory, a bit of colour commentary, and no *life* at all.

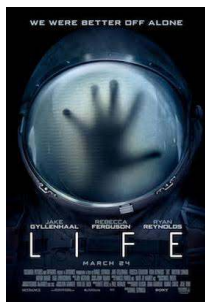
Overall: the plot descriptions are a mere shadow of the James Blish novelizations, and the backstory is about as superficial as it can get.

REVIEWS: Movies & Television

LIFE

Reviewed by Lindsay Brown

A few MonSFFen went to the premier of 'LIFE' last night (Keith, Mark, and myself) thanks to the free passes we won at the last MonSFFA meeting.




It was a nice film, for a freebie. I caught myself periodically checking my watch as I found its direction was limited, thus predictable (SPOILER ALERT! The ending was *very* predictable).

The acting was as expected – great and it was nice to see how they finally found a way to shut Ryan Reynolds's mouth from running

on, and on, and on... (works in Dead Pool, but not here)

The alien 'Life'-form's development was amazing.... and nail biting. If anything – it was the best part of the film.

There were a few questionable technicalities (I can't explain without giving something away) mixed in with a few questions answered (like an "upgrade to the ISS" explains why the tubes were wider than they currently are.)

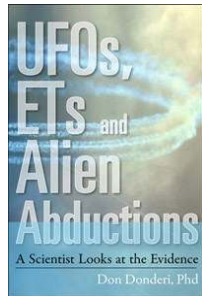
I don't think it's worth the box office price, but it's a nice rental to curl up with alone in the dark... with a 

MonSFFAndom.: February to April

Keith Braithwaite, photos by Sylvain St-Pierre, except where noted

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.

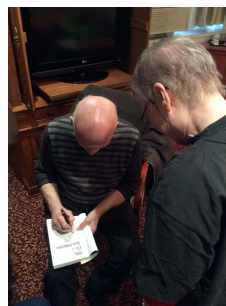


To set the mood, we opened the meeting with a screening of MonSFFA's 2001 found-footage short film *Encounters of the Very Close Kind*, in which a few sci-fi fans video-taping their own fake UFO sighting using a pie-plate model, are interrupted by the real thing suddenly swooping in overhead! Don found 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.



Prof Donderi signs Cathy's copy

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.



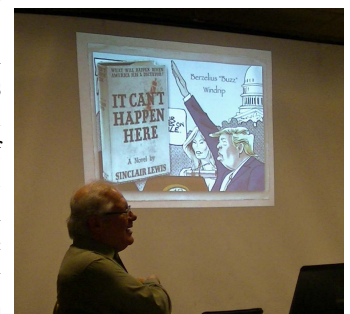
MARCH

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 hosted by **Keith Braithwaite**, 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



It can't happen here! CPL

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



*In honour of St-Patrick!
Thank you Lindsay!*



Model display by Dom Durocher

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 with **Sylvain** and **Cathy Palmer-Lister** 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 Con*Cept 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.



Josée models one of her creations

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 panellists 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.



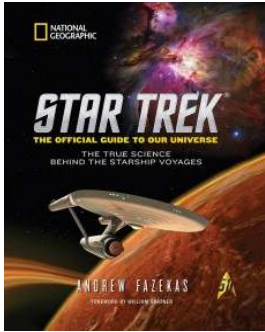
April

We welcomed astronomy writer/educator and life-long Star Trek fan **Andrew "The Night Sky Guy" Fazekas** to our April 9 club meeting to talk Trek and compare Star Trek science to real science. Andrew, a fan of the original 1960s series, in particular, asserts that, unlike other sci-fi TV shows of the day, Star Trek got a lot of the astronomical science right. Producers adhered to science fact as much as possible, he says, in creating their reasonably plausible science fiction storylines.

Andrew opened his presentation by outlining his interest –

nurtured at an early age by his father – in both Star Trek and science, astronomy in particular. He noted that many of today's researchers, engineers, and technicians were inspired by Star Trek as youngsters, and that cell phones, iPads, and other modern electronic devices can trace their lineage back to the then-futuristic gadgets featured in Star Trek. Gene Roddenberry's inspirational sci-fi series served to instill in motivated young people a vision of the future that they have applied to the real world as adult scientists and inventors.

Andrew is author of the National Geographic publication *Star Trek: The Official Guide to the Universe*, in which the fictional



The Official ST Guide to the Universe



Author Andrew Fazekas and Cathy

stars and planets to which the starship Enterprise travels are compared with their counterparts in the real universe. The Orion Nebula, for example, could easily stand in for the fictional Mutara Nebula featured in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. And Spock's home world of Vulcan may well have a real-life equivalent orbiting the star 40 Eridani A, also known as Keid. Some of the 3000 or so exo-planets recently discovered by astronomers resemble the earth-like terrestrial planets that Star Trek classifies as M-Class worlds.



Andrew signs for Joe Aspler

Pitching his proposed book to the Star Trek people, Andrew was met with pronounced enthusiasm and described the whole experience of researching and writing the book in exceedingly positive terms.

A lively Q&A followed and eager MonSFFen snapped up sale copies of Andrew's book, which he graciously autographed for each buyer.

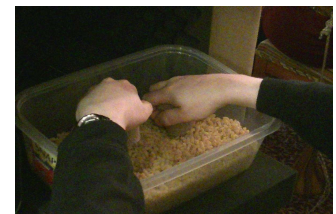
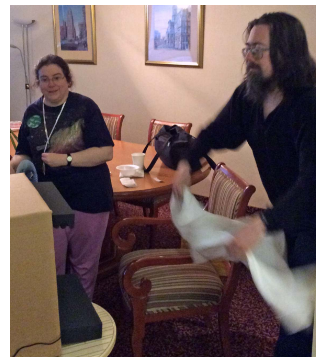
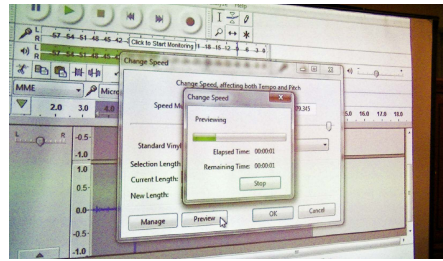
The latter part of the meeting was given over to a workshop on the sound design of our paper cut-out stop-motion animated film project, concentrating on recording sound effects for the production.

Keith Braithwaite began by screening of a brief primer he had prepared on the art of what is called Foley, that is, the creation of

specific sound effects tailored to a film or television show. The process is named for its inventor, Jack Foley.

Keith then showed the group how he had "scored" our short film by cutting and blending together snippets of royalty-free music downloaded via Creative Commons, before he and **François Menard** set up a makeshift recording studio to capture the sound effects needed to complete our project.

Various MonSFFen sat before the microphone to mimic a variety of dinosaur grunts and bellows, which Keith then ran through sound processing software, altering pitch, tempo, or speed to arrive at a series of nifty "voices" for our dinosaur characters. A bath towel was manipulated to create the sound of the



Above: Our dinosaurs "walk" through macaroni.
Left, François Ménard flaps the wings of the Pterodactyl.

Pterodactyl's wings flapping. Strips of cut-up newspaper were bunched together, mop-like, and gently agitated to simulate the sound of jungle foliage rustling, and a pair of paper cups "walked" through a Tupperware container of dry macaroni feigned the sound of our dinosaurs' footsteps.

Keith closed the afternoon with a quick demonstration on inserting the various sound clips into the film's soundtrack.

We appreciate greatly guest speaker **Andrew Fazekas'** talk and thank him very much for visiting with us. We thank, too, **Keith Braithwaite** and **François Menard** for running our Foley workshop. And, a nod is given all who helped to plan and run this meeting.



LOOKING AHEAD: November 12 Meeting

CRAFT DAY and SECOND HAND BOOK SALE

Workshops and a chance for our artisans to sell their creations. The annual MonSFFA book sale will begin at noon. Donations of gently used books are gratefully accepted, as long as they arrive before noon and you help us to sort them on the tables.

As usual, volunteers who help set up get first choice of the books.

Prices run from 3 for a dollar for mass market pocket books, to 3\$ for hardcover.

SF/F inspired artisans wishing to sell their craft work may either rent a table, 5\$ for 4 ft table, or have wares sold by MonSFFA staff for 10% commission fee.

We are also considering the possibility of a garage sale table as well.

Did you know WARP has a penpal? It's **CyberCozen**, Israel's longest surviving Science Fiction fanzine. WARP editor, Cathy Palmer-Lister and MonSFFen René Walling and Danny Sichel met with editor Leybl Botwinik, a few months ago (see WARP 97), and agreed to stay in touch. Recently, Leybl sent Cathy an article he wrote for CyberCozen describing the workings of HEX – the super computer from DiscWorld. It was originally going to follow Keith's music article, but really, it's too funny – it belongs here, even if the MonSFFun page has to be stretched a bit because, you know, Terry always gets the last laugh! Right? – CPL

Terry-Tech¹ : What the HEX?

Leybl Botwinik, Israel

The following installment was originally published in CyberCozen of June 2015. We've edited it slightly.

Terry Pratchett's "Discworld" is all but devoid of Science and Technology, as we know it. Other than simple and mostly primitive mechanical devices (including weaponry) – the 'advanced' energy producing or energy consuming devices are all magical in origin and use. In addition, the setting for the stories are usually in places where there is no technology or where the equivalent setting in our world would be something like at the beginning of the industrial revolution (around the 1880s to 1910's, and before the airplane).

That having been said, one of Pratchett's most interesting (and advanced) devices makes a tremendous leap forward to one of our modern world's most unique and significant technological wonders: **THE COMPUTER** (and the hi-tech surrounding it).

Since the dawn of today's Computer Age, this thinking and calculating machine has been equated with both academics and "magic" in our world. It was therefore very appropriate, that the creators of Discworld's first thinking machine would be the wizards at the Unseen Academy.

In fact, the term "wizard" is used in today's computer lingo as described in Wikipedia:



A Lego HEX

"A software wizard or setup assistant is a user interface type that presents a user with a sequence of dialog boxes that lead the user through a series of well-defined steps. Tasks that are complex, infrequently performed, or unfamiliar may be easier to perform using a wizard."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wizard_%28software%29

– how fitting!

Created by Ponder Stibbons and some student wizards in the **High Energy Magic** building of the university, they dubbed the

contraption "HEX". Pratchett does wonders in his creative use of many hi-tech terms and concepts. The very name "HEX" is a perfect example of his combining many elements familiar to Discworld and to our world.

A 'hex' is another term for a magical spell. 'Hex' in computer lingo is short for 'hexadecimal' (=base 16, incorporating the digits 0-9 and the letters A,B,C,D,E,F), which is one of the counting systems used in computer mathematics and logic.

In addition to the above, there are several computer terms and products reminiscent of the sound and letters 'h', 'e', and 'x', that may or may not have also influenced Pratchett:

> **LEX** – LEX is a stream cipher based on the round transformation of AES.

See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LEX_\(cipher\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LEX_(cipher))

> **Lex** – Lex is a computer program that generates lexical analyzers ("scanners" or "lexers")

See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lex_\(software\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lex_(software))

> **TeX** – TeX is a typesetting system designed and mostly written by Donald Knuth and released in 1978.

See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TeX>

[I believe that there is at least one more related "HEX" – your turn to look it up ☺]

For a very thorough and enlightening study of the development of the HEX thinking machine in Terry Pratchett's books, I direct you to an excellent presentation here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hex_\(Discworld\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hex_(Discworld))

Terry Pratchett has a ball playing with HEX and its development. For one thing, it is continually building itself – magically adding parts to increase its utility – similar to the constant upgrades and new versions of both hardware and software in today's computers. The continually growing set of new features also develop HEX's artificial intelligence and communication capabilities.

¹ Terry Pratchett's take on Science, Technology, and related issues

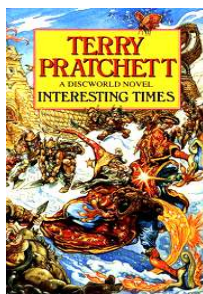
To describe HEX, one has to see it develop. In the original ‘first generation’ HEX, it was simply a complex network of glass tubes, containing ants. The wizards would use little boards with holes in them (reminiscent of the old punch-cards) to control which tubes the ants could crawl through, enabling it to perform simple mathematical functions.



added to it (RAM) and bee hives (for external memory and long-term storage).

Let’s take a look at some interesting insights directly from the books.

In an obvious clash between conservatism/ tradition and progress, we find the following in the book “*Interesting times*”: “Look, I don’t mind summoning some demon and asking it... That’s normal. But building some mechanical contrivance to do your thinking for you, that’s ... against Nature...”

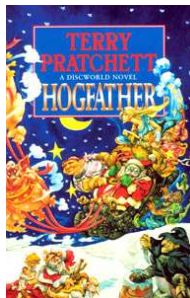


Here is an excerpt about the self-building and new versions of hardware and peripherals that are discovered every once in a while as add-on features: “But a lot of it had just... accumulated, like the aquarium and wind chimes which now seemed to be essential. A mouse had built a nest in the middle of it all and had been allowed to become a fixture since the thing stopped working when they took it out...”.

Of course HEX’s printed output messages are lots of fun too. The specific responses depend on the context of the queries made of it. However, the standard responses are just as fascinating:

HEX is like child, and beginning to develop some form of artificial intelligence. Ponder and some others at the university suspect as such – and are somewhat concerned. The entity known as “DEATH”, however, who is an expert on what is and isn’t alive (or dies) immediately picks up on the fact that there is a spark of life in HEX.

In the book *Hogsfather* (the equivalent of our Santa Claus – the book is about him and Discworld’s equivalent “Christmas” which Pratchett coins “Hogswatch”), we find the entity known as “Death” replacing Hogsfather on Hogswatch eve, because the latter has disappeared.



In order to attempt to solve the mystery, Death comes to the Unseen University seeking help from the wizards, where he is introduced to HEX. They begin communicating about some issues that are quite profound:

“It took several minutes. The wheels spun. The ants ran. The mouse squeaked. An egg timer came down on a spring. It bounced aimlessly for a while and then jerked back up again...”

Death is about to leave, when HEX begins to write again:

+++ Dear Hogfather, For Hogswatch I want –

OH, NO. YOU CAN’T WRITE LETT – Death paused and then said YOU CAN, CAN’T YOU.

+++ Yes. I am Entitled +++

Death waited until the pen had stopped, and picked up the paper.

BUT YOU ARE A MACHINE. THINGS HAVE NO DESIRES. A DOORKNOB WANTS NOTHING, EVEN THOUGH IT’S A COMPLEX MACHINE.

+++ All Things Strive +++

YOU HAVE A POINT, said Death
LET ME SEE ... HOW OLD ARE YOU?



Speaking of Terry Pratchett, he was Guest of Honour at the 62nd World Con – Noreascon 4 – in Boston, 2004. I was thrilled to have a seat at his Kaffeeklatsch. He gave us souvenirs, little pewter miniatures. I was given the Luggage, which I cherish. Recently, it occurred to me that I should ask **Mark Burakoff** if he would paint it for me. The results are astounding! Check out all the little feet! – CPL

