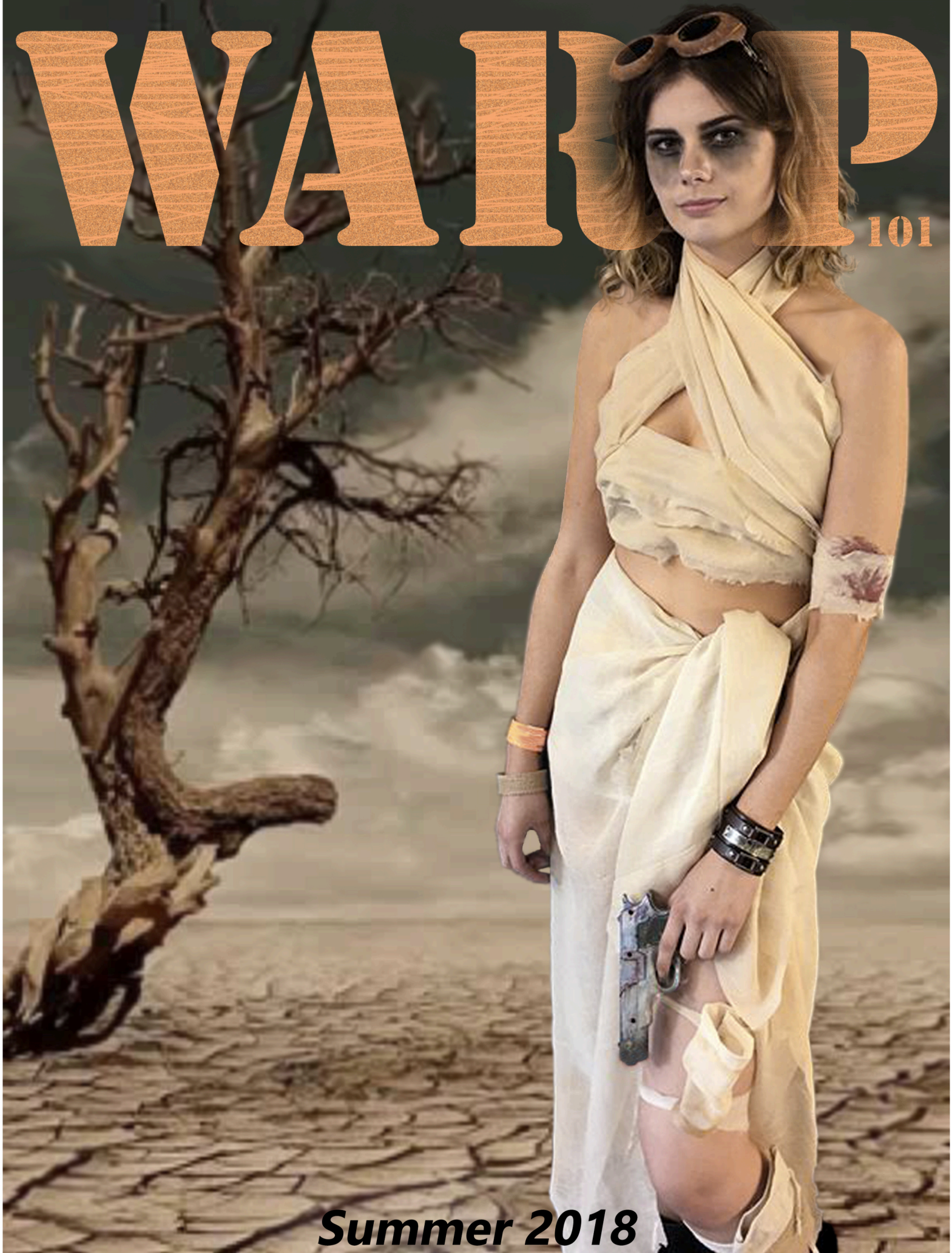


WARD

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Summer 2018

MonSFFA's Executive

President
Cathy Palmer-Lister
president@monsffa.ca

Vice-President
Keith Braithwaite
veep@monsffa.ca

Treasurer
Sylvain St-Pierre
treasurer@monsffa.ca

Appointed Positions

PR, Membership, editor of Impulse
Keith Braithwaite
impulse@monsffa.ca

Web Master & Editor of WARP
Cathy Palmer-Lister
webmaster@monsffa.ca
warp@monsffa.ca

Keeper of the Lists
Josée Bellemare

On the Cover

This issue's cover is a photograph of club member Erin Braithwaite cosplaying at the 2018 Montreal ComicCon as one of the brides from *Mad Max: Fury Road*. Erin made her costume from scratch, and dad, Keith Braithwaite, digitally slipped the post-apocalyptic wasteland behind her as a backdrop.

Contact us

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

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page



<http://www.monsffa.ca>



Facebook
group



MonSFFA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Except where noted, all MonSFFA meetings are held
SATURDAYS from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Espresso Hotel, Salle St-François, 1005 Guy Street,
corner René Lévesque.

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

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

SUNDAY JUNE 10 FIELD TRIP

The all-new Canada Science and Technology Museum
<https://ingeniumcanada.org/scitech/index.php>

SUNDAY JULY 22

Picnic in Angrignon Park, rain date 29th of July

SATURDAY AUGUST 18

Bring your Favourite book illustration for the display table!

Presentation: Sword and Sorcery, François Ménard

Judging a Book by its Cover: Various presenters are interested—might be several short presentations rather than one.

Slide Show: The Star Trek recreated sets in Ticonderoga, presented by Keith Braithwaite and Lindsay Brown

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 8

Presentation: Ret-Conning, Ret-Conning: The More Things Are the Same, the More They Change! The look of the Klingons; long-established Caucasian characters suddenly becoming African-Americans; the many new different origins of just about everybody in the DC and Marvel universes. It seems that nothing is sacred anymore! Why is that, and is it a good thing? Sylvain St-Pierre

Astronomy, hoping for a guest speaker!

SATURDAY OCTOBER 20

The Golden Age of Pulps Once upon a time, scientists could build faster-than-light interstellar spaceships or a quantum time machine in their basement with cardboard and a few vacuum tube. Those stories were published in magazines that are now falling to dust because of the cheap paper, but that were so gorgeously illustrated!

Folktales, and how they have left their mark on SF, presented by Adam Lawrence

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 17 SECOND HAND BOOK SALE

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

SATURDAY DECEMBER 8, HOLIDAY FEAST

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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MonFFANDOM

February to June / 25



You've Got Mail!

March 17, 2018

Dear MonSFFen:

Happy St. Patrick's Day! Yvonne and I are relaxing at home while the chaos of the Toronto ComicCon carries on downtown. In our peace and quiet, we are getting so much done at home, and lo and behold, here is a letter of comment on Warp 100. Congratulations to the club for

one hundred issues of news and creativity. I am sure there's something to say about what's inside.

A mammothfly? I can only imagine the size of the flower it would need to land on...

My letter... Again, congratulations on 100 issues of Warp. Few fannish publications get to that number. I am still employed, but my hours have been cut way back because of lack of available work. With that news, the job hunt goes on again, and the resumes spill out. Indeed, our hobbies are not cheap. We never did see SW Episode VIII, and to be honest, that's okay. We had several video shops we used to go to for fresh discs, and they are all gone. Online ordering will have to be the way we get our DVDs from now on. And, it looks like I might need to send you another convention list.

Got it! – thank you so much. In WARP, we only publish an abridged listing. The longer list can be found on our website here:
http://www.monsffa.ca/?page_id=254

I have seen a number of reviews of the Finnish Worldcon last August. Sylvain, your report and photos really bring me there. Who was the steampunk merchant with pictures on page 15? I may have seen merchandise like that here and there while we were at The Asylum in 2016. I have tried to keep track of all the steampunk vendors I have run into over the years, and I have a binder full of business cards.

We tried The Orville the first night it ran...nope. It just didn't appeal. And then, we tried Discovery, and we loved it. I must admit that it's the only regular series we've watched, outside of Murdoch Mysteries. SF movies and TV shows just don't have the appeal to us that they used to have.

A lot of mixed feeling re Orville vs Discovery. IMO, Orville got better and Discovery got weirder. The only way I can deal with Discovery is to believe it is set in an alternate universe. It is indeed a good show, but it's not my Star Trek.

(Go to the website of the Toronto Star...you will find in today's paper an interview with Rob Sawyer, and he will also be interviewed on The Current on the CBC, around 8:35am on Radio

One this coming Monday.)

I have heard Robert Sawyer several times on the CBC. He seems to be their go-to guy whenever they want to talk about SF/F

The main reason we're relaxing at home on this green and beery day is that we do have a St. Patrick's party to go to tonight, and we are saving our energies for that. Should be great fun. I will say

BLAST FROM THE PAST: WARP14, March 1991



No, in spite of appearances this is not WARP 3, but rather WARP 14. The number on the cover refers to the month of publication, an unwieldy system that was abandoned with WARP 20, thankfully, as it was terribly confusing.

The cover is described thus: *The Big, ugly brute on this month's issue, rendered in marker and pencil by Keith Braithwaite back in 1980, cannot as you can plainly see,*

be contained by the flimsy graphic borders of our cover!

Looking through the early issues of WARP, it is hard not to notice the changes over the years, most for the better, but not all. I'm glad to note the language politics so lamented in WARP 13 have faded, but I wish we still had all those contributors and writers of LoCs. There are *five* letters to the editor in WARP 14, mostly in response to Trudie Mason's article in WARP 13. John Mansfield wrote to ask who made the Enterprise pins he saw at Con*Cept '90 (– Hmmm, who could that possibly have been?) In his LoC, Lloyd comments on the high quality of our zine:

In the latest issue of Xenophile (a Calgary-based 'zine), western fans comment highly on the quality of Warp and say it's the best looking publication to come out of eastern Canada.

The increasing quality of the publication is obvious, even over its first 14 issues.

In MonSFFandom, we read that MonSFFA is having to move from the Armoury to the Y on Stanley because of security issues arising from the Gulf War: "Saddam shame, but that's the way it is!" Groooooan – that could only have been written

Upcoming Conventions and Events

July 13-15 – Ad Astra, Richmond Hill, ON. Guests include Timothy Zahn, Bill Fawcett, Maria V Snyder, Jody Lynn Nye
<http://www.ad-astra.org/>

August 3-5 – Otakuthon, Montreal, QC
<http://www.otakuthon.com/2018/home>

many thanks for this hundredth issue, and I am intrigued to see what you do in the second hundred issues. We can start with the first of the second hundred, and we will see you then.

You probably know by now that WARP has been nominated for an Aurora Award. :-)

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

C. Palmer-Lister

by Keith.


Speaking of Keith, his editorial under the alias, Carl Philips, takes on the problem of how fans are viewed in the media:

That being said, I really don't care what the mundanes see us as, how the media handles us or what the dweebs do or don't do to the image of fandom. I just wanna have some fun.

Conventions get more media attention than they used to in this city, but still most of the time that attention is to the fans in costume – the sillier the better – so not much has changed since Keith wrote that editorial. But, to be fair, if you're wandering in alien territory carrying a big camera, what will draw the eye of your lens? Probably not the fascinating debate going on behind a table in the St-François room.

Costuming, or cosplay, as it is known to younger fans than I, was once a huge part of our fandom. Masquerades at World Cons, even at Toronto Trek (later known as Polaris) lasted hours, and no one was bored. Well, almost no one – some skits were way too long! But at the first World Con I attended, there were period costumes that could only fit through a door with help. And they were hall costumes! The masquerade left me breathless. Ah, the good ol' days! Sylvain St-Pierre has considerable experience in the costuming world, having won a coveted ribbon at a World Con himself, and in WARP 14 he begins the first of a three-part series: Glittering Rags and Spaced-Out Threads. Costume Con is coming to Montreal in 2020, time to start on your costumes, and this is a good place to start learning the ins-and-outs of the competition.

Joe Aspler contributed an interesting article on classic SF, and Kevin Holden wrote about the increasing violence in SF movies. From Bryan Ekers, we get a very short story entitled "Necessary Evil" (the carnage of war) which the editor thoughtfully placed right next to the article on violence in SF.

Sensors reports on Star Trek, Creation Cons coming to Canada, Aliens III, and other sequels in development. 

Lloyd Penney

August 3-5 – CanFURence, Alt Hotel, Ottawa, ON.
<http://www.canfurence.ca>

August 4&5 – Rockton Festival of Witchcraft & Wizardry, Rockton, ON. Harry Potter event. <http://www.rfww.ca>.

August 4-6 – 2018 Guelph Pirate Festival, Marden Park, Guelph, ON. <http://www.thepiratefestival.com>.

August 11 – Coldwater Steampunk Festival, Coldwater, ON. <http://www.coldwatersteampunkfestival.com>.

August 10-12, 2018 – When Words Collide, Calgary, Alberta <https://www.whenwordscollide.org/>

August 16-20 World Con in San Jose, CA Guests: Spider Robinson, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Pierre & Sandy Pettinger, Edgar Pangborn, Bob Wilkins, Frank Hayes, John Picacio, more. <https://www.worldcon76.org/>

Aug 30 – Sep 2 – FanExpo, Toronto, ON Guests: Michael J. Fox, Karen Gillan, more. <https://www.fanexpocanada.com/en/home.html>

September 8 & 9 – Animara Con, Sherbrooke, QC. Anime/gaming convention. <http://www.animaracon.com>.

September 15 – Royal Medieval Faire, Waterloo Park West, ON. <http://www.royalmedievalfaire.org>.

September 14 – 16 – Albacon, Albany, NY <http://www.albacon.org/2018/>

September 21-23 – Grand Canadian Steampunk Exposition,

Fort George, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON. <http://www.canaadiansteampunk.com>.

September 22 – Forest City Comicon, London, ON. <http://www.forestcitycomicon.ca>.

September 23 – Peterborough Comic Con, ON. <http://www.popculturecanada.ca>.

September 28-30 – Ottawa Geek Market X, Nepean, ON. <http://www.geekmarket.ca>.

September 29 – Brockville Comic Con, ON <http://www.popculturecanada.ca>.

September 29 & 30 – Windsor Comicon, Windsor, ON Hotel & Casino, <http://www.windsorcomicon.com>.

October 5-7 – Scintillation, Montreal, QC **SOLD OUT**

October 5-7 – N2U 2018, Ottawa, ON, Anime convention. <http://www.n2u.ca>

October 12-14 – Can*Con 2018, Ottawa, ON Guests:  DongWon Song, more <http://can-con.org/>

NB This list is abridged, see our website for more listings.

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. There may be an alliance between the Cardassians and the Dominion; 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 for the Maquis leader. Immediately on entering the Badlands, Janeway's vessel is detected 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. Cavit is increasing belligerent toward Maquis, to the point of becoming a liability to Janeway. The captains 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. The away team assembled to explore the planet includes Javis from the Maquis crew, but he clearly hates the Federation. The team engages the Kazon, and meet Kes and Neelex, learning from them that the Array is the Caretaker who has sent Torres and Kim to the planet where they are probably dying of some strange disease. Both captains agree to continue their truce.*

CHAPTER 44

Twenty minutes later, after a quick sonic shower and dressed in fresh clothes, Chakotay joined Janeway in her ready room. As he entered, the captain waved her hand in the direction of the replicator. "Help yourself."



Accepting the invitation he walked over to the wall unit. "I feel ten pounds lighter with all that sand off me. I don't know how anyone could live there." Cup in hand he walked over to the desk, sitting down in what had become his usual seat.

Janeway looked up from the computer screen. "Well....I'm sure if the opportunity came their way the Kazon would change. We were fortunate to be born into the society in which we were. Neither the Kazon nor ourselves had a choice; they

have to survive in the environment in which they were placed. There must be Kazon who want, and perhaps are trying, to improve their living conditions. In whatever context they know. Improvements do not come easily, or quickly."

Chakotay uttered a small sigh. "You're right. We're so used to our standard of living we take it for granted, forgetting there are others who are not so lucky, forgetting there are some who are forced to fight for the bare necessities of life."

The Maquis leader sampled his coffee, then held up his cup. "Before returning to the Alpha Quadrant, I'll have to obtain one of your replicators. Your coffee is much better than mine."

Picking up her cup Janeway leaned back in her seat. "Do you really think I would allow you to take a replicator? I would lose my advantage with your crew. Now....what do you think of our friends Mr. Neelix and young Kes?"

Running his hand through freshly washed hair, Chakotay took

several seconds before replying. "That....is a good question. For all we know one of them could be this Caretaker, either testing or playing with us. We met him as an old man, in a setting designed especially for us. There is the possibility this alien is capable of assuming different forms."

"But?" Janeway added for him.

The Maquis commander smiled. "But....I doubt it. The old man knows about transporters. When we beamed onboard, Neelix looked surprised and scared. I think it was genuine. I don't believe he was acting."

Janeway nodded. "I'm inclined to agree with you. But what about Kes? She showed no fear, for someone who spent her whole life underground....."

For a moment Chakotay gazed down into his cup. "No, she didn't. However, her curiosity appeared to be real. Perhaps that overcame her fear. Our desire to explore overcomes our fear of the unknown."

Janeway could not restrain herself. "I'm glad that being a rebel leader did not blind you to the charms of our visitor."

Chakotay almost choked on his coffee. "Captain....I....what do you mean?"

Laughing at his embarrassment her eyes danced with amusement. "I noticed how taken you and Tom were with Kes. Both of you stared at her almost the entire time we were in sick bay."

Trying to find a way to answer the captain, Chakotay stared at Janeway. He then decided it would be best to change the subject. Over the rim of his cup he watched Janeway's reaction. "On my way up here I stopped by the shuttle bay, to have a look at Neelix's ship."

The amusement in Janeway's voice let Chakotay know that the change of subject did not go unnoticed. "Spying on our guest without authorization." She tried to sound serious. "If you were a member of my crew there would be a good reprimand coming your way."

Chakotay grinned. "That is why I didn't mention my intentions."

She tried not to show her impatience and satisfaction as to his actions. "Well! What did you find out?"

The Maquis leader pulled on his ear lobe. "Well Captain.... he appears to be.... some sort of scrap dealer."

"Scrap dealer!" She echoed in disbelief.

Chakotay nodded. "His ship is full of odds and ends of what is probably salvage. He has minimal weapons and the vessel appears ancient. He is certainly not well equipped for battle. I also took the liberty of looking at his log records covering the last five to six months."

Janeway gave her head a quick shake. "I won't ask how you obtained access to his computer."

The Maquis leader grinned. "You did say that the Maquis do not require an invitation."

She rolled her eyes.

Remembering what he had seen, Chakotay grew serious. "Evidently, this Caretaker brought a number of ships into this sector. I recognized a couple from the Alpha Quadrant, the others must have come from various places all over the galaxy." Pausing for a second, he took a mouthful of coffee. "I didn't have time to investigate the logs at my leisure, however, I counted about forty-

five to fifty ships. Same format, they were here for a few days to a week. The crews were abducted, probably subjected to the same examinations as we were, then they returned to their ships and left. Most of the time with one or two crew members less. Interestingly.... I saw no attempt to locate those who were missing. All ships appeared to leave on their own, immediately after the crews returned. There was no indication they were sent back to where they came from."

Slowly shaking her head sorrow mixed with anger showed on her face. "How many were in the same position as we are now in. Stranded, with little hope of reaching home unless this Caretaker sends us back. You said there were other Alpha Quadrant ships?"

Chakotay nodded. "One Cardassian and one Starfleet."

Janeway leaned forward. "What! Starfleet? Were you able to identify the ship?"

Wondering how the captain would react to his next statement Chakotay took another sip of coffee before replying. "No! However, I downloaded the information into both my computer and yours." The Maquis leader continued to sip his coffee, trying to hide his amusement at the shocked look on the face of the Starfleet captain.

For once at the loss for words, Janeway stared at Chakotay. "Downloaded into my computer! Obviously, with a little help from Evans."

Chakotay's response was quick and definite. "No! Evans is here with your trust. Since I'm familiar with Starfleet protocols it was not difficult to gain access. I used one of the consoles in the shuttle bay. Perhaps someday, that is one more thing I can show you. Captain.....you have my word, all I did was download the information."

Not knowing if she should be mad, anxious, or both the captain shook her head. "I think I'll have a talk with Tuvok about security."



Chakotay laughed. "I wouldn't. Your security system is the best I've seen. If it is any consolation, it did take me longer than usual. Don't forget Tuvok was a member of my crew, knowing his methods helped. Take it from me, very few would have been able to circumvent his safeguards."

With a gleam in his eyes Chakotay looked at Janeway. "Besides, he'll probably say it was the logical consequence of dealing with the Maquis."

Heaving a sigh she replied in an amused, exasperated voice. "You're right!" Silently admitting that she had lost this round she leaned back, cup in hand. "What about Neelix?"

Chakotay knew that for once he had 'defeated' this Starfleet captain, and had done so without losing her trust. He took another sip of coffee. "Yes, your coffee is much better than mine. I'd better keep an eye on my crew."

Janeway glared at the Maquis leader. The look clearly stating how much she would like to strangle him.

Becoming serious Chakotay responded to the captain's question. "I sense Neelix is harmless."

Janeway raised an eyebrow. "Harmless? Perhaps! However...he did manage to sneak up on both of us, while Tuvok and Paris were on guard. Even if he does not pose a threat, can we

trust him, or the girl?"

Chakotay took a moment to think over the situation. "I don't think we have any other choice. Right now, not only are they our best hope, they are the only ones. We'll take whatever precautions we can, but other than that...."

Heaving a sad sigh Janeway had no option but to agree with the Maquis leader. "You're certainly correct in that respect. However.... with or without them we are back to square one. What are the motives of this Caretaker, and will this alien bring additional ships here? We keep coming back to the same question and it is making me uneasy. I certainly don't like the idea of anyone else being subjected to this situation. Was he interested in us for purely biological reasons? Or, are we lab rats? Could Neelix and Kes be his inventions? Until we have these answers, we can not even try to put a stop to this Caretaker."

The Maquis leader nodded. "You are not the only one wanting to stop this alien! But for the moment I can not offer any suggestions, certainly not with his level of technology. As for testing us.... The only test, which I can see, would be one of loyalty. See how far we are prepared to go in our search, since the other ships made no attempt to rescue their missing crew members. Based on what the old man and Kes told us, combined with the examination to which we were subjected, I'm inclined to believe he is searching for something biological, something to do with the Ocampa, since they are the object of his attention. Perhaps they are lacking something in their chemical composition this Caretaker feels is necessary."

Janeway angled her head to the side. "Kes did say they only live nine years. Perhaps he wants to extend their life span, searching other species, trying to find a way to do so."

The Maquis leader slowly rubbed his finger up and down his cup. "You might have something, it does make sense. However, why now? The Caretaker appears to have been around for a long, long time. From what Neelix told us, this has been going on for less than a year."

For a moment the captain stared down into her cup. "Has it always been the exact same entity? Neelix said no one has ever been to the space station, nor has any life form been seen. For all we know the alien or aliens could have the ability to come and go unnoticed. Also, there might have been, or still is, a group of beings operating this station, if there has been a change in

leadership.... Different leader, different ideas."

The captain uttered a small bitter laugh. "We find Kes and Neelix, we find answers and more questions. So far, we had to play the cards as they were dealt to us. Were we lucky in finding these two, or were they put there for us to find? Right now, as you pointed out, we have to choose but to trust them. I'm hoping that once we find Harry and B'Elanna they will have some answers for us. If we can determine why we were brought here, then perhaps we can not only use that information to our advantage but also put a stop to the Caretaker abducting any more ships."

Chakotay shrugged. "Unless we can communicate with this alien I don't see how. Kes gave me the impression that her people live a very casual and isolated existence, having no knowledge of the world above."

Leaning forward Janeway placed her cup on the desk. "I have the same feeling. However, there is a slim possibility that despite the Caretaker's opinion about our species we do have the answer to his problem. We did find him once, if we return to the Array with Kes, we might be able to do so again. Since the Ocampa have never seen or spoken to this alien, and he has been caring for these people for a long time, then he must have some compassion. Perhaps Kes will have some influence."

After drinking the last of his coffee he held the cup on the arm of the chair. "Ummmmm, you could be right. With that young lady with us he might be more reasonable. This could be our only hope. There is no way we could force him to send us home, he is much too powerful, and processes technology foreign to us."

At that moment Tuvok's voice came over the comm system. "Tuvok to Captain, we have found a break in the barrier large enough for us to beam through."

Janeway and Chakotay leaped to their feet. "We're on our way."

She started to walk around her desk. "Assemble the away team along with our two guests. We'll meet you in the transporter room."

Faces grim the two commanders looked at each other. This was it! Either they would recover their missing crew members or....they would not! One last chance! But would Kim and Torres be alive....or dead?

And if alive, in what condition?



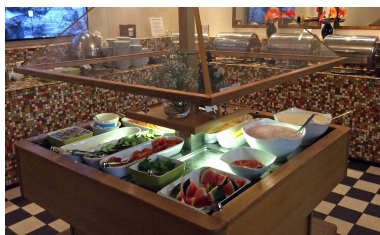
World Con 75 Trip Report

Sylvain St-Pierre

PART TWO

Part one appears in WARP 100

Thursday, August 10th

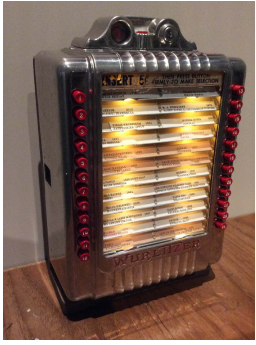


The breakfast buffet at the Seurahuone proved a little less lavish than the one at the Victory Hotel, but very decent nevertheless. I was certainly in no danger

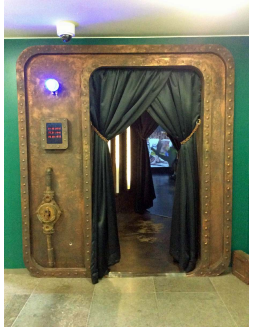


of starving during my stay and must confess having gotten fond of pickled herring.

The con activities did not start until 10:00 AM today, so I visited a few of the local attractions first. The Helsinki Municipal Museum provided an excellent retrospective of the history of the city, cleverly presented by a series of lively tableaux accessible through a "time machine" portal and virtual reality. Nothing makes you feel your age like seeing a room from half a century ago and saying to yourself, "Hey, I remember that!"... On the other hand, it was quite entertaining to see a group of teenage girls totally baffled by a classical restaurant table jukebox!



The Helsinki Municipal Museum



The Helsexinki Exhibition

There was also a temporary exhibit on the perception of some of the more... unusual aspects of sex over the years [BLUSH].

Back to the convention centre, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the Con Committee had lost no time in addressing the panel overcrowding problem. In record time, they secured larger rooms in the Messukeskus – probably at considerable expense – then severely limited the number of day tickets sold, and assigned people to indicate where the queues to the various rooms ended. Now, that's good management!



Managing crowds efficiently

I did manage to get into all of the panels I wanted to attend. The trick was to get in the queue early enough. This was made easier by the fact that time limits on panel duration were strictly and efficiently enforced, allowing at least ten minutes to reach the next one.

The “Non-binary Genders in Post-Human and Non-Human Bodies” panel.



It should also be noted that the chairs were surprisingly comfortable, which is no small thing when you spend so much time seated. Another commendable point is the consideration given to people with mobility problems. The seats at the end of each row were always set aside for fans with special needs, and while it appears that the Messukeskus was not originally built with full access in mind, all the impassable flights of stairs have been retro-fitted with ramps or mechanized platforms for the wheelchairs.



Wheelchair access

While I still had more than enough storage space for my pictures, I found out that my finger-sized extra power pack was not nearly up to the task of keeping my tablet running under such a heavy load. Fortunately, I found one with a much greater capacity at the shopping mall next to my hotel. Service was no problem, as all the clerks spoke excellent English.

Friday, August 11th

Today, I visited Tallinn, capital of Estonia and the city that Helsinki was meant to compete against back in the 16th Century, when it was known as Reval. The Baltic takes only about two hours to cross at this point, and the ferries are quite comfortable, so it was not a big side trip and could be done in a single day without the need to sleep over.



This was but a short crossing...but there was an eerie fog at first!



Unlike Helsinki, Tallinn has preserved much of its Medieval heritage, and tourism is an important part of the local economy. The place is not nearly as crowded as Gamla Stan in Stockholm, which made walking around a far more pleasant experience. If you are into gaming, you cannot imagine a more pleasant source of material for your Middle Ages inspired campaign.

They do have a MacDonald© here, but for some reason I felt like hunting down something else. The signature elk soup at the III Draakon (The Three Dragons) restaurant proved superb, and the inside decor quite amusing, if a bit dark.



A wonderful old/new toy in the window of the Nava Antik Shop, but the price was a bit high for me.



The semi-ruins of the Tallinna Linnahallis

Tallinn has preserved much of its Medieval heritage.



A bowl of elk soup at III Draakon. The pigeon is not part of the meal.

This steady diet of cervidae has not been without side-effects: I think I'm growing antlers.



For those who do not like to walk. I wonder how smoothly those things run on ancient cobblestones.

There is also a modern aspect to Tallinn. Estonia has a total population smaller than that of Montreal, and they are heavily pushing high technologies to diversify their economy. You can tour the Old Town on Segways, and I came

across a robotic minibus being tested. There is also a monstrous Soviet era concert hall that has been closed since 2009 and would a marvellous set for a post-apocalyptic movie!



Look Ma, no driver!

I certainly did not manage to see everything, and the others who visited the town reported the same. There is easily enough to see in Tallinn to keep you occupied for a couple of full days, but I had booked my trip back when I expected to have only a limited amount of free time available.

Sadly, I did not come back to Helsinki early enough to attend the Hugo Awards ceremony. Much to my dismay, if that event is available on U-Tube, I have not yet been able to find it. [There were many complaints; the con finally got around to uploading it in February of this year <https://tinyurl.com/y7g6ue82>]

Saturday, August 12th

A week already? Can't be, I felt like I just arrived! I must have taken a wrong turn at that Municipal Museum time machine! Still so much to be seen and done.

The highlight of the con today was the Masquerade. Unsurprisingly, Nordic mythology was the theme of choice for many of the entries. The local fans are apparently heavily into role playing and go for historical accuracy rather than flamboyance. Accordingly, the show was somewhat muted, even taking into account the fact that events like CostumeCon or Anime North are now the venues of choice for the better costumes. My own footage was awful, but fortunately there is also an excellent quality video available of that event, including the post-Masquerade very good show of singers.

The entire event is available at <https://tinyurl.com/y87jw575>

There were a number of interesting hall costumes to be seen on every day of the convention, including some European-based ones. I was, for instance, quite amused to see characters from the *Scandinavia and the World Web* by Danish artist Humon, whose strip depicts various countries as if they were people.

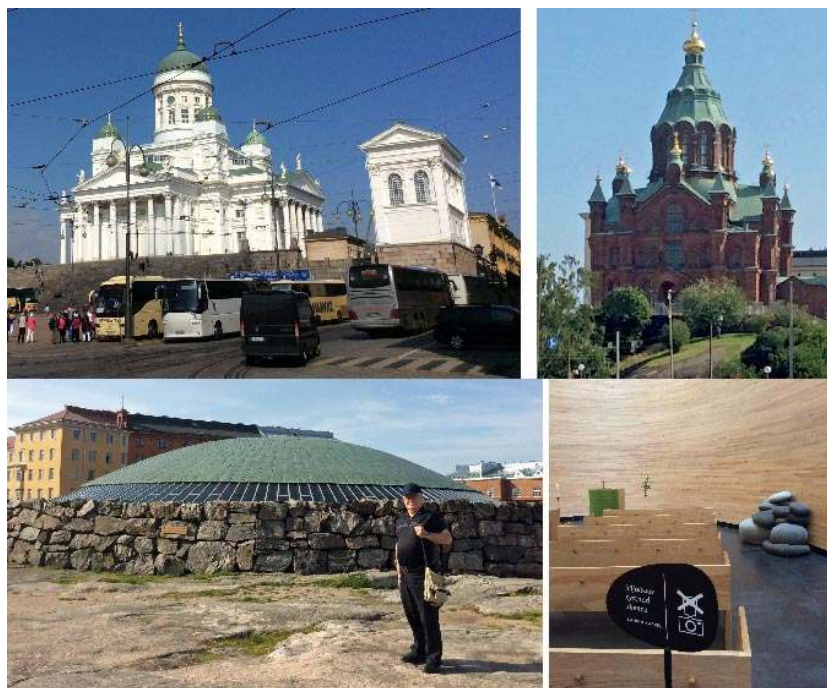
<https://satwcomic.com/the-world>



From left to right: England, Denmark, Finland, and Norway with his signature fish. I was told that King Europe and Canada were also running around but never managed to catch them.

To nobody's surprise, Dublin, Ireland, won the bid to host the 2019 Worldcon. It was, after all, the only serious contender. This comes as pleasant news, as I have never been there. Not only that, but the Eurocon for that year, called Titancon, will be held in nearby Belfast on the following week! It's only a couple of hours train ride between the two cities, so it's a safe bet to assume that many people will want to attend both events. I certainly will try to attend.

Sunday, August 13th



I knew it would eventually come, but I woke up with the realization that today was the last day of Worldcon 75 (*SIGH*). This morning, I reviewed my pictures of the houses of worship I encountered so far and gave thanks for a marvellous trip. The Finns are not very religious, but they have a nice selection of temples and take good care of them.

Just because there were only a few hours of con time left did not mean that I was going to let them go to waste. I managed to get in a very interesting Mars panel where an actual fragment of Martian meteorite was passed around! As with most other panels, this one was packed solid.



The "What Do We Know of Mars?" panel. Yes, I'm holding an actual piece of the Red Planet!

As usual, the Closing Ceremony was a joyful/sad affair. The traditional gavel was passed down to San José, where the Worldcon will be held next year, and everybody left with a heart heavy that it was all over, but kept buoyant by the fact that this had been a most fantastic event.



Farewell, until we meet again.

Our Antler-Con dinner on Opening Day was such a success that we decided to hold a party in the same vein right after the Closing Ceremony. We found the perfect venue for that, in a rather over the top Viking-themed restaurant. This one was more lightly attended than the first, in part because a nasty strain of con crud was running around.



Harald, a Viking themed restaurant

While there were a few Vikings based in Finland, the Finns think of themselves as Nordics rather than Scandinavians. As such, their descendants tend to remember the savage raiders part over the proud ancestors one, and have no qualm about picturing them in somewhat unflattering ways. Accordingly, the oversized horned helmets at the Harald restaurant are indeed plastic.

But if you are willing to look beyond the tackiness and manage to understand a menu that reads like an epic saga, then you can have an interesting dining experience, and we certainly did. After all, how many people can say that they have tasted beaver sausage served on a sword? I hope Beavra will not stomp this place out...



Sylvårg the Bloody (mainly because I cut myself on the sword)

There is absolutely no doubt that this trip would not have been nearly so enjoyable if not for the gorgeous weather that prevailed

for most of my stay. I credit the daily sacrifices I made to Ukko, a Finnish god who combined the attributes of both Odin and Thor. This deity was said to be partial to alcohol offerings but, unlike many other gods who selfishly demanded that the libations be spilled on the ground, Ukko thought it was perfectly acceptable that his worshippers should drink them!

Monday, August 14th

One last big Nordic breakfast, and then the saddest part of any con: going back to the real world. A rapid connection to the airport is another advantage of my hotel's location and I arrived well in advance. My return flight was with Lufthansa, but this time the stopover in Munich, Germany, lasted only a couple of hours.



Landing in Montreal was on time and uneventful. I was thankfully spared the horror of being thrown out of an overbooked flight or roasting for hours on the tarmac.

I spent part of my travel time putting the finishing touch on this present report, and when I arrived home it was already more than half done. As it was a day flight, I did not sleep much and instead watched a couple of the several genre movies available.

I arrived home very tired, but very, very happy! This was a very very very wonderful trip.

One last detail of importance: if you ever visit the Nordic countries, try to vary your diet a little. I don't know if the lingering aftermaths of nearby Chernobyl are to blame, but it seems that stuffing yourself with local reindeer, elk, beaver and salmon for ten days can leave you somewhat changed...



REVIEWS: Movies and Television

Quick Movie Reviews Keith Braithwaite

The 2018 Summer Blockbuster Season is well underway and I've jotted down some thoughts on a few of this year's most anticipated Genre flicks, most now in theatres, plus some other recently released films of note:

Avengers: Infinity War

I don't think there have ever been as many superheroes crammed into one movie! You might think the whole thing would collapse into a bloated tangle of competing stars, individual action sequences, and rival storylines, and while it sometimes comes close to doing just that, somehow, it all works. This is superhero movie-making on a truly epic scale!

Much of the established Marvel roster come together to battle

the ultimate evil, the Mad Titan Thanos, an incredibly powerful villain who threatens half the universe. But this well-drawn bad guy is not simply evil for evil's sake; he's motivated by an admittedly twisted logic, but a logic, nonetheless. He has reasons for doing what he's doing, given his backstory. We can understand his justification.

With so many superheroes in play, it's inevitable that there will be a lot of super-powered derring-do as each gets his or her moment to shine. It all gets to be a bit much – almost. The film

starts to drag just a tiny bit midway, but manages to avoid numbing our senses for very long. Clever dialogue helps to keep things lively until we arrive at the film's terrific, finger-snapping climactic pay-off.

And the story's not over yet!

A great post-credits scene sets up the coming debut of the latest addition to Nick Fury's Avengers Initiative.



A Quiet Place



Contemporary horror movies are often merely exercises in cheap jump-scares, or blood-soaked gore-fests, the gruesome and gross standing in for real, palpable, haunts-your-dreams terror. Director John Krasinski's tense chiller stands quietly and most assuredly in contrast to that lesser fare.

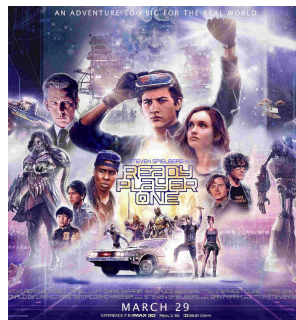
The audience is thrust immediately into a post-apocalyptic world inhabited by deadly creatures that stalk the remnants of humanity by sound alone, and engage with a family's efforts to survive in this new reality. Krasinski also stars as father to this young family, and his cast, including real-life wife, Emily Blunt, is top-notch. We quickly become invested in these characters.

Tautly directed, *A Quiet Place* is a well-conceived, suspenseful, stylish monster movie, and for budding filmmakers, a masterclass in sound design. Here, it is the sparse, simple noises things make that serve to skilfully build tension in the almost complete absence of dialogue and familiar ambient sound.

This is one of the best horror movies of recent years.

Ready Player One

I'm not generally a fan of films based on video games, or built around video-game culture, but I must admit that Steven Spielberg's *Ready Player One* is a whole lot of fun to watch, despite its being, in large part, a two-hour Easter egg for Genre fans! The concept could easily have failed to entertain in the hands of a lesser director, but this kind of big blockbuster is Spielberg's specialty, and while it won't be remembered one day as a classic, it's definitely, today, a most enjoyable popcorn movie.



Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle

Speaking of films based on video games, this one came out last year, and surprisingly, it exceeded expectations, both my own,

and those of the box office. Like *Ready Player One*, it's another movie that's fun to watch, though for different reasons.

Welcome to the Jungle is a sequel to the original *Jumanji* (1995), the titular fictional game updated, here, from board to video. There's a lot to like about the film – lovable characters, good screen chemistry amongst the four lead actors, cool and comedic action sequences – but what I liked most is that it's funny, cleverly lampooning teenage-movie as well as video-game character tropes.



Deadpool 2



Wade Wilson is everyone's favourite foul-mouthed mercenary superhero, and he's back and even more impudent than in his first appearance (discounting his turn in *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*)! If you liked that approach to the character, you'll certainly like this sequel, as well.

But be warned, this film is not for everyone, especially those easily offended. The shtick may eventually wear thin, but it hasn't yet. Ryan Reynolds's is in fine form as he mercilessly skewers the superhero movie genre, Hollywood, the MCU, and especially the DCEU! This is one wild mix of superhero action and fourth-wall-breaking, vulgar, wise-cracking irreverence.

Definitely not your father's superhero movie!

Solo: A Star Wars Story

This latest Star Wars movie is, apparently, underperforming at the box office as I write this review! Go figure. It's still pulling in some pretty good coin, mind you, just not the more-wealth-than-you-can-imagine, Death Star-sized purse-full that was expected of a film about Star Wars' beloved Han Solo.



Perhaps audiences are beginning to tire of the Star Wars franchise, with a new chapter or stand-alone opening every few months, it seems. Overkill? That's the only reason I can think of that would have audiences turning away from this picture, one of the best Star Wars flicks of recent years.

Solo's stellar cast, leads and supporting, have all crafted roguishly charming characters, and I include, here, star Alden Ehrenreich. His interpretation of the younger Han Solo is not executed as Harrison Ford would have played it in his heyday, but is equally compelling. Ehrenreich's is not merely an imitation of

Ford as Solo, but his own take on the iconic character that hints just enough at the Solo we all know from the original trilogy to allow us to buy into this guy as a younger Han in his formative years, developing into both the scoundrel and hero he will become.

The script is sharper than anything George Lucas has ever written, and the movie's brisk pace emulates that of the first Star Wars film (*A New Hope*). The action is well-choreographed and exciting without ever detracting from driving the story forward. Direction and editing are tight and on point, allowing no more time than necessary to effectually get across the story's emotional beats, delivering a fun and most satisfying Star Wars adventure.

Die-hard fans get their candy, too, with scenes depicting the formation of Han and Chewie's partnership, his introduction to Lando, and the legendary card game that wins him the Millennium Falcon. There are also foreshadows to what we all know is to come.

The Shape of Water

Guillermo del Toro has had a lifelong fascination with monsters and his odd, dark fantasy about a woman who is peculiarly attracted to *The Creature From the Black Lagoon's* cousin won the Best Picture Oscar last year, along with a Best Director nod for del Toro. The film is now available on DVD/Blu-Ray.

Del Toro's films are beautifully shot fairy tales shaded with elements of horror, his leading actors almost always first-rate talents who turn in wonderful performances, and his stories often just patently weird, as was the case, here. He's an acquired taste, to be sure, his cinematic visions eliciting robust praise in one instance while on another occasion, categorical displeasure. Personally, I either really like, or fairly dislike his work; rarely am I indifferent to it, however.

The Shape of Water I found to be kind of out there but one of his better efforts, enhanced by the solid performances of the principals. I note in particular lead Sally Hawkins as Elisa, a mute cleaning woman who works at a high-security government laboratory during the peak years of the cold-war; Richard Jenkins as closeted Giles, Elisa's neighbour, a struggling commercial illustrator; and Michael Shannon as Colonel Strickland, captor and overseer of the strange amphibious humanoid the U.S. government is studying in the lab, hoping to exploit the creature for American advantage in the space race.

This is not only a monster movie, but a bizarre love story, a jailbreak escapade, a spy thriller, and a commentary on our seemingly innate rejection of otherness. It's quite the mix and involves Elisa and the creature not only forming a loving bond, but at one point having sex in her bathtub!

As I said: weird. Perhaps too weird for some tastes, but worth a viewing if only to admire del Toro's gifts as a fantasy filmmaker. He was partly inspired to pen this story, apparently, by childhood memories of having watched *The Creature From the*

Black Lagoon and wishing that the Gill-Man and actress Julie Adams' character had pursued a romance!



Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom

I've been infatuated with dinosaurs since childhood, so I look forward with great zeal to the release of any new dinosaur-related books, films, or TV specials. I was thus excited about catching the latest installment of the Jurassic Park/World film franchise.



Alas, *Jurassic World: Fallen*

Kingdom proved a disappointment. Not that it's dreadfully unwatchable or anything like that, it's just not particularly memorable.

This follow-up to *Jurassic World*, which rebooted the franchise in 2015, fails to match its predecessor, just as *Lost World* (1997), the sequel to the original *Jurassic Park* (1993), stumbled after the spectacle, excitement, and thrill of Spielberg's initial visit to John Hammond's theme park. Both of these sequels packed a lot of dinosaur action in between their opening titles and closing credits, which is fine, but offered only mediocre storylines. *Lost World* was just a series of cool dinosaur encounters loosely strung together by a rather thin plot, and *Fallen Kingdom* wasn't much better, though offering a decidedly more hectic story.

Director [J. A. Bayona](#) threw practically everything into his script but the kitchen sink!

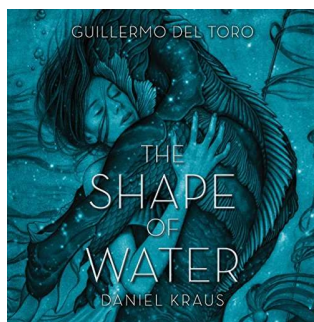
We meet a group of animal-rights activists committed to saving the dinosaurs of the now-abandoned Jurassic World park, suddenly endangered by that timeworn cliché of all dinosaur flicks, an erupting volcano! Reformed ex-corporate cog Claire leads the group.

On the other end of the ethical scale, we have a group of poachers, who "rescue" the animals, planning to sell them to the highest bidder. Dr. Wu is still manipulating DNA to create monsters, including his latest weaponized hybrid, an Indominus Rex-Velociraptor cross called the Indoraptor. Meanwhile, Owen's favourite Raptor, Blue, is all grown up and figures in the development of the Indoraptor.

Claire and Owen are no longer an item, but citing Blue, she convinces him to join her efforts to save the dinosaurs.

Add Jeff Goldblum's brief cameo as Dr. Malcolm, a criminally underused Mosasaurus, plus a little girl and her wealthy grandfather – Hammond's former partner; I won't give away a critical plot point concerning these two – then release some poisonous gas and the dinosaurs in a big old mansion, and let the fun begin!

There's an awful lot going on and, frankly, it all gets to be a little too much. This is a very busy movie, both in terms of script, and of visuals, and the whole of it tends to dilute the component parts. A leaner, more focussed story would have been the better option, in my humble opinion, perhaps having to do with that



criminally underused Mosasaurus!

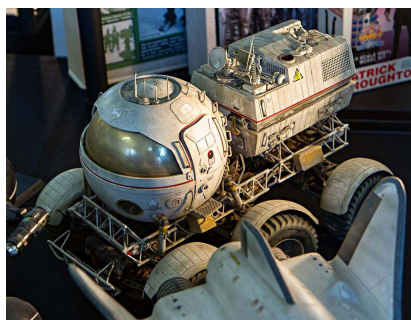
That said, the on-screen chemistry of the two leads, so well played in *Jurassic World*, is intact, here, and is one of the things about this movie that works best. I noticed, too, that the composition of more than a couple scenes seemed to call back the Spielberg *Jurassic Park* films, perhaps in tribute. *Fallen Kingdom*'s special effects were—no surprise—top-notch, the

supporting cast likable, and a few moments unexpectedly touching. Also, watch for the brief post-credits scene at the end, which we might argue rips off our own **Beavra!** franchise!

So not the best of the *Jurassic Park/World* films, certainly, but not the worst, either.



Star Cops Sylvain St-Pierre



I had heard of this British TV series before but had never seen it until it occurred to me that at least some episodes might be lurking on YouTube. My hunch paid off and I did find all of them there.

First aired in 1987, only nine episodes were produced before lack of interest and a labour conflict forced cancellation.



Admittedly, the series does lack the action packed scenes and high end special effects that characterized *Space 1999* and others, but it is far from shabby.

The premise is based on an international police force whose jurisdiction covers anything outside Earth's atmosphere. Set in a near future, the interest comes from the fact that criminals are just starting to take advantage of the opportunities offered by this new environment and the technologies being developed for it.

REVIEWS: Events

Montreal ComicCon 2018 Keith Braithwaite

In general, I find that ComicCons and other big commercially-driven pop culture events, while certainly fun, are just too crowded, often impersonal, and very expensive, so I don't attend the Montreal edition every year – I've been to maybe three or four in the past decade. When I do opt to attend, I'm usually drawn by a particular guest or guests, special event, or just the inescapable itch to satisfy my fanboy predilections. This year, I was enticed by a couple of the advertised guests.

A fervent fan of *The X-Files*, I was elated to find that both of the show's stars, Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny, were to

The show is hard science, and while some of the predictions are way off, others are disturbingly close to the mark. For instance, the Americans are very much against the idea that any outside agency might have power over their space stations. There are also a lot of political shenanigans going on.

As befits a British series, the actors were chosen for their talent rather than their looks. The lead star, Commander Spring

(an Englishman, of course), got his position very much against his will but it turns out that he is an excellent choice for the job. He does get a lot of help from Box, a



d i s c o n t i n u e d experimental pocket computer with a talent for snooping around and a somewhat snarky personality. The cast also includes an American and an Australian amongst the deputies, a Soviet Moonbase commander (nobody expected communism to collapse so fast back in the 80's); but alas no Canadian – at least as of Episode Six. It should be noted that most of the characters could be considered lovable rogues, which is a refreshing change from the usual squeaky clean standard hero.

The various sets and vehicles are quite credible, and even apparently inspired a short-lived line of models.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNNH_RI--7sI

completing for me a unique and personal collectible.

Long story short: I got his autograph! But the line-up to get that signature was insane! I joined the queue a good 30 minutes prior to his scheduled signing session, which I figured – naively – would put me near the front of the line. I joined the other poor, disabused chumps in the overflow section to wait it out! There were so many people lined up for an autograph that the session quickly became an assembly line: pay your money; get in line; wait; shuffle ahead a few feet; wait some more; repeat; repeat; repeat again; finally, hand over your item to be autographed; sorry, no time for chit-chat; exit to the right! To his credit, Mr. Duchovny signed for hours, and was as genial as time allowed in the process.

Call me a cranky old man if you wish, but long line-ups are a chronic problem at ComicCon, and one of the drawbacks that causes me to think twice about whether or not to attend. When I have to line up for an hour or more to take in a headliner's Q&A, or even for half an hour just to get into a secondary panel upstairs, I'm inclined not to bother. Half of one's day at ComicCon is spent standing in line waiting. And the great throng of fans makes it difficult to move about in the corridors and foyer, and especially in the dealers' room, where dozens upon dozens at a time crowd in front of the sales booths. Patience is a requirement, to be sure.

I spotted new, interesting merchandise this year, a few fresh flowers amidst the garden's by now familiar perennials, and picked up a number of marvellous sci-fi and comics art books to add to my collection, including one out-of-print digest that I've been after for years. Score!

As always, I enjoyed the cosplay. I've always admired the costuming creativity on display at ComicCon, although I didn't get to see as much of it as I'd have liked this year. Among the cosplayers this year was my daughter, who with some of her friends, have lately gotten rather into it. (See cover of *WARP 101*)



A family of ghostly pirates

Pennywise terrorizes kids.

In a couple of rare, quiet moments, I had opportunity to speak to a favourite artist, Steve Rude, and comics legend Neal Adams. Both very magnanimously signed the books and prints I had purchased from them.

Before the convention weekend rolled around, I learned that Gillian Anderson had cancelled her appearance, not an unusual development for working actors, who may at any moment be called in to audition for a new role, or for reshoots, or to participate in promotional events for their latest project. Most

actors agree to appear at conventions with the proviso that they may, even on short notice, bail out should any professional commitments arise. Fair enough.

It's just frustrating for fans, who may have bought their tickets solely in anticipation of meeting their favourite screen hero, only to find that the star in question won't be in attendance after all. I don't know what can be done to satisfy both the needs of the stars and desires of their fans, only that when an advertised guest is a no-show, it can be maddeningly disappointing. I know a number of folk who have experienced such let-downs over the years. I don't fault the stars for these unfortunate occasions, nor the convention, and I wish there was some way to avoid the random intervention of fate's fickle finger. I don't know how we might manage that, however.

In my own case, I was, certainly, bummed to hear that Gillian Anderson wasn't going to show. But at least I had met her in 2013, and obtained her autograph at that time. And now I had David Duchovny's alongside. Cool!

I decided to skip the Masquerade Saturday evening and instead took in a live stage performance of *Once More With Feeling*, an adaptation of Buffy the Vampire Slayer's beloved musical episode.

House of M, the fledgling musical theatre company mounting this production – their very first! – is made up of energetic singers/actors/dancers, musicians, choreographers, costumers, make-up artists, and set designers, many pulling double duty. Dedicated to celebrating geek culture through musical theatre, this vibrant mix of young professionals and students designed and succeeded in staging a positively wonderful version of the Buffy favourite.

The show's director distilled the TV episode down to its basics, highlighting the music and hitting the narrative's important emotional marks. Commanding a simple, versatile stage the cleanly minimalist set pieces of which captured the essentials of Buffy and the Scoobies' Sunnydale haunts, his cast delivered in spades as singers, actors, and dancers. Key moments elicited boisterous cheers from an audience familiar with the material, and genuinely thrilled to see and hear it brought to life before them with passion, humour, and conviction. Their voices soaring, as soloists, sharing a duet, and as part of the ensemble, this terrifically talented cast absolutely rocked it, backed by a tight five-piece band that sounded as big and bold as an orchestra. Buffy and Spike's kiss at the end of the closing act dissolved beautifully into a standing ovation from a tremendously appreciative crowd.

Once More With Feeling was a highlight of the con for me. I was so impressed with the production that I returned for the encore presentation on Sunday afternoon. A few minor technical glitches that cropped up during the first show had been ironed out, and the cast, any opening-night jitters now behind them, were even more polished.

It's hard to believe that this group only formed in January of this year, and that this was their first show; they looked and sounded like they've been doing this for years! In the wake of their ComicCon triumph, House of M may be asking themselves, "Where do we go from here?" Anywhere you want, guys!

Your audience will follow.



**Free Comic Book Day
Josée Bellemare**



Saturday, May 5, was free comic book day and, as usual, my local store turned it into a big event. Several artists and authors were there to talk to the fans and sign autographs.

Cosplayers were a bit scarce this year. Considering the huge success of the latest Marvel movies I thought there would be more. Maybe they showed up in the afternoon or maybe folks didn't have time to make their costumes.

The weather was sunny and everyone there was having fun.



**An Outing to the Ingenium
Sylvain St-Pierre**

MonSFFA started doing group outings in 2007 as a financial measure to shave one monthly room rental per year from our limited budget. The practice is now a firmly entrenched tradition and has taken us to such interesting venues as the Star Wars Identity Exhibit, the new Alcan Planetarium and the Star Fleet Academy experience.



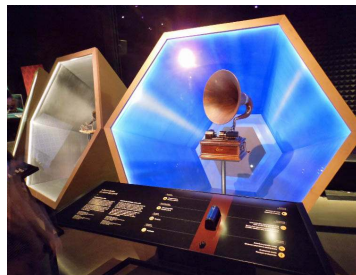
Canada Science and Technology Museum Entrance

Last June 9th, a number of us descended *en masse* to the recently refurbished Canada Science and Technology Museum in Ottawa.

The weather was fantastic and the trip easy, but coming as we did in several cars we experienced some difficulties getting together. Given the large size of the facility, we ended up visiting in small groups

that only occasionally managed to meet each other's.

This museum is the remarkable proof that repositories of knowledge need not be dusty and boring places. It was nice to find out that, for once, our tax money has been put to good use. The exhibits are comprehensive, lively and presented in an attractive manner. I especially liked the way the evolution of common devices was depicted. In the *Sound by Design* section, for example, the musical boxes give way to gramophones, then record players, followed



Sound by Design

by tapes and CD and ending up with modern digital devices.

One of my favourite parts was probably the *Artifact Alley*, with pristine and lovingly restored examples of many now strange looking devices spanning decades or centuries. Some of them not so old, however, that I could not still remember using or even owning. It was in fact rather funny to have to explain to a museum guide what a mainframe computer was before she could tell me whether or not they had one on display! (She had to look it up.)



How many of those things do you remember?



Sci-Fi rules!

Interestingly, the contribution of our favourite genre was acknowledged as having forecasted and even influenced the design of many actual inventions, much to our delight.

We ended up spending about three hours at the museum, leisurely wandering through the exhibits and enjoying them thoroughly. A great place for kids and adults. Fans being a little of both, this turned out to be a delightful outing.



Art of the Brick Exhibit. The T-Rex has 80,020 bricks in it. (T-Rex skull photo by KGB)



MonSFFen Danny, Cathy, Dom, and José

The special exhibit at the time was *The Art of the Brick*, showcasing the Lego creations of artist Nathan Sawaya, very much in tune with the sort of things people like us like.



Museum gift shop

The Gift Shop, as at most museums, proved a bit expensive but nevertheless had a number of interesting items on sale.

All this intellectual stimulation left us quite famished and we had a much needed late lunch at the Kelsey's restaurant nearby. After an excellent meal in good company we returned home, some of us stopping at local hobby and craft shops to pick up a few additional souvenirs.

Definitely a day well spent.



MonSFFandom: February to June, 1018

Keith Braithwaite

February

February's well-attended meeting boasted a busy agenda!

We opened with the year's first edition of the now renamed *Saturday Sci-Fi Cinema Matinée*, featuring movies starring notable sexy sirens of science fiction and fantasy, like Zsa Zsa Gabor, Jane Fonda, Raquel Welch, and the unitard-clad Hollywood Cover Girls, featured in, respectively, *The Queen of Outer Space* (1958), *Barbarella* (1968), *One Million Years, B. C.* (1966), and *Cat-Women of the Moon* (1953)! Our fifth film

offering, and the one chosen by the group for review, was the cheesy 1973 sci-fi sexploitation gem *Invasion of the Bee Girls*, starring Victoria Vetri and Anitra Ford. MonSFFen found the film mildly entertaining, in a so-bad-it's-good kind of way, and very much of its period.

All of this tied in nicely to our lead panel topic, sex and love in the society of the future. **Yves Tousignant, Leslie Perryon,**

and **Keith Braithwaite** were our panellists, here, engaging their audience in a wide-ranging discussion of emerging trends surrounding sex and love in our increasingly technological society, and the future that may develop as a consequence. Discussed were the impact of the Web and social media on modern relationships; the explosive growth of increasingly violent pornography and the consequent detrimental views of sex engendered in today's youth; the decline of traditional institutions such as marriage and the eroding of monogamy as society's default setting with regard to relationships; and virtual sex and how the advent of "sex robots" on par with those depicted in science fiction may well unintentionally wreck human civilization—with all of one's fantasies fulfilled, would anyone ever again come out of their basements?—or conversely, save it! The feasibility of human-alien couplings, a common trope of science fiction, was touched upon, too, as were some of the many representations of sex and love in SF/F.



Afterwards, everyone smoked a cigarette.

MonSFFA's March 10 meeting welcomed two special guests on the topic of women in SF/F. Multi-award-winning SF/F author **Jo Walton** and social activist and a writer new to the Genre, **Su Sokol**, took their seats at the dais before a packed room.



Following an introductory video presentation briefly outlining the history of, and biases faced by pioneering women SF/F writers and early female stars of the Genre, moderator **Keith Braithwaite** opened the discussion by asking of the guests what drew them to the Genre to begin with, and who they thought were the female equivalents of SF/F's so-called "Big Three" :



Asimov, Bradbury, and Clarke, along with Heinlein and other of the Genre's best known male writers?

It was immediately noted that these male writers are dead and no longer selling! Many of the best-selling and award-winning Genre writers today, in fact, are women. So has gender equality been achieved, then? What of the instances of sexism endured by the precursors of today's stable of very talented and capable female science fiction and fantasy writers? Do such instances

Among other brief video clips of interest to the group, the meeting witnessed the screening of a featurette on the production of the club's recently released stop-motion animation project, a short film starring cardboard cut-out dinosaur puppets. The scheduled slide-show presentation *A Personal Journey*, highlighting a club member's years-long involvement with MonSFFA and the fun and satisfaction it has brought him, was regrettably, again postponed, to a date later to be determined.



The closing hour or so of the meeting was given over to a sci-fi game put together by **Danny Sichel** and very loosely based on the popular board game Balderdash. Players were given the actual title of an obscure or oddly titled SF/F story, then asked to pen a quick fake outline of the story. These were then read aloud, along with the story's genuine summary, and folk were challenged to identify which was the true synopsis, scoring points if they did, or if their fake run-down fooled others. Lots of fun! (Read more: http://www.monsffa.ca/?page_id=6278)

We thank our panellists for their efforts, as well as all involved in the planning and running of this meeting.

March



continue to occur, today?

Things are better than they were, to be sure, but there's still a ways to go. Gay and transgendered issues reflected in some of modern sci-fi are seeing more push-back of late than are the old battles fought by earlier generations of women SF/F writers trying to break into the field. This brought up the recent controversies surrounding the Hugo nominations and the politically-charged arguments advanced by such groups as the "Sad Puppies," who yearn for the square-jawed science fiction of old and feel that those kinds of stories are being overlooked by a cabal of politically correct writers and activist fans who are supposedly asserting a leftist agenda.

Members of the audience were invited to chime in with their thoughts and questions.

Touched upon, too, was the then-common practise of women writers using gender non-specific pen names – C. L. Moore, C. J. Cherryh, J. K. Rowling – to mask their femininity because, they were apparently told, sales would suffer if the author of a sci-fi piece was known to be a woman! Su read aloud Robert Silverberg's humble admission of error regarding the gender of James Tiptree, Jr., who, it turned out, was a woman! Alice Bradley Sheldon wrote under the pseudonym James Tiptree, Jr. Silverberg had previously been confident, in print no less, that of course Tiptree, Jr. was a man, and that you'd have to be balmy to think otherwise! Jo clarified on the story regarding Cherryh, who it goes was cautioned by her first editor that she should change her surname because it sounded too much like that of a romance writer. But there actually was such a writer named Cherry, Jo explained, so Carolyn Janice Cherry added the "h" to her surname so as to differentiate herself from that other writer.

Our guests also illuminated the group on the craft of writing,

touching on what influences their work, on building a realistic character, the ins and outs of the publishing business, and such.

The discussion closed with Jo and Su speaking of their latest projects, and signing a few books for enthusiastic fans. MonSFFA thanks them both for taking the time to share their thoughts with our membership.

The second half of the meeting saw an open discussion comparing two new TV shows, *Star Trek: Discovery* and the Trek parody *The Orville*.

Keith again moderated, joined at the dais by **Francois Menard, Paula Dufour, Leslie Perryon, and Joe Aspler**. Most found that, while not quite living up to what they promised, the shows were nonetheless entertaining. The panel and audience together dissected the just-completed first seasons of each show.

Discovery is fairly well written and acted, but relies on old

Star Trek tropes like the Federation-Klingon conflict and the Mirror Universe to tell its story, despite the advertised promise of a return to the spirit of the original 1960s series. There was rather little exploring of strange new worlds or seeking out of new life and new civilizations involved! And while *The Orville* was sold as a send-up of Trek infused with frat-boy humour, it hasn't proven quite as funny as that would suggest. It doesn't seem to know if it wants to be a comedy or a science fiction series, and as such, it's an odd hybrid of both that doesn't quite satisfy as either. It is definitely an homage to TNG, however! And it did get better as the season progressed.

Thanks, again, to our guests, **Jo Walton** and **Su Sokol**, and to all of our panellists on this afternoon, as well as to those who helped to plan and run this meeting. April

April



April's club meeting got off to an early start with a superhero edition of Saturday Sci-Fi Cinema Matinée, the assembled MonSFFen passed on movies featuring **Wonder Woman, Batman and Robin, Captain America, and a Russian superhero team**, choosing, rather, to review the 1951 black-and-white adventure **Superman and the Mole Men**, starring George Reeves. This first ever Superman theatrical feature film was later recut as a two-part episode of Reeves' *Adventures of Superman* TV series, for which this movie served as a pilot of sorts. The movie was well received by our group, who found it dated, of course, but an entertaining and well made, low-budget effort. The camera trickery employed to give Superman flight and showcase his other super powers were simple but effective, it was noted.



The meeting proper opened with a quick discussion on the popular appeal of the superhero, moderator **Keith Braithwaite** opining that comic book superheroes are the modern equivalent of the gods of Greek and Roman mythology. Folk chimed in with their own observations, speaking of superheroes as representative of the ideals to which we individually and collectively aspire, as metaphors for our always changing societal values, and as role

models for awkward, skinny adolescent boys (and girls!) who wish for the same impossible bravery, strength, and virtue in the face of adversity (read: high school or family crisis or just plain life in general!) as their comic book idols.

A lively and decidedly tongue-in-cheek "debate" pitted Marvel fans **Paula Dufour** and **Marc Durocher** against DC fans **René Walling** and **Keith. François Menard** moderated, here, testing the debaters with demanding questions on arcane aspects of the Marvel and DC universes, and pitting favourite characters from each against the other to determine who might prevail! It was all in good fun, with the audience commenting on the debaters' arguments and voting on the winners of each round as the debate progressed. In the end, François called it, overall, a tie!

Supported by numerous visuals in illustration of his treatise, **Keith** remained at the dais to offer a PowerPoint presentation on the evolution of comic book art, specifically through the lens of Golden and Silver Age Superman artists – many of them largely unsung – beginning with co-creator Joe Shuster, who in the mid-1930s with partner Jerry Siegel, laid the foundation for the world's most enduring superhero. Keith explained that the printing processes of the day necessitated a particular stylized approach to comic book art, and spoke, too, of the collaborative effort of many artists – writers, layout artists, pencillers, inkers, letterers, colourists – that is required to create a comic book.

May

MonSFFA's May 26 meeting was our last before the club's summer activities began.

We started a little late – blame it on Montreal's construction-related road closures and traffic jams, which delayed the arrival of a few of us! – with an edition of Saturday Sci-Fi Cinema Matinée focussed on flying saucers and UFO aliens. Those MonSFFen gathered in advance of the regular meeting chose from a list of five so-themed films – the classic **Day the Earth Stood Still** (1951), the quintessential '50s flying saucer flick **Earth vs. The Flying Saucers** (1956), the Canadian-made stinker **Starship Invasions** (1977), a TV movie, **Roswell** (1994), and the creepy

alien abduction tale **Dark Skies** (2013). Folk opted for the thrills of Ray Harryhausen's stop-motion saucers in *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers*, rating this B-movie a serviceable actioner with a competent script and cast that benefited from Harryhausen's superior special effects magic; his scenes of saucers attacking and the destruction of Washington, D. C. landmarks were the highlights. An enjoyable, if not exceptional, movie.

Keith Braithwaite opened the meeting proper with a PowerPoint presentation on the influences UFOlogy has had on sci-fi movies and TV shows, like the aforementioned *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers*, which drew on real reported UFO sightings for

elements of its story, and for the designs of the featured flying saucers. Keith cited other films, and TV series like *The Invaders* (1967-'68), *Project U.F.O.* (1978-'79), *Dark Skies* (1996-'97) and, of course, the *X-Files* (1993-2002; 2016, 2018), all of which, to varying degrees, tapped into actual UFO lore in scripting their



stories. The late start to the meeting necessitated a shortened presentation, unfortunately, so Keith has more on UFO-themed films and TV series in reserve for another time.

After the mid-meeting break, **Danny**

Sichel was up with his talk on translation as featured in sci-fi. Such devices as Star Trek's universal translator, Star Wars' protocol droids, the Babel fish of Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe, and others allow us to speak to aliens, understand what they are saying, although not always with complete accuracy. Danny outlined some of sci-fi's most interesting examples of translation methods, and the problems of the inevitable mistranslations or misunderstandings that are bound to crop up from time to time. He noted that an alien species, quite possibly, may not communicate with sounds, as we do, and that would certainly complicate our understanding each other!

We thank Keith and Danny for their presentations, and all who helped to plan and run our May 2018 meeting.

June



More Than Just Another Brick in the Wall!

MonSFFA undertook as our summer excursion a field trip to Canada's Science and Technology Museum in Ottawa on Saturday, June 9.

The venerable Science and Technology Museum has for decades been a destination of choice for school field trips or family excursions. Closed in recent years for necessary renovations to the building housing the museum's exhibits, the now refurbished and updated CSTM is again open and welcoming visitors! And the balance-challenging Crazy Kitchen, dating back to the museum's opening in 1967, is still a part of it all!

We found the museum to be a wonderful collection of artifacts tracing the progression of technology in Canada through the years, from tiny vacuum tubes and transistors to massive radio-telescopes (the latter in scale-model form, here), children's bicycles to giant, powerful steam-powered train locomotives, children's toys to family recreational vehicles. A 1950s-era military radar console had the retro sci-fi look of any number of spaceship control panels seen in old SF movies or TV shows. Très cool! There were displays of old radios and television sets, record players and high-fi stereo consoles, CBC broadcast microphones, early video-gaming systems, and common household items such

as a barrel-like clothes washing machine, with a set of rollers mounted atop through which the wet clothes were run to squeeze as much water out before the wash was hung up to dry on a clothesline. Several of our older members recalled such washers from their childhoods.

The science behind the technology on display was outlined in a variety of interactive stations.

The CSTM's showcase exhibition this summer is The Art of the Brick, a Lego exhibition featuring the work of renowned Lego builder/artist Nathan Sawaya. His original pieces, as well as recreations of world famous works of art like Michelangelo's David, Da Vinci's Mona Lisa, and Van Gogh's Starry Night, greatly impressed our group. His largest sculpture was a full-sized T-Rex skeleton, made of over 80,000 bricks!

For information on the museum, visit the CSTM's Web site:

<https://ingeniumcanada.org/scitech/index.php>

After our visit, we sat down to lunch at a local eatery, then disbursed in smaller groups to a variety of shopping locales before heading back to Montreal. All in all, a most enjoyable day.

We thank all involved in organizing and carrying out our field trip, in particular our volunteer carpool drivers.



A lot of pictures were taken at the Sci & Tech museum, look for them on our website!