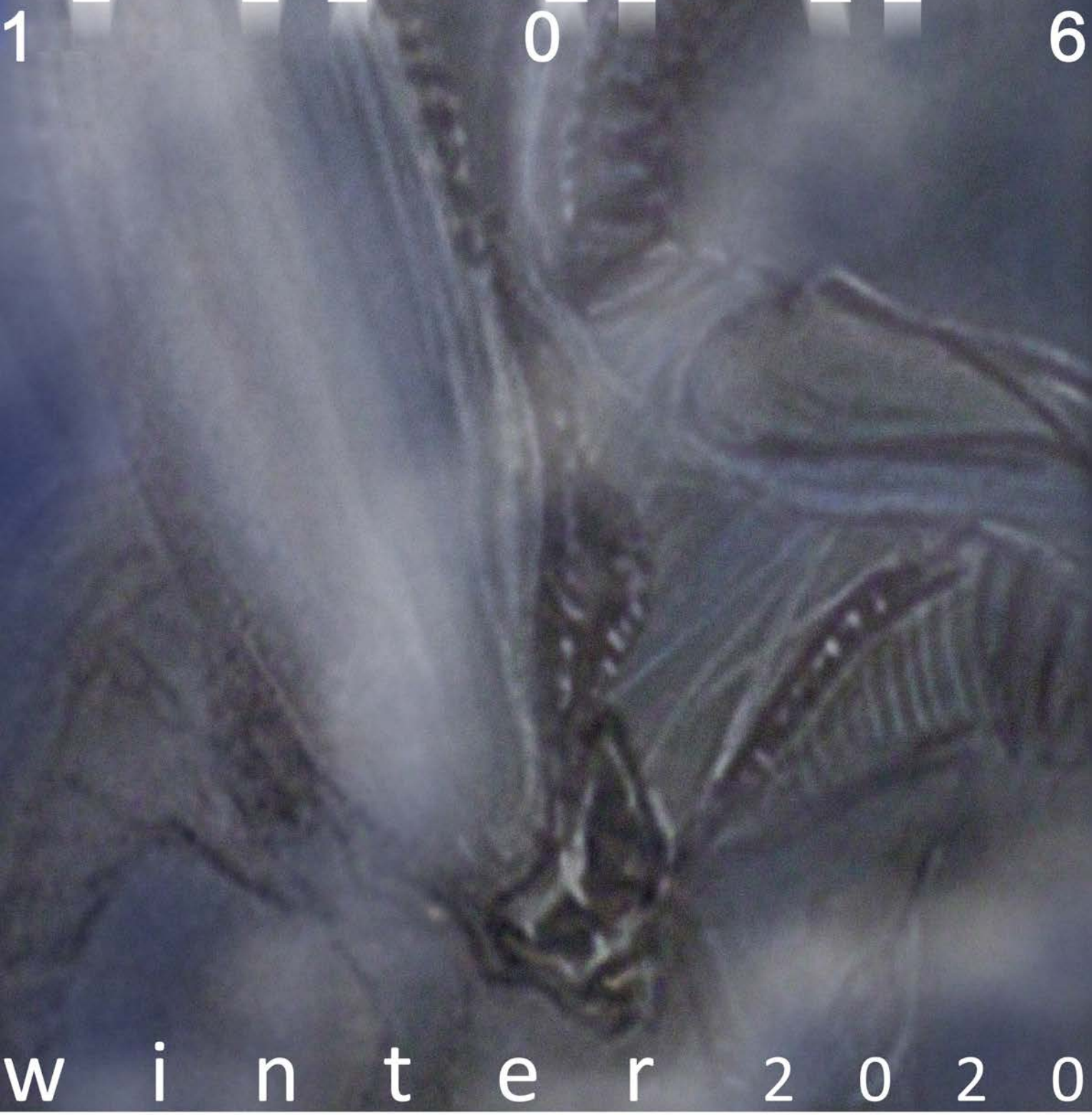


# WARF



w i n t e r 2 0 2 0

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Josée Bellemare

### On the Cover

*This issue's cover is a mixed medium piece by Keith Braithwaite. "Alien" is a circa-1987 felt-tip marker and Prismacolor pencil sketch on vellum, enhanced digitally with an airbrushed overlay of venting steam, partially obscuring the creature in a misty cloud. It's an old horror-movie adage that a monster kept in the shadows proves the scariest of all and Keith recalls noting, after first seeing Alien in a movie theatre in 1979, that Ridley Scott's monster was so very frightening because the audience never got a good look at the beast, the mysterious terror remaining a devastatingly deadly unknown for much of the film. And our fear of the unknown is primal.*

### Contact us

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### Click to find us on line!



Facebook  
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.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

MonSFFA is in the process of looking for a new meeting hall.  
[Check our website for latest developments.](#)

### JANUARY 11

Elections

#### **Presentation: G&S in SF/F (Joe Aspler)**

The works of Gilbert and Sullivan have turned up in many SF and fantasy stories, films, and TV shows.

#### **Planning session for 2020**

### FEBRUARY 8

**Everywhere You Look:** Science is a state of mind, and so is science fiction. If we expand our definition of what counts as SF by just a little, where else can we find it?

**Who writes this stuff?** Instead of discussing a particular book or writer, we will look at all of them at once. Thanks to the power of statistics, we can see the big picture and look at trends in genre books published since 1800.

**The Almost, but not quite Balderdash Game:** Members try to guess the plot of a short story from its title.

#### Upcoming meeting dates may change if we have to move

March 7

April 4

May 9

June 6 (avoiding Grand Prix)

July 12 Sunday Picnic in the Park

August 8

September 12

October 17

November 14 BOOK FAIR

December 5 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 us first. 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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MonSFFun / No submissions! Maybe next time?



Dear Everybody,

You are cordially invited to join eAPA, an Amateur Publication Association conducted online.

An Amateur Publication Association (APA) is a participatory group publication, in which each of the members regularly contribute a few pages of writing and art to a regular collection, and the collection is

mailed out on a periodic basis (ranging from monthly to annually) to all of the members. You might think of APAs as the pre-Internet version of social networks or bulletin boards, but there have also been several APAs conducted by email, such as eAPA. APAs have been founded to share a wide variety of interests, ranging from Sherlock Holmes and James Bond fandom to manga, hentai, independent comics, alternate histories and anarchism. WOOF, an annual APA, is regularly produced at every Worldcon. I think one of the benefits of eAPAs over other activities is that we can look back and double-check what we and other members actually wrote, or how the subject of a conversation can wander away from its beginning.

eAPA is one of the longest-running electronic apas, and topics covered can range from costuming, special effects technology, or climate change to DIY publishing, podcasting, alternate histories, recent reading, the dumbing-down of North America screen productions, and the threat represented by the Evil Sinister Belgian Empire. It's all up to you!

If you have things to say and want a place to say them, check out the attached guidelines and contact me. I'm the Official Editor.

Yours truly,  
Garth Spencer

*Hi, Garth!*

*Thanks for the invitation. It sounds very interesting, but I'm doing well if I can get out 3 issues of WARP yearly. I don't think we can get enough material to satisfy the e-APA requirements.*

*Wishing you a great 2020!*

*To which Garth replied:*

Ah well. Perhaps you could advertise eAPA in Warp? I can send a Word version of the guidelines if that's more convenient.

Consider it done!

*And if any MonSFFen are interested in contributing to the APA, I have the document*

Dear MonSFFen:

Thanks to all for Warp 105! Great space cover, so many great fictional spacecraft paved the way for the real thing, and it is hard to believe that happened over 50 years ago. I'm certainly feeling old. More to discuss once I get past the cover.

*Wasn't it a great cover! Keith really raised the bar on that one! How many ships did you recognize? I could only name 4, my education is lacking it seems.*

A great local! It's been a while my letter, and I can tell because in a few days, I will apply for a table in the Crafters' Corner at Anime North 2020! We had a great time in England, and I still plan to get all the photos we took in England on Facebook. We did celebrate my 60th birthday at Mr. Fogg's, but while they like to say they are a steampunk bar, it is that only in its decoration. Even with our reservation, the staff said that their kitchen staff has not shown up that day. So, they got together in the kitchen, and provided me with a wonderful rhubarb cider and the promised charcuterie plate. It was a great time, but after we left, we found a nice little pizza place not far from Nelson's Column, and we chowed down. Greetings to Steve Green and Ted at Sur Place. I have recently been informed of a new fannish pubnight every Wednesday in the downtown area of Toronto; we might check it out.

*Steve has sent a LoC for this issue, and he also was quite impressed by Keith's cover featuring fictional moon landers along with the real one. It got me looking up spaceships on line and I think I might get around to putting some interesting links on our website.*

*Let me know how the pubnight works out. As you know, we meet up for supper after our meetings, and I find the outings quite enjoyable.*

I don't often take the time to re-read any books, but I may make an exception for *Lord of the Rings*, and Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* series, and definitely, as Sylvain mentions in

Hi Cathy,

I must congratulate Keith on his fine cover design for Warp #105, not only a fun montage but a stimulating wander down Memory Lane. To my shame, I confused Lang's capsule with Méliès', and quite failed to recognise the spacecraft from Moon Zero Two. In my defence, the first two are broadly identical, and the third is from a movie I haven't seen for the best part of a half-century (there doesn't appear to be a Blu-ray edition, and the DVDs are curiously expensive for such an obscurity).

In your response to my previous letter of comment, you mention the extremely enjoyable afternoon during I met with members of MonSFFA in the run-up to Anticipation My very

*that Garth sent with his e-mail and would be happy to forward it to you on request.*

his article on space law, Wil McCarthy's *Queendom of Sol* series. I found that series so fresh and interesting to read. When it comes to alien law, I might recommend Rob Sawyer's *Illegal Alien*.

*I recently read a book by Erin Morgenstern called **The Starless Sea**. It had such beautiful imagery, that I immediately reread it. The prose was so intricately woven, like a fine tapestry. I knew I had probably missed a few threads, and indeed I had.*

We've been there before, but it has been ages since we've been to the Flying Saucer Restaurant in Niagara Falls, ON. Kitsch indeed, silly as can be, a little piece of Area 51 in our own back yards. I know these days in Toronto, fans gather at the Storm Crow Manor (too expensive for our budget), but the Flying Saucer was good and cheap, burgers and fries to feed the masses.

With it now being the new year, we will soon be starting our newest season of tables for Penney's Steampunk General Store to sell steampunk jewellery. We'll enjoy some Valentine's eating early, for we will be at a Valentine's Steampunk and Victorian event at a church near Bloor and Spadina downtown. After that comes more events in April and May. May 1-3 will see the return of Ad Astra to the convention calendar, and its return to Toronto from Richmond Hill. We will definitely be there to see lots of familiar faces.

*I hope to make it to As Astra this year. Last year, I gave it a miss as I knew Ireland was going to cost me a small fortune, and frankly the guest line-up was hardly up to the standard I expect, being nearly all authors I have met before.*

Take care all, Happy New Year, and Year of the Rat, and see you at upcoming events. Thanks for Warp, and please do keep them coming.

Yours, Lloyd Penney

happy memories of that day are edged with a tinge of sorrow, of course, since both the lovely Ann Methe (whose home I stayed in immediately upon my arrival in Canada as TAFF delegate) and surprise guest Randy Byers are no longer with us, but it's good to know the group itself is still in excellent fettle should I ever be able to pay a return visit.

Warmest regards,  
Steve Green



*Thanks so much for your comments! Love hearing from you, and if you do come visiting again, I'd be glad to host you!*



The club is still at this time numbering the issues according to the month, hence WARP 2 as this edition was published in February. However, the editor seems to be recognizing the confusion this causes –the date line includes the important notice “19<sup>th</sup> issue”. On the cover is the Klingon General, Chang, from *Undiscovered Country*. Several members attended the premiere, many in costume. The movie was reviewed by members **Keith Braithwaite** (writing as

Carl Philips), **Lynda Pelley**, **Bryan Ekers**, **Sylvain St-Pierre**, and **Kevin Holden**. Check out pages 17-20 and enjoy the flashbacks!

The LoC column was quite interesting as it included letters from other fan clubs accepting our invitation to trade. We heard also from **Paul Bennett** and **Lloyd Penney**. I don't think Lloyd has missed a single issue of WARP!

MonSFFandom (written by Keith?) gives a synopsis of the December and January meetings which were held at the YMCA and a meeting of the executive and advisors to plan future meetings. The dates for the 1992 Con\*Cept were confirmed, **Andrew Witzman** launched a UFO photo contest, there were elections which confirmed **Keith**, **Sylvain**, and **Lynda Pelley** as

**UPCOMING CONVENTIONS AND EVENTS** *With thanks to Lloyd Penney*  
*Abridged, see our website for more listings, Local events in bold*

**March 13-15, 2020 - Toronto ComicCon**, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, <http://www.comiccontoronto.com> .

**March 13-16, 2020 - CostumeCon 38**, Bonaventure Hotel, Montreal. Memberships are \$115 until December 31st, 2019, \$120 after, price at the door TBA. Memberships are available on the convention's website. <http://costumecon38.org/en/home/>

**March 20-22, 2020 - Furnal Equinox 2020**: Retro Rewind, Westin Harbour Castle Hotel, Toronto. <http://www.furnalequinox.com>.

**April 24-26, 2020 - FilKONtario 30**, Monte Carlo Inn & Suites, Markham. Guests: The Stone Dragons, The Blibbering Humdingers, PDX BroadSides. <http://www.filkontario.ca>

**May 1-3, 2020- Ad Astra**, Toronto Don Valley Hotel & Suites <https://ad-astra.org/>

**May 1-3, 2020- Congrès Boréal**, Cœur des sciences de l'UQAM, Montreal, QC <http://congresboreal.ca/>

**May 22-24, 2020 - Anime North 2020**, Toronto Congress Centre and Delta Hotel Airport, Toronto. <http://www.animenorth.com>

President, Treasurer, and VP. MonSFFA had participated in Conv-iction which drew about 100 people. TransWarp, a mega-meeting of 4 local fanclubs was announced. Keith was invited to be fan GoH at Maplecon.

There were many reviews in this issue: *Hook*, by Sylvain, *Freejack* by Keith, and the *Addams Family* by Kevin. About *Freejack*, Keith wrote: “The movie sucked...Thank me, I just saved you eight bucks.” **Beatrice Gasc** wrote a glowing review of *Phantom of the Opera*, giving it a rating of 3 thumbs up, 20 out of 10. **Baird Searls**, a reviewer for Asimov's and author of several books, was also a MonSFFan, and in this issue he reviews several books. We got to see his opinion of them before readers of Asimov's did! **Andrew Weitzman** reviewed “*Nightmares in the Sky*”, a book about Gargoyles, and **Kevin Holden** reviewed a couple of media tie-in novels.

Sensors has very in-depth coverage of the state of Canadian fandom. We have lost a lot of clubs and cons, sadly.

Beginning in this issue is the serialization of *Prankster*, a fanfic story by Bryan Ekers, set in the ST:TNG universe. It's an excellent story, worth reading. **Capucine Plourde** submitted a full-page crossword puzzle, page 23, Give it a shot! ❄️

**July 3-5 Montreal Comicon - Palais des congrès, Montreal, QC.** GoH include Tom Felton, Michael Madsen, Paige O'Hara, more TBA <https://www.montrealcomiccon.com/>

**July 29 to August 2- CoNZealand 78th World Con**: GoH: Mercedes Lackey, Larry Dixon, Greg Broadmore, Rose Mitchell, & Toastmaster George R.R. Martin <https://conzealand.nz/>

**August 14-16 Otakuthon**, Palais des Congrès de Montréal, <https://www.otakuthon.com/2020>

**August 27-30 FanExpo Canada**, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, GoH announced so far include Giancarlo Esposito, and 4 Hobbits <https://www.fanexpocanada.com/en/home.html>

**September 11-13, 2020 - Ottawa Comiccon**, EY Centre, Ottawa. <http://www.ottawacomicon.com>

**October 16-18 Can-Con**, Sheraton Hotel, Ottawa, ON <https://can-con.org/>

**October 23 - 25, 2020 -Scintillation**, Montreal, QC <https://scintillation.ca/>





# 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 Neelix, learning from them that the Array is the Caretaker who has sent Torres and Kim to the planet. The crew members are found in a clinic and taken to the Maquis ship to be treated by the EMH. Kes relates what she knows of her planet's history. Janeway visits the Maquis ship when informed that Harry and B'Elanna are awake, but they have no further information for her.

## CHAPTER 49

Once again the Array received visitors. Very determined visitors, who knew this would be their last chance. Either they would be able to return home, or they would have to bid good-bye to their families, friends, all that was familiar. Their lives forever changed.

Chakotay looked around. "Something is wrong, there appears to be a problem with the imaging processor everything is dull, or out of focus."

He pointed over to his right. "Captain, look over at the house, at the left side, there are holes in the image. You can see the walls of the Array."

Janeway turned to look. "I don't like all this sputtering and crackling. I agree.....there must be a problem with the equipment. Tuvok, search for the control unit operating that displacement wave. Something tells me that we do not have much time, I have a very uneasy feeling.....I'm going to locate the old man. The area around appears to be secure, we'll try over there."

The captain with her group of Chakotay, Tom Paris, Neelix, and Kes started in one direction, the Vulcan with the balance of the away team headed the opposite way.

Neelix pulled Kes closer. "Captain! Are you sure it's safe?"

Laughing lightly Kes reassured her nervous friend. "Neelix, you worry too much. Of course it's safe, this is the home of the Caretaker."

Janeway did not want to contradict the young lady's confidence, however, she sensed it would not be safe for long."

As she had done back on the ship, Kes' head turned first one way, then another. To the best of her knowledge no other Ocampa had ever visited the Array, nor had they ever met the Caretaker.



Quietly the young Ocampa looked around, absorbing all that she could about that which had been a legend to her people.

Entering the barn they immediately spotted the old man at the far end, sitting on a bale of hay, holding his head in his hands. He looked up as they approached, his face drawn and haggard. "You again! I told you that I can't help. I can't send you back. I have no energy left. I....I wish there was a way, but there is not."

Placing her hands on Kes' shoulders, the captain moved her

to the front. "I want you to meet someone. This is Kes, she's Ocampa."

The old man's body jerked in shock. Through forlorn eyes he stared at Kes. "Ocampa! This is the first time.....in all these years."



Bowing his head he shook it from side to side. Looking up his eyes revealed great pain. "I let you down. I'm sorry."

Kes took a step closer. Intrigued by this old man who, for so long, had been a mystery, just a name, to her people. "I don't understand, how have you let us down?"

As the Caretaker began his story, Chakotay placed four bales of hay in a semi-circle for to sit on. Chakotay took a seat at one end with Janeway beside him, then Kes and Neelix, with Tom Paris at the far side. Quietly they listened as the puzzle was finally pieced together.

The Caretaker's voice was weak, but clear, as he traveled far back in time. "Many, many years ago, a millennium now, I was part of a group of explorers from another galaxy. We meant no harm, but our technology was devastating to the atmosphere of the Ocampa's planet. By the time we noticed the damage it was too late to reverse the effects. Once the planet could no longer produce rain, oceans began to dry up, the forests and green areas turned brown and lifeless."

Misery and regret covered his face. "In a matter of weeks everything changed. While searching for a solution, we discovered a perpetual abundance of water trapped underground. Knowing the Ocampa would be able to survive, we built tunnels leading everyone to the subterranean area we had prepared, then sealed the tunnels and erected a barrier to keep the people safe. We felt this was the only solution to the problem we had created."

Suddenly the captain's comm badge chirped. Keeping her eyes on the Caretaker she quickly tapped it with her hand. "Janeway here!"

Cavit's voice echoed through the vast cavern of the Array. "Captain, the Kazon are approaching, their shields are up, weapons on-line. They are not responding to our hails."

Seeing Chakotay's alarm she held up her hand. "Are you able to deal with it?"

Slightly annoyed that the Captain questioned his capabilities Cavit responded, being careful not to allow his feeling show in his voice. "Yes Captain! They only have small ships and their weaponry is very simple. More of a nuisance than a threat."

Janeway looked over at Chakotay. "Are your weapons and shields operational?"

Apprehension darkened his face. "Yes, but no sensors!"

The captain could feel and understand the Maquis leader's concern. "Is Seska still in charge and does she have battle training and experience?"

Chakotay nodded. "Yes!"

Janeway's attention shifted back to her first officer. "Cavit, go to red alert. Have Evans contact Seska, alert her to the pending attack. Maintain the tactical link to the Maquis ship, keep it secure at all times. Keep me posted, contact me at the first sign of a problem. Janeway out!"

The captain turned back to the Caretaker as he continued. "Once everything was in place the others left. Leaving myself and my mate to watch over the Ocampa."

Uneasy at the prospects of another lurking about, Chakotay looked around. "You are not alone, there is someone else here?"

The old man shook his head. "No. no. She left.....oh....around four hundred years ago. We didn't agree on how the care for the Ocampa. If only she had stayed."

He looked at the group sitting before him, silently pleading with them to comprehend the difficult position he was in. "About a year ago I realized my time was almost up. I felt that only one of my species would be willing and capable of understanding the massive commitment required to look after the Ocampa. I did what I felt was necessary."

Suddenly it dawned on Janeway. "You were trying to procreate! Attempting to create another to take your place!"

The old man nodded. "Yes, but I failed. The Ocampa have enough energy for five years, perhaps six. After that....they will have to venture onto the surface. They will not survive."

Kes leaped to her feet. "Why not?"

The old man stared at the young Ocampa, then bowing his head he slowly shook it back and forth.

Kes looked from the Caretaker to Janeway and Chakotay. "If we had the knowledge that we once had. Daggin and the others....I'm sure there has to be a way. What if we could produce

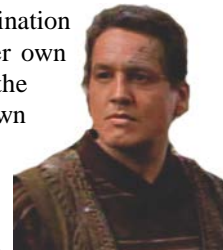
our own power, or could defend the tunnels ourselves...."

Out of breath she stopped, appealing to those around her.

Janeway stood up, as did the others. She approached the old man who was sitting with head bent, hands clasped in front. "Kes is right. Your computer banks must contain information that the Ocampa can use. Send it to them before it is too late. Give them a chance. Give them the knowledge so they may take command of their lives and survive!"

Raising his head the Caretaker stared long and hard at Kes.

Chakotay placed a hand on Kes' shoulder. "This Ocampa has a great deal of determination and curiosity. Wanting to see beyond her own world, she had the courage to seek out the surface, alone, without help. I've been down there. The younger ones, they too dared to try something new....growing their own food. They can and will survive, but the must know their history. Give them something to be proud of, something to fight for. Give them the tools which they need!"



The old man looked at Chakotay with pain-filled eyes. "If I send the information, I'll not have enough energy to destroy this station. The Ocampa must be protected from the Kazon."

Glancing at Chakotay, Janeway took a deep breath. "I promise you.....we will take whatever action is necessary to protect the Ocampa, we have no intention of deserting them. Before we leave you have my word.....the Ocampa will be safe and we will ensure they understand and can use the information which you send them."

The old man faded in and out. His image blurred the swelled. The barn became faint, the bare metal walls of the Array's outer structure appeared. "It is done."

Taking another step closer, Kes reached out her hand. Gently she touched the arm of the Caretaker, bringing a conclusion to a thousand years of Ocampa history. "Please send these people home. You are their only hope."

The Caretaker looked at Kes with eyes that could no longer see. "I'm....I'm sorry. For....forgive me. My time is over."

Growing to a huge red ball, forcing Kes to take a couple of steps back, for a moment he shimmered then disappeared.

Leaving behind a small, hand-sized piece of bone.

## CHAPTER 50

The Caretaker had ceased to exist, leaving behind only the bare walls of the Array. Taking with him the hope of returning home.

Slowly Janeway walked over to where the Caretaker had been sitting. For a moment she looked down, then leaning over she carefully pick up all that remained of a being who had existed for over one thousand years.

In stunned silence Starfleet captain and Maquis leader stared at the bone, then at each other. Their minds in a turmoil trying to come to grips with the situation, and the hopeless despair they were feeling.

Kes broke the heavy silence that hung in the air. "Captain Janeway, Commander Chakotay, I'm....I'm sorry. You were brought here because of my people, now neither I or the other

Ocampa can send you home."

Chakotay smiled down at the distraught young lady. "There was nothing you could have done to prevent this from occurring. The Caretaker acted on his own, he's the one responsible, not you or the Ocampa. At least we now know why our ships were brought here. Kes, we are explorers, facing danger and the unexpected every day. Meeting you and the other Ocampa has been an experience and a pleasure. Don't forget, thanks to your courage not only did we find Harry and B'Elanna, but we did so in time to save their lives.

Also understanding that Kes was feeling responsible, Janeway too spoke gently. "Kes, what Chakotay said is true. As explorers we are always searching for the unknown. This was one of the reasons I became a scientist and joined Starfleet. We are

accustomed to strange places, different species, but you are not. You have much to be proud of and nothing to feel sorry for.”

In an effort to comfort Kes, Neelix placed his arm around her. “Captain, what will you do now?”

Trying hard not to give into the depression lurking inside her tired body, Janeway looked around. “Tuvok might be able to find the Caretaker’s equipment. We’re not ready to give up.”

Paris also put on a brave face. “That’s right, where is Tuvok?”

Janeway tapped her comm badge. “Tuvok, report!”

The Vulcan’s voice echoed in the space now devoid of all except the away team. “I’m two hundred yards directly opposite from the beam-down point, around the second bend. I’ve located the control console.”

“We’re on our way! Janeway out!” Before the words were out of her mouth the captain was leading her group in the indicated direction.

Again Janeway tapped her badge. “Captain to Cavit. Report!”

The reply from the first officer was instantaneous. “The Kazon are retreating, we suffered no damage.”

The captain breathed a sigh of relief. “Notify me immediately if the Kazon return. Janeway out.”

Chakotay tapped his comm badge. “Chakotay to Seska! Any damage?”

Up on the Maquis ship Seska quickly responded. “No! We took several hits but the shields held. What’s happening on the

Array?”

“We may have found the Caretaker’s equipment controlling the displacement wave. “I’ll keep you posted. Chakotay out!” The Starfleet captain was not the only one breathing a sigh of relief.



Janeway glanced over at Chakotay’s worried face. “So far so good. Neelix, do the Kazon have any large, heavily armed ships?”

Neelix had taken a liking to these strangers and found no pleasure in being the bearer of bad news. “I’m afraid so Captain.

The group on the Ocampa home world represents only a small segment of the total Olga Kazon. Their main base is less than a day from here, and they do have large battle cruisers.”

Both Janeway and Chakotay could take no comfort from Neelix’s information, neither ship was in condition for a large full scale battle.

They quickened their pace, forcing the others to almost run in order to keep up. Moments later they rounded the last bend up ahead they could see Tuvok and the rest of the away team standing around a strange looking object. Closing the distance Kathryn Janeway knew there was a problem.



## When I Was in High School, I Made Aliens, Part 4

Danny Sichel

*In Part 3, we learned that what allowed the onset of K’Sin’T’Xiks civilization was not fire, or stone axes, or agriculture or domestication. It was child-rearing. In Part four, we learn more about the “raisers” and how they have contributed to the advancement of their civilization.*

**T**hey’re gradually expanding their territory. Digging up the eggs buried by ferals, and bringing them in to civilization to hatch and raise and make into people. An important part of their culture, one which the raisers inculcate into the children as early as possible, is that you only mate in the approved mating grounds. Laying your eggs outside the approved mating grounds is bad, because of the possibility that the egg-fetchers won’t be able to find them. If they hatch in the wild, then they could become feral.

Raisers are rare because the children can’t just be taught to be raisers. They need a genetic propensity for those behaviours. The gene in question is present among the worldwide feral populations too, albeit at an even lower prevalence. Child-rearing could be re-invented elsewhere. A second civilization could be born on this planet. It just hasn’t, that’s all. Not yet – and, depending on how fast and how far the first one spreads – maybe not ever. And outside the context of child-rearing having been invented, that propensity is useless, like how dyslexia is

survival-neutral outside the context of writing having been invented.

### Hatchling Thumb-claw helps to break shell?



Very slowly, the raiser trait is spreading through the population. Raisers don’t favour their own eggs over those of the rest of the community – they don’t even keep track of who laid which egg, except insofar as whether it was laid by someone within the community, or just a feral – but communities with more raisers are more prosperous.

They’ve recently invented music – well, singing. A few of them have started independently working out the rudiments of figurative art; the raisers aren’t sure yet whether it’s useful. They have the basics of arithmetic – tally marks. They’re learning to redirect streams and make ponds. Some of the children can shape clay. I honestly don’t know if they’ve figured out how to make fire. They bury their dead.

They have no idea that they have a fossil record, or what that means. They’ve seen meteors, of course – what Neolithic population wouldn’t? – but they don’t know what they are, or what the



connection is to the Nr'Tatek impact crater that shaped their evolutionary history. They don't even know that Nr'Tatek is an impact crater. It's just a place.

They have a creation myth. It tells of how, at the beginning of the world, First Parent K'San'J'Cha fertilized its own eggs and laid them in the sky. After the first people hatched, the fragments

of the eggshells became the stars.

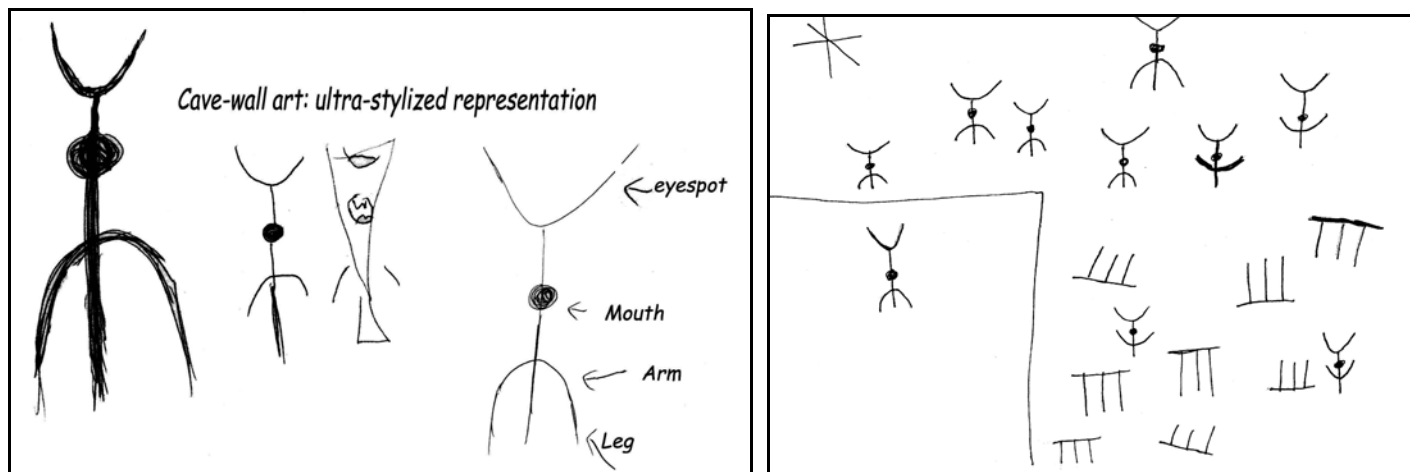
Writing is a long way off in their future, but they've got an oral tradition. They tell each other stories.

And at night, they dream.



### Further Cultural Notes: The Cave Art Of the K'Sin'T'Xiks

An example of early K'Sin'T'Xiks figurative art: petroglyphs, Paralleling the human cave paintings found at Lascaux. As with the human artwork, a hunt is being celebrated. Note the straight and broadly curved lines: the adults lack the dexterity for fine detail work, and the juveniles don't fully understand what they're meant to be doing.



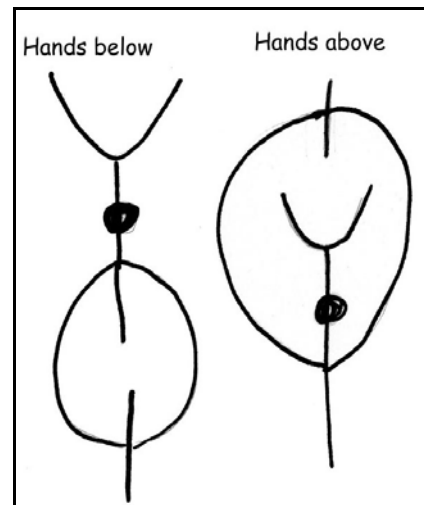
The upper curve can represent either the vision patch (the photosensitive tissue on the front the cephalothorax, in the shape of an inverted capital A) or, depending on the artist's intentions, the patagia (the flappy winglike things on the sides of the cephalothorax). This will eventually cause arguments.

The lower curve represents the arms; note that in some stick figures, both arms are upraised, and in others, both arms are downcast. Although K'Sin'T'Xiks are certainly capable of raising a single arm, drawing such a pose is not something of which they are currently capable.

Each doubled  $\Pi$  symbol represents a Trundler (one of the domesticated prey animals which the K'Sin'T'Xiks raise as livestock). The upside-down ones have been freshly killed.

The three intersecting lines in the upper left corner represent the sun. The dot at the centre of each stick figure, representing the agnathous (jawless) mouth, is made by dipping a single thumbclaw in the pigment, and then pressing it firmly on the rock face.

These symbols both represent First Parent, clasping its hands together to fertilize its own eggs: in the world, as it is in the sky. (Actual K'Sin'T'Xiks are not capable of self-fertilizing, although that doesn't stop the juveniles from trying.) The question of whether First Parent clasped its own hands down on the ground or up in the sky is one which, thousands of years in the future, may cause theological disputes.



Symbols representing First Parent, as in the creation myth

# Space Law

Sylvain St-Pierre

This article is an expansion of the MonSFFA presentation given on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

## PART TWO

### VII: No Law

It has been suggested, more than once, that the best state of affair is having no laws at all. **Anarchists, Libertarians, Sovereign Citizens** and a few other groups do maintain, to various degrees and with somewhat overlapping and conflicting arguments, that there is no need for law and that everybody should settle differences on their own.

I will readily admit that this is one of my pet peeves. Yes, our real-life laws have often – and still are – seriously been twisted to favour of those who write them, but the people who advocate doing away with rules are generally just as guilty of wanting to do just about anything they wish without having to suffer for it.

In fiction, some authors have tried their hand at creating lawless societies. How well they do tends to follow closely the writer’s opinion on the topic. For example, the DC Universe planet Krypton has **Bokos Island**, a society founded by marooned mutineers where honesty is outlawed. How they manage to function is anybody’s guess. In most stories written by Libertarians, of course, such a system is generally assumed to be always magically perfect.

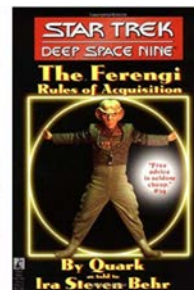
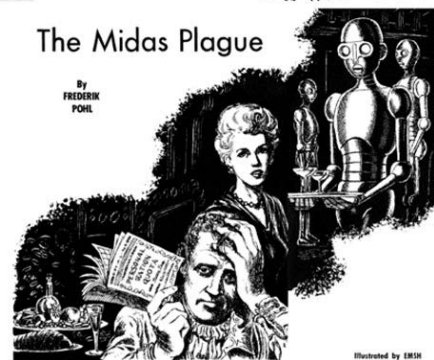
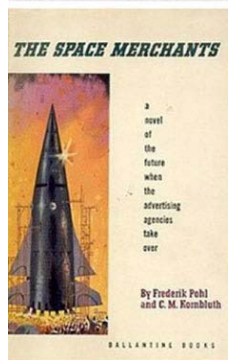
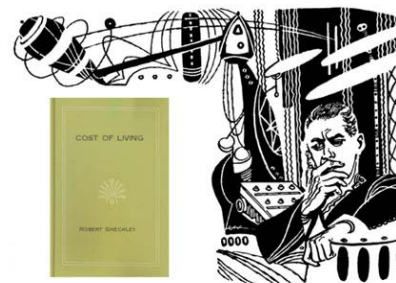
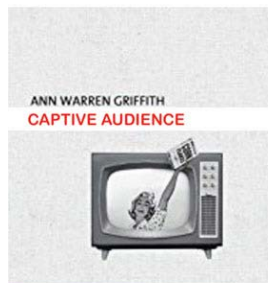


### VIII: Commercial Laws

Possession, they say, is nine tenth of the law. This is unsurprising, as “mine” is a powerful word in most Earth languages. Over the course of human history, attitudes towards the idea of regulating commerce have ranged from total *laissez-faire* to the over-zealous application of tedious rules, and with everything in-between.

Some works of fiction based on this concept have led to societies that are uncomfortably plausible. Such as the great classic *The Space Merchants* (1952), by Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth, in which the world in being run by advertisers and laws are made by and in favour of corporations. There is also Robert Shekley’s *Cost of Living* (1952), where citizens are legally allowed to mortgage their children’s and grandchildren’s earnings to support their lavish lifestyle. In Ann Warren Griffith *Captive Audience* (1953), every consumer product is equipped with a tiny loudspeaker that blares advertising all day long; and ear plugs are illegal because they obviously interfere with

Freedom of Speech. The law in *The Midas Plague* (Frederik Pohl, 1954) forces you to consume to exhaustion, for how else can you keep the economy running?



More recently, we have been introduced to the **Ferengi**. First in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-1994) and then in greater detail in the subsequent series, most particularly *ST:Deep Space Nine* (1993-1999). Their **Rules of**

**Acquisition** are probably secretly enshrined in the library of many a modern tycoon.

### IX: Law Enforcement

A law, no matter how sensible and well balanced, has little impact if it cannot be enforced somehow. Hence the police, which has been around in some form for a considerable amount of time. As early as the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, the city of Athens is known to have employed enslaved Scythians to keep the peace and enforce municipal edicts.





In a genre world, police can take many forms, some of them very colourful. Americans, for instance, are very fond of the sheriff mystique and never miss a chance to extrapolate it into future space colonies. Just consider the success of such cartoons as *BraveStarr* (Filmation, 1987-88), *SilverHawks* (Rankin/Bass, 1986) and *The Adventures of the Galaxy Rangers* (Gaylord Entertainment, 1986-89). Even non-Americans have taken that route with such releases as the *Saber Rider and the Star Sheriffs* anime (World Events Productions, 1987).



The Japanese themselves lean instead towards a mechanistic approach to law enforcement, and prefer their officers with plenty of bolts and covered in chrome. Generally starting as a manga before being made into anime, their future cop stories have titles such as *Appleseed* (Masamune Shirow, 1985-89), *New Dominion Tank Police* (Masamune Shirow, 1986) and *Mobile Police Patlabor* (Headgear, 1988-94). Note that the machines in this case are generally considered adjuncts of flesh-and-blood police rather than pure robots, although the distinction is sometimes fuzzy.



The Brits have also tried their hand at the genre, but instead of glorifying their own Bobbies they created *Judge Dredd* in 1977 in the magazine *2000 AD*, and the character has since then acquired a life (many lives, in fact) of its own. One of his many colourful adversaries that stands out is *Judge Death*, a being from another dimension where life itself has been made illegal.



One of the more amusing ideas that I have come across in law enforcement is that of the *Space Mounties* (2001-2004), a graphic novel series set in a future where the RCMP polices the entire galaxy. The idea is that they are used to keep order over vast territories with only a few men, but it's a bit of a cheat because it

was written by Guilhem and Veys, two Europeans.



Another whimsical approach is that of Douglas Adams, with his *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* (1987), which specializes in... unusual cases, often involving ectoplasm and eldritch horrors. Private detectives, by the way, are a popular way of skipping the more restrictive aspects of formal law; which is why such works as *Lance Lewiss*, *Space Detective* (Startling Comics, 1944) and L. Neil Smith's novel *Their Majesties Bucketees* (1981), with heroes almost independent from the justice system, are so appealing to some. Note that the detective in that last book is a three-limbed crustacean alien who has never even heard of humans and who must base his deductions on the strange – for us – biology and culture of his quasi-Victorian race.

Another non-human officer of note is *Osmosis Jones* (Warner Bros. Feature Animation, 2001), a white cell bringing law and order in a human body.



In the movie *The Fifth Element* (Columbia Pictures Gaumont, 1997), policemen have the characteristic of being always perfectly polite, even as they beat you up. Apartments in that world are equipped for their convenience, with marked spots on walls and floors to put your hands and feet on during raids.





During World War II, the Japanese authorities maintained control with the help of the **Tokubetsu Kōtō Keisatsu**, their so-called **Thought Police**, which appear to have served as partial inspiration for George Orwell's *1984*, written in 1948.

While both previous agencies might, and often did, arrest people for "having bad thoughts", they were not actually able to read minds. Paramedic Tony Logan, in the Canadian TV series *The Listener* (CTV, 2009-2014), did not have that limitation and helped the police solve numerous crimes.

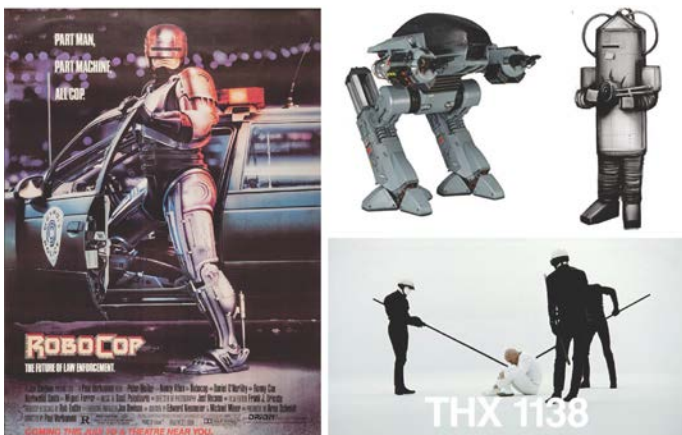


### X: Machine Law

Given the frailty of human law enforcement, it has often been suggested that perhaps machines could do better. In the Real World, we have begun to take some small steps in that direction with such devices as **Bomb Disposal Robots** and police **Aerial Drones**, which are now accepted common tools. Some jails and airports, too, are starting to experiment with **robot patrols** for surveillance.



Everybody knows about the various incarnations of **Robot Cop** since 1987, but George Lucas' *THX 1138* had a robot police years earlier (Warner Bros., 1971) and Ming the Merciless maintained order in his palace with the help of clunky, but cool-looking, robot guards in the various *Flash Gordon* serials of the 1930's.



On TV, you can walk the theme of robotic detectives and

constables back in time from *Almost Human* (Warner Bros. Television, 2013-14), *Mann & Machine* (NBC, 1992), *Future Cop* (ABC, 1977), to *Holmes & Yoyo* (also ABC, 1976-77), with shows covering all the positions in the seriousness scale.



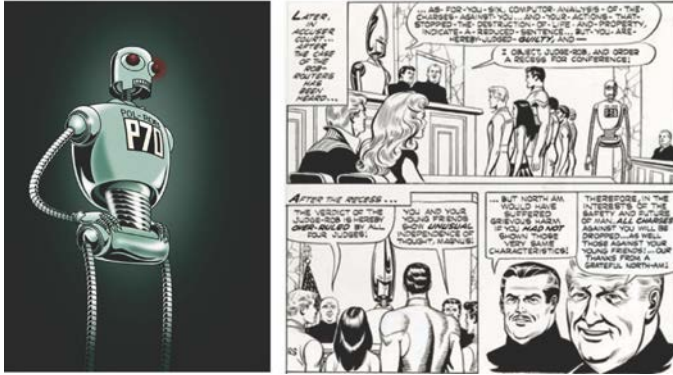
Some of you may remember the 1967 Episode 60 of *Lost in Space: Condemned of Space*, where a defective robotic warden has been keeping convicts for centuries beyond their sentence. This last one is a good example as to why leaving justice in the hands of machines alone is generally considered a bad idea.



In print, the graphic novel *Automata*, by Mike Krauhlik and Jerry Holkins features a robot detective in an alternate timeline where machines have been emancipated, but are still considered second-class citizens; and in the world of *Magnus Robot Fighter 4000 A.D.*, pol-robots maintain order and justice is rendered by supposedly infallible judge-robots, although they still can be overruled by a panel of four human judges. In the short story *One Good Juror* (1997), by Mary Rosenblum and James Sarafin, advanced A.I.s cannot be overruled, but must at least partly base their decisions on the input of one single human juror.

The earliest instance of a machine specifically designed to render judgement that I have been able to find dates back from 1938, with the novel *Lord of Tranerica*, by Stanton A. Coblenz, in which a future despot relies on automated judges to maintain his power.





The ultimate in the field is probably the awesome Gort, from the movie *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1951), who is judge, jury and executioner all at once, and not even accountable to its creators.



### XI: Super Law

They say that with greater power comes greater responsibility. “They” forgot about accountability. It is easy to think of all the novel crimes a super-powered criminal can commit, but the legal woes of the good guys are often overlooked.

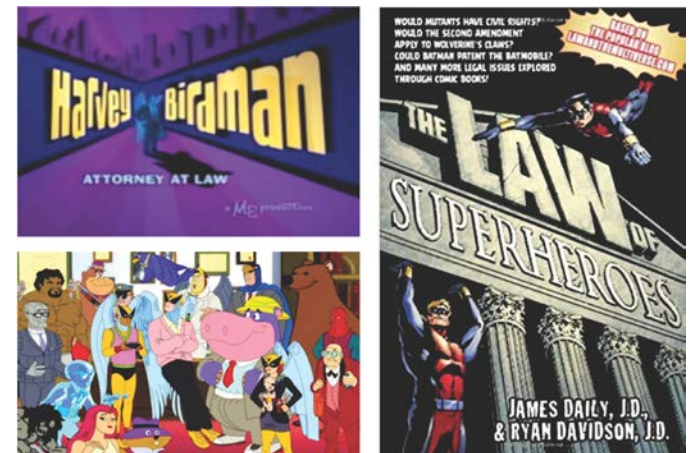
Consider the many heroes who come from distant countries – many of them not officially recognised – or planets or alternate

dimensions. Though a case could be made for Superman having been legally adopted as an American citizen by the Kents, what about Thor, Wonder Woman and numerous others? In the Marvel Universe, the hero **North Star**, a Canadian, was even expelled from the US by ICE for not having a proper visa. In the 1980’s, this publisher was also famous for starting the **Mutant Registration Act** concept, which is still around.

*The Incredibles* movie (Pixar, 2004) did cover the outlawing of superheroism because, don’t you know, you can’t stop people from suing when something gets damaged when you try to save them.



Some actually manage to profit from such regulations. *Harvey Birdman Attorney at Law* (Cartoon Network, 2000-2007) made a career out of defending the sometimes bizarre crimes of his fellow cartoon characters. For the more serious fans, *The Law of Superheroes* (2012), by James Daily and Ryan Davidson, does a thorough job of exploring all the legal and constitutional ramifications that would be present if such characters were actually around.

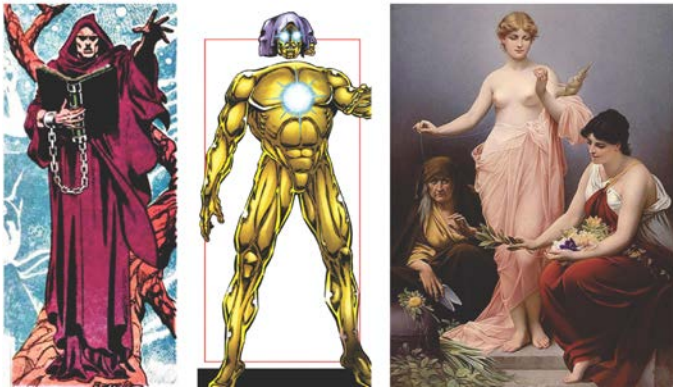


At the universal level, there are plenty of entities that pass judgement on individuals, worlds or even entire realities. Marvel’s **Living Tribunal**, DC’s **Destiny**, the Greek/Roman **Moirai/Fates** (whom even the gods feared) are but a few examples. It is truly astonishing that we are still around, but then again a good lawyer knows how to drag procedures and find loopholes.

### XII: Magical Law

At one time, street magicians in many parts of Europe needed official Church sanction to be able to practice. So-called conjurers had to explain in detail to examiners how they achieved





their seemingly miraculous tricks, establishing without the shadow of a doubt that no actual magic was being used.

In a world where magic is a real thing, there would no doubt be strict rules about what is allowed or not. Like in the various **Lord Darcy** whodunnits stories by Randall Garrett, set in an alternate world that is almost Victorian in feel but where magic is casually used for just about anything in everyday life. While the benevolent use of magic is blessed by the Church, the dark versions of the art are strictly forbidden. Even sci-fi classicist Robert Heinlein once wrote in that vein with *Magic Inc./The Devil Makes the Law* (1940), where the world is pretty much the same as our own, save that commercial use of magic is commonplace but heavily regulated; much to the chagrin of the Devil.



As well, we should not forget the internal rules of magic itself, though we are talking here of something more akin to the laws of physics than something written by a legislature. Any **role-playing game** where magic is featured will have extensive rules about it to prevent players from doing just about anything they want, and in Lyndon Hardy's *Master of the Five Magics* (1980), the workings of the art are so well defined that it should, from our point of view, be almost considered a branch of advanced science.

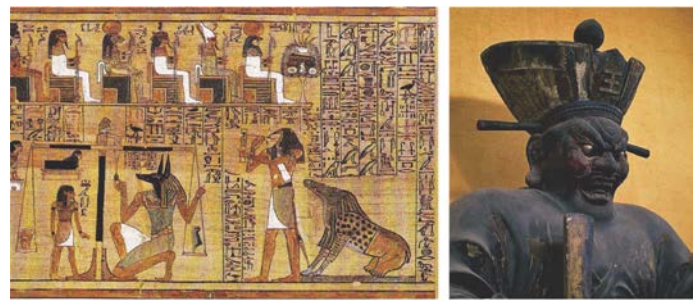
This is also pretty much the state of affairs in the world of *Fullmetal Alchemist*, by Hiromu Arakawa, a franchise which started in 2001 and where you can do wondrous things if you are a skilled alchemist, but only by giving something in exchange. Notable as well in this regard is the short-lived TV series *Wizards and Warriors* (Warner Bros. Television, 1983), where it is clearly established that you cannot kill people with magic, and only increase the odds that someone will die.

### XIII: God's Law



Obviously, you can't go to any higher court. At least, that is what priests, ministers, rabbis, imams and shamans are telling us. If you manage to evade judgement in this world, you'll get your just dessert in the next one.

In many religions, afterlife starts with a judgement of what your stay on Earth was like. We are all familiar with the Western cliché of



**Saint Peter** standing in front of the Pearly Gates and directing souls to either Heaven or Hell, but the concept dates back from well before Christianity. The ancient Egyptians weighed your heart against the **Feather of Maat**; if the weight of your sins was too great, the **Devourer** would snack on your soul. To this day, Japanese sinners are still judged by **King Enma**, who will sentence you to an eternity of horrible torments if you turn out to have been wicked.

It is hardly surprising that the idea of Divine Judgement should be a popular one, and not just in Fantasy stories. One example among many is Gerry Anderson's *Stingray* Supermarionation series, which introduced us in 1964 to the Aquaphibian's god Teufel in the very first episode. The duration of his gaze on you will determine whether you are guilty or innocent. As a side note, "teufel" is the German word for "devil".



Strange rules are a staple of invented religions in fiction, and are often used as satire. The **Omnians** of Terry Pratchett's **Discworld**, for instance, maintain that their world is a sphere,



despite all evidence of the contrary (*Small Gods*, 1992). The novel *Monstrous Regiment* (2003), by the same author, is peppered with the Borogravians' silly "Abominations Unto Nuggan", which include:

*Garlic, cats, the smell of beets, people with ginger hair, shirts with six buttons, anyone shorter than three feet (including children and babies), sneezing, rocks, ears, jigsaw puzzles, chocolate (which was once Borogravia's staple export, plunging the country into increasing poverty), and the colour blue. [Excerpt from Wikipedia.]*

Signal towers are also evil, for their messages might interfere with rising prayers. Any similarity with our own world's history is more than fleeting: the title takes its name from an anti-Catholic 16th century tract by Scottish theologian John Knox. **Spoiler alert:** at the end, it is discovered that the god Nuggan no longer exists, as people progressively put more faith in the rules than the actual deity and it is a law of that universe that gods are brought into existence by their believers rather than the other way around.



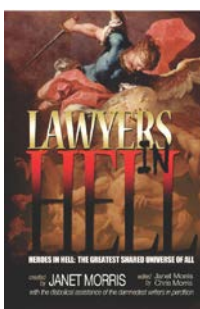
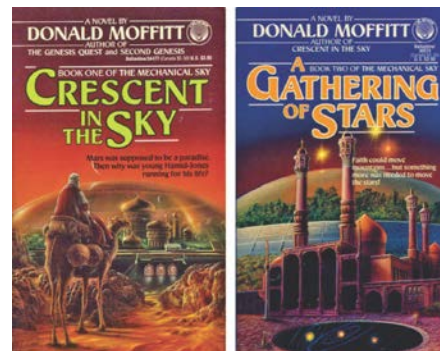
It should be noted that, despite appearances, many religious laws that may look dubious today started with good intentions. Not eating pork, for instance, made perfect sense in the Middle East when pigs were riddled with disease and could not be easily cooked thoroughly because fuel was hard to come by. And before you start laughing about such restrictions, many Montrealers still recall the days when eating meat of any kind was forbidden to Catholics on Fridays.

Sadly, such rules often mean doing the right thing for the wrong reason, as – by their very nature – they have always been right and will always be so. If the environment changes or if you encounter circumstances not initially taken into account, then you may have serious problems.

The requirement to cover your head in religions that originated under sunny latitudes, for one, is quite sensible, but may be a bother in other places, to say nothing about all the rules based on local weather, geography or astronomical measurements.

It could be argued, however, that such strict laws do foster imaginative solutions. Such as the Jewish *eruv*, a thread that technically can turn a whole neighbourhood into a single dwelling for the purpose of staying home during the Sabbath. Although you have to be careful: a few years ago, the giant *eruv* that surrounds Jerusalem broke during a sandstorm, putting the entire population in a potential state of sin. Though to be honest, only very Orthodox people bother going that far, and there are disagreements about the details even among them.

Still on the same theme, in Donald Moffitt's *Mechanical Sky* series (1989), an all-Muslim future civilisation needs to be very creative to reconcile some of its more strenuous religious tenets with the realities of interstellar travel. Praying towards Mecca while standing on Mars, in particular, is often a complicated ordeal, and very few colonists from the most distant stars ever get to accomplish the necessary pilgrimage to the sacred city. We could



not conclude without a mention of the ultimate criminal: **Lucifer**, A.K.A. the Devil, Satan and Lord of All Things Even Slightly Unsavory. Although justly (in)famous for many things, it is

interesting that, according to most serious sources, Lucifer will scrupulously follow the exact letter of the law and never go back on his word.

There, done. Now that I have fulfilled my obligation as per Article 374, Sub-section VI, Paragraph D of the MonSFFA Statutes, I would appreciate if our president could please delete the file she has been using to blackmail me with.

(Mwhahaha! –CPL)



# Space Voyage

or

## The thrilling, strange, and perilous adventure in the town of Burnley

Paul Gareau

*A Texan farmer's wife discovers a strange meteor-like object, actually a piece of debris. Will the townspeople and Sam, the ambitious police investigator dare to look for an answer above the stars?*

**The story so far:** A reporter from Boston, Bill Ellengreen, is investigating a report about something strange that fell in a little Texas town. He has just finished interviewing the principal witness, Ann Robinson Sheridan-Price.

**Transcriber's note:** in the last instalment, covering Scene III and published in Warp 105, the name of the reporter was mistakenly rendered as "Bukk" instead of "Bill". My apologies. -SSP

### Part 3

#### SCENE IV: AT THE TOWN HALL



*Fade out, then cross-dissolve on to an assembled group of Burnley's townspeople. They are gathering together in the town hall where they are involved in a deep discussion. The "story" has broken wide open.*

**FIRST BURGHER** - *(He hectors the audience)* "I tell you it's about time that we do something about it! Aren't you all going to do something about it?"

**SECOND BURGHER** - "I say the question is: what are we going to do about Ellengreen, that young whelp of so-called newspaperman that hails from Boston. This young trouble-maker comes here... ..to cause a whole lot of trouble!"

**THIRD BURGHER** - "I say we get rid of the whole bunch of them!" *(He addresses Detective Lieutenant Sam Scurfield)* "Lieutenant Scurfield... Lieutenant! What do you say?"

**DETECTIVE SAM SCURFIELD** - "Now look, as I have said, as I have already said, it's not in my power... beyond..."

*Consternation reigns. Shouts, protests of anger, harangues on the part of the group of townspeople.*

**FIRST BURGHER** - *(He shouts)* "There has been time enough for discussion, time a' plenty for palavers and discussions... Now is the time for action. I call here for a bit of immediate action, not talk. Are we going to let strangers run our life? Hasn't this piece of fallen debris caused us all enough embarrassment as it is?" *(Heckles Sam Scurfield)* "What about the debris – that thing – fallen from the skies? I say that we should post a guard over the debris and not hear anything at all anymore about this unholy matter!!!"

**THIRD BURGHER** - "Yes! Yes! Post a guard! Post a guard! Get rid of the strange thing. Get rid of it! Get rid of it!"

**THE TOWN MAYOR** - "Hush! Hear, hear! Let's have some order in this address!! Order in the court!! I call for order!!" *(Confidentially, in an aside to Sam Scurfield)* "And where is Mrs. Ann Robinson Sheridan-Price? Should she not be here to speak on her behalf? And..."

*Pandemonium erupts amidst cries, shouts and whispers in the hall.*

**PROSECUTING ATTORNEY** - *(Haranguing the audience)* "And it was there, on that lonely stretch of road in this, our beloved little town of Burnley, Texas, on a hot July morning in the year 2010 at 5 AM, on Wednesday the 6th, to be precise, in the mid-morning dust of that ashen-covered lonely lane, upon the ground." *(He thunders in a huge voice)* "That... that... that the unholy connection took place!! Isn't it? Eh?"

*Fade out.*

[Illustration: Town Hall by Texas Architect F.E. Ruffini (1883)]

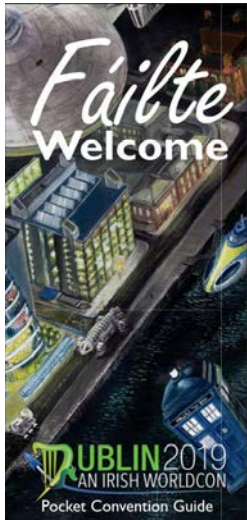




# A report on Worldcon 77

## PART ONE Sylvain St-Pierre

### PLANNING



How much preparation is too much? I've had some lively debates with friends and relatives on this topic regarding trips. I know people who find great pleasure in not knowing where they will sleep on the following night. Give them a backpack with a few essentials and they will happily roam foreign lands, discovering the place as they go along.

This is perfectly acceptable, provided that you also accept the inconveniences that inevitably follow. Something that I, for one, am not willing to do, especially now that I am in my seventh decade. I started researching this journey to Ireland as soon as I came back from the Helsinki Worldcon in 2017. Earlier, in fact, because it was a pretty sure thing that Dublin would win the bid, being the only serious candidate.

I consider myself a seasoned traveler and know quite a few tricks. Still, this was my first trip prepared while in full retirement, and this meant that I had more time to research things than ever before. Details like the weather (rarely above 20 Celsius), the price of hotels (frightfully high) and what there is to see (the list is very long).

Booking in advance resulted in being able to secure entry to many places and events that were full by the time we arrived, and would not be available to random roamers.

So yes, I did heavily rely on extensive planning, but I was not naive to the point of believing that everything would unfold exactly as planned.

The hotel situation, for instance, turned out to be rather hectic. I had very carefully made a first, second and third choice based on location relative to the convention site and Centre of Town, price,

and quality of the accommodations. It all fell apart when virtually all of the convention blocks in a dozen hotels ended up being booked in less than ten minutes on January 9th when the online system switched on! I was still able to grab something that I hoped would be decent, but there must have been a lot of teeth gnashing and hair pulling amongst fans on that day.



Some of the Main con-sponsored hotels

The booking of the airfare also came with its share of aggravations. The Irish carrier Aer Lingus announced last year that they would inaugurate a direct route between Montreal and Dublin, and that it would start in August a week before the Worldcon. Perfect, right? I thought so, and quickly secured tickets. A couple of months later, an apologetic e-mail informed me that there was a delay in the delivery of the new planes and that the route was postponed. I was given the option of rescheduling at the same fortunately low price, but with a stopover in Boston. While it meant actually arriving earlier than originally expected, it still took longer. Given that the price of the same flight went up by five hundred dollars a few weeks later, I nevertheless considered myself ahead.

So, on departure day I left with a very thick bundle of vouchers and a lot of eagerness. Here is what followed over the next couple of weeks.



Let's see, do I have everything?



## GETTING THERE

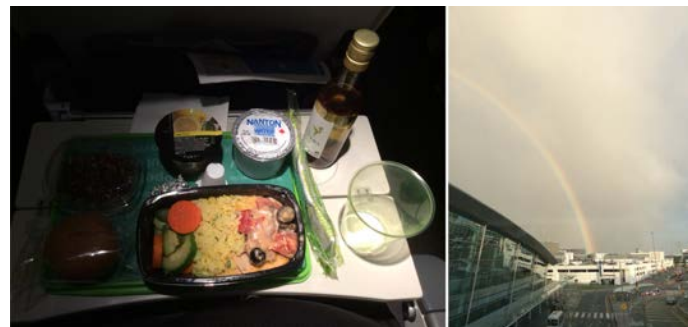
I left a couple of days before the start of the con with platonic friend Cathy Palmer-Lister, our esteemed Club President. The stopover in Boston was interesting in the “interesting times” sense. Our Aer Lingus plane developed a mechanical fault that could not be corrected in time and we had to spend the night in town.

The airline’s handling of the matter was mixed. They quickly handed out meal vouchers when it looked like there was only going to be a delay, and put us in an excellent hotel nearby when the flight was finally cancelled. But we had to queue forever to get the paperwork, and were forced to call ourselves for the re-booking. I am glad that I had the patience to wait half an hour on the phone for the latter, for we learned that some of our fellow travelers had not yet managed to finalize their change of plans on the following morning. At least the hotel was very close to the airport.



*Delays, delays!*

Our new route involved a transfer in Washington DC, which meant going away from our destination for a while and the loss of an almost full day. As is often the case for flights to Europe from the North American East Coast, ours was an overnighter and we arrived in the morning of the Worldcon, instead of a day early.



*The food was decent, but we were too tired to look for the pot of gold*

Our multiple transfers involved so many long corridors that at times it felt that we must have covered a good deal of the distance on foot and could have dispensed with the planes. Still, there was beautiful rainbow to greet us in Dublin and we viewed that as a good omen.

Upon checking in at the hotel, which we could fortunately do right away despite the early hour, we learned that the staff was fully aware of what they referred to as “Aer Lingus Disaster” and that we were far from the only ones in the same situation in this establishment alone.



*The Northern Star Hotel was truly stellar.*

Our room turned out to be an excellent one, recently renovated and far away from the section where noise from the nearby elevated train track might have been a concern. Service throughout our stay was superb, and the overly warm duvets were quickly replaced by lighter coverings upon request.



The standard local full breakfast, aptly referred to as the Irish Fry, turned out to be quite filling and more than enough to provide enough energy for a full day of visiting. My only qualm was that the baked beans were a bit watery, but this was compensated by the fact that mushrooms seem to be a standard side dish here and I do love them.



## MUNDANE DUBLIN

Let's face it: it's hard for a Montrealer to apply the word "mundane" to a city like Dublin. Even though the age and style

of most surviving buildings is similar to what we are accustomed to, there is a palpable aura of ancient history that permeates the whole place and makes it quite special to visit. There is a bit of



*Dublin at a glance*

missed our time slot because of the delayed arrival. Ah, the best laid plans of mice and men...

Another plan that went down the drain was our scheduled first dinner at Jimmy Chung's, a local Chinese buffet with an impressive menu, but we would have missed that even if we had arrived on time. By a weird coincidence, this restaurant went out of business on the very day we were to arrive!

As both Cathy and I thought that this would likely be our only trip ever to Ireland, we agreed that not spending our entire time at the Worldcon would be a good idea. Given that Programming tends to be a bit lighter in the morning (got to nurse those hangovers, don't you know...), it made sense to concentrate on seeing at least a little of the rest of the non-fannish stuff before Noon on each day.

So, we did visit quite a few other sites of interest. A major spot amongst them turned out to be the famous Book of Kells, a magnificently ornate bible from around 800

Irish in many of us, and it felt not unlike going home after being long away.

Knowing a little about said history was also useful, and I had made sure to learn about local lore and customs to avoid any faux pas, such as saying "Top of the morning". We individually took an extended "hop-on/hop-off" tour that had a grand total of thirty-three stops, but managed to get out at only a few.

Most notably absent among them was the infamous Kilmainham Gaol, for which advance tickets are required. We did have them, but



*The Book of Kells*



*The Long Room (Cathy in her natural habitat)*

AD. This was one of those places where planning paid off; we had booked viewing slots in advance and thus bypassed the long queues.

But even in those ancient halls we could not escape our favourite Genre: the nearby Long Room of the Trinity College Library served as inspiration for the Jedi Archives.

During the course of our stay, we also managed to see at various times such fascinating places as the Museum of Archeology, with a remarkable — if poorly labelled — collection of Celtic artifacts; and the Dublinia Museum,

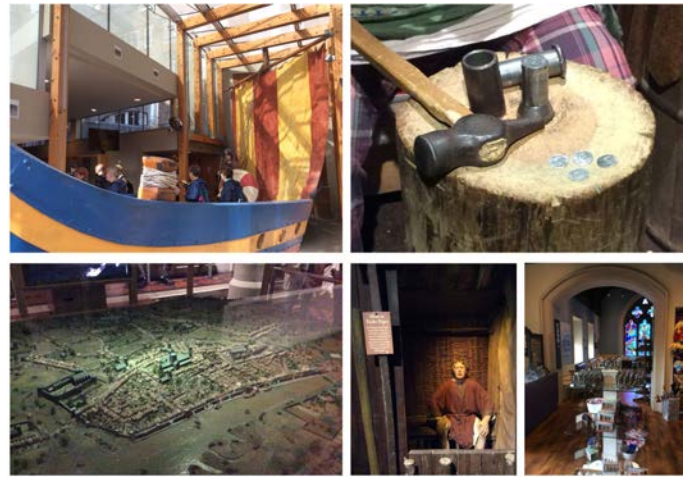


*Museum of Archaeology. Oh, the treasures to be seen there!*





The Little Museum of Dublin



The Dublinia Viking Museum



which covers the Viking period of the city in a most realistic manner. Additional places of interest to history buffs include the Little Museum of Dublin, with a very lively collection; and the General Post Office, seat of the famous 1916 Easter Uprising that set Ireland on the road to independence.



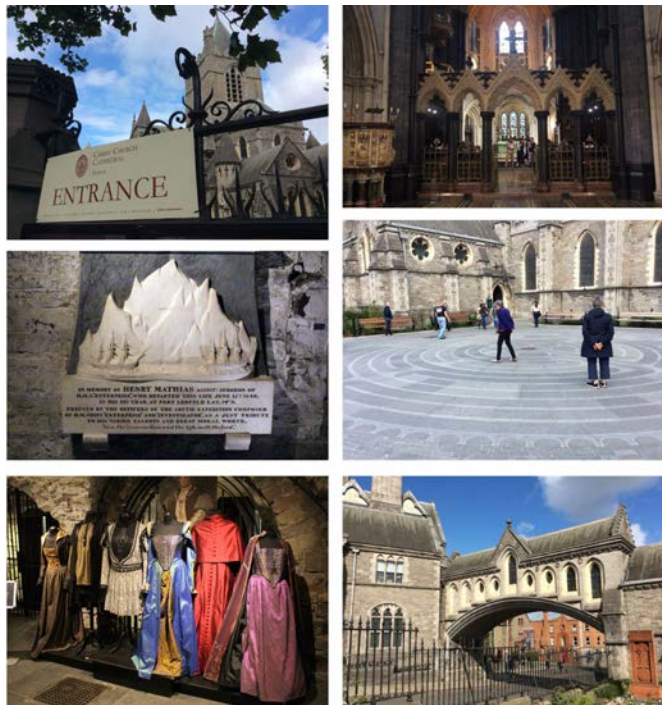
The General Post Office

By general agreement, the Guinness Storehouse is a tourist trap, but it's a nice one, and few people mind getting caught in it. The section devoted to past advertising campaigns is especially amusing.



The Guinness Storehouse. Does it count as sacred ground? Pictures by Joseph Aspler

Held in almost as much reverence are the Christ Church and St. Patrick Cathedrals, two famous houses of worship well worth a visit. It irks Catholic Irish no end that both places are now Anglican.

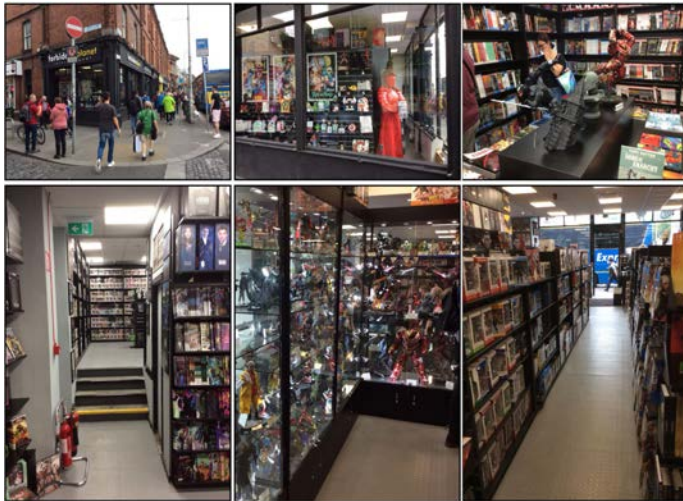


Christ Church



St. Patrick Cathedral. Inside pictures by Joseph Aspler





*Forbidden, but so tempting!*

The famous British chain Forbidden Planet has a large store in Dublin, and it is definitely worth a visit, even though their stock somewhat lacked distinctiveness compared to what it used to be.



*For true Mouseketeers*

There is a Disney Store as well, where a certain mouse can be found wearing a leprechaun costume. I am told that some locals despise the place.



Given enough available time, one can round out the experience with visits to various museums with words such as Leprechaun, Wax, Jewish, Whiskey and Emigration in their name. All of them worthy of at least some interest depending on your tastes.

Finally, Dublin proved to be a very easy city to walk through. Compact, quite flat and with a rather easy layout, much enjoyment can be had just wandering around both shores of the Liffey River.



Weather proved acceptable for the duration of our stay. There were rainfalls, but rarely very heavy or very long. Far more annoying was the wind, which was quite strong at times.

Language was never a problem. Though they are trying to bring it back, Irish (not Gaelic) is still way behind English in everyday use, and accents — both theirs and mine — proved to be generally

manageable when communicating with the natives. It is interesting that, even though only about 40% of the population

can read it, Irish is always put first on all official signage.

## WORLDCON 77

Thursday the 15th of August was the Opening Day of the Worldcon, and we arrived — just in time — with some trepidation.

Some of you may remember from my report on the 2017 Worldcon (Warp issues 100 and 101, 2018) that the Helsinki Committee had been unprepared to face the unexpectedly high attendance. They managed to turn around rapidly because they were able to rent extra space at a moment's notice, and — I believe for the first time ever — put serious restrictions on the buying of Day Passes.

The Dublin organizers faced a similar but even more acute problem: they realized early on that their cute-but-small



Convention Centre, which they had already rented in full, would never hold the kind of attendance that was likely to show up! The only reason why this did not turn into a complete catastrophe is because they got their warning a full two years in advance. Even renting space in somewhat distant facilities proved to be not enough, and drastic measures were taken. Such as stopping the sale of day passes well before the actual start of the event, offering none at the door, and requiring to get a wristband in advance to access the more popular events.

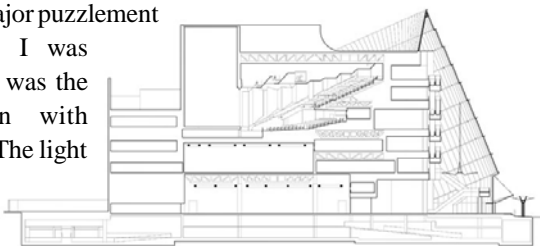


Sadly, this was one convention that could not be attended on the spur of the moment, unless you had the luck of being able to purchase one of the few memberships put on sale by hapless people forced to cancel at the last minute. Even a couple of days before the Opening, the dedicated Internet chat rooms were full of messages from people begging to get in. Especially heartbreaking was the case of one fan

who had sold his own entry because he did not expect to receive his passport in time, only get the precious document in the mail at the last minute.

As previously mentioned, the Venue was not nearly large enough to host all the events. The CCD proved however to be a well-designed building, allowing quick access to all parts from the central atrium, which doubled as an excellent meeting area. The five levels were connected by escalators, thus avoiding the traditional elevator bottlenecks. Quite amusing was the use of well-known genre characters to remind people about proper etiquette. There was a sufficient number of well-appointed toilets to avoid unpleasantness, and the con went the extra mile to make them accessible to all genders.

One major puzzlement as far as I was concerned was the connection with the Luas. The light train ran in the street



behind the building, and entrance was exclusively from the front; which meant quite a walk on the outside. But this was a basic design problem, and had nothing to do with the Organising Committee.

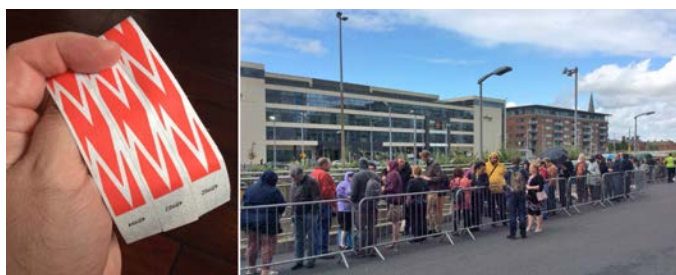
Registration had opened a full two days before the actual

convention started, and this no doubt helped a lot reduce crowding on opening day. No high-tech gimmick was used this time; you simply went to the proper line, stated your name and presented some form of identification. Sometimes, the old-fashioned ways are the best.

The Opening Ceremony, like most important functions, was scheduled at 8:00 in the evening. This event was the first of several for which it was necessary to get a pattern-and-colour-coded wristband so that the capacity of the auditorium would not be exceeded.

I managed to get one for all the events I wanted to attend, but the queues — which were mostly outside of the building — were often long and sometimes under wet and blustery conditions.

For the Opening, our little group of Montrealers took the precaution of having an early dinner in a floating restaurant very close to the CCD, to give us a chance to get in as fast as possible. I had my first local Guinness there, and can confirm that it is much smoother than the stuff we get on this side of the Pond.



*I had to endure a lot to get that strip of paper!*



The Traders' Hall was located right next to the entrance hall of the CCD, which was quite convenient. The choice of



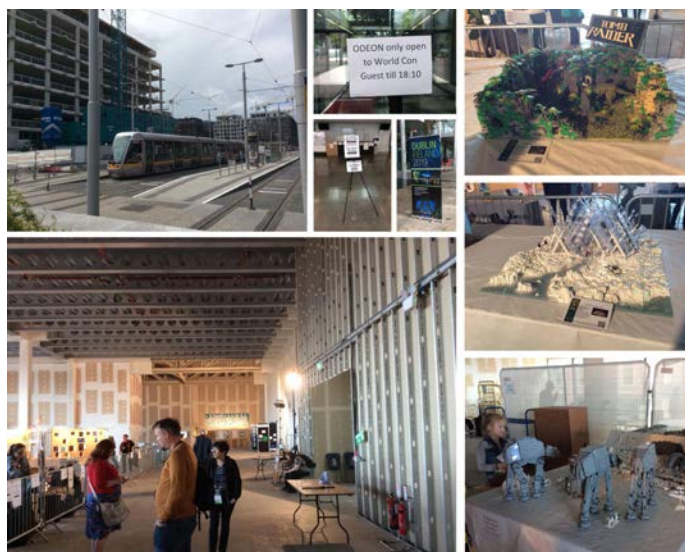


merchandise was more than decent, but reflected a growing world trend: no matter where you go, it is getting more and more difficult to find truly unique items.

The same room held a number of interesting Exhibits, such as a stunning time-travelling DeLorian, a very good Star Trek TOS full-scale bridge set and a hilarious “Throne of Games” made from Hurley paddles.

Much to the disappointment of some, the usually popular formal historical Dances were kept to a minimum. The reasons given ranged from a lack of space to perform them in, to the bad connotation that holding an English Regency Ball in Ireland might have for some of the more nationalistic locals. The performance of the Worldcon Philharmonic Orchestra, playing great genre classics, was however much appreciated. The Art Show was one of those functions held at the Point Square location, in a building so sparkingly new that it did not yet show up in Google’s satellite pictures. In fact, the room was not even finished yet, with some walls still showing their aluminium framing.

The Masquerade was nice, which was pleasantly refreshing



The Point Square Location



Masquerade backstage, photo by Dervin Mak.

because I have been disappointed by that event in the last few cons I have attended.

The Hugo Awards Ceremony turned out a bit colourful, mostly because the winner of the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer, Jeannette Ng, immediately denounced the editor after whom it is named as – and I quote – “a f\*cking fascist” and a few other choice words. In an unusually rapid move, the committee renamed it shortly after and Ms. Ng is now the last person ever to win that particular award.

As befits a decent Worldcon, the Panels were maddeningly numerous, with a bewildering choice of themes and topics. I swear, we will one day discover that those large attendance figures are due to time travellers trying to see everything.

One interesting feature, introduced to compensate for the distance between the main locations, was the staggering of the time slots; some panels starting on the hour, others on the half-past.



A few people valiantly managed to keep alive the tradition of Hall Costumes, and though there were some clever ones in the lot, this art form is but a shadow of what it once was.



Best in show: a hauntingly beautiful Kelpie.



The list of panellists included a number of exalted names, especially in the field of hard sciences. Such as Dame Susan Jocelyn Bell Burnell, a North Irish astrophysicist who co-discovered the first radio pulsars in 1967; and Brother Guy J. Consolmagno, an American Jesuit director of the Vatican Observatory.



*Pictures of Dame Bell and Brother Guy by Joseph Aspler.*

It was logical to expect that, with the forewarning of a high attendance and the Helsinki experience, measures would have been put in place to mitigate overcrowding. Alas, it was not so. It still took a couple of days before somebody thought of tracing queue lines on the floor, and it seems that the idea of marking cut-off points for the maximum a room could hold did not occur to anyone. Apparently, most of that cat-herding work was done by the CCD staff, who are to be commended for the extreme courtesy they showed for us weirdos throughout the whole duration of the con.



*You had to queue to join a queue.*

Most appreciated was the lack of any demonstration or picket line outside the building, be it by religious nuts or people with extreme socio-political agenda.



*Friends from near and far*

Conversely, it was quite a delight to occasionally bump into a number of friends not seen in a while. It's always funny how you sometimes have to go half around the globe to meet people who live but a few clicks from you on the map.

## FAREWELL

All good things must come to an end, and we eventually came to the Closing Ceremony. Thanks were offered to all the many

volunteers who had a hand in making the event possible; the gavel was passed to CoNZealand, which will be held this summer in Wellington, New Zealand; and the site of the 2021 event was officially confirmed to be Washington DC.

Tears were shed, and everybody left (SIGH).



*Closing Ceremony- Not a dry eye in the house.*



Alas, I knew thee well, dear Worldcon.

Given the success of AntlerCon in Helsinki two years earlier, we thought something similar might be fun to cap the Dublin experience. Both Cathy and I independently thought that the name LeafCon (Maple and Shamrock) would be appropriate. I guess great minds think alike.



While we also thought that a pub would be the perfect venue, we quickly discovered that most Public Houses are not well suited for larger parties. Those establishments are often on the small side, partitioned for the convenience of a few friends wishing to have a conversation over a pint or four, and quite a few of them stop serving food altogether in the evening, switching to an exclusively liquid diet.

After much research, we found that the S.W. Sweetman Craft Brewery would be the perfect place. The place proved indeed wonderful, and it is sad that attendance was not greater. The food

was great, the company entertaining and all the various beers in the sampling tray were quite tasty.

For many, this was the end of the whole experience. The majority of travellers returned home on this very day or on the morrow. Cathy and I were among the fortunate minority that got to stay and visit a bit more of the Emerald Isle. This, Dear Reader, shall be covered in the next issue of Warp.

**TO BE CONTINUED!**



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## HUGO WINNERS

### **BEST NOVEL:**

The Calculating Stars, by Mary Robinette Kowal, Tor

### **BEST SHORT STORY**

“A Witch’s Guide to Escape: A Practical Compendium of Portal Fantasies,” by Alix E. Harrow (Apex Magazine, February 2018).

### **BEST SERIES**

Wayfarers, by Becky Chambers (Hodder & Stoughton / Harper Voyager).

### **BEST RELATED WORK**

Archive of Our Own, a project of the Organization for Transformative Works.

### **BEST GRAPHIC STORY**

Monstress, Volume 3: Haven, written by Marjorie Liu, art by Sana Takeda (Image Comics).

### **BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, LONG FORM**

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse, screenplay by Phil Lord and Rodney Rothman, directed by Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey and Rodney Rothman (Sony).

### **BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, SHORT FORM**

The Good Place: “Janet(s),” written by Josh Siegal & Dylan Morgan, directed by Morgan Sackett (NBC).

### **BEST EDITOR, SHORT FORM**

Gardner Dozois.

### **BEST EDITOR, LONG FORM**

Navah Wolfe.

### **BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST**

Charles Vess.

### **BEST SEMIPROZINE**

Uncanny Magazine, publishers/editors-in-chief Lynne M. Thomas and Michael Damian Thomas, managing editor Michi Trota, podcast producers Erika Ensign and Steven Schapansky, Disabled People Destroy Science Fiction Special Issue editors-in-chief Elsa Sjunneson-Henry and Dominik Parisien.

### **BEST FANZINE**

Lady Business, editors Ira, Jodie, KJ, Renay & Susan.

### **BEST FANCAST**

Our Opinions Are Correct, hosted by Annalee Newitz and Charlie Jane Anders.

### **BEST FAN WRITER**

Foz Meadows.

### **BEST FAN ARTIST**

Likhain (Mia Sereno).

### **BEST ART BOOK**

(A one-off category created as per WSFS rules by Dublin 2019)  
The Books of Earthsea: The Complete Illustrated Edition, illustrated by Charles Vess, written by Ursula K. Le Guin (Saga Press /Gollancz).

The following awards which are administered by WSFS and voted on alongside the Hugo Awards were also included in the ceremony.

### **LODESTAR AWARD for BEST YOUNG ADULT BOOK**

Children of Blood and Bone, by Tomi Adeyemi (Henry Holt / Macmillan Children’s Books).

### **JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD for BEST NEW WRITER**

Jeannette Ng (2nd year of eligibility).

## Hugo Retrospectives 2013

Danny Sichel

Editor's note: This article was supposed to appear in WARP 105, but was filed in the wrong folder. Mea culpa! – CPL

*To repeat: the goal here is to see how much I remember of these. If I get a detail wrong... well, that's the whole point.*

### NOVELS

**Redshirts**, by John Scalzi. I remember stopping at the bookstore one morning after meeting with my brother for breakfast, and finding this book. And I remember flipping through it, and looking up three hours later and realizing I'd finished it. And I remember thinking I absolutely had to nominate it for a Hugo. Imagine a Star Trek ripoff. Not a terrible one, just... average. Mediocre. Now, imagine what it would be like to be a character on such a show. One of the redshirts who get killed for cheap drama. Now, imagine what it would be like to realize you were a character on such a show. All the nonsensical things about how your world works are suddenly explained. Now... imagine going into the real world, to confront the people who produce your show, and ask them to stop being so terrible to you. Many, many very clear memories of scenes from this book, especially the epilogues (where, for instance, the head writer is wracked by guilt over the lives he's destroyed).

**2312** by Kim Stanley Robinson. It's something to do with New York City in the year 2312. I believe there's mass flooding, and a tall building, and multiple viewpoints. I really couldn't get into this. [And in looking at Wikipedia's "Hugo Award for Best Novel" article, I notice that a few years later, KSR had a novel called 'New York 2140', and that's the one I just described. '2312' is apparently about colonizing the solar system, and I have no recollection of it whatsoever.)

**Blackout** by Mira Grant. Part three in the "Newsflesh" series. Clearer memories of how this one differs from the first – I believe there's cloning, and the revelation that Kellis-Amberlee (the zombie virus) is adapting into a less harmful form. And Shaun and Georgia finally reveal their relationship. And possibly something about Australia.

**Captain Vorpatril's Alliance**, by Lois McMaster Bujold. This is one of the Vorkosigan books, except the viewpoint character is Miles's hapless cousin Ivan Vorpatril. And a Jacksonian woman named Tej, whom he marries for legal reasons. And then they find out that they really do get along really well. And then the judge who was supposed to give them a quickie divorce says he doesn't like the idea of people not taking marriage seriously. And there's the bit where Tej's family show up, and they find a cache of Cetagandan loot left over from the Occupation, and Tej's grandma is an exiled Haut lady, and her half-sister is genetically

engineered to be bright blue, and ImpSec HQ sinks into the mud, and there's a Formal Inquiry and Dr Borgos has to testify that the borer nanites will inert themselves, and basically there's so many great details I remember from this one, I really feel like digging it out and rereading it.

**Throne of the Crescent Moon**, by Saladin Ahmed. Don't think I had time to get into this one fully, but I remember desert imagery and monsters to be slain and ghouls and an intent to go back and read it properly afterward.

### NOVELLAS

**The Emperor's Soul**, by Brandon Sanderson. The protagonist is a magical Forger who can effectively change things into what they would have been if their history were different. This is blatantly illegal, especially when you use it to fake antiquities, which is why she's been sentenced to death in the Empire of Something. Then the Emperor's counselors make her a deal: the Emperor is brain-dead after an assassination attempt, so if she can fake him back into having a personality again, they can avoid a messy succession dispute. Making a plausible fake of the Emperor will take time, during which she can maybe plot her escape – but how can she pass up on the chance to make a forgery that will fool an entire empire? This was pretty interesting – there was a prison cell that she couldn't forge her way out of, and the relationship she had with the Emperor's one honest counselor, and all the stuff about having to learn what the Emperor's real history had been so that she could re-create him, and the temptation to alter him so as to be a better person, and the temptation to include a back door so she could control him, and the techniques she used to finally escape – rewriting her own history to be someone who had the necessary skills, and... oh yes, I remember this one very well. Unless I don't and someone rewrote my history so I falsely remember having read it.

**After the Fall, Before the Fall, During the Fall**, by Nancy Kress. Hm. Time travel – a calamity (the Fall), stealing children from the past to... rebuild? I'm not sure. I do recall that I didn't enjoy this.

**On a Red Station, Drifting**, by Aliette de Bodard. Images of being on a deserted space station. Something about rescuing the station's AI core? Which... may be revealed to hold the grandmother (or a recording thereof) of the person running the



salvage op? It's important to rescue the AI's personality, it – she – grew with the family, or... something. Not sure about the rest. ***San Diego 2014: The Last Stand of the California Browncoats***, by Mira Grant. This is more backstory from the Newsfeed trilogy. Specifically, this is about the zombie apocalypse happening... at the San Diego Comicon. Where you've got people intellectually (if not emotionally) prepared for the idea of a zombie apocalypse. And where you've also got people cosplaying zombies. Viewpoint characters are a cluster of Firefly fans (the titular California Browncoats). Many tragic misunderstandings and moments at which just maybe the zombie apocalypse could have been averted, but all foredoomed because this is (as mentioned) backstory from the Newsfeed trilogy.

***The Stars Do Not Lie***, by Jay Lake. Obviously humans evolved here, obviously we share common ancestry with all life on this planet, obviously it's ridiculous to do research projects that are based on the idea that, no, this is a colony planet, we're hundreds of light-years away from Earth. Not just ridiculous, in fact – possibly heretical, how could anyone claim that the science books we recovered from the wreckage of our ancestors' civilization are wrong? Some cool imagery, but overall I remember not being terribly impressed by this – Jay Lake had done much better.

### NOVELETTES

***The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for Sushi***, by Pat Cadigan. If you want to do scientific research on Jupiter Station, you can stay in your human body, but if you want to do the physical work that keeps the station functioning, it's usually a better idea to “go out for sushi” – that is, have yourself transformed into something based on undersea life (nautilus, squid, octopus, etc). Part of the reason for this is that, as a cephalopod you're psychologically better suited to floaty environments, and also you can grip and manipulate more things at a time. Except the regular humans find you disgusting and repulsive, and suddenly you don't have as many rights as you used to. And then there's a new arrival, and she wants to work with you – your group affectionately calls her the “girl-thing”, and although she's trying to get away from Earth for personal reasons, she's also got legal training. And then things start changing. I particularly remember that the voter packet included, in the items for “Best Editor (short form)”, the anthology in which this appeared, and when I read it, I thought “oh damn, I wish I'd known about this story earlier so I could have nominated it” – although I also remember being a bit disappointed that some of the climax takes place offscreen. I want to dig this up and read it again.

***The Boy Who Cast No Shadow***, by Thomas Olde Heuvelt. So, let's see, there's these two teenage boys, both of whom are... well, not mutants, per se, that's a scientific concept and this is more along the lines of magical realism. One is named “Luke”, which he pronounces the same as “Look” (I'm pretty sure this story was originally written in Dutch). And he's translucent,

which has all kinds of weird and unpleasant effects on his life. The other is... far more medically fragile. Because he's made of glass. Like, literally glass. Adolescence is terrible for them, and they run away from home together, it's romantic and sad, and the medically fragile one dies on a cliff-top as they watch the sun set over the ocean. The phrase “coming of age” springs to mind. I also recall not liking it terribly much. Also at one point they're hitchhiking and have to provide sexual favors for the man who picks them up (or maybe this is after the death scene, so it's only one of them), which I was a little surprised to see mentioned quite so plainly – I remember thinking that perhaps it was a Dutch thing. The vagueness of the memories is enough to make me want to dig up some reviews of the story, just to get the details straight.

***Fade to White***, by Catherynne Valente. This was horrible and beautiful. It's set in, oh, I'd say the late 50s, early 60s, in the aftermath of the nuclear war (Joe McCarthy wasn't the best president), and America is struggling onward. I remember the teenage boy who was trying to learn all the necessary skills to be a Father, in hopes that his sperm sample would be approved. I remember the teenage girl who wasn't sure if she was more terrified of being forced to be a Mother, or of being found out as having Japanese ancestry – and to make matters worse, the boy she liked was black. I remember the worldbuilding as shown by the constant stream of advertising (and the demands for rewrites). I think Ray Kroc became president. Glorious writing, brutally sad.

***In Sea-Salt Tears***, by Seanan McGuire. Seanan writes this series of urban fantasy novels about a half-fae private detective named October “Toby” Daye. This is backstory for one of her characters – a very powerful ocean witch whose name is “The Lsomething”. (It's been a while since I've read the Toby Daye books.) A romance with a mortal – well, semimortal – that goes tragically wrong because of secrets being kept. There's selkie stuff. I remember thinking that stuff which works in the indefinite “Long Ago And Far Away of fairy tales doesn't necessarily work when you try to set it in California in the early 1970s.

***Rat-Catcher***, by Seanan McGuire. The backstory for another one of Toby Daye's supporting characters – this one, her sort-of-boyfriend the cat-man. Specifically, what was his life like in Shakespearean times, which I believe may have been before he realized he was magical. I definitely remember a scene where he was trapped in a burning theater.

**SHORT STORIES** (due to nomination weirdness, there were only three)

***Mono No Aware***, by Ken Liu. Earth has been evacuated, only a fraction of humanity survived. Most of Japan is dead, for instance. There's a small Japanese population on one of the ships, including the protagonist, who's trying to do his best to sustain Japanese culture. And... I think origami and Go skills turn out to be useful in saving a solar sail, even at the cost of his own life? I

think?

***Immersion***, by Aliette de Bodard. The protagonist has a brain thing that forcibly ensures she's culturally adjusted to her environment. Or it would, if it was working right. Unless it's supposed to work this way... I remember I rather liked this. I'm pretty sure it was part of de Bodard's "Vietnamese in Space" setting, and it took place on, or largely on, a space station.

***Mantis Wives***, by Kij Johnson. This is a list of entries from the Kama Sutra for sapient praying mantises. "Eventually the

mantises figured out how to separate having sex from making children," except every activity still involves the male being killed. Innovative, skillfully artistic, and not in any way a narrative. If you go into this expecting that it will be science fiction, you'll be disappointed – it's more of a fable, and as such the worldbuilding is threadbare; I remember one reviewer who asked why, if they're sapient, does informed consent not play a part? Is this supposed to be taking place on Earth? Etc, etc. Which misses the point.

## Hugo Retrospective 2014 Danny Sichel

*As usual, the goal is to see how much I remember of these items. If I get something completely wrong, or draw a blank, that's the point.*

### NOVELS

***Ancillary Justice***, by Ann Leckie. This is an absolutely wonderful novel. I could talk about it at much greater length than you're willing to read. The voter packet only included a PDF of the first 10 chapters – once I finished it, I read it again, then went to the store and bought a physical copy. I have recommended this novel to multiple people, including just this week. One narrative strand is about Breq, an AI in a human body (... although that description may not be exactly accurate), who is seeking revenge on the galactic emperor; the other is about what happened to that same AI twenty years earlier, when she operated the starship "Justice of Toren" – and why she is seeking revenge. One interesting trick Leckie plays is that Breq speaks Raadchai, a language which doesn't distinguish between genders – and as a result of translation into English, Breq refers to everyone as female. All pronouns are 'she' and 'her', all parents are mothers, all children are daughters, all siblings are sisters. It's remarkable how quickly one stops trying to figure out what gender a given character 'really' is, and instead focuses on the fascinating exploration of the ideas of consciousness and colonialism (with hugely cinematic action scenes). This novel won a *ton* of awards, and it absolutely deserves them.

***Neptune's Brood***, by Charlie Stross. I know this is a sequel to his *Saturn's Children*, which I liked. I know it's about how a society of ageless robots handles banking over interstellar distances, and that he made it a lot more interesting than this description makes it sound. I also know that I didn't finish this, although I don't recall why. Perhaps I'll dig it up again and reread it.

***Warbound***, by Larry Correia. I'm pretty sure I didn't read this. I keep thinking it was an urban fantasy, although I might be conflating it with his "Monster Hunter" series. Maybe it's set in the 30s or equivalent? Private detective, maybe? <Google – yes, I'm right.> I believe this may have been one of Correia's early experiments with ballot manipulation.

***Parasite***, by Seanan McGuire as 'Mira Grant'. I know that McGuire uses the 'Mira Grant' name for her horror work. I'm not much into horror. I think this one involves parasites that are deliberately implanted in people for medical reasons – they keep you healthy, etc. And then... the protagonist discovers that her consciousness is that of the parasite. Or... something like that. I'm pretty sure I didn't finish this, although I might dig it up and reread it when I get the chance.

***The Wheel of Time***, by Robert Jordan and Brandon Sanderson. Some Robert Jordan fans used a loophole in the rules to define the entire 15-volume series as a single work: published in installments, of which the last was released in 2013. Yes, the voter packet included every *WoT* novel. I remember starting to read the first in the series, *The Eye of the World*, in the early '90s. I didn't finish it then, and I didn't try it again in 2014. This may have contributed to the eventual creation of the "Best Series" Hugo.

### NOVELLAS

Here, the question of 'how well do I remember these' is affected by the fact that I wrote reviews of these in WARP in 2014, and I know I looked at those reviews within the past year. Let's see, though.

**"The Butcher of Khardov"**, by Dan Wells. Licensed fiction based on exploring the tragic backstory of a character in the WarMachine setting. Life in Khardov is okay and then it's not. The protagonist – the Butcher – is in a bar, talking about his problems and about his woman. Then it turns out that his woman is actually his weapon. Royalty was manipulating him to make him into a weapon, and then he got out of control. I think. Massacres, traumas. Meh.

**"The Chaplain's Legacy"**, by Brad R. Torgersen. There was a cluster of the-value-of-religion stories in the awards a while back.



This was one of them. I *think* this was the one where the aliens want to know about religion so that they can make an accurate record of us after our obliteration. Also they may have been insectoid. Otherwise blank.

**“Six-Gun Snow White”**, by Catherynne M. Valente. This is basically Snow White in a mythical magical version of the Old West, with gorgeous lyrical prose and some changes that you wouldn’t expect – she’s Metis, sure, and her father was a white land baron, okay, and the dwarfs are female, why not, and the animals she encounters are mythical trickster archetypes, no problem – but then when she gets a horse, his name is “Charming”. And then she spends upwards of a century in suspended animation... *which, since she started in the Old West, takes her into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.* So she goes to university and studies astronomy.

**“Equoid”** by Charlie Stross. One of his “Laundry” stories, this one is about the obscene blasphemous magical abomination that is the unicorn. I remember connections to the cone snail, and HP Lovecraft being inspired to create the Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young.

**“Wakulla Springs”**, by Andy Duncan and Ellen Klages. Events in and around Wakulla Springs, Florida, during the filming of various SF-ish movies – I recall ‘Tarzan’ and ‘Creature from the Black Lagoon’. Lots of racism. An actor – a real person – gets an underage girl pregnant. Fifteen years later, their son is still hanging around Wakulla Springs, and still watching the movies being made. There’s – well, I won’t say “less” racism, but he’s allowed to swim in the springs now. And then a generation later, his daughter is a film history student, and she interviews Cheetah the chimp. Obviously he doesn’t talk... and then he does. Unless she fell asleep for a moment, which is possible. I recall that various people disliked this story for not being remotely science fiction. It’s *about* science fiction, but it *is* not science fiction.

### NOVELETTES

**“The Lady Astronaut of Mars”**. Mars City, late 1980s. Erma, who led the expedition to settle Mars in the 60s, is taking care of her elderly husband in the last few weeks of his life. It’s miserable but she loves him. Then she’s offered the chance to go on one last mission – and orbital details mean that she has to decide *now*. I remember a ‘Wizard of Oz’ allusion from Erma’s doctor. One of this year’s Best Novel nominees is the novel-length prequel (explaining why they *had* to go to Mars in the 60s).

**“Opera Vita Aeterna”**, by Theodore Beale aka “Vox Day”. I wrote a lengthy review of this story, whose presence on the ballot was explicitly the result of Larry Correia’s experiments in ballot manipulation – Correia said that first, he had liked the story, and second, he had wanted to make people angry (because Theodore Beale is a terrible person). An elf visits a human monastery, and

decides to learn more about this strange “religion” thing. He eventually becomes very fond of the humans there, and listens to all their wise religious teachings. And when they are murdered, he mourns, and finishes their work for them – transcribing and illuminating manuscripts by hand, etc. Centuries in the future, the faces of his friends are still present in the illustrations he made.

**“The Truth of Fact, the Truth of Feeling”**, by Ted Chiang. A journalist writes about what it’s like having a daughter who lives with “Remem” - a device that retains every event that ever happened to you and lets you go back and share them with perfect accuracy. And eventually he discovers the fallibility of human memory – for instance, that huge screaming fight with his daughter, after his wife walked out... the one in which the words “it’s YOUR fault Mom left us!” were screamed... ten years later, he finally watches her recording and discovers that *he’s* the one who screamed them. He honestly remembered it as *her* having screamed them. Parallel narrative: missionaries teach a Tiv man to read and write. It turns out this isn’t entirely compatible with oral tradition – what do you do when the records from 20 years ago, about which land belonged to who when, contradict what the tribal elders say? I remember how amazed he was to learn about the concept of “individual words” - if you don’t know that speech can be broken up into them, is it something you’d think of? And I remember how he realized what it meant when one of the missionaries would read a script to rehearse a sermon. And I remember how disappointing it was when it turned out that the Tiv man was a story written by the journalist with the angry daughter.

**“The Exchange Officers”**, by Brad Torgersen. Possibly another Correia manipulation, possibly not - once you get involved with someone who manipulates the ballot, how can you ever be sure your previous nomination was genuine? Story about the military; I believe there’s a lot of stuff about telepresence. And one of the officers is female. And there may have been some Russians. Maybe mention of Israel? I also recall that there were allusions made to USMC general Chesty Puller. Beyond that, nothing.

**“The Waiting Stars”**, by Aliette de Bodard. One of her “Vietnamese in Space” stories, with mindships, but beyond that, I got nothing.

### SHORT STORIES

**“The Water that Falls On You from Nowhere”**, by John Chu. What if, whenever you lie, water falls on you from nowhere? And what if that’s everyone in the world? This means that, for instance, you can’t tell your parents that your boyfriend is just your roommate, not unless you want to get splashed. I remember a ton of details, like how laboratories have examined the water in every way they can think of and it’s totally normal, and how the protagonist’s sister risks splattering them both with hot grease by

telling a huge lie in the kitchen, and how when the boyfriend declares his love, the air actually gets *dry*. I also remember being annoyed by Chu leaving so much unexplored – what is the nature of a ‘lie’, exactly? Is it possible to tell a joke in this world? Do you have to *know* whether a statement is true or false? If not, can you use magic infallible lie-detection to, for instance, test the primality of large numbers? Does lie-water violate conservation of mass, and if so, can you use it to power a generator? I’m a science fiction geek, this is the sort of thing we think about.

“**If You Were a Dinosaur, My Love**”, by Rachel Swirsky. Poignant little prose poem about how, if the narrator’s fiance were a dinosaur instead of a paleontologist, things would have been super cool and amazing in so many ways – including that he would not have been bludgeoned into a coma by a bunch of drunken thugs. It’s *about* science fiction, because the narrator is thinking of a science fictional scenario, but I wouldn’t qualify it as science fiction itself – or, necessarily, as a story. Conservatives frothed themselves into an absolute rage over its presence on the Hugo ballot.

“**Selkie Stories Are for Losers**”, by Sofia Samatar. Another story whose SF credentials are thin: so many things in the protagonist’s life would make sense if her mother had been a selkie. That’s what she tells herself, anyway. The selkie legend always involves the selkie abandoning her family, and her mother loved to swim and didn’t have any relatives, so it would explain everything, right? Right? Eventually she falls in love with one of her coworkers from the restaurant, and they move to a place as far away from the ocean as they can. Just in case.

“**The Ink Readers of Doi Saket**”, by Thomas Olde Heuvelt. Deep in the jungles of Thailand is the village of Doi Saket, where the people are Ink Readers. If you write a wish on a little paper boat and toss it into the river, it will find its way to Doi Saket, where the Ink Readers will read it, and set about making your wish come true. They’re very good at what they do, but they’re not magic. But they’re also very good at making things *appear* magic. As with “Wakulla Springs” and “If You Were a Dinosaur, My Love” and “Selkie Stories are for Losers”, this is SF-adjacent, but I don’t think it’s actually SF. Unless I misremember.



## MonSFFandom: September to January

Keith Braithwaite

### September

The club’s September 14 meeting began early with a workshop session as MonSFFen involved in our Utopia Planitia Shipyards Competition continued work on their scratchbuilt-from-household-junk model spaceships, focusing on final detailing and painting. The build teams were playing a little catch-up as unavoidable circumstances had prompted the cancellation of an earlier session of our 2019 group project. We were able to allow a bit more time this session to help mitigate hours lost.

Danny Sichel was up front as moderator for our primary panel of the afternoon, a discussion/debate that asked: can one separate the art from the artist?

Danny prefaced the discussion with a little background on recent controversial redesigns of prize trophies and name-changes made to prominent SF/F awards. This begged the question at hand and the ensuing discussion was a lively one, with just about everyone in the room offering comment.

So was it fair to apply the societal/political values of today to authors or other important genre personages of a previous era? Are revelations of bad behaviour on the part of a particular SF/F star reason to peg their work as unworthy and therefore verboten?

Folk debated back and forth, eventually expanding the discussion beyond the science fiction and fantasy realm to include the popular arts in general. While some might be critical of a

given artist’s political opinions, for example, or despicable behaviour, they would not categorically rule out ever enjoying a book, film, or other creative work by that artist. But knowing what the artist’s personal views were on issues would almost certainly influence one’s interpretation— or reinterpretation—of the work, it was agreed.

As to whether or not an award should be rechristened in light of new revelations about the individual for whom the award was named, most of our group felt that such a call would probably best be made on a case-by-case basis. We all speculated, as well, on what “transgressions” today’s artists might commit that future audiences would, perhaps, consider just as unacceptable as these same artists so consider the “sins” of their predecessors.

A fun and amusing little diversion capped the afternoon as we held a couple rounds of a quick game in which MonSFFen were challenged to identify comic book and screen superheroes and villains. Shown only brief, partial glimpses of the colourful characters’ costumes, our people scored quite well despite being stumped on a few of the more obscure of the caped and cowed that we highlighted!

Thanks are proffered Keith Braithwaite, who oversaw this session of our Utopia Planitia Shipyards Competition and hosted the above-described game, and Danny Sichel, who captained our discussion/debate.





## October

MonSFFA's 2019 group project was completed at the outset of this meeting as the various scratchbuilt model spaceships (fabricated of empty pop bottles, plastic food containers, and bits of assorted household "junk") were given a final coat of paint. Build teams had been working on their ships during workshop sessions over several months. Keith Braithwaite oversaw this project, which had been dubbed our Utopia Planitia Shipyards Competition.

Several MonSFFen had the good fortune to travel to Ireland this past summer to attend the 77th Worldcon as well as the 2019 Eurocon, and the meeting proper got underway with an account of their trip. Projecting on screen numerous photographs of their adventure, Sylvain St-Pierre, Cathy Palmer-Lister, Joe Aspler, and René Walling offered a brief tourist's overview of Ireland before describing in detail the conventions themselves, comparing the Irish Worldcon to typical North American and other European Worldcons, noting the little things that made the event charmingly

and uniquely Irish.

René followed solo with an overview of the statistical work he has been doing for several years, now, regarding Worldcons and SF/F fandom, noting some interesting misconceptions about the state of Worldcons (they're not in decline, as many believe), and spotting a few trends that seem to be developing in fandom. He outlined, as well, his methods of gathering data and the difficulties, in certain cases, posed by a lack of easily accessible facts and figures regarding Worldcons past.

Josée Bellemare closed the meeting with a primer/how-to session on sock puppets, incorporating a sci-fi angle to the examples she had on hand and laying the groundwork for a potential club group project/fan film next year.

We thank all of our presenters today while also acknowledging the contributions of those club members who helped to plan and run this, our October 2019 meeting.

## November

The "Invasion of the Super Sci-Fi Book Sale from Planet X" was the moniker given this year's fund-raising used SF/F book sale, which proved MonSFFA's most lucrative to date, adding a little over \$1100 to the club's coffers last month (November 9)!

The room was packed with avid bargain hunters as the sale opened to the public, with many folk expressing delight at the large selection of hardcovers and paperbacks available, and at our astounding bargains, in particular the Box-of-Books-for-\$10 deal! Within the roughly four-hour duration of the sale, we managed to clear some two thirds of our considerable inventory, if not more! The club wishes to thank all of the member-volunteers and friends of the club who helped to set up, run, and at afternoon's end, pack away our book sale. Your helping hands were greatly appreciated! We thank, as well, the numerous people who very kindly donated books to the cause; thank you so much for your support of our

club!

All funds raised at this sale have been directed to MonSFFA's operating budget.

The sale went just swimmingly, with the exception of what we, unfortunately, can only conclude was a theft! It seems someone surreptitiously made off with the donations jar that had been placed, as usual, on the snack table. The few dollars collected here, at this and each of our meetings throughout the year, helps to offset the cost of renting our function space. We've never before had a problem leaving this donations jar sitting on the snack table at the back of the room, for the most part unattended, and didn't think it necessary to post a guard! And so, an otherwise wonderful day for MonSFFA was marred somewhat by a single lousy deed!

## December

Some 15 MonSFFen, family, and friends met at the downtown Baton Rouge Steakhouse & Bar on Rue de la Montagne (Mountain) Saturday evening, December 7, for the club's traditional celebration of the festive season.

Nestled next to a warming fireplace in a corner of the restaurant reserved for us by club president Cathy Palmer-Lister, folks enjoyed conversation, cocktails, and a lovely meal. Courtesy MonSFFA, each attendee received a small gift basket which included seasonal treats, a Genre bookmark designed by club VP Keith Braithwaite, and a souvenir science-fiction Christmas movie-themed keychain!

We were pleased to reward our 2019 volunteer-members, as well as those who had renewed their club memberships early, by way of special raffle draws designed for these purposes. (Of the

winners, here, Fernando Novo and Dominique Durocher were not in attendance; their prizes have been held for them and can be picked up by them at an upcoming club meeting.)

Our fund-raising Christmas Raffle added \$60-plus to the club's coffers, capping a rather lucrative year with regard to fund-raising ventures. And, there were enough beautifully wrapped gifts under the club's Christmas tree to allow everyone present to win at least one, and often two or three prizes—Merry Christmas, everyone! We thank those who very kindly donated prize items to this raffle.

The evening proved a most enjoyable and satisfying closing MonSFFActivity of 2019.



## January

The club held its first meeting of 2020 on January 11, opening proceedings with Joe Aspler's entertaining presentation on the odd penchant of SF/F writers and producers to include in their stories references to Gilbert and Sullivan, and snippets of their songs, the famous Major-General's Song from *The Pirates of Penzance* being oft employed.

With Keith Braithwaite providing technical assistance, Joe screened clips of sci-fi films, TV shows, and video games to prove his thesis. And indeed, Gilbert and Sullivan *do* pop up randomly, unexpectedly, and amusingly in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Babylon 5*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *The Simpsons*, *The Muppet Show*, and *Mass Effect 2*, among others. Isaac Asimov was a big fan, stated Joe, but it seemed altogether strange and surprising to our group that so many SF/F writers and producers were so taken by Gilbert and Sullivan as to somehow work the 19th-century composers into their stories and films and television episodes!

Joe offered an historical overview of Gilbert and Sullivan, who composed some of the most popular light operas of all time, and were famous for their polite but cutting satire of Victorian society. He noted that dramatist Gilbert had a fondness for fantasy and whimsy that was reflected in their works.

With lyrics projected on screen, MonSFFen were challenged to sing along with Joe, tackling the difficult patter of the Major-General's Song!

Joe also included a few clips of live theatrical performances, including of his own appearance in the chorus of a Gilbert and

Sullivan production staged while he was a university student back in the day. Ex-astronaut and current Canadian Governor-General Julie Payette—an excellent vocalist, incidentally, who once sang with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra—also performed Gilbert and Sullivan during her university days. And in *H.M.S. Pinafore: Gilbert and Sullivan—The Next Generation*, a cast of M.I.T. engineering students performed *Pinafore* as Next Generation-era Starfleet officers with the familiar *Enterprise* bridge serving as principal setting!

After the mid-meeting break, during which time the membership was updated as to the club's search for a new meeting hall, Cathy Palmer-Lister oversaw a planning session in which we brainstormed ideas for 2020 meeting programming and began outlining the schedule for our next and subsequent meetings.

Among the suggested presentations were: sci-fi gadgets (ray-guns, tricorder, sonic screwdriver, etc), the art of futurist Syd Mead, urban futures, conspiracies and urban legends, "surreal-estate" (the strangest buildings and structures in sci-fi), the likelihood of alien contact, the question of whether the immense popularity of superhero movies and TV shows is a sustainable phenomenon, the cinematic works of Italy's Mario Bava, costuming and prop making for the cosplayer, and *more!* It's shaping up to be a fascinating year.

We thank all those who contributed, whether in ways major or minor, to the success of this, our first meeting of the year.

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*Josée took these pictures of our space ships made from mostly from "junk".*



Nothing was submitted for MonSFFun— next time???

