

WARP

A PUBLICATION OF THE MONTREAL SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY ASSOCIATION

Issue 110



IN MEMORIAM

SYLVAIN ST-PIERRE

1956 - 2021

MonSFFA Executive Board

President

Cathy Palmer-Lister
president@monsffa.ca

Vice President

Keith Braithwaite
veep@monsffa.ca

Co-Treasurers

Joe Aspler, L. E. Moir
treasurer@monsffa.ca

Appointed Positions

PR, Membership, editor of *Impulse*

Keith Braithwaite
impulse@monsffa.ca

Webmaster

Cathy Palmer-Lister
webmaster@monsffa.ca

WARP Editor

Danny Sichel
warpp@monsffa.ca

Keeper of the Lists

Josée Bellemare

WARP Design & Layout by Valerie Royall

On the Cover

This month's cover features a photo-montage by Keith Braithwaite, memorializing our dear departed friend and fellow MonSFFAn Sylvain St-Pierre, who passed away recently of COVID-19. Keith chose images of a space rocket and a dragon to symbolize Sylvain's spirit—his soul, if you will—rising heavenward to rest in peace amidst the stars. This rocket-and-dragon imagery has been a constant of MonSFFA's iconography throughout the years, representing science fiction and fantasy, the cornerstones of this club, to which Sylvain devoted so much energy and talent.

Contact Us:

MonSFFA
c/o 125 Léonard
Châteauguay, QC J6K 1N9
Canada

Website: www.monsffa.ca
Facebook: www.facebook.com/MonSFFA

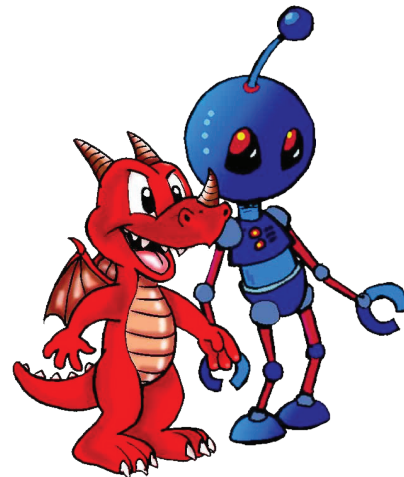
MonSFFA Calendar of Events

All in-person meetings are cancelled until further notice. Programming will be posted on our website and Facebook page a week or two ahead of the virtual meeting. Invitations to Zoom are sent to members and friends about a week before the meeting.

January 9
February 13
March 13
April 10
May 8
June 6
July 10
August 14
September 11
October 16
November 13
December 11

In theory, the book sale is scheduled for November 13 and the Holiday Feast is scheduled for December 11.

Stay safe and follow us on the internet!



The Fine Print: *WARP* is a quarterly publication of the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association, 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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Letters to the Editor

Dear MonSFFen:

Many thanks for issue 109 of *WARP*. I know I am a little late with some response, but Yvonne and I are recovering from something we were careful not to catch, but caught anyway, a case each of COVID-19. I suspect we caught it from one of the maskless idiots in our building. So, I am behind, but not out. We're getting better every day. So, while the ultimate revenge of the February 2 groundhogs rampages on the front cover, I will see what's happening behind it.

As I type, a snow squall is raging outside, threatening to make Toronto look more like Timmins. Texas, which is not used to all the snow and cold it is receiving, seems to be something frozen on a stick, with houses with little or no insulation, frozen and burst pipes, no water available, and people dying in the cold either inside or outside. Our veneer of civilization seems thinner and thinner all the time.

My letter... The editorial work with WorldVision was not renewed for 2021, with the organization preferring to save money and keep their editorial function all

domestic. I am getting more Amazing work done. The resumes continue outwards, but it's become part of an exercise. I am happy for the CRB, but the government is having internal software problems.

The review of *WARP* 22 has a letter from me responding to Kevin Holden's article on aging fans being dinosaurs. It's also 30 years old, so I guess I am one of those dinosaurs. I've now been in fandom a total of 43 years. I've lived long enough to see this pandemic affect fandom so much, and the conlist I'd usually provide is now just a list of cancellations, postponements and general announcements. The only update lately is that Darren Hann's StarCon.TO, the big Trek con he had plans for at Toronto's airport strip, has been rescheduled again, this time to the fall of 2022.

Time for me to go, and get other work done. Everyone stay safe and healthy. Now that we know what it's like to have COVID-19, I wouldn't wish it on anyone. See you in the spring!

Yours,
Lloyd Penney

Issue 110
Spring 2021

Blast From the Past

By Cathy Palmer-Lister



WARP 23: March 1993

The cover shows a lovely Velasian starship called the Dreamseeker, an example of computer art by Sylvain St-Pierre. There is more of his art on the Viewscreen, but unfortunately they did not reproduce well.

This issue marks the start of Lynda Pelley's term as president. From the Centre Seat, she thanks former president Keith Braithwaite, and welcomes some new faces to the organization of the club. Keith remains active in the club as editor of *Impulse*. I see that the upcoming meeting is scheduled to be TransWarp—the mega meeting of all the SF/F clubs in the city. MonSFFA is the only one still active.

Among the letters to the editor is a thank you card from Baird Searles, who sadly passed away soon after. Tributes to Baird came in from Kevin Holden (in rhyme), Keith, and Eugene Heller, the chair of Con*Cept. Andrew Gurudata, president of the Dr Who club, wrote to congratulate Lynda on being elected president. The HCofG, once a very active group that held a Dr Who convention in Montreal, folded when Andrew moved down the 401. Toronto Trek got the benefit of the experience he gained here in Montreal with the Festivals, the Who con, and TransWarp.

MonSFFandom reports on a panel discussion regarding *DS9*, and how it compared to *ST:TNG*. Interesting, in light of the recent debate held by current members in March. There was also a presentation on

Ray Harryhausen, by Keith, of course!

Keith wrote a favourable review of Conv-iction (yes, that's how they spelled it) and MonSFFA's presence there. One of the guests was astronaut, Ken Mooney.

Bryan Ekers' fanfiction, *Prankster*, continues with part V. I recall enjoying this story which I eventually acquired complete and bound when Bryan offered it for fund-raising.

SF on TV has reviews of several new shows offered by the networks. Of the lot, *DS9* appears to have the most appeal to the unnamed reviewer. *Babylon 5* is "disappointing" and I personally agree—the pilot was dreadful. It got better, thankfully.

A review of *Visions, en français par* Yolande Rufange, praised the Chicago Dr Who convention which is still the best fan-run con ever, IMHO, barring Worldcon. Ahh, the smell of gingerbread!

The back page is a flyer for the first Science Fiction Festival. Guests included Robin Curtis, Tony Todd (who cancelled last minute), and John Levine. The organizer was Chris Chartier who has since passed away. It was Chris who talked Yolande and me into attending Visions.

I do enjoy looking back, but there is sadness, too. So many friends, no longer with us.

MonSFFandom

By Keith Braithwaite

Change of Address

Important, please take note: Effective April 10, 2021, MonSFFA has changed its postal mailing address. All letters, cheques for membership fees, etc. should now be mailed to:

MonSFFA
c/o 125 Léonard
Châteauguay, QC, Canada
J6K 1N9

Our former Boulevard Ste-Rose, Laval address is no longer operative. Please update your address books accordingly.

Sitting Executive Acclaimed to Office for 2021

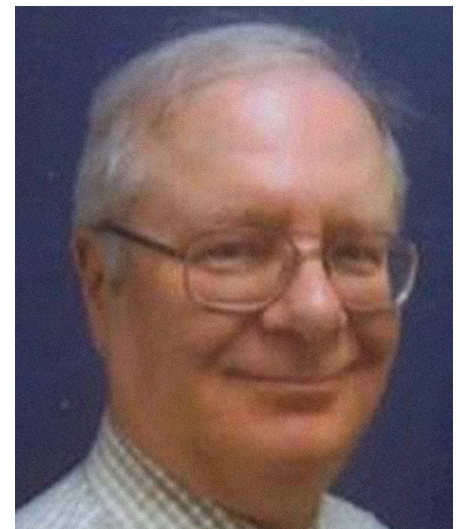
MonSFFA's annual election of its Executive Committee this year was held

during the Zoom session conducted in conjunction with the club's January 9, 2021, virtual meeting, marking the first time ever the vote was carried out online, necessitated by current circumstances.

As no other MonSFFen presented themselves as candidates for office, the club's sitting Executive Committee was acclaimed to office for 2021.

Cathy Palmer-Lister, Keith Braithwaite, and Sylvain St-Pierre all ran again for the same positions they had held in 2020, respectively, president, vice-president, and treasurer. As they ran unopposed and were prepared to continue in their posts, they were *unofficially* declared acclaimed to office shortly after the vote. An announcement was made during the February 13 online meeting formally ushering them in as MonSFFA's 2021 Executive Committee. Congratulations were extended and the three of them wished well with what will be another challenging year for the club.

Obituary: Sylvain St-Pierre



Sylvain St-Pierre

In late March of 2021, the club was rocked by the tragic news of long-time MonSFFAn Sylvain St-Pierre's sudden passing. He was 64.

Sylvain had reported having tested positive for COVID-19 and shortly thereafter, apparently succumbed to the deadly virus. At this time we know for certain only that about mid-March, he and his mother were experiencing symptoms which he thought related to the flu, and that he felt it prudent under current circumstances to book an appointment for a COVID test.

Days later, on March 25, he passed, his mother following on the 28th, a devastating turn of events for Sylvain's family.

What shocked us so was that Sylvain had been in relatively good health, and had been exceptionally careful with regard to COVID-19 safety protocols as he was caring for his elderly mother at home. He had been in communication regarding preparations for our then-upcoming April 10, 2021 virtual meeting, and had been working on content for this very issue of *WARP*. Then online communication eerily ceased and attempts to reach him through other channels proved unsuccessful. Soon thereafter, messages of condolence from family members and friends began to appear on his Facebook page, confirming the worst.

To Sylvain's family, and especially to his surviving brother, Marc, we offered our sincere sympathies, as well.

As of this writing, no formal announcement of a memorial or funeral plans has been issued by the family.

Sylvain joined MonSFFA in the very early '90s and served on the club's Executive Committee for decades as treasurer. He was an erudite, creative fellow passionate about sharing his love of science fiction and fantasy with fellow aficionados. One of our most devoted members, Sylvain tirelessly dedicated himself to club operations, and to major projects like our fanfilm productions and Montreal's MonSFFA-founded ConCept SF/F convention. He was especially committed to the club's meeting programming, producing over the decades countless extensive, well-researched, lavishly illustrated A/V presentations on a wide variety of genre topics. Rare was the MonSFFA meeting that he did not attend and to which he did not contribute. This same zeal he applied to *WARP*, authoring numerous reviews and feature articles for the publication over the years. He was also one of the principal architects of our series of virtual MonSFFA meetings, the first of these posted to the club's Web site on April 4, 2020.

We are greatly saddened and diminished by the loss of good friends to this insidious virus. Sylvain will be missed not just for his substantial contributions to our club, but far more for his kindness, warmth, generosity, sense of humour... Simply put, for his *friendship*; Rest in Peace, dear friend.

Executive Appoints Replacement Personnel as Treasurer & Auditor

In light of long-time club treasurer Sylvain St-Pierre's recent passing, the club Executive has appointed Joe Aspler and Lil Moir to take over his responsibilities, sharing the duties of that office for the remainder of the year.

Club's Virtual Meetings Archived and Available on Web Site

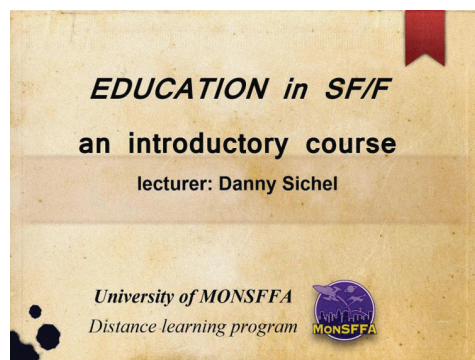
The COVID-19 crisis compelled the club to move all of its activities online for most of last year, and we anticipate much the same approach will be required for the bulk of this year. September will likely be the earliest opportunity for a return to in-person meetings, so we'll be holding our get-togethers on the club's Web site and via Zoom for a while yet.

One of the good things about holding our assemblies online is that out-of-town club members are easily able to "attend," and anyone who misses a meeting is able to access *after the fact* the presentations included as part of any given e-gathering. All of the posts that make up each virtual meeting remain archived at www.MonSFFA.ca for those who might have missed the fun day-of, or simply wish to again peruse the content that was proffered.

To facilitate that, we'll publish here, within our synopses of each meeting, the URLs for each of the posts making up each of the online gatherings we've hosted, September 2020 through April 2021. To access a specific post, or view an entire meeting, just enter the corresponding URL(s) into your web browser.

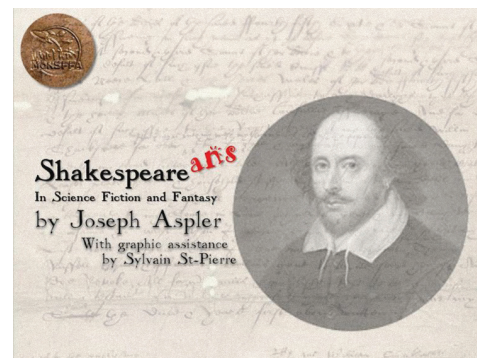
September 2020

The September 12, 2020, virtual meeting began with our usual recap of recent pandemic news, the agenda for the afternoon, a couple of coronavirus parody songs, these YouTube gems having become a staple of *all* of our e-meetings, and a trivia game prepared by Keith Braithwaite (*Post 1: www.monsffa.ca/?p=13335*).



Our major presentations for the afternoon were Danny Sichel's *Education in SF/F* (*Post 2: www.monsffa.ca/?p=13182*), exploring the genre's depictions of how

humans and aliens teach and learn, and Joe Aspler's list of Shakespearean actors who have appeared in SF/F productions (*Post 4: www.monsffa.ca/?p=12804*), which included many Canadians, no doubt owing to the famous Stratford Festival.



Between these presentations, we paused for our customary mid-meeting break, offering here our established format, the "virtual display table," a "raffle," and our Zoom session (*Post 3: www.monsffa.ca/?p=13285*). The display table photographically showcases the various genre-related crafting projects on which folk are working, our raffle affords people a chance to win a participation prize in exchange for a contribution to, or comment on the meeting, and the Zoom session enables MonSFFA to touch base with each other via a brief video-chat.

Sylvain St-Pierre added a gallery of backyard insects and arachnids (*Post 5: www.monsffa.ca/?p=13064*), often the inspiration for bizarre aliens and giant sci-fi monsters, then the meeting closed with a few more coronavirus parody songs, the answers to Keith's earlier trivia test, and a couple more items of interest, with thanks accorded all involved (*Post 6: www.monsffa.ca/?p=13342*).

October 2020

Our October 17 online get-together featured Halloween-themed content, beginning with Keith Braithwaite's liberally illustrated, comical, and bloody 19 Basic Rules for Surviving Halloween (*Post 1: www.monsffa.ca/?p=14092*!)

Next came Sylvain St-Pierre's *Many Faces of the Moon* (*Post 2: www.monsffa.ca/?p=13785*), in honour of a full and blue moon both falling on October 31—Halloween—and examining the superstitions and mythologies surrounding the moon, as well as the many science fiction stories involving our nearest celestial neighbour.

The mid-meeting break followed (*Post 3: www.monsffa.ca/?p=13711*), again comprising all of this intermission's familiar



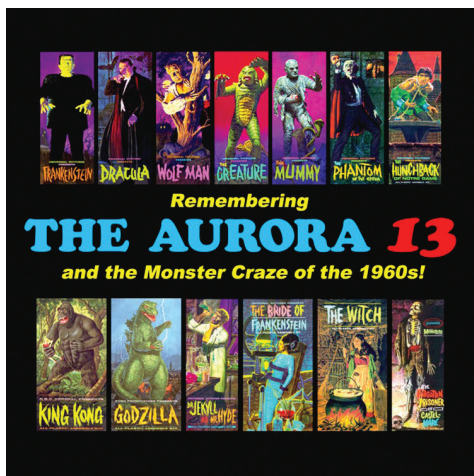
features. The latter part of the agenda advanced Joe Aspler's Mad Scientist Hall of Fame (Post 4: www.monsffa.ca/?p=13663), featuring boffins ranging from absent-minded to evil, and Josée Bellemare's suggestions for celebrating Halloween under quarantine (Post 5: www.monsffa.ca/?p=13522).

Keith returned to wrap things up (Post 6: www.monsffa.ca/?p=14098), recounting the story behind Aurora's popular 1960s and early-1970s classic movie-monster model kits and the ensuing "Monster Craze" they sparked. Thanks were extended to all of the afternoon's contributors.

November 2020

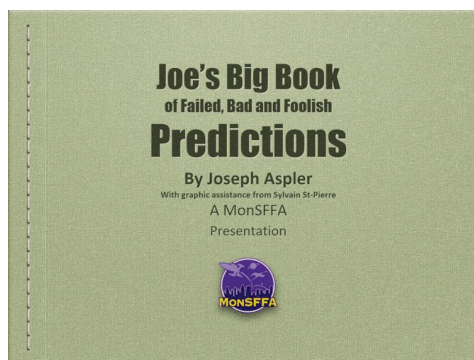
A typical November meeting would have been given over to the club's annual fund-raising sci-fi book sale, but given the continuing pandemic, we instead built our online gathering of the 14th around the theme of books.

Keith Braithwaite began by putting up a gallery of SF/F magazine- and book-cover art, asking if MonSFFers were able to identify the SF/F artists who had painted the images (Post 1: www.monsffa.ca/?p=14802).



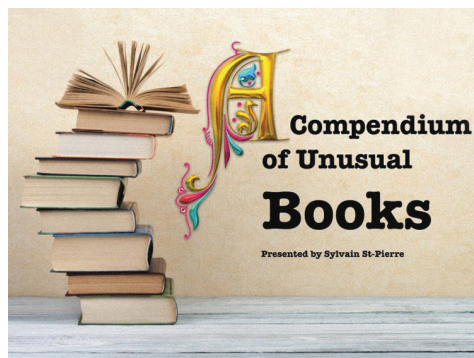
Next up was Joe Aspler's Big Book of Failed, Bad, and Foolish Predictions (Post 2: www.monsffa.ca/?p=14308), a droll look back through history to see how even

distinguished scientists and other learned men got it wrong!



Our midway pause (Post 3: www.monsffa.ca/?p=14624) was true to the afternoon's theme, among other content highlighting in snapshots some of the sizable book collections of club members.

Sylvain St-Pierre followed with his Compendium of Unusual Books (Post 4: www.monsffa.ca/?p=14280), a collection of genre-flavoured tomes oversized and miniature, thick and thin, curio-like and elaborately decorative. Josée Bellemare joined Sylvain to next mount a photographic tour of unique, beautifully appointed, and architecturally stunning bookshops and libraries from around the world (Post 5: www.monsffa.ca/?p=14485).



We closed the book on this meeting's principal programming with Keith's disclosing of the names of the artists who had rendered those cover images he assembled at the outset, and with his adieu until the next meeting with thanks to all involved (Post 6: www.monsffa.ca/?p=14823).

An additional post (Sign-Off: www.monsffa.ca/?p=14121) put up something of our own after-credits scene in the form of a vintage Merrie Melodies cartoon singing the praises of books.

December 2020

MonSFFA has not held a meeting in December for many moons. Rather, it has

long been our practice to get together at a downtown restaurant/bar for dinner and drinks in celebration of the season. In the midst of a pandemic, clearly, that just wasn't in the cards, so we opted to hold another of the online gatherings we'd been hosting since April, assigning a Holiday theme to the occasion, naturally!

Proceedings opened with seasonal greetings to all and the familiar introductory notes, plus a couple of Christmas-themed coronavirus parody songs, before the wrapping was torn off of Keith Braithwaite's Trivia Challenge for the Festive Season and his personal list of must-see Christmas movies and TV specials (Post 1: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15264).



Our Zoom session (Post 2: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15234) was expanded for the first time—courtesy MonSFFA's recently acquired Zoom subscription—and began at 1:30PM, running pretty much the whole length of the meeting, in tandem with the Web site-based content. During this video-chat, Keith gave a brief talk on the Yuletide classic *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), sharing clips and underlining the film's alternate history sequence, in which suicidal protagonist George Bailey's guardian angel allows him, on Christmas Eve, the chance to see what things would have been like for his family and friends had he never been born.

Meanwhile, Sylvain St-Pierre's tutorial went up automatically on the Web site, this being an historical overview of Christmas and other seasonal celebrations, spotlighting sci-fi's many twists on the holiday (Post 3: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15232).

Joe Aspler next outlined the history and traditions of Hanukkah (Post 4: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15123), and included video of astronaut Jeffrey Hoffman spinning the first Dreidel in space aboard the space shuttle *Endeavour*! Joe simultaneously gave his seminar live as part of the Zoom.

The break followed, with our display table sporting a couple of Christmas articles (Post 5: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15150), then

Josée Bellemare put forward her rundown of the various traditions extant at this time of year, from Christmas and Hanukkah to Kwanzaa and New Year's Eve (Post 6: www.monsffa.ca/?p=14958).

Festivities concluded (Post 7: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15364) with the answers to Keith's earlier posted trivia quiz, a nod of thanks to everyone who contributed to the meeting, and a closing "Merry Christmas to all, and to all, a good night!"

January 2021

We began 2021's MonSFFActivities with our January 9 virtual conclave, kicking off a new year with word on the latest public health restriction to be imposed in the ongoing battle with rising COVID-19 case numbers: a Québec-wide nightly curfew, scheduled to begin this very evening at 8:00PM. Also, having suspended the collection of annual membership fees almost a year ago after the club's March 2020 meeting, notice was here given of MonSFFA's intention to start collecting said fees again, beginning in April 2021. Keith Braithwaite opened programming proper with his New Year's Anagram Challenge, in which folk were tasked with unscrambling the names of sci-fi luminaries. And, as MonSFFA's 2021 Executive Committee was to be selected during the afternoon's Zoom, a primer laid out the details of the club's election procedures, modified this year to take place online (Post 1: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15855).

At 1:30PM, our Zoom session opened and would run the length of the meeting, as it had the previous month (Post 2: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15635).

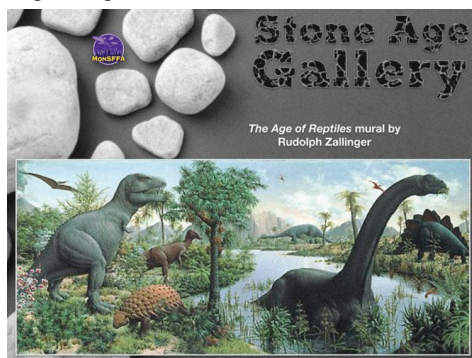
Other People's Toys (Post 3: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15617) was shortly put up, being Danny Sichel's discussion of fan fiction, or "fanfic."

Break-time was then upon us (Post 4: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15539), and during this recess, the club's elections took place (see "Sitting Executive Acclaimed to Office for 2021," above) and a request was made for

more folk to pitch in with content for future meetings.

Joe Aspler was up next with his Libraries, Books, and L-Space (Post 5: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15619), exploring through the works of Terry Pratchett and others the power and magic of books, and the places that house them. Amazingly, Joe even gave "proof" of the *genuine* existence of L-space, those multidimensional folds within which *all* libraries *everywhere* are connected!

Sylvain St-Pierre's Stone Age Gallery (Post 6: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15622) was an assemblage of various things prehistoric, Sylvain reasoning that the world could use a reset after last year, so why not start at the beginning?



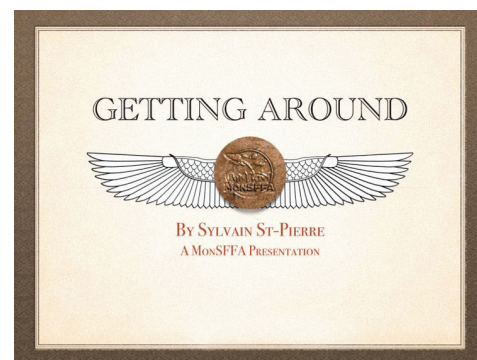
Keith wrapped up by unscrambling for folks those anagrams he'd posted at the top of the meeting, giving thanks to those who saw to the afternoon's programming, and inviting people to return the following month for another MonSFFA DIY, Virtual Meeting (Post 7: www.monsffa.ca/?p=15860).

February 2021

Transportation systems of the future and a listing of the many Shakespearean actors also appearing in SF/F productions featured in this February 13 e-gathering, along with numerous other items of interest, including Jeff Fanworthy's Top Ten Signs You Might Be In a Post-Apocalyptic Sci-Fi Movie, Keith Braithwaite's amusing mash-up of pandemic-themed images and the signature comedy routines of Jeff Foxworthy and David Letterman. Also on tap, more of Keith's Anagram Challenge, which had proved quite a popular game when introduced the previous month (Post 1: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16334).

The commencement of our simultaneously-running Zoom session was announced (Post 2: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16225), followed in short order by Sylvain St-Pierre's copiously illustrated slideshow examining transportation, historically and as imagined by inventors,

and science fiction writers and illustrators (Post 3: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16221).



The break (Post 4: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16156) spotlighted more of the genre-themed crafting projects of MonSFFen while including notice that the latest issue of **WARP** was now available for download, and that a new editor and layout artist would be taking over responsibility for the publication as of the next issue.

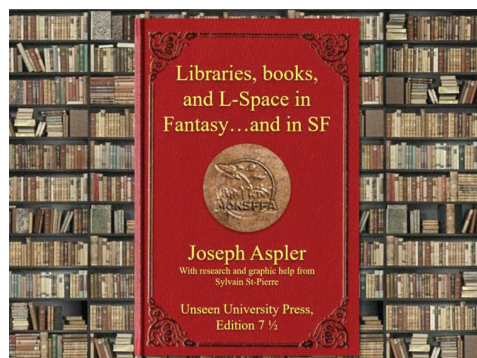
Illuminated with plenty of photographs and video-clips, Joe Aspler's second list of Shakespearean actors and actresses who have also lent their talents to science fiction and fantasy productions followed (Post 5: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16058), this a sequel to his September presentation.

Sylvain had intended, here, to include a photo gallery but begged off, offering his apologies and writing simply that he "could not muster the strength" (Post 6: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16223). We did not and would not have recognized it at the time, but was this, perhaps, a dire harbinger of what was to come the following month?

Keith wrapped up our February get-together by unscrambling the anagrams he'd posted off the top of the meeting and thanking all contributors to the afternoon's programming before closing proceedings (Post 7: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16363).

March 2021

Our March 13 meeting began with Keith Braithwaite's busy introduction (Post 1: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16961), covering the latest COVID news and noting that the pandemic had been officially so-labelled by the WHO one year ago, almost to the day. Several coronavirus parody songs were included, as usual, along with a series of "dad jokes," and notes of club business. His presentation on the early-1970s Canadian-made sci-fi series *The Starlost* made up the bulk of the post, relating the story of the creation and production of this ignominious and ill-fated show, ultimately abandoned





and disparaged by its creator, mercurial SF writer Harlan Ellison.

The next post (*Post 2: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16558*) served only to officially kick-off the afternoon's Zoom session and was shortly followed by Joe's dissertation on British author Terry Pratchett's multi-book Discworld series (*Post 3: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16560*), initially a spoof of the classic sword-and-sorcery subgenre before evolving into wry modern satire. With Sylvain St-Pierre's helping hand, Joe provided a visitor's guide of sorts, highlighting major characters, settings, story arcs, screen adaptations, etc.

The mid-meeting break (*Post 4: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16709*) showcased the in-progress scale-modelling projects of a number of club members and led into an open Zoom discussion of *Star Trek's* best and worst episodes (*Post 5: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16564*), with participants putting forth their selections and explaining the reasoning behind their choices. Some of the meeting



programming we have been including every month, like this discussion, was by now being set up to run exclusively during our Zoom sessions, sometimes opposite unrelated content available on the Web site.

Next came Sylvain St-Pierre's brief history of the club's series of virtual meetings (*Post 6: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16566*), outlining how the format was conceived and developed, and showcasing the various online avatars he had designed to represent each of the contributors to these meetings

over the past year, among other illustrative touches.



Keith's quick closing post put up a few additional parody songs, more dad jokes, and signed off with thanks to all involved (*Post 7: www.monsffa.ca/?p=16996*).

April 2021

With heavy hearts did we convene on the 10th for a special memorial meeting dedicated to our late friend and fellow MonSFFAn Sylvain St-Pierre (*Post 1: www.monsffa.ca/?p=17207*). What had been planned on this occasion for the anniversary of our very first online meeting a year ago was postponed in order to pay homage to our fallen comrade, a casualty of the continuing war against COVID-19.



*Sylvain at the 2007 Con*Cept Masquerade
Photo courtesy of Joe Aspler*

Invited to participate were not only Sylvain's fellow club members, but any in Montreal and greater SF/F fandom who had known him. From as far away as California, Vancouver, and Winnipeg to localities

nearer like Toronto, Ottawa, and Quebec City, friends-in-fandom joined MonSFFen and other local fans for the afternoon's Zoom gathering to pay their respects and fondly remember our dearly departed SF/F compatriot.

In his honour, a selection of the exceptional "MonSFFA Virtual Presentations" Sylvain had produced over the previous 12 months for our series of online meetings were rerun on the club's Web site during the course of the afternoon. These were Communication in SF&F, Parts 1 and 2 (*Post 2: www.monsffa.ca/?p=17128*), A Compendium of Unusual Books (*Post 4: www.monsffa.ca/?p=17145*), and the photo gallery It Came from the Garden, showcasing an album of backyard bugs which served as inspiration for some of sci-fi's aliens and monsters (*Post 5: www.monsffa.ca/?p=17143*).

The mid-meeting break, for the most part, melded into the reminiscences offered by those taking part in the Zoom and Keith Braithwaite's closing post thanked all for participating and included a final tribute to Sylvain in the form of a commemorative video (*Post 6: www.monsffa.ca/?p=17222*).



Photo courtesy of Josée Bellemare



Fiction: *Starfleet Treachery*

By Barbara Silverman

The story so far: Captain Kathryn Janeway has pursued Maquis leader Chakotay into the Badlands, where their confrontation is interrupted by a displacement wave that takes them to the other side of the galaxy. The two captains agree to a truce, and discover that the wave was created by a mysterious device: the Array. They encounter a powerful alien being that calls itself the Caretaker of the Array, and presents itself as an old man. After the Caretaker dies, the captains realize that they are amidst the wreckage of several other ships also brought here by the Array: it is a constant threat, and may need to be destroyed -- but this will make it impossible to return home. Worse, Kazon ships are approaching, and Voyager's warp core is still damaged. When the Kazon demand that Voyager give them control of the Array, Janeway opens fire on it instead.

CHAPTER 54

The Array exploded in a huge ball of fire, sending billions of fragments hurtling through space... and taking with it the hopes of Starfleet and Maquis for a quick way home.

The two stranded ships were alone, with just each other to depend on while attempting to find their way home. A home that lay on the other side of seventy thousand light-years of unknown space.

Standing near the turbolift, Neelix held Kes tightly in his arms. She buried her head against his shoulder, both wondering what their new friends would now do – both realizing and understanding the sacrifice that had been made, by the strangers who had been brought here against their will.

A sacrifice made to protect others who, living all over the galaxy, would never know of the events that had just transpired.

Harry Kim's console beeped. Momentarily confused, he looked down at the flashing light. "Captain, the Kazon are hailing us."

Taking a deep breath, Janeway nodded. Facing the Kazon was the last thing she wanted. She felt Chakotay's hand lightly brush against hers, just enough to let her know she was not alone. "On screen!"

An enraged face appeared. "You will pay for this!"

The screen went blank, then a view of space.

His voice barely above a whisper, the Maquis leader broke the silence. "You did what had to be done. There was no other way."

Janeway turned to the man who was now a friend and ally. "That... does not make it any easier. On top of everything it appears we have made our first enemy, and have a major battle on our hands."

Chakotay met her gaze, then looked at the floating debris field. "Unfortunately yes! Not a good way to begin making first contacts."

With a small smile he turned back to the captain. "We survived the trip here, we found Harry and B'Elanna, we made new friends, we will find a way home. Now.... I think it's time for Evans and I to return to our ship."

Janeway nodded. "After the battle I suggest meeting as soon as possible. We have a lot to discuss."

With a touch of devilment in her eyes the captain turned to Evans. "Thank you for helping. You make a good Starfleet officer."

Glancing at Chakotay, Evans laughed. "Thanks, Captain! Working on a bridge under the command of a Starfleet captain is an experience I never expected. I'm looking forward to the day when I can tell this to my wife and son. But I'll need your help, they will never believe me."

The laughter in his eyes disappeared, to be replaced by sadness tinged with compassion. "If it's any consolation, I understand why you destroyed the Array. I agree with your decision. It might be a long time before I see Charlotte and Steven again, but at least they're safe from that displacement wave, and from the Kazon."

As the strain of the last few minutes caught up with her, Janeway found it difficult to speak. Instead she gave a quick, sharp nod. Here in this alien region of space she may have made an enemy, but she had also made some very unlikely friends. "I'll see you and Chakotay later."

She turned to ops. "Harry, make sure the tactical link is secure."

"Understood, Captain. I'll keep it open." Thinking of at least one friend that he had onboard the other ship, Harry Kim would definitely maintain the link.

Realizing that Chakotay and Evans were not their only new friends, Janeway looked in the direction of the turbolift. "Neelix, Kes, for the time being you had better remain onboard. After the battle, Chakotay and I will discuss how best to proceed. We'll want to speak with you again and see those star charts. In the meantime, I suggest returning to your quarters where it will be safe."

"Certainly, Captain, certainly." Grabbing Kes by the arm, Neelix pulled her into the turbolift. He definitely did not wish to be on the bridge of a ship while it was engaged in a battle with the Kazon.

Chakotay strode towards the turbolift, then paused, a small, sad smile on his face. "It appears... you will have that guided tour, and another opportunity to try my coffee."

Janeway nodded her head. "Yes... we'll have plenty of time."

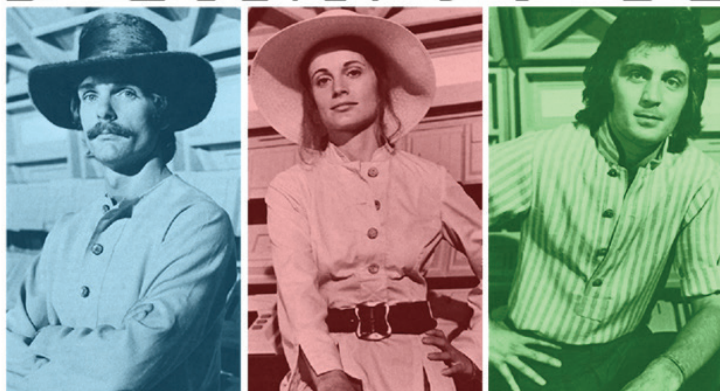
With that, Chakotay and Evans left the Starfleet bridge, returning to their own ship.

Captain Janeway walked over to her command chair. "Red alert!"



Feature: *The Starlost*

By Keith Braithwaite



EARTHSHIP ARK: HUNDREDS OF MILES LONG... A HUGE GRAPELIKE CLUSTER OF METAL DOMES, EACH A TINY WORLD ISOLATED FROM ALL THE OTHERS. IN THE COUNTLESS GENERATIONS THAT HAVE LIVED AND DIED SINCE THE LAUNCHING OF THE ARK, EVERYONE HAS FORGOTTEN THAT THE EARTH EVER EXISTED... FORGOTTEN THAT THEY ARE STREAKING THROUGH SPACE ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH DISASTER. FORGOTTEN... UNTIL ONE MAN STUMBLES ON THE TRUTH: THAT THEY ARE THE STARLOST!—excerpt, *Starlost* production bible

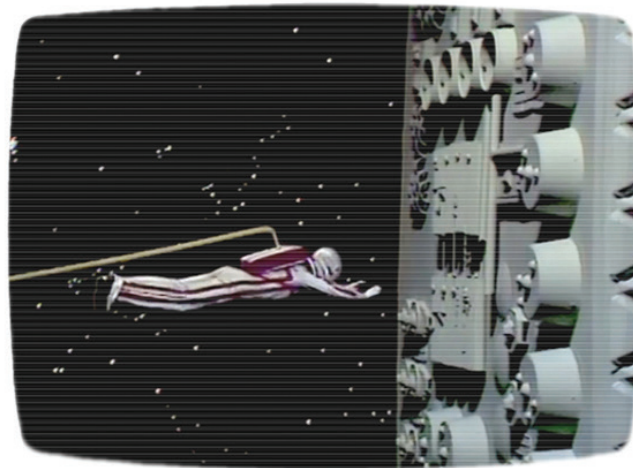
The Starlost was a short-lived, Canadian-produced science fiction television series created by SF writer Harlan Ellison. The show originally aired between September 22, 1973 and January 5, 1974 on the CTV network, and on a number of stations in the U.S.

CREATOR/STORY EDITOR HARLAN ELLISON HAS WON INNUMERABLE SCIENCE FICTION AWARDS, INCLUDING ONE FOR A STAR TREK SCRIPT AND ONE FOR EDITING THE “NEW WAVE” ANTHOLOGY, DANGEROUS VISIONS. HIS STORIES AND ARTICLES HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED INTO SIXTEEN LANGUAGES, HAVE BEEN ANTHOLOGIZED OVER 200 TIMES, AND ARE INCLUDED IN A DOZEN “BEST ANTHOLOGIES” LISTS.—excerpt, *Starlost* production bible

At first glance, *Starlost* seemed a sure-fire bet to rival science fiction television's best, boasting an unparalleled SF pedigree. Along with Ellison were Keir Dullea, Douglas Trumbull, and Ben Bova, these four respectively the show's creator, star, visual effects specialist,

and science expert. Ellison was an avant-garde and award-winning speculative fiction writer, Dullea and Trumbull alumni of Stanley Kubrick's influential *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), a landmark of science fiction cinema, and Bova a writer of hard SF stories and then the Hugo Award-winning editor of *Analog Science Fiction and Fact* magazine.

And yet, the series proved an unmitigated fiasco, not quite of Ed Woodian proportions, but enough to earn deserved scorn by critics and sci-fi fans alike. In the end, *The Starlost* was unceremoniously



TOP: Each week, Devon, Rachel, and Garth set out on another slow-paced, talky, dull adventure, navigating their way around plot holes big enough to fly the Earthship Ark through.

ABOVE: Spacewalk, with an absurdly rigid umbilicus.

abandoned by its angry and exasperated creator before the show had even premiered! Dropped only 16 wretched episodes in, after less than four months on the air, the series has justifiably been labelled one of the worst science fiction shows ever produced.

Much of what has been written about the making of *Starlost* sprang from the bitter pen of Harlan Ellison, and thus there's an obvious bias, a one-sidedness in the telling of the tale, to be taken,

perhaps, with a grain of salt. The often mercurial Ellison had little patience with, and ample venom to spit at, those he felt had bastardized his creative efforts. He'd locked horns, for instance, with Gene Roddenberry over the *Star Trek* creator's rewrite of his "City on the Edge of Forever" script. *The Starlost* people he held in particular disdain, labelling them "butchers and Visigoths."

As best I can piece together the sorry saga of the show based on the research I have uncovered, this is the story:

In February of 1973, 20th Century Fox television producer Robert Kline met with SF writer Harlan Ellison to discuss ideas around which could be built a science fiction series. Kline was putting together a proposal for a group of prime-time mini-series to be co-produced by the BBC and Fox, one of which would be a science fiction show. Ellison was intrigued, keen for the opportunity to write what he categorized as "a novel for television," like *The Prisoner* (1967). Kline's initial thought was to create an outer space version of the popular crime drama *The Fugitive* (1963-1967), but Ellison was not terribly impressed by this concept and quickly dissuaded the producer of that notion, instead proposing a few ideas of his own.

The two finally settled on a simple science fiction trope, what Ellison termed an "enclosed universe" tale involving a gigantic spaceship ferrying the last of humanity to a new home among the distant stars. Robert A. Heinlein had popularized the idea with his novellas "Universe" and "Common Sense" (*Astounding Science Fiction*, 1941; together as a novel, 1963) but the concept of an interstellar Noah's Ark dates back to rocket pioneer Robert Goddard's "The Ultimate Migration" (1918). The twist in the story is that the descendants of the original passengers, after hundreds of years enclosed within the vessel, have lost any awareness that they are on a spaceship. Further, an accident has knocked the ship off-course and set it on an ill-fated trajectory.

THE STARLOST: THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURE OF A GIANT SPACECRAFT CARRYING THE SURVIVORS OF A DEAD PLANET EARTH ON THE MOST CRITICAL MISSION EVER LAUNCHED BY MAN: AN ENDLESS JOURNEY ACROSS THE UNIVERSE IN SEARCH OF A NEW WORLD.—excerpt, *Starlost* production bible

Kline liked the idea but claimed that no money was yet available to pay Ellison for a proper prospectus, urging the writer to instead provide him with a simple tape recording of the show's framework which could then be used to sell the concept. Ellison was hesitant as this amounted to working on speculation and, at the very least, skirted Writers Guild rules, though it did seem to him something of a grey area. Ellison finally agreed to tape-record a rough précis of his idea onto an audio cassette, authorizing Kline to use the recording to sell the show to the BBC while expressly forbidding that it be transcribed.

The BBC passed, judging the show too expensive an undertaking. Undaunted, Kline downgraded his ambitions and opted for low-budget syndication, managing to sell *The Starlost* to Canada's CTV Network, and in the U.S., to the Westinghouse Network and NBC's owned-and-operated stations. His pitch included a transcription of Ellison's tape-recorded outline!

The series would be produced in Toronto by Glen-Warren Productions, taped at TV station CFTO's facilities, and take advantage of government subsidies offered at the time to encourage Canadian content, in support of the country's developing entertainment



Shooting a scene for the last Starlost episode, at CFTO's studios in Toronto. Cast and crew later recalled that the set was so small that it hindered production.

industry. This compelled the production to hire Canadian personnel, including writers, who would pen scripts based on treatments provided by established SF novelists—Ellison had invited his fellow genre wordsmiths to submit story ideas. Ellison himself would write six scripts, including the series opener, and serve as story editor.

That was the plan, anyway.

ALL OF THE STORIES WILL BE SPRINGBOARDED BY ORIGINAL STORYLINES COMMISSIONED FROM THE LEADING SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS OF THE WORLD. NAMES LIKE A.E. VAN VOGT, FRANK HERBERT, JOANNA RUSS, THOMAS M. DISCH, ALEXEI PANSIN, PHILIP K. DICK AND MANY OTHERS. EACH STORY WILL EMERGE FROM THE SPECIAL DREAMS OF THOSE WHO HAVE MADE A PROFESSION OF THE IMAGINATIVE, THEY WILL BE DELIVERED INTO THE TENDER MERCIES OF FINE CANADIAN SCRIPTWRITERS, THEY WILL BE MADE ACCURATE SCIENTIFICALLY BY BEN BOVA, AND THEY'LL BE RAMRODDED BY MYSELF. THEN THE WORDS WILL BE TURNED INTO LIVING VISIONS THROUGH THE MAGICS OF DOUGLAS TRUMBULL, EASILY THE TOP SORCERER IN THE FIELD OF VIDEOTAPE AND SPECIAL EFFECTS.... THOUGHT AND EXECUTION ARE THE KEYNOTES OF DOUG'S METHOD, AND HE HAS CREATED ENTIRELY NEW VISUAL TECHNIQUES TO MAKE WHATEVER YOU ENVISION SPRING TO LIFE.—excerpt, Harlan Ellison's word to potential scriptwriters, *Starlost* production bible

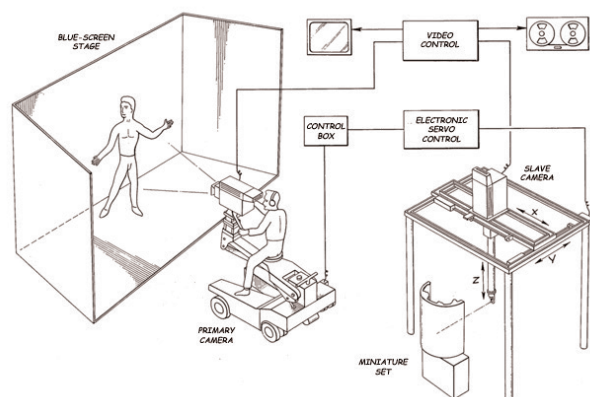
Other than Ellison himself, the only name writer associated with the show was Ursula K. Le Guin, whose submission became the episode "The Goddess Calabra," earning her a "from a story by" credit.

Ellison later avowed that several scripts were, in fact, entirely written by Americans, side-stepping CanCon rules, and this is true in at least one instance. "And Only Man is Vile" was scripted by Shimon Wincelberg, who had written for series such as *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (1964-1968), *Lost in Space* (1965-1968), *The Wild Wild West* (1965-1969), and, under the nom de plume S. Bar-David, *Star Trek* (1966-1969).

Meanwhile, special photographic effects innovator Douglas

Trumbull was gearing up to play his part in the production. Trumbull was known for his work on *Space Odyssey*, *The Andromeda Strain* (1971), and his own ecology-themed SF film, *Silent Running* (1972), the spaceship featured therein apparently stripped for parts when fabricating *Starlost*'s giant Earthship Ark. Trumbull and his partners had freshly devised their Magicam Composite Photography System, which was to be employed in shooting the series.

This pre-CGI technology linked a primary servo-controlled camera shooting actors performing before a blue screen to a second photographing a miniature set so that both cameras moved in proportionate synchronicity, thereby allowing the real-time melding of the two shots into a single video image. In a nutshell, the Magicam promised to seamlessly place actors onto and move with them through a detailed miniature environment, a cost-saving measure that precluded the need to build and dress expensive full-scale sets.



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER DOUGLAS TRUMBULL'S REVOLUTIONARY "MAGICAM" CAMERA TECHNIQUE GIVES THE STARLOST THE MOST EXCITING AND REALISTIC SPECIAL EFFECTS EVER ACHIEVED ON TELEVISION.—*excerpt, Starlost production bible*

Unfortunately, Magicam failed to work as advertised, dealing an injurious blow to the production and forcing a reassessment of plans. As the Toronto studio space rented was too small to accommodate the now required full-sized sets, only partial sets could be erected in the cramped space available, encumbering production. Also necessitated was a retreat to the use of simpler, conventional chroma-key compositing, brooking resultant static and decidedly less dynamic shots. The finished product had that regrettable, cheap patina of a local TV station's weather segment, the forecaster outlined against their map by the fuzzy contour of visible haloing. This low-rent look certainly did not help the show's popularity, especially in the U.S.

Ellison had heard nothing from Kline since their initial meeting. He was unaware that Trumbull was attached to the project, or that the BBC had been pitched since that initial meeting, and had declined to become involved. When he finally met again with Kline, Ellison was thrilled to hear that the show had been sold! His elation was short-lived, however, when Kline elaborated, explaining that said sale had been made to a *Canadian* TV network.

Ellison was none too happy to find that he was headed not to swinging London, as expected, but instead to staid Toronto. The wheels were already in motion, he realized, even though he had yet

to sign a contract with "slick operator" Kline, who had successfully peddled Ellison's concept without to date having paid the writer a dime. Kline promised him creative control and dubbed him story editor, so Ellison pressed on.

A promotional campaign for the series was hurriedly prepared, the artwork depicting a huge meteor buckling the hull of an old-fashioned bullet-shaped rocket, shattering the living quarters within. Ellison bemoaned the illustration, noting that first of all, the show's spaceship hadn't yet been designed, and secondly, that it would most assuredly not look anything like this thing! He intended to tap the greater expertise of Ben Bova in conceiving of a feasible, scientifically sound spacecraft. Kline had a series to promote and apparently no time for such niceties. Ellison could only lament the profound ignorance exhibited by most television executives when it came to science fiction, more concerned are they with nifty special effects.

At about this time, Ellison also learned that *Space Odyssey* star Keir Dullea was top-most on the producer's list to play the lead, a casting choice he felt was all wrong. He argued that the role required someone who could credibly look the part of a peasant farmer, at home toiling in the dirt, the polar opposite of the chic, coiffed, metropolitan Dullea. When conceiving of the character, Ellison



TOP: Winnipeg-born William Osler played the image and voice of the Ark's Host Computer.

ABOVE: Harlan Ellison wanted his friend, *Star Trek*'s Walter Koenig (foreground), to play lead Devon, but the producers chose *Space Odyssey*'s Keir Dullea (background) instead. Ellison then tried to have Koenig cast as Garth, and again failed. Koenig was finally cast as the alien, Oro, in which role he was the only guest star to appear in more than one episode.

had envisioned in the role his friend Walter Koenig, known for his turn as *Star Trek*'s Ensign Chekov. But despite Ellison's objections, it seems Dullea was to be cast, and the writer suspected that Kline had already made a commitment to the actor, effectively leaving Ellison out of an important creative decision. This presaged the growing frictions between writer and producer that eventually led to Ellison's stormy departure from the series.

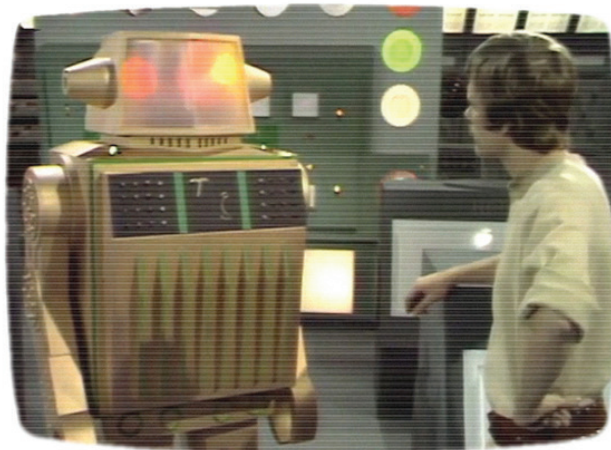
It's not clear if Kline had secured Dullea's commitment, and perhaps Trumbull's as well, *prior* to Ellison's. The producer was putting together a package of names with which he might more readily sell the proposed series. In Hollywood, it's people like Kline who organize and cajole and cross-pollinate creative types to make things happen. Because of their involvement with the phenomenal *Space Odyssey*, Dullea and Trumbull were both regarded as big fish in the science fiction pond. The promise of their participation would go a long way towards selling a sci-fi TV series to backers. Add Ellison to the mix for good measure, and surely were elevated Kline's chances of closing the deal. I suspect Ellison's ego may not have allowed him to consider that it hadn't all started with his idea. And it's not inconceivable that Kline saw him not as the top get, but as an extra, albeit savory ingredient in the recipe.

Looming over all of this was an impending writers' strike. A dutiful Writers Guild of America member, Ellison informed Kline that were a walk-out to be called, he would not type a single word until the strike was settled. Kline brushed off such talk, telling Ellison not to worry about it, and that something would be worked out.

The WGA strike was, indeed, soon thereafter declared. Regardless, Ellison found himself under increasing pressure to get to work on the show's "bible," essentially the necessary blueprint of any episodic television drama. This is a handbook outlining characters, setting, story arcs, and other pertinent details, serving as a guide to everyone from the producer and production designer to the special effects crew and prop-makers, and most especially to any prospective scriptwriters. After much back and forth between Ellison and Kline—involving, to hear Ellison's account, a lot of rather shady monkey business on Kline's part—an arrangement was arrived at that would allow Ellison to begin work on the bible by virtue of *The Starlost* being a wholly Canadian production. As such, the production was under no obligation to respect the WGA strike. Kline had successfully lobbied the Canadian performers union ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television, and Radio Artists) to so decree the production.



Angel Tompkins (right) guest-stars as CGI: a computer-generated illusion.



TOP: The special effects budget could not accommodate giant bees. What it could accommodate was stock footage.

ABOVE: A... robot?

"So...I sat down and I wrote the bible," Ellison related in a radio interview conducted soon after he had left the series. "Good bible, too."

Later, arriving in Toronto, he met newly appointed Canadian producer William Davidson, who had recently wrapped the popular half-hour CBC family-friendly drama *Adventures in Rainbow Country* (1970-1971), which he'd created. Davidson began his career writing and directing short films at the NFB and later worked on the CBC children's series *Junior Roundup* (1960-1961), *Razzle Dazzle* (1961-1966), and *The Forest Rangers* (1963-1965). Ellison quickly gauged that Davidson "knew nothing about science fiction."

Meetings with scriptwriters had been set up and Ellison and Davidson began a marathon of interviews. "I met twenty-four writers in twelve-and-a-half, thirteen hours, a half an hour each" Ellison recalled, "and I had to go on my gut instinct about who could write and who couldn't." He would whittle the prospects down to about a dozen, but it was readily apparent to him that these people had little if any familiarity with, or understanding of, the science fiction genre. "They were nice people," but "just couldn't cut it" writing science fiction, or for that matter, episodic television. "They just had no idea!"

Feeding them off-the-cuff notions of his own to get them started, Ellison set the Canadians to work writing. They were "energetic and anxious to learn," he observed, but what came back was simply unusable, earnest but clichéd—Westerns in space, giant ant stories, talking plant tales, space pirate yarns, and so on. He took another tack, enlisting Bova's help in plotting out stories, which were then assigned to the scriptwriters. And he asked that a good assistant



Children on the Ark 'play' by wearing neural stimulators.

story editor be hired to handle the rewrites that would inevitably be required. "I was not about to spend the rest of my natural life in a motel in Toronto rewriting other people's words."

Bova had been brought in as technical advisor at Ellison's insistence so that show would get the science right. He was to review scripts, highlight any scientific inaccuracies, and suggest possible changes so that errors could be corrected in the final draft. Bova recalls that he was handsomely paid, even though his advice was totally ignored.

Ellison laboured under a panoply of maddening dictums issued by production executives who had him working tirelessly with his crop of SF-deficient dramatists. A lot of his time was consumed troubleshooting their scripts while simultaneously writing the show's opening episode, all the time taking more meetings with the executives, who were "revamping and altering arrangements daily." On top of all that, he was also dealing with ballooning pre-production "crises," including the circulation of a "scab bible" that Kline had commissioned from another writer in L.A. during the WGA strike, then later promised would be excised from the production. This document contradicted Ellison's proper bible and had confused matters greatly, the crew having wasted time and money on, for example, sets that were not actually required for the show.

Increasingly frustrated by the penny-pinching, the endless, niggling changes to story details—ill-conceived and all for the worse—and what he characterized as Davidson's chaotic management of the production, Ellison was fast losing enthusiasm for and faith in the show. He'd come in with hopes of creating "a dream the shape and sound and colour of which had never been seen on television." He was finding that this dream was quickly becoming a nightmare. "In the hands of the inept, the untalented, the venal, and the corrupt, *The Starlost* became a veritable Mount Everest of cow flop," he later wrote in "Somehow, I Don't Think We're in Kansas, Toto," an article outlining the whole sordid story of his involvement with the series.

A scriptwriter named Norman Klenman had been suggested by producer Davidson, Kline, and CTV's representative as someone who might be able to help out with story editing duties. A Canadian who had previously worked with Davidson on a couple of projects, he had travelled south in pursuit of the big money to be had working in American TV. Klenman had experience writing for American series, and he satisfied CanCon requirements. His sole sci-fi credit: story co-writer on a single episode of *The Invaders* (1967-1968).

Klenman telephoned Ellison, introduced himself, offered that Davidson had recommended he call, and told Ellison that he'd read

the production bible and found it "difficult and confusing." He acknowledged that he did not understand science fiction, but was willing to learn under Ellison's tutelage. Holed up in L.A. and facing deadline on his first-episode script, Ellison couldn't spare the time to discuss anything at this particular moment and put Klenman off until a later date.

Ellison completed his script, calling the story "Phoenix Without Ashes," and sent it off to Toronto.

It wasn't long before Davidson called with questions, concerns, or to notify Ellison of arbitrary alterations that had to be made to the script in order to get around some production problem or other. When informed that the diameter of the Ark's biospheres had been changed from fifty miles to six, but that no one would notice or care about the discrepancy this created in the narrative, which suddenly made no sense, Ellison recognized that precise brand of gormless ignorance with which it was futile to argue. He knew with abject certainty that the series was "destined for the ashcan." The "unimaginative, hidebound, and obstinately arrogant thinking that emerged from total unfamiliarity with the subject" led to "mistake after mistake," he stated in his aforementioned article.

Ellison walked.

In the wake of his exit, Klenman was hired as the new story editor. And he *rewrote* Ellison's script. *Klenman* did! The writer who by his own admission *did not understand science fiction*!

Ellison had written the character of Garth as a friend-turned-antagonist, compelled by the mores of his backward, quasi-religious society of rigid tradition and unquestioning obedience to pursue renegades Devon and Rachel, retrieve her, and execute him for his transgressions, as decreed by the Elders. Relentlessly tracking his quarry, hunting them, always close, Garth was to provide a level of constant peril for Devon and Rachel throughout the run of the series. Only on occasion would he grudgingly unite with them to fight off a greater mutual danger encountered in the corridors or biospheres of the Ark as they traversed the great vessel.

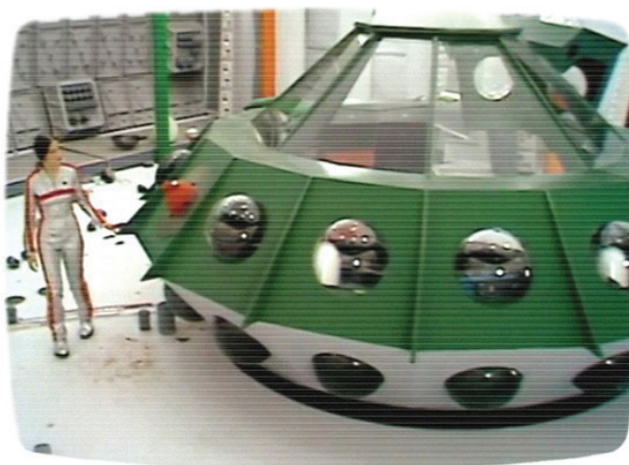
Ironically, this seems a scenario not unlike *The Fugitive*. In space. Kline's face must have had quite the smug grin!

In any case, Klenman threw all of that out and positioned Garth immediately, if reluctantly, side by side with Devon and Rachel, wary of following them into unknown dangers but willing to do so in order to ensure her safety.



Garth (right) was originally intended as an antagonist, a constant threat to protagonists Devon and Rachel. But when Harlan Ellison quit the series, Norman Klenman took over as story editor and rewrote Garth into an ally, establishing the show's heroic trio.

I OFFER HERE THE THEME OF THE SERIES AS CONCEIVED BY MYSELF: IT IS THE LONG STORY OF THREE YOUNG PEOPLE DISCOVERING THEIR WORLD, AND THEIR PLACE IN IT. IT IS ALSO A STUDY OF MANY DIFFERENT CULTURES IN CONFLICT WITH EACH OTHER. OH, OF COURSE IT'S ADVENTURE, AND EXOTIC SOCIETIES, AND THE WONDER OF DEEP SPACE, BUT THOSE ARE MERELY THE SURFACE ELEMENTS THAT PERMIT US TO STUDY OURSELVES THROUGH THE EYES OF TWO YOUNG MEN AND A YOUNG WOMAN AS THEY GO ON "THE SEARCH." —
excerpt, Starlost production bible



Rachel discovers Oro's full-scale flying saucer.

Ellison intended that the quest to locate the *Ark's* controls underpin the entire series and permit his characters to develop over the course of the show. He had Devon and Rachel fleeing their Cypress Corners home, with Garth dispatched to chase them down. Making their way through the *Ark*, from biosphere to biosphere, they discover the diverse societies established therein and explore this greater world than ever they knew existed. They seek insight, help, and acquire knowledge about the workings of the *Ark* so that when they finally find the ship's bridge, they're capable of correcting her doomed course. From the control room, the engines can be restarted, the vessel piloted clear of an impending stellar collision, and all aboard saved. Series over, roll credits. Klenman dumbed down what Ellison had laid out and chose to put Devon, Rachel, and Garth on the bridge in the very first scene of the very first episode, well before they were sufficiently equipped to fulfill their heroic destiny. Ellison had envisioned his protagonists ultimately finding the bridge in the series-ender, not the opening episode.

Finally, Klenman changed Ellison's title, "Phoenix Without Ashes," to the much less poetically mythological "Voyage of

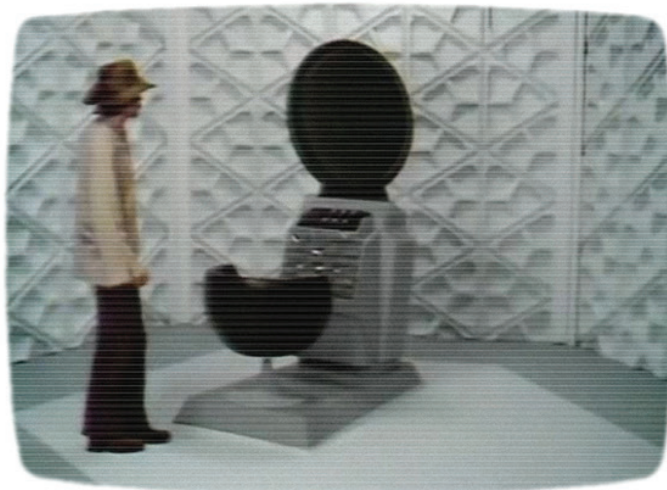
Discovery." His rewrite robbed the series of countless opportunities for dramatic tension, suspense, and mystery.

Under Klenman's creative leadership, the show proved slow-paced, talky, dull, and replete with plot holes through which one could fly the giant *Earthship Ark*. Any semblance of the strict internal logic required of good SF went missing, and the "science" was invariably wonky. The motivations and actions of the characters often made little if any sense and what seemed blatantly obvious solutions to plot complications were completely ignored without explanation. As the series progressed, our heroes never seemed to meaningfully advance much, as characters or towards their goal. When knowledge was obtained that might help them save the *Ark*, it was never significantly revisited in subsequent episodes.

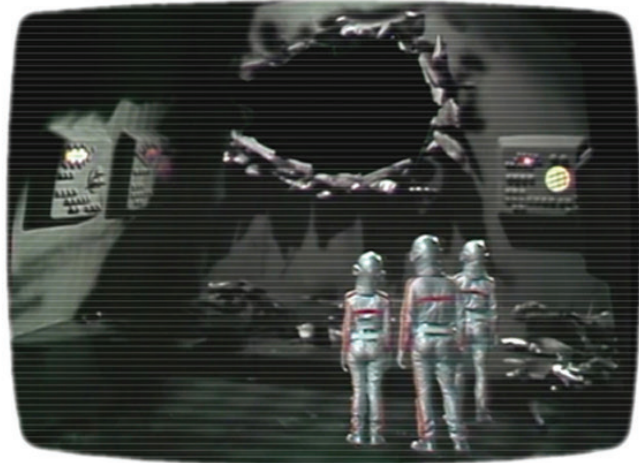
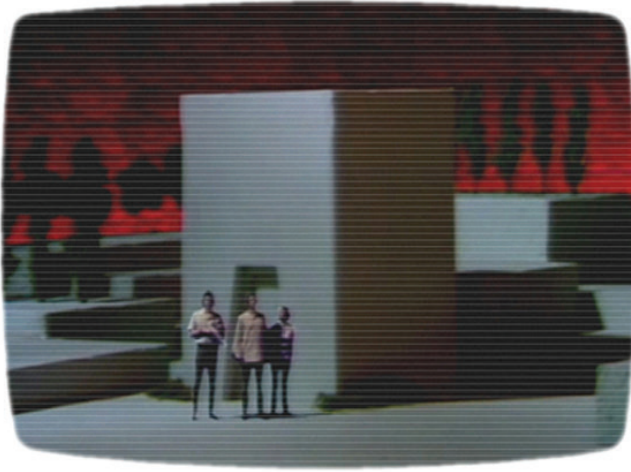
Ellison cited the poor quality of the scripts as *the* key factor in the show's failure, both artistically and in terms of ratings. It's hard to argue with his assessment.

Sporting Mick-Jagger hair and a moustache trimmed in that style favoured by the era's adult movie studs, Dullea played Devon and was joined by Canadian performers Gay Rowan and Robin Ward as, respectively, Rachel and Garth. Winnipeg-born actor William Osler, who had appeared in both *Adventures in Rainbow Country* and *The Forest Rangers*, provided the face and voice of Mu Lambda 165, the *Ark's* General Information Computer, also referred to as the Host Computer. Guest stars were drawn from a roster of Canadian, American, and British actors and actresses, some respectable, others clearly amateur.

The quality of the acting, then, ranged from adequate to barely tolerable to absolutely ludicrous. And some of the inane, cheesy, ridiculous, and *bizarre* dialogue scripted would have challenged even the most disciplined of thespians to keep a straight face while speaking their lines: "Earthship *Ark* locked on collision course with Class G Solar Star!"—"You'd be pretty in a spacesuit."—"Names are



The Starlost's sets had a certain cardboard-and-duct-tape quality. They ranged from austere (left) to adequate, almost respectable (right) as the series progressed.



Chroma-Key compositing was supposed to seamlessly place actors onto miniature sets. The results were unconvincing, and often toy-like. Given the limited resources available, though, Starlost's craftspeople are to be applauded for fabricating something close to acceptable.

frivolous and do not enhance computer read-out!"—"There are others, all of us interlinked, like the tentacles of an octopus; cut off one or two, but the rest remain nascent mandibles of the universal mind." Yeah! Stuff like *that*.

The unimposing full-scale and miniature sets, and toy-like spaceship models are probably the best thing about the series. But that's not saying much. While noticeably of a discount, cardboard-and-duct-tape motif, unimaginatively designed and bare-bones on detail, given the especially limited resources the craftspeople had at their disposal, they are to be commended for putting together at least satisfactory environments within which the stories could take place. The one stand-out model, here, is the *Ark* itself, an impressive miniature clearly smacking of Trumbull's influence.

Interestingly, at least one reviewer I read detected a certain Canadian aesthetic underlying the series.

In "The Alien Oro," for instance, the titular character, an explorer from the planet Xar, harvests electronic and mechanical parts from the *Ark* in order to rebuild his own wrecked scout ship and return home. Is this a metaphor for America's exploitation of Canada's natural resources? Oro returns in a later episode intent on repairing the *Ark* and piloting the titanic vessel to Xar, promising to there resettle all of the people aboard. Canadian disquiet over Manifest Destiny?

Is the heavily industrialized city of factories and smokestacks belching forth choking pollutants depicted in "Mr. Smith of Manchester" an allegory for America, circa 1970s, standing in stark contrast to the fresh air, pristine waters, fertile meadows, and verdant hills of the agrarian Cypress Corners—read: Canada—from

whence our heroes hail?

Canadians have been known to sometimes disapprove of their big, brash neighbour to the south, often while at the same time harbouring a secret envy of American exceptionalism. Was our habitual and discomfiting Canadian inferiority complex showing? Maybe. The across-the-board poor quality of the show, and the fact that it was a Canadian production, probably left more than a few of this country's sci-fi fans somewhat embarrassed.

I'll allow that the Canadian sensibilities of the scriptwriters may have subconsciously seeped into their work—or, perhaps, were quite deliberately infused into the narrative—but I suspect that what we have, here, in all but a few instances is more likely a case of the reviewer reading more into this thing than is actually there.

Say what you will about Ellison's fairly earned reputation as egotistical, cantankerous, rude, unmanageable, litigious, and extraordinarily accomplished at stirring the excrement, if only half of the outrages he claims were vested upon him by Kline, Davidson, and others here involved *actually* happened, he'd still have good reason to be infuriated. First Trumbull, then Bova followed Ellison out the door, displeased with the shoddy shape of the series, a development which suggests that Ellison wasn't just being Ellison, but had a legitimate beef.

As a parting salvo, he had his name stripped from the credits and replaced with the dismissive pseudonym he used whenever he wished to signal that he was unhappy with what had been done to his work: Cordwainer Bird. He was not going to countenance that his good name, which carried some weight in science fiction circles, be

employed to legitimize this debacle of a production. Trumbull and Bova, to their dismay, were not contractually permitted to have their names removed.

On March 21, 1974, Ellison felt vindicated as he accepted the WGA's prestigious Best Episodic Drama nod for his original, intact "Phoenix Without Ashes" script, "not the emasculated and insipid drivel that was aired." New Wave writer Edward Bryant later teamed with Ellison for a novelization of the script, published in 1975.

In the 1980s, Ellison wrote again for television on the revival of *The Twilight Zone* (1985-1989), serving as a creative consultant, as well, and tangling with CBS executives over Standards and Practices' rejection of one of his scripts as too controversial. In the 1990s, he co-wrote a couple of stories for the space opera *Babylon 5* (1993-1998) with series creator J. Michael Straczynski.

Harlan Ellison died in 2018 at age 84, having in years recent undergone heart surgery and suffered a stroke.

Robert Kline continued to work in television, primarily as a producer, most recently of documentaries about former U.S. presidents Kennedy, Reagan, and Clinton.

Douglas Trumbull's visual effects talents were subsequently applied to such sci-fi blockbusters as *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979), and *Blade Runner* (1982). He also developed Showscan, a high-speed, large-format film projection system of elevated fidelity used chiefly for premium amusement park rides.

Norman Klenman retired professionally in 1990, but occasionally consults on other writers' screenplays.

William Davidson went on to produce another critically panned Canadian sci-fi project, *The Shape of Things to Come* (1979), a cut-rate, loose adaptation of the H. G. Wells classic. Davidson passed away in 2009, remembered fondly in this country for having brought *Adventures in Rainbow Country* to CBC audiences.

Ben Bova wrote *The Starcrossed* (1975), a satirical fiction about the television industry of the future based on his and Ellison's experiences on *The Starlost*. The book's Ron Gabriel is a thinly disguised characterization of Ellison. Bova died last year of COVID-19-related causes.

Keir Dullea immediately followed *Starlost* with a role in the Canadian horror film *Black Christmas* (1974), destined to become a cult classic and inspire horror cinema's slasher sub-genre. He reprised his role as Dave Bowman in Peter Hyams' *Space Odyssey* sequel, *2010: The Year We Make Contact* (1984). Dullea has enjoyed a long career playing an eclectic range of characters in film, television, and on the stage. He and his wife divide their time between their Manhattan apartment and a house in Connecticut.

Gay Rowan quit acting after about ten years or so in the business, after which she relocated to San Diego, California for a career-change and married life with children.

Robin Ward continued to act, landing a number of supporting roles in film and television productions. He hosted a couple of Canadian game shows in the 1980s, and also worked as CFTO's TV weatherman into the 1990s.

William Osler followed *Starlost* with a role in the Canadian slasher flick *The Clown Murders* (1976), the cast of which included a young John Candy. Osler went on to a modicum of film and television appearances and voice work. He died in 2008.

Canadian film and television production today is on par with the world's finest. Canada has turned out such well-regarded and award-winning genre series as *Lexx* (Canadian-German-British co-production; 1997-2002), *Sanctuary* (2008-2011), *Lost Girl* (2010-2015), *Orphan Black* (2013-2017), *Killjoys* (2015-2019), and *Wynonna Earp* (Canadian-American co-production; 2016-present). And many of the top American sci-fi TV shows were shot, or are currently shooting in this country, employing Canadian cast members and crews, including *The X-Files* (1993-2002; revival, 2016-2018), *Smallville* (2001-2011), *Fringe* (2008-2013), *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Star Trek: Discovery* (both 2017-present).

As for Devon, Rachel, and Garth, their search for a means to save the Ark continues, on wobbly old VHS tapes, or burned into the discs of a DVD boxed set... Across Ethernet and wireless systems on such services as YouTube, and emanating outward into deep space as broadcast signals, faint now, and perhaps only detectable by some advanced alien technology... Our heroes persevere... They forever remain... *The Starlost*.



Special Section:

Remembering Sylvain St-Pierre

Joe Aspler

I have had few shocks greater than the one I received on March 28, 2021. I looked on Sylvain's Facebook page for updates to his COVID-19 diagnosis. Instead, I found a post from his cousin, stating he had passed away the day after his positive test result. Only two days before his death, he had posted pictures (including a selfie) of his taxi ride to the test centre.

I hoped against hope that it was some ghastly error, perhaps the wrong person. We received the confirmation two days later that it was indeed our Sylvain who had passed away, along with his mother.

To use a Yiddish expression, Sylvain was a mensch. Like many Yiddish words, the meaning goes beyond the literal definition (a man). In Yiddish tradition, to call someone a mensch is to offer the highest compliment; a person of honour and integrity; someone who is kind and considerate: a thoroughly decent person.

Sylvain was that and more. He was generous, open, and gregarious. He was a pillar of our club. As many posted in the hours after his death was announced, he was friendly, understanding, and invariably courteous to all. He was a doer and an organizer. He was a costumer and a masquerade MC. He did crafts and graphic design. He was even a travel advisor. He never forgot a holiday or a birthday.

He was a fan's fan. His knowledge of our genre was encyclopaedic, in both English and French. He was eager to share that knowledge with all. His expert presentations were entertaining and informative. When the lockdown forced us into online Zoom meetings, Sylvain was involved in every detail of their planning, including his own many presentations, sharing his expertise and his erudition. His graphic design skills greatly improved my lockdown presentations.

Out of love for SF and to help a handful of travellers, he originated Facebook pages for Montreal fans attending the Helsinki Worldcon in 2017 and the Dublin Worldcon in 2019. He researched travel options, accommodation, and local attractions. He organized post-convention dinners for Canadian fans: Antlercon (honouring the moose and Finland's reindeer) and Leafcon (honouring the maple leaf and Ireland's shamrock).

In October 2019, Sylvain and I gave a presentation on the Dublin Worldcon. Annette came to see the presentation, but had to leave early. Sylvain was very concerned and asked if there was a problem. That was Sylvain: he observed, and he cared.

And now he is gone, a victim of this damnable, evil virus. It is hard to imagine any MonSFFA activity without him, and it is hard to imagine the world without him.

Valérie Bédard

Adieu Sylvain,

le fandom vient de perdre un gros morceau, et le monde va être tellement moins drôle sans toi. Je te connaissais depuis le début des années 80, dans les Maplecons, Con*Cepts, Boréals, quelques conventions mondiales... On a travaillé ensemble pour la mascarade de 2009 à Montréal. C'est de tes mains que j'ai reçu mon Best-in Show à la mascarade de Con*Cept. Et je me rappelle de toi en costume à Boréal dans les années 80... J'ai le coeur brisé. Je me préparais à t'envoyer un CD humoristique par la poste, pour te

remercier pour tous ceux que tu m'avais prêtés, et que je ne pourrais jamais te remettre... Je vais les garder en souvenir de toi.

Tu avais toujours la réplique drôle lorsque je parlais de mon chowchow Victoire, Impératrice de Chine en exil. Tu m'avais aidé à faire ma carte de Noël virtuelle à Noël en son honneur. Eh bien, mon cher ami, ce soir le Palais Impérial de Condoland est en deuil. L'Impératrice et moi pleurons ton départ, comme une grosse partie du fandom.

Bon voyage, Sylvain, et salue ta mère et va dire bonjour à mon Joel...

XXX Matante Valérie

Josée Bellemare

He was a good friend and he will be missed.

Jeffrey Boman

Everyone at the Zoom meeting had vivid memories to share of Sylvain. I felt bad because I didn't – but as I thought more, I realized I did.

He was always there.

In 1992, I joined the concom for Con*Cept. I was a hotheaded 22-year-old, still without a portfolio. I think he was in the art show department (this was 29 years ago. My exact memory is foggy). As a youngster, I found him fussy. Now I know it was passion.

I was with the concom until late 1999. Each year, he was there. In 2003 I went to TorCon III in Toronto. He was part of the Montreal contingent.

I came back to attend Con*Cept in 2004 as an attendee after I'd shaken the organizer "funk" out of my system. He was still always there. Every year I came back, he was there.

He was at Anticipation, our Worldcon. In recent years we connected on Facebook. He snuck some zinger replies to many of my status posts. For that too, he was there.

I didn't know him as well as many of you, and with everything I hear now, I regret it. However, he was a constant in my life. But now, no longer – except in memory.

Now he won't be there.

Leybl Botwinik

When I met him a few years ago, he made such a nice impression on me. I really loved the several presentations he had put together that I viewed on the MonSFFA website - such a breadth and depth of knowledge! I wish I had had the opportunity to get to know him better.

Lindsay Brown

I'm still in shock. I cried so much the night I heard of his passing that I had to take the next day off work to grieve. I am going to miss Sylvain.

He always wore a smile. He was so thoughtful to everyone. His panels were always so interesting, and well presented. Every year I

looked forward to his unique Christmas cards. At the MonSFFA BBQ he always had a glass of white wine in hand for me, and together we would toast life. As the club's photographer he always managed to capture the essence of MonSFFA.

Sylvain meant more to me than I realized. We swapped Marvin the Martian collectibles together. We traded laughs and he even encouraged the prankster in me. He taught me that the value of our friendship was worth more than a couple of signed celebrity photographs. He was Sylvain – a friend who mattered and will always have a special place in my heart.

I'll miss you, Sylvain. Deeply. Gone, but never will you be forgotten

~Linzi

Mark Hickey

He was always kind to me. I will miss him a lot.

Cathy Palmer-Lister

*In the past, club presidents used to write a column in WARP titled **From the Centre Seat**, but I never did because I never knew what to say or how to say it. I still can't find the words, but for Sylvain, I will try my best to write in his memory.*

From the Centre Seat:

This year was supposed to be better than 2020, but the virus is not done with us yet. Hardly had I got over the shock of losing my friend, Alice, than I hear that both Sylvain and his mother had passed away, also from COVID.

The last I heard from Sylvain was a post on his Facebook profile saying he had tested positive and would be looking for a place to stay away from his mother. Then a message appeared among all the usual get-well-soon comments that he had died!

We were all in shock, it happened so quickly. The news was muddled at first because it appeared on Facebook, and Facebook being what it is, no one wanted to believe it. I still don't want to believe it.

Not only was Sylvain a close friend of many in fandom, he was a pillar of our community. He managed the club's finances for decades and did ever so much behind the scenes. He wrote for WARP, kept the membership lists, gave well-researched presentations, and in recent months, was responsible for the programming of our on-line meetings. Not to mention keeping us all sane during a difficult year!

When I was chatting with John Mansfield, he marvelled at how many people turned up at the April Zoom meeting to remember Sylvain. I wasn't surprised. Sylvain was the kindest man I ever had the honour to know. He had friends everywhere. Already, I miss the funny comments he would post on Facebook. Like Alice, he was witty and always found humour in everything. I simply cannot believe he will not be there at our next meeting, sitting in the front row with his iPad open and ready.

Such a gaping wound in our club, and in our hearts.

Danny Sichel

It's weird to realize that I didn't know Sylvain that well, despite having attended meetings with him for more than 15 years.

Sylvain St-Pierre was ('was!') a mainstay of this club since almost the very beginning, shortly after this switched from being solely a Star Trek club. He was our treasurer, and our treasure. He frequently made detailed presentations on short notice, with research dating back centuries – I remember one a few years back about what it would have been like to be a fan over a century ago, in the days before Gernsback coined the term "science fiction". He attended many Worldcons – and again, he gave presentations. On what it had been like at Worldcon 2007, in Tokyo; 2015, in Dublin; 2017, in Helsinki.

I remember him sitting at the table during the book sales, collecting people's money and giving them little cards promoting the club. And afterward, at the restaurant, telling us how much money the club had earned. I remember our production of the trailer for

Moose Man: he played the Prime Minister, and I (as the Loonie) took him hostage. I remember that when we did that "radio play" project, and I had written a script for a call-in advice show for superheroes and villains, he played the host.

He always helped organize the meetings. He took lots and lots and lots of photos. I remember that when we went to restaurants afterward, he'd usually order wine. And, ironically, I remember that he usually had a bottle of hand sanitizer with him.

In the previous issue of *WARP*, he described a recent fannish triumph: having successfully identified a science fiction comic strip from his childhood as a translated version of the Dutch comic *Piloot Storm*, by Henk Sprenger. He wrote part 1 of a retrospective of its history. Unless it was on his hard drive, we'll probably never see Part 2.

It feels weird to know that he won't see this.

On a more personal note, Val is writing a novel whose protagonist comes from Montreal, and who has arguments with his father in *joual*; I didn't feel competent to translate these for her, as I can read *joual* but I don't think in it. I asked Sylvain if he

could help with these; not only did he help, he declined our offer of payment.

I checked the recording of our last group Zoom chat. In the last section, he did his review of the year's worth of avatars, and then we were about to start the anagram game.

And he said: I have to go prepare dinner, so...

And Cathy said, "Take care, Sylvain. Say hi to your mom."

And he said: 'Til next month!

And we all said "bye!"

Joe said "thanks for the presentation!"; and I said "be well!"

And then he disconnected.

And that was it.

Goodbye, Sylvain.



Photo courtesy of Bernard Reischl

Memories of Sylvain St-Pierre

L. E. Moir

We moved recently! In the elevator lobby on the floor where our apartment is located, we are confronted with two signs:

Memories are the storybook of our lives

and

Friends, you are a special gift

Who would think that those signs, placed there by someone decorating the elevator lobby, could so poignantly state in a few words where I and others who knew Sylvain now find ourselves? We look at the gift of Sylvain in our lives, and try to write about the memories that are now the memorial storybook with which we honour him.

Others will write of Sylvain's involvement in the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association, and of his many skills that helped bring meetings and conventions to life for us and for a wider public. I, and my friend Phyllis, knew Sylvain in a different way, mostly outside MonSFFA and the Science Fiction community. I'd known Sylvain 45 years this year. Phyllis knew him for about a decade. So, most of the memories and events where he was part of our lives will be mine – but not all!

We went back a long, long way. Sylvain was one of very few people in my life who had been around long enough to have known my grandmother, who died in 1982. In fact, he knew all my family, and in some way was a supporting friend to me through the deaths of every single one of them.

I certainly did not expect to be eulogizing Sylvain now, or any time soon. Life is not fair – as we all know too well. It is hard to find a starting place. So, let's just say we'll have a bit of a look at several things that come to mind as I think about the years gone by, including family, food and drink, conventions, art, travel, faith and knowledge of church history, etc., while not forgetting his mischievous side that would pop up at unexpected times. Sylvain was multi-faceted, and I hope to share some sides of him that might be less known to others.



Family was important to Sylvain – specifically, family history and lineage. Inside the front door of his house there is a wall filled with photos and notes and names reflecting his relatives, their place in the family tree, and how the Plante (his mother) and St-Pierre (his father) families were connected. This isn't a small space with a few old pictures. The graphic work he did on this family tree takes up the space of approximately 3 x 3 metres, and it was always being added to.

Family was so important to Sylvain that when his long-time employer, Michelin, transferred the accounting department to the Carolinas, in the USA, Sylvain declined the offer of moving that was made, and took his leave of Michelin so he could stay in the house in Laval, near family. He never had a solid job again, flitting from here to there, often through placement agencies, until he finally landed at Gaz Metropolitain a few years ago. It turned out to be his last job. When he left that one in 2018, he decided it was time to “retire” and he stopped looking for any more work, choosing to focus on his mother's health and his travel to places like Ireland and other planned destinations.

He was also artistic, gaining that skill from his mother. Eva worked in several media, but was primarily a painter. She continued to paint until recently, and I have the pleasure of having one of her paintings on my wall.



Untitled Farm Scene by Eva St-Pierre. Photo by L. E. Moir, 2021



Sylvain had some specific tastes in food. He disliked raw tomatoes, drank his tea and coffee black, liked squid (especially that served by Casa Grecque) and was fond of sushi.

At a dinner one evening my mother caught Sylvain removing the fresh tomatoes from the salad on his plate. It should be noted that the family always referred to my mother's middle names as “chocolate” and “tomato” which will give you some idea of her liking for both. To remove the tomatoes from the salad was something of a sacrilegious move with respect my mother's sacred tomato worship, unless Sylvain might have been allergic to them (as am I). But, no, Sylvain made it very clear he simply did not like raw tomatoes, specifically saying he disliked the texture of them on his tongue. Until my mother died in 2012, every time she saw Sylvain, she gave him a hard time about tomatoes.

Sylvain's taste for tea and coffee was as refined as his taste for wine and other beverages. He eschewed milk or cream, not to mention sugar, in any tea or coffee, saying that he never understood why someone would drink a beverage “adulterated” by additions that prevented tasting the beverage as it was intended to be tasted.

As for squid – well, we met twice every year at Casa Grecque to deal with income tax concerns. While we often met elsewhere for a meal as well, that particular location was convenient for various reasons during the income tax period. Sylvain always commented on it being his annual two visits to get his dose of their particularly well prepared squid.



He also loved sushi. During the WorldCon in Toronto in 2003 he declined an invitation to dinner with me, in favour of visiting a restaurant with a reputation for excellent sushi, saying he had not had good sushi in far too long. I believe he went on his own, but I have little doubt that if he found other fans there, he would have joined with them, and perhaps made new friends at the same time.

Sylvain enjoyed entertaining, although usually claimed he was not much of a cook. Evidence was rather to the contrary, though. Raclette was often on the menu; it provided variety for many tastes, and was easy to prepare, while looking classy and professional. He made a mean French onion soup, using “shortcuts” that would make a chef’s head spin. His basic recipe was Campbell’s onion soup and Campbell’s consommé mixed together, without diluting them as the cans recommended, although he would add wine or sherry. To this he’d add a crispy round made by Grissol (the Melba Toast people), top it with grated cheese, then bake it. I’ve had less professional, and much less tasty, French onion soup in restaurants, even good restaurants!



His family was equally welcoming, at all times. When I picked him up from the airport after his trip to Japan, his mother was most insistent that I come in, as normally I would do. I had already intended not to do so on this occasion, realising that Sylvain was just back from a long flight, and would want to relax. His mother persisted, though, until he, in a rare burst of annoyance, said (in French): “Ma! I have just got off a long flight, I would like to eat, and I need to take a shower, because I stink.” Turning to me, he said, apologetically – “I’m sorry, I am just tired. I do not normally raise my voice like that. But, really, I do stink!”

Indeed, Sylvain was always neat and tidy, and well turned out. Even if I were just stopping in to collect paperwork, he’d be snappily dressed. It stood out then, quite sharply, when one day some years ago I arrived (pre-arranged, not by surprise) to get some documents and was greeted by an unshaven, untidily dressed Sylvain. It was out of the ordinary, and I presumed he’d been distracted by something significant enough to interfere with his usual toilette.

Apparently not! I had crossed a threshold of friendship to a place where presentation didn’t matter: a promotion if you will. From that date on, unless Sylvain was actually entertaining us formally, or had been out elsewhere earlier, he never shaved again just to be “presentable” to us (that is, Phyllis and me). It no longer was necessary. We’d moved to a place, to borrow from an observation by Cathy Palmer-Lister, *where the people who mind don’t matter, and the people who matter don’t mind*.

Along with being entertained at his home, back in the day I used to have garden and house parties at our house – at which Sylvain was a regular presence. I believe the first one he attended was in 1979, coinciding with my grandmother’s 95th birthday. He was unfailingly polite to all guests, many of whom remember him years later. He never arrived empty-handed, typically presenting my mother with a box of chocolates and me with a bottle of red wine. He did this for quite a while until someone finally told him that I do not drink red wine. Efficient as always, Sylvain smoothly switched to bringing me

white wine. One day he did ask what happened to all the bottles of red wine, as he knew my parents did not drink. I told him that my brother was very fond of extremely dry red wines and had always happily made off with the bottle for his own enjoyment. Thereafter, always the gentleman, until my brother moved away from Montreal in 1991 (and even later if he knew Dave was visiting in town) Sylvain would bring two bottles of wine on his visits – a red for my brother, and a white for me.



Chateau Garden Party, fine wines by St-Pierre Blending

During the 1988 garden party I overheard Sylvain chatting with my father on the driveway. He was talking about having moved, and having bought the house where he continued to live until his recent death. He was making a rather specific point to my father. I still remember his words: “I used to live with my parents; my parents now live with me. The difference is subtle, but there is a difference.” Precision was always important to him.

He’d traded off a house (which his father owned) with a kiln, for a house (which he owned) with a hot tub and Franklin stove. That latter turned out to be very handy during the ice storm of 1998, although Sylvain was lucky (as were we) in that he only lost power for a very few hours – less than one total day altogether.

By way of personal help, Sylvain was always ready to assist. It was he who provided support when, after my mother’s death, Revenue Quebec managed to botch her tax file in grand style. Sylvain offered both financial (reimbursed, to be sure!) and personal support until the problem was resolved – and it took nearly three years. There were others who helped, too, but he was there constantly, in person, always making sure that the problem was progressing to resolution, and asking what he could do to help. He also attended MRQ meetings with me to listen for anything that I overlooked, and surreptitiously recorded the meetings on his tablet for future reference. Without his unfailing support, the whole situation would have been even more trying than it was.

Sylvain was a fixture at many local and regional science fiction conventions, as well as a frequent attendee at WorldCon all around the world.

He regularly attended Maplecon, in Ottawa, both displaying art and entering the masquerade. One year, when he was still living on rue L’Auberivière (his father’s house, with the kiln), he not only had some ceramic items displayed in the art show, he also had a mechanical device, cobbled together from miscellaneous parts and bits that were lying around the house. The central part was an old fashioned alarm clock, with the big gong-like ringers on the top.

He gave it some name related to Dr. Who, and expected it to be ignored. It wasn't. It sold for \$35.00. What I remember most about that particular item was Sylvain's remark after the fact that he'd stuck together a few pieces of junk from the house, given it a name, and "some fool actually paid \$35.00 for it! It is amazing what people will buy."



He and I were both at ConFiction, in The Hague, The Netherlands in 1990. In those days, he was still costuming a fair bit, and he did enter the masquerade at ConFiction. This was back in the days when he was filming a lot of his travels and events, and making videos. Sylvain could not appear in the masquerade, as well as film it, so he put a request in the daily WorldCon newsletter asking for someone familiar with his model of video camera to assist. Unfortunately, the daily newsletter staff either mis-read or mis-spelled the name, or both (or somehow mixed it up with a British fan artist's name), with the result that the request posted was for a person to help Sylvia Starshine with a video of the masquerade. Miss Starshine remained a joke between the two of us forever after.

Speaking of videos – Sylvain would make lovely videos of his travels and trips to places like Las Vegas, well worth watching, and done with taste so that they never were boring.

He also would help with special occasions for others. For my family, Sylvain made videos of my mother's 75th birthday party in 1999 and my brother's memorial service in 2005.

In 2014, Phyllis, an Associate Minister at St. James United Church at the time [and Minister Emerita now], celebrated her 50th Anniversary of Ordination. Sylvain took on the large task of recording both the dinner and speeches on the Saturday evening, followed by the special church service on the Sunday. He was unavailable to do the service for the 55th anniversary, in 2019. This was unfortunate, as the person who was engaged, a professional(!), didn't do anything near the quality of job that Sylvain had done five years earlier, and to this day, we don't have a finished product from that second special church event.

Sylvain was unemployed at the time of Phyllis's 50th Anniversary of Ordination, and his visits to St. James United Church in the centre of the city resulted in him wanting to know more of its history. With time on his hands, Sylvain made a project of sorting through the mounds and mounds of paperwork and photos in the basement of the church, and creating several binders of material that now form the basis for the St. James United Church archival material. He also made descriptive plaques for many of the historical points within the sanctuary of the church. St. James United Church, Montreal, might be the only major United Church that is a National Historic Site under Parks Canada, with in-house archival work done by a volunteer French Roman Catholic on the dole, simply because he had time on his hands and was interested in the history of this important Montreal site.

He had faith – Sylvain was not a regular church attendee,



Rev. Dr. Phyllis Smith's 50th Anniversary of Ordination, June 2014.
Photo by Sylvain St-Pierre

although mass at Christmas and Easter was, typically, on his agenda. He was, however, church-knowledgeable. He attended more than one service at St. James United Church over the years, joining us for some special celebrations. He commented on how the United Church liturgy was like listening to an old-style Catholic church liturgy – and that they'd moved away from that somewhat stodgy style. In many ways, he was right, although things are changing, often some of the older protestant churches are a bit stuck in time, a comment Phyllis has often made – and as she is a minister, well, I guess she has that right of observation.

Sylvain enjoyed travel. In one of his last long e-mail messages to me in March 2021, he remarked that he was itching for a trip. (*"Even for somebody like me who does not go out much, this extended confinement is getting annoying. I really crave a restaurant outing and need to renew my now somewhat frayed wardrobe. A nice trip somewhere would also be welcome."*)



Cruise ships in port, Caribbean, 2014. Photo by L. E. Moir

For travel, of course, he needed a passport. We had a nice little circle of three of us who routinely signed the paperwork to renew passports. This made all our passports consistent for information, and as luck would have it, we all renewed within a couple of months of each other, so the timing was consistent as well. Sadly, we will now have to look for a third person where all three of us know each other well enough to manage this sort of thing. I'm not sure there is another person who'll fit.

Sylvain had been to Japan, Finland, and other places for conventions, and he was a regular visitor to Las Vegas, as well as a cruiser. It was Sylvain who introduced me to the intricacies of Las Vegas, and I who pushed him toward cruising. We never cruised together, but he had a master plan for travel in his retirement that included a river cruise in Germany. He asked me to go with him, as I speak the language and used to live and study in the country. I

said that was an unlikely scenario – river cruises are very expensive, and quite simply outside my budget. Sylvain, in a patient but pointed way, just looked at me sternly and said that if he were asking me to go with him for his convenience, he had every intention of paying for the cost of the trip.

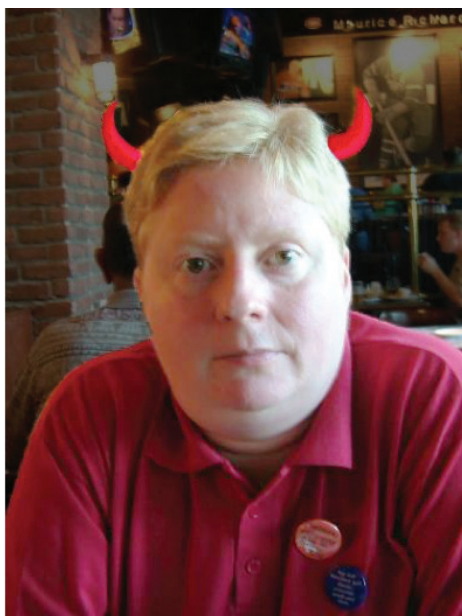
That is the type of man he was!

In 2005 Sylvain purchased a small, pocket-sized digital camera. After the October MonSFFA meeting, we, along with others, went to Cage aux Sports for dinner, and Sylvain introduced me to this new digital toy. He offered to loan it to me to take on an upcoming cruise, and by way of explaining how it worked, showed me some settings, and then took my photo. He handed me the camera, and showed me the settings again, then sat back and asked me to take his photo. I did so, and asked him to send me the results.

Indicative of how his sense of humour could at times be unexpected and devilish, he processed the photos and as promised sent me the images so I could see them. What arrived in my e-mail is shown below. It was evident immediately that this little bit of mischief had been planned, once one looked at Sylvain's pose.



Sylvain St-Pierre, October 2005. Photo by L. E. Moir



Lil Moir, October 2005. Photo by Sylvain St-Pierre

We moved recently! I sold the family home, bought by my father in 1958. It was the place I'd lived all my life, and where Sylvain was welcomed inside often over the decades. He was supportive of my need to sell, and keen to offer words that always hit the right tone. He was looking forward to seeing our new home, our apartment.

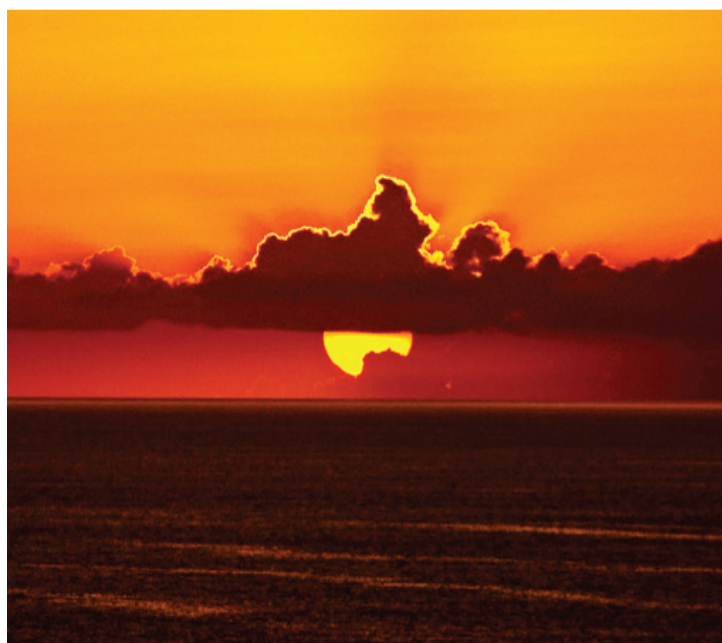
It saddens me deeply that my old friend, who walked through so many parts of my life during its early and middle stages, will not be here to share in the last stage as life goes forward – and to reminisce about the past. I regret that he'll never see the apartment where Phyllis and I now live. He was planning a visit as soon as it was feasible. He knew the house so well, and was looking forward to seeing where I'd gone, and engaging in this new stage of my life, so totally different from the first six decades. It is unbelievable, almost unbearable, that he will not share in this, as both of us were moving toward the "downsize and retire" stage of life.

Sylvain was one of the few in my life who knew all the players, the scenes, the acts, and the play. And he wasn't backward in coming forward with a review, if the performance needed some work, or if it was going well.

I cannot imagine, and do not want to understand, going forward and not being able to share with Sylvain the dinners, travel, conventions and other things that made him such a long-time, special companion in my life – and in the lives of others, too.

Good-bye my friend – salut, mon ami!

Sylvain, bon-voyage!



*A final sunset for Sylvain
Caribbean cruise 2014. Photo by L. E. Moir*

Photo credits: All photos not specifically credited are royalty free images from Getty.

Obituaries

Sylvain St-Pierre and his mother Eva St-Pierre

(contributed by L. E. Moir)

On Saturday 8 May 2021 the following obituaries were printed in *The Gazette* (Montreal) and the *Journal de Montréal* as well as appearing on-line for *The Gazette*, the *Journal de Montréal* and *La Presse* (Montréal). The English obituary will be available online with a guest book for “signing” for a period of one year. The French obituaries will be available as per their website policies.

Along with the charitable suggestion requested by Marc, Sylvain’s brother, as mentioned in the English obituary, some people might be interested to know that Sylvain supported Foster Parents Plan of Canada, now called Plan International Canada. He sponsored a third-world child each year. This would, therefore, also be a suitable charitable choice. (<https://plancanada.ca/> OR <https://plancanada.ca/fr>) For anyone who might choose to make a donation in memory of Sylvain, or his mother, regardless of charitable choice, if you wish to provide the MonSFFA mailing address or e-mail address as the *person to be informed* our President, Cathy Palmer-Lister will make sure all such notifications are re-directed to Sylvain’s brother, Marc. You may also request the direct mailing address for Marc from the MonSFFA Club Executive.



5 August 1956-25 March 2021

ST-PIERRE, Sylvain – Sylvain St-Pierre died at home in Laval, Quebec on Thursday 25 March 2021, at the age of 64, from Covid-19. Sylvain was pre-deceased by his father, Jacques St-Pierre. The death of his mother, Eva St-Pierre (née Plante), followed Sylvain’s death by three days, on 28 March 2021, also from Covid-19. He leaves to mourn his brother, Marc St-Pierre, as well as many relatives and friends. Sylvain’s wit, perception, insightfulness, patience and artistic skills were well known and appreciated by all who knew him. He was an active member of MonSFFA (Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association), having participated in the club for more than three decades. Sylvain was well known in science-fiction fandom circles locally, provincially, nationally and internationally. His presence will be missed at home and abroad. As per family wishes, and because of Covid restrictions, Sylvain and his mother were cremated without a memorial service. The family asks everyone to think about, and protect, the living. Sylvain’s and his mother’s remains will be interred in the family plot in Lavaltrie, Quebec at a later date. Donations in memory of Sylvain and Eva may be made to a local charity specialising in aiding children and/or women at increased risk of violence or social need as a result of Covid-19, or to a charity of your choice. (Arrangements entrusted to La résidence funéraire Goyer de Saint-Eustache.)

[Published online and in *The Gazette*, Montréal, Quebec, 8 May 2021]



ST-PIERRE, Sylvain
1956-2021

À Laval le jeudi 25 mars 2021 est décédé Sylvain St-Pierre des suites de la covid-19. Âgé de 64 ans, il laisse dans le deuil sa mère Eva Plante St-Pierre (décédée le 28 mars 2021), son frère Marc ainsi que de nombreux parents et amis.

Son esprit, sa perspicacité, sa grande patience ainsi que ses montages artistiques étaient bien connus de ceux qui le connaissaient. Membre actif du MonSFFA pendant plus de 30 ans, il était connu dans les cercles du fandom au niveau local, provincial, national et international.

En raison des circonstances et des restrictions sanitaires liées à la Covid-19 il n’y aura pas de réunion commémorative. Pensons aux personnes vivantes et protégeons-les.

L’inhumation se fera sur le terrain familial situé à Lavaltrie à une date inconnue.

Il fut confié au : Complexe Funéraire Goyer Ltée

[Published online and in *Le Journal de Montréal*, and online for *La Presse*, 8 May 2021]



**ST-PIERRE née PLANTE, Éva
1932-2021**

Le 28 mars 2021, à l'hôpital Sacré-Coeur de Montréal, est décédée Mme Éva Plante St-Pierre des suites de la Covid-19. Veuve de Jacques St-Pierre, elle laisse dans le deuil son fils Marc (son fils aîné Sylvain est décédé le 25 mars 2021) ses sœurs Pierrette et Lucile, son frère Denis ainsi que de nombreux parents et amis.

Autodidacte et artiste dans l'âme, du macramé à la peinture en passant par la poterie et le tissage, elle gagna de nombreux prix et récompenses allant même jusqu'à la télévision. Tous se souviendront de son talent.

En raison des circonstances et des restrictions sanitaires liées à la Covid-19 il n'y aura pas de réunion commémorative. Pensons aux personnes vivantes et protégeons-les.

L'inhumation se fera sur le terrain familial situé à Lavaltrie à une date inconnue.

Elle fut confiée au : Complexe Funéraire Goyer Ltée

[Published online and in Le Journal de Montréal, and online for La Presse, 8 May 2021]

On 28 March 2021, at the Sacré-Coeur Hospital in Montreal, Mrs. Éva Plante St-Pierre died of Covid-19. Widow of Jacques St-Pierre, she is survived by her son Marc (her elder son, Sylvain, died on 25 March 2021), her sisters Pierrette and Lucile, her brother Denis, as well as many relatives and friends.

Self-taught and an artist at heart, from macramé to painting, as well as pottery and weaving, she won many prizes and awards, even appearing on television. Her talent will be remembered by all.

Due to the circumstances and health restrictions of Covid-19 there will be no memorial service. Let us think of the living and protect them.

Interment will take place in the family plot in Lavaltrie (Quebec), at a later date.

Arrangements entrusted to: Complexe Funéraire Goyer Ltée

English translation by L. E. Moir for WARP (Both original obituaries were written by Lil, and given to Marc for his adaptation into French. The Gazette obituary was written and published by Lil, at Marc's request.)

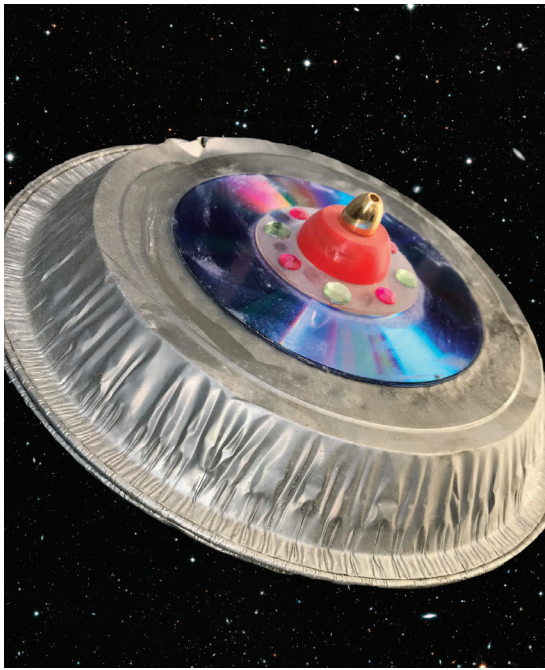
"There are no words that can express how deeply shattered Sylvain's untimely death has left me. Sylvain was one of the major stars in the constellation of my life and he will always be so, even if that light has faded from our Earthly view! I cherished every time I got to spend with him, our phone calls, jokes, puns, and all around enriching experiences that only Sylvain could provide. He had no equal and no one can ever hope to replace him! Farewell, my dear friend of the happiest decades of my life and we WILL meet again! May God grant you rest and peace! My deepest sympathies to the family and myriad other friends of this quiet, yet extraordinary, man, whose hearts are also broken!" *(Larry Stewart)*

"Sylvain was a pleasure to know and very creative. He had an artistic talent. He was a gentleman in every sense of the word. He will be missed." *(Lloyd & Yvonne Penney)*

"Sylvain, my friend, my partner in Martian crime. You always had a mischievous smile on your face, a warm hug within your arms, and a quiet prank in play. I will think of you every time I look at 'Marvin'. You were a positive influence in my life and will be dearly missed by your favourite 'Lil Red Devil'. Love you always." *(Lindsay Brown)*

From a comment in an e-mail message: "I much admired the precision of his French." *(Don McKillican)*

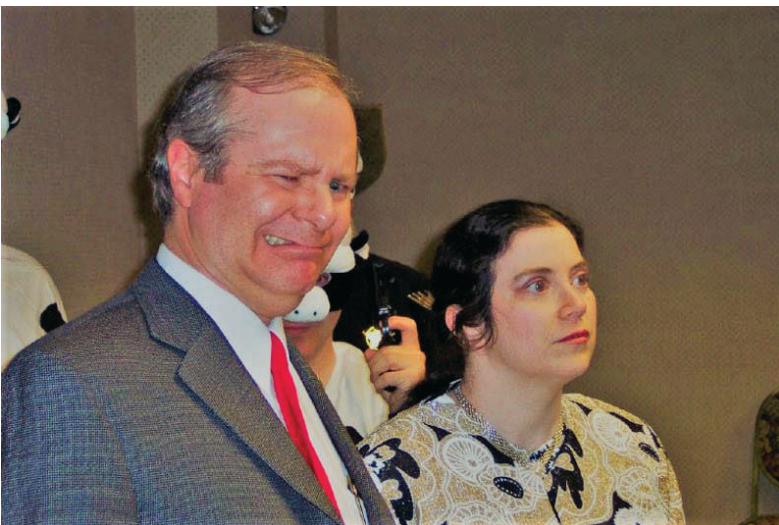
Above tribute comments used with permission.



In 2019, MonSFFA did an extended project: the Utopia Planitia Shipbuilding Competition, where we brought in interestingly-shaped bits of trash and used them to Build Spaceships. Sylvain made this at home, before the (May?) meeting, and brought it in as a demonstration piece. At the end of the day, he was going to throw it out, but I asked if I could have it, and he said sure. It's been sitting on one of my hall bookcases ever since.

— Danny Sichel

Photos by Denise Lafontaine



Photos of Sylvain and friends
Courtesy of Cathy Palmer-Lister and Josée Bellemare

For Sylvain St-Pierre
****5 August 1956 — †25 March 2021***
[REST IN PEACE]
and
his mother, his community, his family, his friends

**God of our yesterdays,
God of our tomorrows,
we turn to you now,
needing you to be the God of our today.**

**We come to you with our humanity
in all its complexity and forms.**

**Receive the stirrings of our hearts,
the turmoil of our minds,
the numbness of our spirits,
and help us to accept all we must accept.**

**We stand today in community with Sylvain
and his mother, Eva,
who began a journey,
not knowing where they were going.**

**We share the feelings of: “not now,”
“surely not like this,”
“not yet!”**

**We are not the first to struggle.
Surround us and sustain us.
Care for us and help us
to care for each other.**

**Empower us to live with courage
what we are being called to live,
and to support each other,
as surely as Sylvain would have supported us,
as we honour and remember our friends.**

Rev. Dr. Phyllis Smyth – a friend
(Adapted from a prayer by Phyllis,
that Sylvain had often admired.)

Photo (“Bermuda Triangle Sunset”) ©L. E. Moir 2012

A Photographic Remembrance of Sylvain St-Pierre

*Rest in Peace,
Dear Friend*



Compiled by Keith Braithwaite from
MonSFFA's Photographic Archives