

# WARP

A PUBLICATION OF THE MONTREAL SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY ASSOCIATION

Issue 112

## Inside:

- Remembering Nichelle Nichols
- Programming as Art
- Recapping Scintillation 2022
- A Modern Take on *Beowulf*
- Fiction From Our Members

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### *On the Cover*

This month's cover image is a first for WARP: an image not produced by a human! MonSFFA member Hendrik Boom wrote an algorithm that produced this image, titled "Areas", by itself, using only a few simple rules—see his article on page 7 for more details.

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### 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. Meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month.

***Stay safe and follow us on the internet!***

Website: [www.monsffa.ca](http://www.monsffa.ca)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MonSFFA](https://www.facebook.com/MonSFFA)

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## Letters to the Editor

Dear MonSFFen:

Thank you all for *WARP* 111, I hope I am in time. Great cover from Ingrid Kallick, a real talent to lay before a fannish audience. Let's see what's inside...

My letter... I have heard that as time goes on, our vaccine immunity to COVID-19 will wane, so we might need a fourth shot of vaccine to target the Omicron variant. This is assuming an even worse variant doesn't make itself known, like the recently announced Omicron-2... I finished the big e-book, and the author is very happy, so I will likely edit his next book. For the record, the book is *Empire's Gambit* by D.J. Holmes, and it is available through Goodreads. I also did the edit and copyedit of *Dreamforge Anvil* issue 6, and now have some stories to edit for a future issue. It's taken me long enough, but I think I have a new direction to take when it comes to a career.

Good to know that Sylvain did enjoy at least some retirement years. Taking on Sylvain's SF collection is a huge task for anyone, and I hope MonSFFA is up to the

challenge. This might take most of 2022, assuming we can all get together to tackle it. I am hopeful we will have more actual than virtual in 2022.

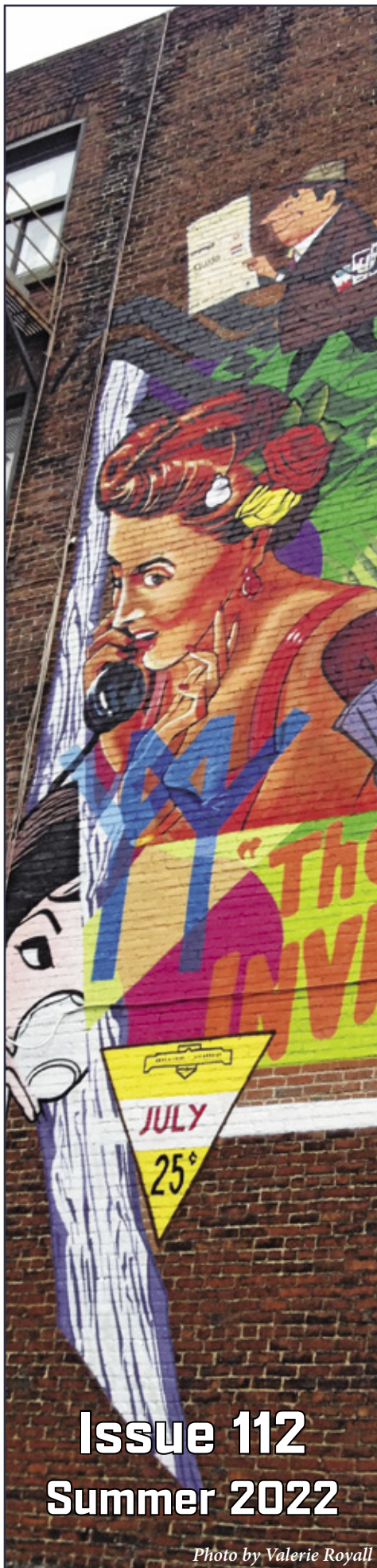
So the World Fantasy Con did actually happen, and virtually happen, too. We attended and worked the previous one in Montréal in 2000, and had ourselves a great time. If you didn't see us, we ran the green room, which was in a small room under one of the escalators going to the convention level.

Tomorrow is the first of February, and the next issue of *Ansible* will arrive. It's always full of news, even if the news is its sizable R.I.P. file. Take care, all, stay warm in this cold winter, and spring is less than 60 days away.

Yours,  
*Lloyd Penney*  
Etobicoke, ON

Dear MonSFFen,

I cannot think of a better way to address



my first letter of comment about an issue of *WARP* than by emulating Lloyd Penney's method. Hey, if it works for you, too, then I'm good with it.

First off, what a gorgeous cover by Ingrid Kallick! That she allowed you to use it as this issue's front cover is a wonderfully gracious thing to do. Now I want to run over to Barnes & Noble Bookstore to find the latest issue of *Cricket* or any of the other magazines mentioned that feature her work. Incredibly detailed and balanced art on this particular piece. Next time I am at a science fiction convention I will make sure to check out the art show—a standard thing I do, in fact—for her work. Very impressive.

The fact that your Montreal SF & F Association has to have e-meetings (I am assuming you mean via ZOOM or Facetime, or something like that) for a long time is definitely a sign that the COVID-19 pandemic is not going away any time soon, which is a tragic shame. Thankfully technology comes to the rescue to keep us together and informed, so there many things I am grateful for these days, such as being able to stay in touch with my fannish friends. This is definitely A Good Thing.

I am saddened to hear about the passing of Sylvain St-Pierre from COVID last year. It sounds like his collection has found a good home so that it can be cataloged and enjoyed for years to come. My will likewise has instructions on the bequest of my collection, which is not as large as Sylvain's, but it still contains many old, rare, and significant books, magazines, and comic books—even fanzines!—from the 1930s on up. This is the sort of thing one does not want to think about very much, but it is something that does warrant attention. I am glad to hear Sylvain's collection will be in good hands.

In the May 8th meeting roundup, I would like to add another great *MAD Magazine* science fiction parody, "201 Minutes of a Space Idiocy" from the March 1969 issue. Naturally, it is brilliant and hilarious. Here is the URL link for it from [a] Keir Dullea tumblr blog: <https://keirdullea.tumblr.com/post/34795391907/201-minutes-of-space-idiocy-a-mad-magazine>, proving yet again that it seems anything can be found on the internet.

Lots of other good stuff throughout the rest of this issue. I also enjoyed *Godzilla vs. Kong* and *The Nevers*; fun Kaiju movie and a well-realized Steampunk series that I hope will continue very soon. Face it; we love a good, rock 'em, sock 'em, giant monster flick any day of the week, and I'm looking forward to the next one in this series. As for the SyFy series *SurrealEstate*, my wife and I watched the first few episodes then trailed off on them. It has promise, but like the review here said, it runs the risk of running into a monster/ghost-of-the-week format, ala various Irwin Allen sci-fi fare of the 1960's: *Lost in Space*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, and so forth. We shall see how things go with this show, too.

With that, I think I am done here. Thank you so much for pubbing this issue and putting it on [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com) so that I had access to reading and enjoying it. Take care of yourselves up there, and I hope to see many of you at ChiCon 8 this coming summer—if I can afford to go, that is.

All the best,  
John Purcell  
College Station, TX, USA

**Editor's Reply:** MONSFFA's pandemic e-meetings are indeed via Zoom (and are archived for later viewing and consultation!)

## Blast From the Past

By Cathy Palmer-Lister



### WARP 24: May 1993

That's Eramelina Boquer on the cover, made up as a Klingon/Romulan fusion for the K&L Convention. The photo was taken by Daniel P. Kenney, who remains an active member of the club. Later in the issue, Lynda Pelley reported on the con, billed as a sci-fi media celebration. GoHs included Mark Leonard, David Prowse and Sylvester McCoy.

Regrettably, K&L did not break even on this event, probably due to the difficult-to-reach location on the West Island.

The letter column has a very touching thank you from Martin Last, partner of Baird Searles who had passed away. MonSFFA had sent a condolence card that depicted Baird as an astronaut, under the title "Amazing People" with lettering in the style of *Amazing Stories*. Kevin Holden wrote the poem, and the card was signed by all members at the meeting.

Transwarp, a small convention organized by 5 local clubs was heavily promoted. In her editorial, Lynda Pelley remarked on this collaboration between clubs, noting how unusual this was in other cities where the norm seemed to be petty bickering. KagJam'93, is also advertised on the bulletin board. Another happy memory!

In MonSFFA's, it was noted that members were granted a 2-month extension due to a delay in distributing membership cards. These cards were important in those days as there were several stores in the city offering us discounts on presentation of the card. Meeting agendas included an introduction to model building presented by Lynda Pelley, a discussion moderated by Bryan Ekers which debated whether we should prioritize space colonies over healing the Earth, and mixed feelings about the premiere of B5. It's been a long time since we had a regular attendance of 30 or so members at a meeting.

Part VI of *Prankster* continued the fanfic by Bryan Ekers. Kevin Holden wrote a detailed report of a special effects workshop hosted by ILM in Montreal. Lynda Pelley wrote about the Star Trek Exhibition at the Smithsonian. *Jurassic Park* was expected to be the blockbuster of the summer. It was, and it spawned a whole bunch of sequels, another of which was released in June of this year.

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## IN MEMORIAM: MARC DUROCHER (1949-2022)

This has been a difficult couple of years; too many friends lost, whether to COVID-19 or other illnesses. I was again dismayed to receive news of the passing of another, fellow MonSFFAn Marc Durocher.

Marc had struggled for some years with mobility issues

and had lost much of his physical vigour. Not long ago, he was hospitalized and later developed complications that proved fatal. He was 73.

An erudite man, his interests were many and varied, but all things medieval stood out in particular as a passion. He had long been involved with the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), and was active, as well, in local Klingon fandom, ConCept, and of course, **MonSFFA**.

I would venture that another particular passion of Marc's was the production of fan films, for he was an enthusiastic contributor, behind and before the cameras, in nearly all of **MonSFFA's** short-film projects. He brought to the table talents as a writer/storyteller, costumer, prop-maker, and actor, portraying the exasperated Canadian Forces general and the gruff newspaper editor-in-chief in **MonSFFilms' Beavra** and **MooseMan**, respectively, as well as numerous other roles in other fan-films.

He was possessed of a deep, booming voice and a crackerjack sense of humour, ad-libbing lines on occasion to delightfully comical effect. His laugh was full-throated, resounding, and one which I shall sincerely miss. Never was that laugh more in evidence than when his sometimes co-star Lindsay Brown got Marc to laughing uncontrollably between takes on set. I recall with fondness one enjoyable afternoon sitting with Marc in a café working out the storyline for **MooseMan**, and pitching character names for our Canadian-flavoured superhero parody—he came up with my favourite, the exceedingly Canadian “Louise Lake,” our script's spoof of Lois Lane!

And, our short **The Simpletons' Life** was entirely Marc's idea, poking fun at the then-topical Paris Hilton/Nicole Richie reality TV series **The Simple Life**. Marc imagined the two dim-witted blonde bimbos travelling back in time to the medieval era, where they are promptly burned as witches, with Paris uttering her signature phrase as the flames rise around them: “That's hot!”

Marc was an avid fan of SF/F and a creative guy, a fellow traveller in that respect, and I always had a lot of fun working with him on the club's fan-film and other projects. I had looked forward to doing so again, post-pandemic, but sadly, fate has rewritten the script and such is not to be.

—Keith Braithwaite

## MonSFFAandom By Keith Braithwaite

### 2022 Club Elections

Held again online during our January 15 e-meeting, the club conducted its annual election of **MonSFFA's** Executive Committee—President, Vice-President, Treasurer. Cathy Palmer-Lister and Keith Braithwaite were returned to office for another term, she as President, he as VP, and Joe Aspler and Lil Moir will share the duties long handled by the late Sylvain St-Pierre, those of Treasurer.

We congratulate all candidates and welcome the club's new bean-counters to the Executive ranks.

The following **MonSFFA** meetings were all online gatherings.

### January 15 (<http://www.monsffa.ca/?m=20220117>)

We began with a trivia challenge prepared by Keith Braithwaite, which posed 22 puzzlers in honour of the year 2022! Answers were posted at the conclusion of the meeting.

Joe Aspler opened principal programming with his exploration of Classical Music in F&SF, citing pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Ligeti, Liszt, Mussorgsky, Schubert, Johann Strauss II, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky, and Tchaikovsky, among others, these being works that graced the soundtracks of such films as Disney's *Fantasia*, Robert Wise's classic *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, animation/live-action hybrid *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, and early sci-fi/adventure serials like *Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe*.



Modern film composers such as John Williams and Canadian Howard Shore, who produce works in the style of classical music, were given their due, as well. And of course, director Chuck Jones made comic use of operas by Richard Wagner and Gioachino Rossini in the unforgettable cartoons “What's Opera, Doc?” and “The Rabbit of Seville,” respectively.

During the mid-meeting break, the club held its annual election of **MonSFFA's** Executive Committee (see lead item).

Josée Bellemare initiated our listing of Special Cameos in Sci-Fi TV and Film, in which we noted instances of genre TV shows and movies paying homage to other SF/F franchises with a knowing nod or inside joke, usually featuring a certain recognizable actor or character. Helen Slater, for example, who starred as the titular superheroine in the 1984 *Supergirl* movie, appeared as Eliza Danvers, Kara “Supergirl” Danvers' adoptive mother, in the 2015-2021 Melissa Benoist-fronted *Supergirl* television series. Another example: Lynda Carter, who starred as Wonder Woman in the popular 1970s TV series, appeared briefly as legendary amazon warrior Asteria in the 2020 Gal Gadot-led film *Wonder Woman 1984*.

A list of SF/F movies set in 2022 followed, while on ZOOM, **MonSFFen** commented on recent books read and TV shows or films watched. Future e-meeting programming was briefly discussed and a couple presentations scheduled before time ran short and we decided to adjourn deliberation until the club's next virtual get-together.

### February 12 (<http://www.monsffa.ca/?m=20220214>)

A writing challenge was introduced off the top of the club's February e-meeting, stemming from an illustrated list presented of a dozen interesting, unusual, *otherworldly* travel



destinations within Canada, such as the UFO landing pad built in St. Paul, Alberta for Canada's centennial celebrations, Moonbeam, Ontario's flying saucer replica, New Brunswick's bizarrely eroded Hopewell Rocks, subject twice daily to the ebb and flow of Fundy's tides, or B.C.'s Enchanted Forest, a family-friendly roadside attraction near Revelstoke. The exercise was to devise a genre short story inspired by one of these locales.

Joe Aspler provided the afternoon's leading presentation, offering an update of his prior look at the wild and wacky physics of cartoons, first proffered in the early 2000s. Adding chemistry to the mix, Joe introduced his amusing *Physics and Chemistry of Cartoons*, noting that the chemistry of cartoons is more scientifically rooted than is the physics. Usually.

Such rules as those of gravity were covered—a body suspended in space will remain there until made aware of its situation! That's an impossibility as regards you and I, but fully in effect when applied to Wile E. Coyote and Sylvester the Cat, for example. Another observation had to do with the infinite malleability of cartoon characters, who are struck, slammed, and battered by anvils, boulders, speeding vehicles, and such, only to have fully recovered moments later!

The chemistry of cartoon explosions was detailed, and of course, the Acme Corporation covered extensively, with many of its calamitous devices spotlighted.

While a show-and-tell of sci-fi crafting projects unfolded on ZOOM, an album of photos was showcased on the MonSFFA Web site related to those earlier-mentioned otherworldly travel destinations, offering potential storytellers further inspiration as regards our writing challenge. During talk of books recently read, and television series and films recently viewed, a photo-gallery of charming, old-fashioned toy tin robots was put up on the site for the enjoyment of those not participating in the video-chat.

The programming planning session truncated in January was completed here, during the final hour or so of this virtual meeting.

**March 12 (<http://www.monsffa.ca/?m=20220314>)**

We opened the afternoon's programming with Keith Braithwaite's first of a series of quizzes, seeking from trivia devotees the full and correct titles of old sci-fi films or TV shows. With only a partially remembered, scanty description given of the productions in question—example: "What was the title of that original-series *Star Trek* episode? You know, the one with the Mugato"—players were challenged with providing the proper title of the piece. Answers were posted at the conclusion of the meeting.

Keith was up again for his entertaining and informative

Sea-Monkeys and Other Wonders from the Back Pages of Comic Books. He ran through some of the better known toys, novelty items, and gag-gifts offered mail-order in the pages of comic books, particularly during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. He recommended persons interested in the topic also refer to Kirk Demarais' book *Mail-Order Mysteries: Real Stuff from Old Comic-Book Ads*.

Keith showed vintage ads for such classic pieces of junk as the X-Ray Spex, the Hypno-Coin, and the Secret Spy Scope, and then revealed how the actual product never lived up to the hype. Ads for "Monster-Size Monsters", for instance, portrayed them as full-scale, realistic mannequins of famous movie monsters like Frankenstein and Dracula... but they were, in fact, merely 6-foot-tall posters.

He then explored the life of crap merchant Harold von Braunhut, who, inspired by a rival's "Ant Farm," invented the adorable<sup>1</sup>, trainable<sup>2</sup> Sea-Monkeys—which are actually common brine shrimp. von Braunhut's personal life held some unsavoury details as well: he was a white supremacist, and a Jew who changed his name to sound more German.



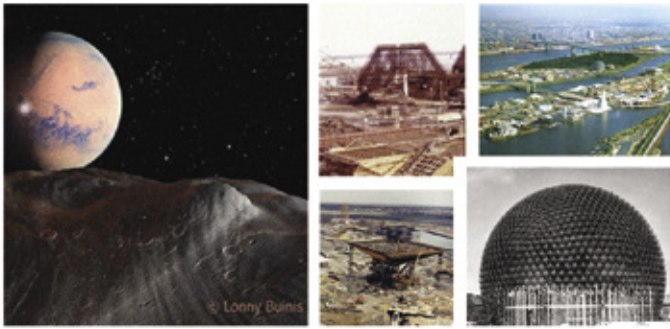
After our regular ZOOM Show-and-Tell, with MonSFFen showcasing recently completed or ongoing sci-fi crafting projects, and our "What Are You Reading/Watching" discussion, along with the usual mid-meeting break, we moved on to SF/F Top-Ten Lists, a new, semi-regular feature of our e-meetings in which club members contribute, whether by posting on the MonSFFA Web site or sharing during our ZOOM chat, a top-ten list related to SF/F. For this inaugural edition, we showcased favourite dinosaur movies, choice Ray Bradbury short stories, the best comic-book superhero sobriquets, best and worst *Star Trek* movies, beloved SF/F films from the 1980s, most desired sci-fi model kits, anime productions, and more!

The meeting closed with Danny Sichel's hosting on ZOOM a game of what can loosely be described as "Sci-Fi Balderdash", where players invent brief synopses for sci-fi story titles, then guess the real one. For those not participating, we posted on the site a preview of coming presentations.

1: 'adorable' is subjective

2: Because you can get them to follow light, this is technically correct—the *best kind* of correct!

April 9 (<http://www.monsffa.ca/?m=20220411>)



After opening with the second installment of Keith Braithwaite's series of quizzes tasking folk with relaying the exact titles of old, largely forgotten sci-fi films and television shows, we welcomed Lonny Buinis, our special guest speaker, who had been brought to our attention by club members Brian and Cathye Knapp, and who addressed the group via ZOOM.

Lonny earned degrees in physics and computer science from the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey, and is one of the 200 space artists worldwide who hold membership in the International Association of Astronomical Artists. The United Astronomy Clubs of New Jersey named one of its observatories after him in recognition of his decades of volunteer work there.

He spoke on the topic of astronomy, and on the art of creating virtual-reality planets, running a live demonstration as he spoke. Using digital graphics and 3-D modelling software, Lonny showed how various maps of Mercury, Mars, and other planets could be superimposed over virtual globes, and in the same way, astronomical art applied, to create VR planets which could be rotated and otherwise manipulated at will. Visit Lonny's Web site at: <http://www.astronomyinmotion.com>

After the mid-meeting break, Joe Aspler took MonSFFen on a nostalgic tour of Expo 67, Montreal's exceptionally successful World's Fair. Older MonSFFen fondly remembered the colourful, exotic architecture of the Expo 67 site as resembling a city of the future, representative of the promise of tomorrow extant in those ambitious, forward-looking, space-race days.

A teenaged Joe Aspler had visited the exhibition often throughout the summer of 1967, and had snapped hundreds of photos, some of which he shared with us, along with other images and video-clips, serving collectively to tell the story of Expo 67's conception and the clever engineering employed to create the twin-island showcase of then-technological marvels and modish popular culture.

The afternoon's remaining time was apportioned to a few more of our SF/F Top-Ten Lists, and our regular Show-and-Tell and "What Are You Reading/Watching?" features.

May 14 (<http://www.monsffa.ca/?m=20220515>)

The third and final installment of our series of quizzes in quest of the titles of old, hazily remembered sci-fi films and TV shows was our warm-up, leading to the afternoon's first featured presentation, part one of Keith Braithwaite's look at the brief Hollywood career of unsung sci-fi/horror B-movie monster-maker Paul Blaisdell.

Blaisdell, an artist and sculptor with no special effects

experience, got into film after a last-second recommendation from early SF fan Forrest J. Ackermann, and quickly made a reputation for building eye-catching monsters for Roger Corman and similar B-movie producers. His first monster, nicknamed "Little Hercules", was an amazingly-detailed 18-inch-tall puppet built for a scene in *The Beast with 1,000,000 Eyes* (1955)... where it was barely visible.



Paul Blaisdell's "Little Hercules"

Keith explained the fabrication techniques that Blaisdell and his wife Jackie used for making monster suits, which Blaisdell almost always wore himself. These suits included the Venusian invader from *It Conquered the World* (1956), and the aquatic monster from *The She Creature* (also 1956)—which was later stripped down, and given a sarong, a skull-face Halloween mask, and a blonde wig, so that it could be the monster in *Voodoo Woman* (1957).

The second half of this presentation would play out the following month, as part of our June 4 e-meeting.

Next on the agenda and leading up to the break were our two regular e-meeting features, Show-and-Tell and "What Are You Reading/Watching?"

Joe Aspler opened the second half of the meeting with his brief presentation on time-travel stories patterned after Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), in which the protagonists opt to introduce aspects of their modern world to the past in which they find themselves as part of their survival strategy. Joe offered a few examples, like L. Sprague de Camp's *Lest Darkness Fall* (1939), S. M. Stirling's *Nantucket* trilogy (1998-2000), and Eric Flint's *1632* series (2000-ongoing). The floor was opened to others who had such stories to cite and recommend.

With the end of the pandemic apparently nigh, we decided to hold a commemoration of those fellow MonSFFen lost over the years, most recently to COVID-19, with club members present offering fond memories of good friends now gone. Incomplete membership files allowed us to identify many, but by no means all, former club members and associates who have passed away since our founding.

We honour them all, and miss them dearly.

June 4 (<http://www.monsffa.ca/?m=20220606>)

With the club's upcoming field trip to a railway museum in mind, Keith Braithwaite got us started on this afternoon with a list of SF/F stories that feature trains, from animé's space-faring Galaxy Express 999 and J. K. Rowling's famous Hogwarts Express to the horror genre's Terror Train and the Trans-Siberian Express, setting of *Horror Express* (1972), to Christmastime's *Polar Express* and the futuristic Supertrain of failed late-1970s television.

Poet and performing programmer Kofi Oduro, a.k.a. "Illestpreacha", who recently joined MonSFFA, came recommended by WARP editor Danny Sichel and was eager to share with the group first a poem, posted on the club Web site as an introduction to his ZOOM panel, then his unique, improvisational take on world-building. Drawing upon guided suggestions solicited from the group, Kofi finessed an offbeat world of strange animals with stranger habits and appetites, using software in real time to map out a graphic and aural representation of the world we were collectively conceiving for all to see and hear.

Somewhat bewildered at first and unsure of what precisely was taking place, as the journey progressed and creativity blossomed, participants contributed further ideas and increasingly got into the exercise. By the end of the allotted hour, we'd all had a lot of fun with the whole affair.

Our Show-and-Tell segment highlighted the dragon collectibles of some MonSFFen and carried over a little into the break period before we resumed programming with the second half of Keith Braithwaite's presentation on the career of Paul Blaisdell.

Along with his work on *Not of This Earth* (1957) and other films of the late '50s, Keith covered Blaisdell's creation of the Saucer Men from *Invasion of the Saucer Men* (1957) and, probably his best work, the Martian creature from *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* (1958). But the movie business was not kind to Blaisdell—broken promises, theft of his designs, destruction of his models—and by the early '60s he had left the industry and become a carpenter. In 1983, he died of stomach cancer, aged 55... just as interest in his work was starting to rekindle.

As the meeting drew to a close, we took the time to finalize our plans for the club's summer events.

MonSFFA's first actual, physical, in-person gathering in over two years was the club's field trip to the Exporail Museum in late June.

### June 18: Field Trip to Exporail

On this day, some dozen MonSFFen gathered, physically, face-to-face in the lobby of the Exporail Museum, located in the South-Shore community of St-Constant. MonSFFen had not gathered together in the same room for a club event since our March 7, 2020 meeting at the downtown Hôtel Espresso! The Exporail outing marked our long-awaited, official return to in-person gatherings and we spent the afternoon visiting this, Canada's railway museum.

The nation's largest collection of locomotives, rail coaches and cars, and railroad equipment and paraphernalia, Exporail's staff and volunteers have beautifully restored Canada's railway heritage, dating back to the early days of steam and streetcars, all on display within two large pavilions. The museum featured, too, several exhibits devoted to the history of toy trains, and a sizable,



Back row, left to right: Joe Aspler, Mark Burakoff, Danny Sichel, Annette Aspler, Keith Braithwaite, Dom Durocher  
Front row, left to right: Josee Bellemare, Paula Dufour, Cathy Palmer-Lister  
Photo by Lindsay Brown

operating HO-scale model-railroad layout. We braved the day's light rain to walk about outside among the additional engines and cars parked on sidings and awaiting restoration. Exploring the museum on our own at the outset, we were fortunate to later also enjoy a guided tour of some of the notable trains in the collection, including a first-generation Montreal Metro car!

Afterwards, we enjoyed a post-field trip dinner at a nearby restaurant.

## Obituary: Nichelle Nichols

By Carl Phillips



MonSFFA began as a *Star Trek* fan club, and we note with sorrow the recent passing of actress Nichelle "Lieutenant Uhura" Nichols. A beloved member of the vast *Star Trek* family, she died at age 89 of natural causes on Saturday, July 30, in Silver City, New Mexico.

In her final years, Nichols suffered from advanced dementia and her son, with whom she had been living, wrote of his dear departed mother, "Her light...like the ancient galaxies



now being seen for the first time, will remain for us and future generations to enjoy, learn from, and draw inspiration. Hers was a life well lived and as such a model for us all."

Nichols was eulogized, too, by former cast mates, Hollywood friends, and many others as an actress who, in her portrayal of the *Enterprise's* highly skilled communications officer, broke down stereotypes and helped open doors for black women in the entertainment industry. Actresses of colour would no longer be relegated to marginal roles as maids and the like.

She counted among her many fans during the early days of *Star Trek* none other than American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. When she considered leaving the show after its first season, it was King who urged her to remain with the series, highlighting the importance of demonstrating to America that a black woman *belonged* on the bridge of the *Enterprise* as much as anyone else. Her presence there as a respected member of a crew of officers offered a positive vision of our future, and served as inspiration for African-Americans throughout not just the television industry, but the nation.

She and co-star William "Captain Kirk" Shatner helped further demolish racial barriers with their then-controversial interracial kiss on national television in the episode "Plato's Stepchildren." Encouragingly, the expected blow-back did not substantively materialize.

Post-*Star Trek*, Nichols was tapped by NASA to help recruit some of the first women and members of minority communities to become astronauts, one of which was Mae Jemison, the first black woman in space. In 1992, as a crewmember on STS-47, Jemison initiated communications aboard the space shuttle *Endeavour* with "Hailing frequencies open," quoting Uhura's off-spoken line from *Star Trek*.

We mourn Nichelle Nichols' passing, and we celebrate her legacy.

## Programming as Art

By Hendrik Boom

I am an artist working in the medium of computer programs.

I'm trying to generate interesting images by writing computer programs. Not just using programs as tools, like popular paint-and draw software, not using a program to mimic conventional painting and drawing, but to have as intimate an interaction with the computer as a painter has with his brush and easel.

An artist whose artwork is the creation of computer programs.

I am, after all, a mathematician and a computer programmer. That's what I'm good at, and I may as well find out what can be accomplished this way.

I'm currently experimenting in the hope of developing a vocabulary of recursive fractal drawing algorithms. I will use and adjust those algorithms in combination to produce images.

How did I get started on this? By drawing landscape maps for adventure games and wanting to automate it so I could explore a territory that is at least somewhat unknown to me.

But realism is hard to program. Instead I end up with images like this one.

Maybe it's abstract stained-glass art. Maybe it's farmers' fields in the European countryside that arose centuries before land was parceled into rectangular grids.

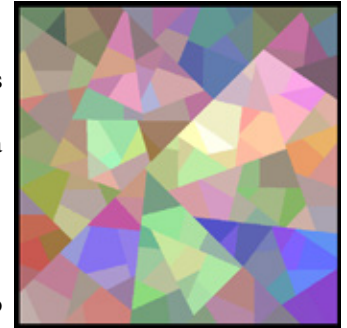
Here's how I generate this image:

- I start with a polygon (in this case, a rectangle).

- I choose a colour (in this case, a neutral grey).

And then:

- I choose its longest diagonal.

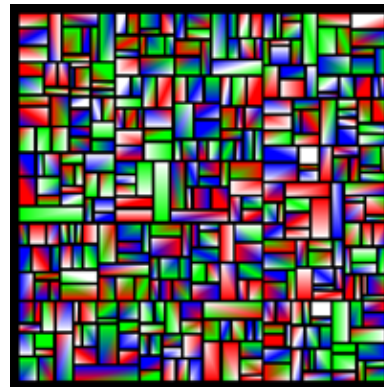


*Areas, by Hendrik Boom*

I cut the polygon in two with a cut running perpendicular to that longest diagonal. Now I have two 'child' polygons. For each of those I pick a colour that's a random small change in colour from the parent's, by adjusting the red, green, and blue components.

I repeat this for the new polygons, recursively, until I reach polygons that are small enough. Those small enough polygons are the ones I actually draw, using the colour I've finally assigned to it.

Of course I didn't do this myself. I wrote a computer program in Racket (a programming language) to do this, giving me a very fast cycle of tweaks to the algorithm in response to seeing how it turns out.



*Glass, by Hendrik Boom*

I'm not done with this algorithm. There are still things I'd like to try out. I would like to blend the colours between adjacent polygons, so I get continuously changing colours in visual space. But that involves keeping track of which polygons are adjacent, which is a lot more difficult to program.

I would like to extend it to three dimensions, making polytopes in differing colours, with tunnels to you can use to explore them in some kind of virtual reality. I'd like to mark different areas or volumes with tokens other than colours, to see what the effect is. But these involve much more complexity of code than this image does; it will have to wait until later. First I'll use the age-old maxim of computer programming—to do the simplest thing that could possibly work, but to deviate from this only when it becomes clear that it won't.



*Summer, by Hendrik Boom*

# Fiction: Two Short Stories

## By Maureen Whitelaw

**Editor's Note:** *Maureen Whitelaw (November 25, 1940 – February 20, 2022) first joined MONSFFA in the mid-90s. Even after she was no longer able to attend meetings because she had moved to a long-term care facility, she retained her membership, talked to Cathy on the phone on a regular basis, and received physical copies of WARP whenever they were available.*

*At some point in the mid-00s, she made a website for herself on Tripod.com, where she posted the following stories that she had written. I have corrected Maureen's typing errors, filled in the occasional missing word and switched out some obviously wrong words where I was sure what she meant, and reformatted the text for increased readability, but the stories are otherwise unchanged. She wrote them very earnestly, and I'm sure she would have been thrilled to know that they were being published.*

*Goodbye, Maureen. Thank you for the stories.*

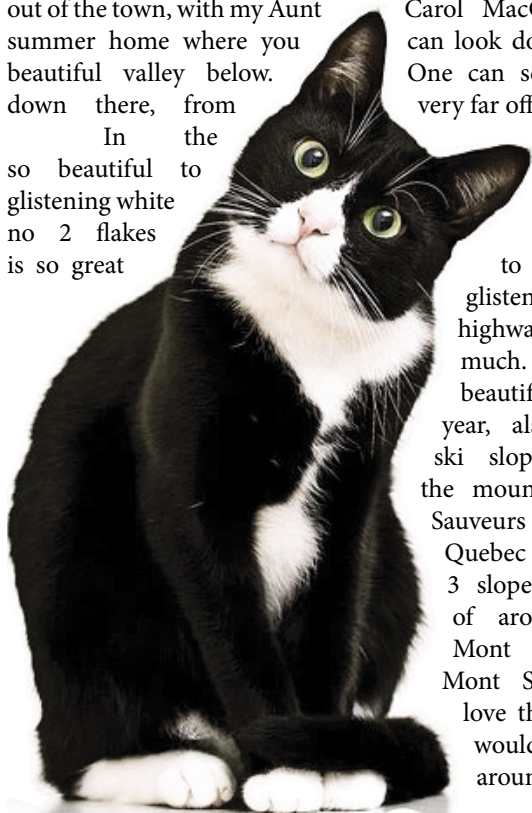
*–Danny Sichel*

### 1. CHRISTMAS ON EARTH AND MARS WITH NICKY, MY CAT

Nicky, my cat and I are happy to be in my living room on St. Antoine St. I was doing my homework, when I got tired, and decided to go to bed. I ended in a very deep dream.

I ended up in a very odd dream, finding myself in the Laurentians, in St. Sauveurs des Monts with Nicky. He loves traveling with me. This is the Laurentians, about 2 miles out of the town, with my Aunt Carol MacClaren's at her summer home where you can look down into a very beautiful valley below. One can see tiny villages down there, from very far off.

In the winter, it is so beautiful to look at, with glistening white snow, with no 2 flakes looking alike. It is so great to see. The sun glistens down on the highway, I love it so much. It is such a beautiful time of the year, also with many ski slopes around in the mountains, with St. Sauveurs des Monts, Quebec having at least 3 slopes that I know of around: Hill 70, Mont Habitant, and Mont St. Sauveurs. I love the mountains. I would live there year around, if I had the



money to do it.

I happened to be sleeping at Mont Habitant, one of the more popular spots on St. Sauveurs des Monts, Quebec. Guess what? What did I see who was with me. Nicky was my cat, black and white, and was skiing down the hill with me. I never knew that he could ski, until I saw him. What a surprise. I couldn't believe it. He was phenomenal, skiing on three paws. I could not believe it. A cat who could ski. Hey. Give me a break, eh. Come on. That does not happen. But my cat, Nicky did it. Believe me.

### CHAPTER 2:

#### A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY OF ST. SAUVEURS DES MONTS: THE MAIN STREET:

La Rue Principale is the main street of the town. You can have a ball, roaming about that part of St. Sauveurs des Monts, Que. It has many arts and crafts shops, ski areas. I hope that they have many restaurants, pubs, sports stores.

### CHAPTER 3:

Nicky and I were sleeping at my aunt's house, which is also used in the winter months at Christmas time. We were sleeping, when a beagle-looking ship, which looked like a Martian coming out of his probe which looks like the mother ship of all ships. He came out of it and entered my aunt's summer home. This ship was big enough that it covered the whole town. It also had the amenities one could ever want to have wanted in life. It looked like St. Sauveurs des Monts, Quebec. Wow. Don't forget, this is the future.

We were taken to a place that looked like the Jodrell Bank Observatory in England. It was scary at all. The Earth was scanned on the surface and ended up in St. Sauveurs des Monts. It was a signal they followed. These Martians came down from their ship and guided us up to the mother ship. It didn't take too long to end up there. The surface was mapped out so they can find the Laurentians area. The radar of the mother ship scans several kilometers of the surface at a time for an underground area.

When we arrived, we found life, rocks on the site of significant sizes and shapes. If they came in contact with water, they can explode, and kill everyone who lives around this area of the planet. If there's a threat of an explosion, everyone should vacate, because if you don't, you can be killed. These rocks could have been part of a salty Martian hot spring or a stream or ocean. This is all different from Earthians – their way of Laurentians and St. Sauveurs des Monts, first choice of where they took us there. It is a way of advertising. It is a planet that seems to be a lot like the Laurentians. They gave us a brochure of the planet.

It is a not-miss Martian site, with plenty of volcanoes, canyons, tourist hot spots for the Red Planet. Red Earth seems to be the thing to behold.

## CHAPTER 4:

One could use a dune buggy around the surface of Mars. It is the ultimate remote-control car. I would love to trace all around the planet, and see what is going on with lots of cities and small towns, looking futuristic.

I saw lakes and oceans, which also has two seasons: winter, then summer. In the winter time, it is a frozen terrain. Poor icy and frozen Mars. WOW. In the summer, it can be very hard to keep the lakes and the ocean, full of water molecules, from vaporizing from the Red Planet's South Pole. It is the water there on its surface that is supposed to have the potential to support life.

They seem to say that Mars is the closest thing resembling Earth. Violent sandstorms often hurts its surface. It has a surface of mixed dry ice. Temperatures can rise tremendously in some areas and also go so very low as -140 degrees. Some people say that Mars has an equivalent of Epsom Salts.

### 2. TRAINS

This is the time of WW2, when war came upon us, between Germany and the rest of the world, and also Japan. As usual, spare parts were at a minimum. These spare parts were used in the war efforts, to be used for the rest of the world. It was a very bad time for humanity, also. Wartime always creates jobs for us local folks.

Things started to happen.

POOR ROCKET: Rocket, you must be so very sick indeed. What are we to do for you? This is so serious.

ROCKET STREETCAR: Not knowing that I too am sick, this is serious business indeed. I used to go to the nearest hospital.

See, at first, we did not know what to do. They had to find out by doing a tracheotomy on him for him to breathe. That seemed to help a little.

They could not find him any spare parts. War does a lot of damage, and destroys property. They will have to do their best to find those parts. Too bad.

EXPERTS, to THE DOCTORS: What is wrong with this little fellow?

DOCTORS, to THE EXPERTS: He seems to be missing some crucial spare parts for his major operation. We have to wait and see what happens in this special case.

Europe has to send in expert doctors and nurses. Confidence is what is needed here.

So, they needed confidence desperately, to see what they can do for him. What sort of operation must be needed? This is so hard to figure this one out.

EXPERTS, again: Let us put our brains together to figure out what

we must do. I cannot figure this one out, indeed. Spare parts are hard to find. We have to help each other.

ONE DOCTOR: I just had a brain wave. He had a tracheotomy to help him breathe. That might help for a while. What do you think of that, then? Eh?

DOCTOR 2: Maybe. I am not so sure. It might help. We will try. OK.

FIRST DOCTOR: I will have to go along with that, if it works at all, sir. I am really pessimistic about that kind of operation. I want it to work, because I love him dearly. That procedure will have to be done in the hospital very soon. It is hard for him to breathe just now.

So, they rushed the little guy to the Royal Victoria Hospital, the next day, first thing in the morning.

It ended up that they had to do an emergency operation on his stomach. His little brother Rocket 2 was so darn worried about little Rocket Streetcar, and his serious illness.

Poor little Rocket Streetcar.

We all feel so sorry for him these days. So, they had to call for help from the CRHA\* to see what they can do to help, and take care of business there. This is so very serious business indeed.

So, they hurried him to the nearest hospital they could find, so he would not die on us. It was the Royal Victoria Hospital. It is the greatest one they could find at the time, and the biggest, and most prestigious hospital around to date.

They seem to have the right equipment to do the job that was needed to save his life indeed. I hope they can do the job right. They were to assist the European doctors and nurses.

Being the specialists they are, they certainly needed more help. So, they took an excursion around the country, Canada by train and bus, and streetcar. Oh! By the way, what a beautiful country we have, especially Western Canada, I mean.

It really is poor Little Rocket Streetcar who needs around-the-clock schools, and the serious operation which he seriously needs to save this guy's life. Ow!

So, this is where his friends and family came in. These doctors and nurses and a streetcar named CPR-2850: the Hudson Locomotive.

He came all the way across Canada to the hospital in Montreal, just in time for the big operations on Little Rocket Streetcar.

CPR-2850-HUDSON LOCOMOTIVE: Thanks for asking me to help you guys. I feel honoured to do that serious job on him. Rocket is someone so very special to all of this. As I said, it is a great honour. This is such a delicate one. We have to be careful, and not do the wrong thing. He happened to be very ill indeed,

\*CRHA: Canadian Railroad Historical Association, the people who run the museum we visited in June.



and really needed help and care from the doctors, family and friends, who were from Ottawa.

It took a long time for them to help, to try to heal him, and to get him on his wheels again, because of some spare-parts shortage. It is all because of the war.

HUDSON LOCOMOTIVE 2850: War is hell, isn't it? It seems that we have to fight for those parts, because if we don't he'll die for sure. That is it. What do all we have to say about that, CXR Locomotive?

CXR LOCOMOTIVE: I really do not know. This is a difficult case for sure. We have to think about all that.

HUDSON LOCOMOTIVE 2850: I have a brain wave. Let us go to Europe and see what is going on there, and then what we can do.

CXR LOCOMOTIVE: Great. It would be a great place to see and explore anyway, honey.

And so, a good collection of cars from Ottawa stayed day and night with Little Rocket Streetcar, to keep him company and heal him. Little Rocket Streetcar: he was loved dearly, and he had a big family. Indeed, he also had friends.

The Scott Car, 902 Dorchester: it happened to be the greatest friend of all of his. But he also had Puffy Billy, and Brunel, and Cowcatcher, and the Rocket 111, who was his favourite cousin, and the Golden Chariot. They all came to cheer him on to health, in his time of need. To get him better in time, they had to hurry him to the hospital, by saying:

Call off: ALL ABOARD.

Thank God for that. After all that was done, they started to head back home to Canada, and do this very serious and fabulous operation.

Off they went.

They took a rickety, rickety, darn old train to the station, and a car, also, outside the capital. They had great conversations while waiting, for the bullet train was on its way to pick them up. An hour later, one did come finally.

THE GROUP OF TRAINS: It is about time it did. Come, guys. I am tired from all that work. I believe the bullet train is supposed to be the fastest train on record in this world of ours. I certainly hope so, because we need to get back home to Montreal to do that operation. The train landed back in the Flym so they can take their plane back home.

Finally, we landed back in Montreal early the next day, in the morning to be precise about it. Royal Victoria Hospital where everyone was waiting for those very special and rare spare parts they needed.

Hooray for the doctors and nurses of Switzerland. They were fabulous, weren't they? You see, they haven't found anything yet. It was a trade show. They had many trains, buses, streetcars, and many spare parts, even though it was wartime.

Trying to find things in times of war is hard, because we do not know which we would be killed by the enemy, according to the Nazis of Germany thought we were. That was hard to deal with, and with all the goings-on here, they did not do what they

wanted there. So they went to a mining chemical manufacturing company. After spending a whole day or so, they found what they wanted. Thank goodness. That was great.

Conversation between the DOCTORS and the NURSES: I believe we might have found just what they needed for that operation on little Rocket Streetcar.

THE GROUP OF TRAINS: Isn't that great? I believe that's it for now. OK, let's go, and head for home.

They indeed did find the ingredient they needed to do the operation. Thanks to everyone who helped. The thing they had to go to many different places and hospitals around Europe.

Then, they ended up in Switzerland. That is the birthplace of the Red Cross. They did lots of great works, and still do now.

## Fiction: *Space Voyage* By Paul Gareau

Bill Ellengreen sat down across from Ann Robinson-Price in the diner, struck a match, lit his cigarette, took a deep drag, then pulled out his notebook and a ballpoint pen. He smiled at her, with his best "I'm the reporter who *really cares* about what you have to say" expression.

"So," he said, "this story about what you found. Just a meteorite, they said. A stone falling from the sky. That's pretty fantastic stuff! You think anyone'll believe it?"

Ann looked around uncertainly. "I... I don't know. They should believe it, because... well, because it's the truth!" She sighed. "Bill, I... I haven't had an easy life. I was an orphan. I still am, I suppose, but—"

"So are lots of people. Go on."

She blushed. "I wasn't always a farmer's wife, is what I meant. I... I did things to survive. Things that weren't very Christian. Please don't put that in your article?"

He patted her hand. "Sorry, I must have gone deaf for a few seconds."

She smiled faintly. "So, people in Burnley, they can be... pretty hypocritical. They may not believe someone who... who wasn't always a farmer's wife."

"Your word against theirs."

She nodded.

He took another puff and set his cigarette down in the ashtray. "Then it's all in the telling. Let's see what we can do, then. You said Detective Scurfield was the first one to talk to you after the incident, is that right? When you found the piece of debris?"

Ann's face soured at the police officer's name. "Yes. Sam Scurfield."

Bill flipped through his notebook. "And he said you were... in hysterics. Weeping."

She nodded again. "Something like that, yes. And that I'd strayed away from the road, that I was in a 'state of confusion', that I couldn't find my way home..."

He wrote that down. "Could you? Did you? But what do *you* say now? Now that Scurfield has exploded this case around town, now that the good citizens have... a meteor shower. *Could* it have been a meteor shower, Ann?"

She shook her head. "No, I... I don't think so. We would

have heard about it over the radio.”

### SCENE IX: THE CLIMAX

Ann’s dream... or nightmare: The arrival to planet Earth of the “comet” or “meteor” was soon commented upon by the townspeople and in the newspapers. But nothing could match in horror what Ann Sheridan Robinson-Price saw with her very own eyes!!! For then... then from the tube slid out one of the creatures. And with it a cocoon of slimy tentacles, sticky, tight and close-fitting around its circumference. Surely the creatures had come here to Earth with martial intent, for now they were proceeding to invade. What Ann had construed to be “lightness” or “light” of coloring was actually a dark shroud which would soon overrun Burnley’s atmosphere, wrap around and envelop the townspeople and poison their lives. The sad end was soon to come... it would seem... it would seem that... Bill Ellengreen was nowhere to be seen. In the Year of Our Lord 2010, the town of Burnley was to have its holocaust.

### THE CLIMAX: RIDDLE UNRIDDED

Had it been real? Or had it all been a dream? A nightmare they both had? Or rather a particularly nasty day?

**ANN’S DREAM OR NIGHTMARE COME TRUE:** It’s 10:00 AM, Wednesday, August 5th, 2010. Ellengreen sits in his office at the *North Yarmouth Reporter* and switches on the radio next to his typewriter. “We now come to you with a special US Government news item—straight from Washington,” a supercilious voice said. The typewriter keys stopped clacking. Ellengreen paused to better listen in. “The space shuttle *Columbia* has collapsed, fallen from the air above the little town of Burnley, Texas. It is reported that there are no survivors! But—”

Bill gasped. The *Columbia* space shuttle lost! A disaster!

“—ostensibly, along with some burning gas, some debris, some piece or vestige—but of what? The debris, the remains of the capsule, had been found on the ground nearby.”

The debris...

So that’s what the “tube” was? Not a “meteor”, an aerolite, or the advancing armada of an alien invasion? (ALIEN INVASION!)

But had it all been just a dream (or a nightmare)?

ALIEN.

“Alien?” Bill Ellengreen thought a secret thought to himself.

Ellengreen had an idea that it had been real.

*Had* it been real? Or had it all been a dream? Ann’s dream? Or rather—a particularly bad nightmare they had both had? A nightmare—or a bad dream?—on a particularly nasty day???

### POSSIBLE – THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW CHARACTER: *THE SCIENTIST*

Bill: Here comes the man in the white coat!

Dr. Carruthers: Hello, permit me to introduce myself. I’m Dr. Carruthers... Dr. Paul Carruthers. And you... you... I believe, you are Mrs. Ann Sheridan Robinson-Price. I’m glad to meet you... Mrs. Robinson, I’d like to question you. I’d like to question you

about that piece of debris you found...”

He smiled an ironic, thin-lipped smile.

Dr. Carruthers was not engaging. It was in the way he said it... Ann felt chilled to her bones. There was something very ominous in his bearing, with his whole person...

Ann: “Doctors! Doctors!”

She saw them, men working in their laboratories in their white coats. Doctors, and men of Science. *So-called* men of science. They would always be like that! Ann thought they were there first... they would make their diagnosis... in the name of medical science (or if they were mathematicians, in the name of digital computing or statistical analysis)... and then, after they make their diagnosis and/or analysis, what then? And then... Ann shuddered.

And then... there was no insurance, no guarantee against them misusing their power over you. No guarantee...

### THE END.

## Fiction: *Starfleet Treachery* By Barbara Silverman

*The story so far:* *Tiny changes between alternate timelines can quickly become huge. When Captain Kathryn Janeway leads the USS Explorer into the Badlands while pursuing Chakotay and his Maquis, they are abruptly flung into the Delta Quadrant. Many of Explorer’s crew are killed—but not, as in the timeline we are more familiar with, first officer Commander Cavit or medical officer Dr. Fitzgerald. Without those high-level vacancies in Explorer’s hierarchy, Janeway cannot offer a position to Chakotay, or leave the EMH permanently on... and the differences accumulate. PREVIOUSLY: Janeway has destroyed the Array, enraging the Kazon, who open fire, leaving her grievously injured. Cavit and Fitzgerald take advantage of her condition to declare her incapable of command.*

## CHAPTER 57

The bridge was quiet. Harry Kim at ops, Tom Paris at the helm, the crew at their stations.

Waiting, struggling to understand and accept the shocking turn of events. The destruction of the Array... being stranded... Janeway’s injury. Everyone hoped it was just a nightmare, one from which they would soon awaken. They waited, listening intently for the slightest sound from the direction of the turbolift. Expecting, hoping that at any moment the doors would open and Captain Janeway would stride out onto the bridge, once again taking command of her ship.

But it was Cavit, not Janeway, who stepped out of the turbolift. All heads swung in his direction.

He stood at the back of the bridge, surveying what was now his crew. Savoring the moment of taking command... the power he now yielded. “I have bad news. Captain Janeway has been fatally injured. There has been extensive cortical damage, plus multiple internal injuries. At the moment she is still alive; however, Doctor Fitzgerald has declared her condition unstable, and the injuries too massive for her to survive. He expects to

officially announce her death within the next couple of hours.”

Cavit looked at the crew’s faces. It was important, he thought, that they understood it had been Janeway’s own fault. That the doctor had made an heroic effort to save her. “I had a lengthy discussion with Dr. Fitzgerald, about the Captain’s condition and the treatment he can provide. He did everything possible, but he is working with damaged equipment and a shortage of supplies. If we had a Starfleet medical base nearby, the Captain would have a fifty-fifty chance. Being here in the Delta Quadrant... there is absolutely no way to save her.”

Dazed, Harry Kim stared down at his control panel. Over in the conn chair, Tom Paris could not accept the words he had just heard. At tactical, Tuvok stood quietly, contemplating the loss of not just a captain, but a friend with whom he had served for so many years.

After letting the news sink in, Cavit took a couple of steps forward. “Therefore... in accordance with Starfleet regulations on the transfer of power in emergency situations, I am now assuming command of the USS Explorer.”

His eyes traveled over those on the bridge. “Normally, until a captain has been declared officially deceased, the officer taking over command would only be the acting captain. However... there are established rules for assuming full command. Two of those regulations apply here. The first covers the imminent death of a captain, with no hope for recovery. The second applies to the emergency situation of our isolation and being in dangerous territory here in the Delta Quadrant.”

This was the moment he had been waiting for. Now he would taste the sweetness of reward for his fortitude.

Hands clasped behind his back, Cavit focused his attention upon the conn. “Tom Paris, you are confined to quarters where you belong. There is no place for one such as you on the bridge of a Starfleet ship.”

Tom’s face reflected his shock. He started to say something then decided silence would be best. Slowly he stood up, and walked to the turbolift, eyes straight ahead. He felt sorry for the crew. Cavit was not the kind of captain he would want to serve under. Silently he left the bridge and his hopes for a second chance.

Over at ops Harry gripped the sides of his console until his knuckles turned white. The new captain motioned to a young ensign in the operations section. “Take the conn!”

Cavit then turned to Harry Kim. “Do we still have the tactical link with the Maquis?”

Fighting back the horrible sense of loss, Kim replied in a tight voice. “Yes Sir!”

Cavit took a deep breath. This would be his second command as captain, and he was going to very much enjoy giving it. “Terminate that link immediately.”

Though horrified by the turn of events, Harry Kim was a Starfleet officer. Fresh out of the Academy, trained to obey the orders of his captain without question no matter how much he disliked them. “Link disconnected.”

Over at tactical, Tuvok was watching his new captain. Cavit’s action against Tom Paris had produced one raised eyebrow, now Tuvok stood at his post with both eyebrows raised.

Cavit approached the conn. He was not going to take any chances. Just in case Chakotay became suspicious, he wanted to be ready.

He addressed the ensign now sitting in the seat vacated

by Tom Paris. “Move us so we are facing the side of the Maquis ship.”

The ensign tapped his controls, slowly moving the Explorer. “In position, sir!”

Cavit walked back to the middle of the command area. Facing the viewscreen, he took the next step in his plan to deal with the man he so despised. “Ensign Kim, open a comm line to the Maquis.”

“Channel open,” Kim replied, never imagining what was to come.

When Chakotay appeared, Cavit, his face reflecting none of the animosity he felt, took a couple of steps forward. “Commander Chakotay, Captain Janeway had to rush down to engineering. During the battle we sustained some damages, one of which has affected several of our comm lines, including the link with your ship. The other resulted in serious problems with the warp core. The captain would like to speak with you immediately. Would it be possible?”

“Of course, I’ll transport over right away!” replied the unsuspecting Maquis leader.

Cavit smiled to himself, his plan was working. “Thank you, Commander, we’ll send you our coordinates. Cavit out.”

He turned in the direction of ops. “Ensign, send our new position to the Maquis ship.”

“Yes, sir!” Gritting his teeth, with shaking hands Harry Kim tapped his panel.

The former first officer again addressed the conn. “Ensign Parker, once Chakotay is onboard back us off two degrees.”

Parker was not enjoying his part in Cavit’s plan, whatever it was. “Yes, sir.”

Cavit headed in the direction of the turbolift. He didn’t give a damn about the startled, horrified looks on the faces of the bridge crew. HIS crew would soon learn who was captain, and behave as a Starfleet crew should. “Mr. Tuvok, with me. Assemble a security detail, have them meet us in the transporter room.”

Tuvok moved to join Cavit. “Security detail, to the transporter room.”

Once in the lift, Tuvok spoke to his new captain. “Sir, Captain Janeway had a truce with Commander Chakotay.”

Not giving Tuvok a chance to continue, Cavit whirled to face the Vulcan. “Captain Janeway is no longer in command. I hope that I will not have to remind you of this again!”

“No, sir,” replied the security chief.

Exiting the turbolift, they entered the transporter room where the security team was waiting.

## Report: Scintillation 2022

By Danny Sichel



In 2018, Jo Walton launched *Scintillation*, a small literary con. I went, it was fun, we did it again in 2019. *Scintillation* 3 was scheduled for late October 2020, but *for some strange reason* it didn’t happen. And *Scintillation* 4 didn’t happen in 2021, either. *For some strange reason*.

This year things were more under control, although there

was some uncertainty about whether circumstances will change by late October, so Jo moved the con to June.

An incomplete accounting of the events at the long-delayed Scintillation 3:

Started with brunch at Robin des Bois in Parc Lafontaine, and then went on a Mural Walk guided by Emmet O'Brien.

Halfway to Mount Royal metro, I encountered an old man on the street who was walking along and singing "La complainte du phoque en Alaska" in full operatic mode while accompanied by an elderly cocker spaniel off-leash, so I sang along with him for a few minutes. ('accompanied' – it was following him, not singing with him).

Consuite activities included mass participation in doing a 2000-piece jigsaw puzzle of a hyper-detailed map of the modern world in the style of an ancient map. I helped figure out where 3 pieces went. To my surprise, we (yes, "we") actually got the whole thing finished by the end of the con.

### Friday Evening

Panel on "A good read", with four panelists talking about four books, incl. Marge Piercy's *He, She, and It*, which I'll have to track down because it sounded interesting, and Maureen McHugh's *China Mountain Zhang*, which I think I have somewhere.

Panel on Ada Palmer's recently-completed *Terra Ignota* series, which I haven't finished. I attended the first 15 minutes when she was talking about the basic ideas and reading passages she was particularly proud of, then left because she was reaching the part where it was impossible to not have spoilers. Went over to Matthew Surridge's talk about fantasy movies from around the world – examples included a Malaysian film where an atheist has to negotiate with gods to rescue her husband from possession, and an American family who makes horrorish films all by themselves (named, of all things, "the Adams family").

### Saturday

Panel on John M. Ford's tragically-unfinished *Aspects*. Andrew Plotkin made an amazing point about the language games—all the poems and verse, all the stuff about the shape of letters, etc. Normally in fantasy novels, the conceit is that all this stuff is just being translated into English from Dwyzerian or whatever, which is what Tolkien's idea was. But Ford was leaning so hard on the details of the language that it could not have been anything except English... except when there was discussion of etymology, when words were given completely alien origins. So, effectively, Ford created an alien language which by pure coincidence was an exact match for English. "The conlang of Pierre Menard", Andrew called it.

Panel on Vikings, with Ada Palmer and Gillian Chan. Three levels of Viking knowledge in readers, and it's the middle level—the ones who've done some reading, but not none—who are most upset when books reflect the obscure details of current historical scholarship. People whose only exposure to Vikings has been via Marvel Comics—or the movies—tend to expect their knowledge

to be fragmentary and largely incorrect. Some interesting stuff about how frost giants are not 'frost' but also ash, and about how the Vikings were super excited to discover Vinland with its tiny barely-edible grapes because that meant they could finally make their own communion wine and stop paying exorbitant prices to have it imported from the Mediterranean.

Panel on swearing in SFF—"the Knights who say Fuck". Larry Niven's "tanj" (initialism for "There Ain't No Justice") was pointed out as a particularly bad example. "What the tanj" just doesn't work. Discussion of Quebecois swearing being religion-based.

### Sunday

Panel on reading everything, not just genre. You do it too.

Attended readings: Ruthanna Emrys with a First Contact scene from her upcoming *A Half-Built Garden*, and Naomi Kritzer with an entire short story about a Not A Productivity App.

Attended a talk between Emmet O'Brien and Jon Singer. Talk about lasers, and edible holography, and bioinformatics. Super, super interesting.

Attended live performance – table read – of Jo's play *Three Shouts on a Hill*, a farcical story of mythopoetic quests that takes a sharp existential turn. Quite, quite good.

Raffle: I don't usually participate in raffles, but everyone was given a ticket with membership. Big table full of prizes; I won early enough that I was able to grab the copy of *Jo Told Us To*, a privately-printed anthology of stories by people Jo knows, about topics Jo likes, produced for her birthday.

## Reviews: Hugo Awards 2022

By Danny Sichel

### SHORT STORY NOMINEES

*Mister Death*, by Alix E. Harrow. Sam is a Grim Reaper who breaks all the rules when he's assigned to collect a toddler with a heart defect. The portrayal of Lawrence the toddler is really nice, as is Harrow's feather-light depiction of Sam's human life and the parallels with Lawrence's exhausted parents, but the overall arrangement breaks when you think about it for too long. And explicitly mentioning that Sam memorized e.e. cummings' "Buffalo Bill's defunct" when he was a kid—well, I suppose that otherwise "Mister Death" might not be distinctive enough of a phrase to make it clear what she was alluding to, but it feels kind of forced.

*Proof By Induction*, by Jose Pablo Iriarte. The hospital gives the next of kin a "Coda": a recording of the last several minutes of the deceased's consciousness. This is supposed to be for last goodbyes, asking about wills and insurance, etc, but Paulie and his dad were both mathematicians, so he uses it to get his dad's help on solving a problem. Paulie tells himself it's because this will get him tenure. What Iriarte shows us about Paulie's relationship with

his dad, however—especially because the Coda doesn't form new memories—is beautiful and... I don't like the word 'bittersweet', but it really applies here. This was wonderful, and not just because it taught me the square root of *i*.

*The Sin Of America*, by Catherynne Valente. Beautiful language, but oh God what *is* this. Ruby-Rose, a randomly-selected woman, is given America's Sin to eat at a diner in Wyoming, and then she is brutally murdered, and this redeems America. That's it, that's the story. It's Shirley Jackson's *The Lottery* on a national scale. Lots of gorgeous imagery as we learn who Ruby-Rose is and what led her to this juncture, and what it's like in the diner where she is Eating America's Sin, and who are the people around her. It's dripping with symbolism. And there's enough impossible stuff happening—e.g., as soon as Ruby-Rose is dead, the TV news starts blaming her for everything bad—that it's definitely genre. And there's almost nothing to it. (I liked the stuff about butterflies, though.)

*Tangles*, by Seanan McGuire. I don't play *Magic: The Gathering*. I don't have an innate understanding of who Teferi is, or Wrenn-and-Six. This is the story of how Wrenn-and-Six became Wrenn-and-Seven, and of the role Teferi played in that transition. It's well told—I especially like that brief portrayal of Six's personality, and of Wrenn's insistence on treating her treemounts ethically, and the role that Teferi's chronal powers play in the resolution is clever—but I can't help feeling I'd get more out of the story if I'd ever done more than admire the art on the cards. Was I supposed to recognize the monster that Teferi fights off halfway through, for instance?

*Unknown Number*, by Blue Neustifter. Text messages between a trans woman and her miserable non-transitioned self from another timeline, as originally posted in a Twitter thread. It's very emotional, with a powerful sense of authenticity—Neustifter is quite clearly drawing on her own experiences—and the dialogue feels totally natural. But ultimately there isn't very much here. It feels much more impactful when it's read one tweet at a time.

*Where Oaken Hearts Do Gather*, by Sarah Pinsker. I like clever stories. This is a clever story, told nonlinearly in the form of, essentially, posts to a Wikipedia-like discussion page in which people are analyzing the meaning and historical origins of a folk song. With the Neustifter and Valente stories, I said that there wasn't very much, and it initially feels like that's the case here as well. But Pinsker is telling us a very, very big story—it's just that we only see it from very far off, through multiple distorted lenses. And her depiction of what it's like to follow someone's posts online—and then they stop posting and you never find out what happened—is excellent, especially in the context of the supernatural *something*.

## NOVELETTE NOMINEES

*Bots of the Lost Ark*, by Suzanne Palmer. Decades after the events of Palmer's 2017 *The Secret Life of Bots*, Ship has awoken troublemaker Bot 9 to deal with yet another crisis. Funny. Ship and 9 are still great characters (although I'm sure they'd both reject

that description of themselves) and the "gloms" are an amazing idea that reminded me of Doctorow and Rosenbaum's 2008 *True Names*, and I really like the scene where 9 awakens Frank and their subsequent interactions ("<INFODUMP>"), and... I don't know. There are many, many wonderful bits here (Ship giving itself a name, the PACKARD gloms trying to argue each other into surrendering), but somehow it overall it feels kind of... minor.

*Colors of the Immortal Palette*, by Caroline M. Yoachim. Skillful little piece following Mariko over the decades as she experiences three types of immortality: as an artist's model, as an artist herself, and—after she is turned by the artist she posed for—as an immortal supernatural being who drains small amounts of vitality from regular humans ("don't call him a vampire! People will think he drinks blood!") and can turn into mist. Wonderful observations, wonderful descriptions of Mariko's paintings. I'm a bit curious about whether Yoachim intended for the Immortal (whose name Mariko never mentions) to be a specific historical figure, but it hardly matters. Also, it's slightly vexing that the publicly acknowledged existence of immortal supernatural beings in the 19th century still leads to the Second World War, with Japanese internment camps in the US and the nuking of Nagasaki, but only slightly – there are many paths to atrocity.

*L'esprit de l'escalier*, by Catherynne Valente. A look at Orpheus and Eurydice in what is more-or-less the modern world, and how their relationship painfully disintegrates in the months after Orpheus successfully rescued her from the Underworld. On the one hand, Eurydice is—despite being animate and awake—still dead. She's very slowly rotting, she can't really feel anything, she keeps having attacks of rigor mortis. She's miserable. But she's trying. Orpheus is also trying, but it turns out he's a terrible, superficial person who has always taken her for granted. It's an uncomfortable new look at a classic (literally) tale. Valente often uses super-rich descriptive language. It doesn't always work, but here, it really, really does—this is agonizingly beautiful and beautifully agonizing.

*O<sub>2</sub> Arena*, by Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki. Nigeria, post-climate apocalypse leading to an oxygen-based economy. Narrator is a law student, in love with a woman dying of cancer, so he gets involved in an illegal fight ring to raise money ("O2 credits") for her care. He wins, but she dies anyway. I honestly didn't like this one. There's some interesting bits of worldbuilding—I'm *pretty* sure I've correctly distinguished the worldbuilding from the accurate representations of contemporary Nigerian culture—but I don't like the story Ekpeki is telling, and I don't like the way he tells it. I also can't help wondering if he based the entire story on the pun in the title.

*That Story Isn't the Story*, by John Wiswell. Anton spent three years as a familiar to Mr. Bird. Now he's gotten the hell out of that abusive mess, but he's still badly broken, and thinking that he needs to go back before Mr. Bird punishes him. Anton's path to emotional recovery is a realistically bumpy one, and the point about vague threats and unspecified consequences is well made—although the fact that Mr. Bird can make his familiars bleed at a distance adds a queasy note of uncertainty to the situation: given that magic exists, what else might be possible? A poignant little



# HUGO AWARD



tale, albeit one that seems deceptively mundane for how lightly it touches on the supernatural. I might be interested in knowing more about Mr. Bird—but then, that story isn't the story that Wiswell is telling.

*Unseelie Brothers, Ltd.*, by Fran Wilde. The fae have a dress shop. It's shown up at varying locations in New York City enough times over the years that it's got an amazing reputation, notwithstanding the horrible fates that befall some of its customers. Sera is a fashion student whose mother wore an Unseelie dress to the ball, met a young man there, married him, had his baby, and then disappeared. Now the shop is back, and Sera is offered the chance to work there. This is not Wilde's first Hugo nomination. It is, however, her first Hugo nomination where I've been able to follow the story and properly understand what's going on. Some very nice and subtle foreshadowing, and lovely imagery (which is a bit of a theme with this year's nominations) in the descriptions of the clothing. Good use of "photo captions". The revelation in the middle, about what *really* happened to Sera's mom, I was kind of expecting. The revelation at the end, about the long-term consequences of Sera working there, I wasn't, and although it's emotionally satisfying, I don't know how much I like it in terms of logic. Then again, it's the fae, and "emotionally satisfying" probably takes precedence.

## Reviews: Aurora Awards 2022

By Danny Sichel

### SHORT STORY NOMINEES

*Clear Waters*, by CJ Cheung. Hiroshi lives in what is presumably rural Canada, where he spends his time maintaining the shrine to his late wife and semipolitely declining the offers of assistance from his neighbor's android (because androids are gross). Then his daughter comes home from the big city, with her new boyfriend—an android. Melancholy piece that feels very, very... 'CanLit', if that makes sense. Competently done, with some good (if heavy-handed) symbolism in Shizue's attack on the shrine, and Cheung does avoid the obvious step of having Jin be the one who rescues her from the floodwaters, but ultimately this doesn't feel particularly special. Genre elements are rather weak: if Jin and Karl had been members of a pre-existing ethnic minority instead of androids, and the shrine had immobile photos of Hiroshi's wife instead of a hologram projector that showed her bowing, and Hiroshi had been from Japan instead of "Japan before the Collapse", how would this story have been any different?

*Eighteen Days of Barbareek*, by Rati Mehrotra. How familiar are you with Hindu mythology? With the tale of Barbareek? With how he swore that he would always support the weaker side in battle, how he then had it pointed out to him that whichever side he supported would become the stronger side, and thus he would be doomed to perpetually switch sides and eventually wipe out everyone... and how therefore he decapitated himself and had his head placed on a hilltop some distance away from the battle so that he could watch the battle without breaking his oath? This is the story of what it was like to be Barbareek as a severed head, watching that eighteen-day-long battle and being very, very frustrated, as described in a snarky modern voice. Clever and witty—Mehrotra

does a skillful job of narrating—and with a lot of good lines ("How are you?" "Still decapitated, thanks for asking."), but this is just the pre-existing story of Barbareek. Retelling legends is fine (see my comments on *Lesprit de l'escalier* on the previous page), but you need to bring something more to it than just snark.

*Elesa's Eyes*, by Elizabeth Whitton. Sosa is a tracker who takes on an unprofitable, non-Guild-approved contract because the client is a relative of her deceased girlfriend Elesa. This feels really, really cyberpunk, in a way that Douglas Adams called "Zeerust": it's the past's idea of the future. Maybe this story would have worked better fifteen years ago, but maybe not. I don't like Sosa as a character. I don't like her post-civilization setting. I don't like the concept of the Guild regulating tracking, because if all trackers burn out by their mid-twenties and die young, then how can there be a Guild? I don't like how little Whitton tells us about what tracking actually *is* except insofar as it's boosted by cybernetic implants. The "always have a backup" reveal was nicely done, but overall I just didn't like this.

*The Mathematics of Fairyland*, by Phoebe Barton. The starship *Tabetha Boyajian* has disappeared in a hyperspace accident, taking its crew with it—including Berenice. Months later, Berenice's girlfriend Marigold believes that the fae might be responsible, so she forges a radio from cold iron with a rowan antenna. Painful, elegant piece about grief and obsession and asteroid habitats and gremlin traps. "Of course, it's best if you understand gremlins as a metaphor. But that doesn't make them any less true, does it?" Skillfully done—and because this is SFF, there's still the tiniest suspicion that maybe, *maybe*, Marigold is right. Or is there?

*The Only Road*, by Susan Forest. During the British Raj, Orville is a Bhutanese man on a mission to steal secret plans from a colonial administrator while serving as his guide and porter. The administrator asks him about Shangri-La, and Orville says whatever he thinks the administrator wants to hear, even though everyone knows Shangri's not real. Then they arrive at an outpost whose commander has a Shangri prisoner. This was really, really good. Enough hints of Orville's backstory are given that he feels much more developed than he actually is, and Leopold's desperate quest being not for healing, but rather for guaranteed entry to Heaven, feels very era-appropriate. I liked the subtle displays of Roane's magic. Chakdor's redemption ("many Sikkimese hated the British, but not all") seemed perhaps a little rushed, but still plausible. The revelations about why Roane fled Shangri in the first place could support an entire novel.

*Second Thoughts*, by Eric Choi. Elaine is a physics grad student who participates in an experiment to send information backwards in time and becomes enmeshed in a murder. I'm sorry, this was just clunky. As I review the story, I keep finding sentences that have problems—Yegor's eye dialect is particularly painful (and yet, Ibrahim *doesn't* have eye dialect??). Choi completely squanders the potential of a nonlinear plot structure. Nice things I can say about this story: technobabble was well handled; Elaine's reconciling with Derek is sadly believable; "LOOK WHAT YOU MADE ME DO" is exactly the thing that sort of killer would say, and the many parallels with DJT make his defeat more emotionally satisfying (although *specifying that the killer had just made a reference that Elaine didn't get* was just awkward).

# Review: *Beowulf: A New Translation*

## By Joe Aspler

This is a review of *Beowulf: A New Translation*, the 2021 winner of the Hugo for Best Related Work. It follows the kerfuffle at the 2020 Worldcon, where Jeanette Ng's one-minute 2019 rant—transcribed and bowdlerized into a single page PDF file—won the Hugo over several more worthy nominees. Maria Dahvana Headley's translation of *Beowulf* was at least a return to sanity.

*Beowulf* dates to about the 7th Century. It is written in Old English, a language that is entirely foreign to our eyes. A quick search found at least 100 translations over the last two centuries, into English, Latin, German, French, and many other languages. J.R.R. Tolkien—Professor of Anglo Saxon at Oxford University—wrote a translation of *Beowulf* as well as an essay on the difficulties in translating *Beowulf*.

There is an Italian saying, *Traduttore, traditore*: Translator, traitor. An Italian friend told me an earthier version which I won't repeat here. The meaning of the Italian saying is this: it is difficult to translate a complicated literary work into another language without losing some of its meaning. All that a translator can hope for is a compromise between the requirements of a language and the requirements of literature.

Victorian scholars in particular translated many great classics of antiquity into English. Their Victorian prose in all its dull wordiness turned many modern students off the classics. I tried to read Dante's *Divine Comedy* several times, unsuccessfully, until I discovered the 1977 translation by American scholar, poet, and translator John Ciardi: a brilliantly readable translation, yet still faithful to the original.

Headley's 2018 novel *The Mere Wife* was nominated for the World Fantasy Award for Best Novel. This was a modern-day retelling of *Beowulf*, set in 21st Century America. This led to her translation of the original *Beowulf* itself. Headley's translation is an excellent work of scholarship: readable to modern eyes, yet still faithful enough to the original.

Headley's translation begins with (at first glance) a jarring introduction:

*Bro! Tell me we still know how to speak of kings! In the old days, everyone knew that men were: brave, bold, glory-bound. Only stories now, but I'll sound the Spear-Danes song, hoarded for hungry times.*

Our very modern expression *Bro!*—in a classic work of literature? Repeated frequently throughout the translation? And why not? A sampling of the same passage in other translations

from the late 19th-early 20th centuries show that translators use whatever exclamatory introductions were expected for their time:

1892, translator Lesslie Hall: *Lo! the Spear-Danes' glory through splendid achievements*

1894, translators William Morris and A. J. Wyatt: *What! we of the Spear-Danes of yore days, so was it; That we learn'd of the fair fame of kings of the folks*

The 1913 translation by Ernest Kirtland contains all the sins of dullness and fake Medieval structure that turned generations

of students off the classics. *Now we have heard, by inquiry, of the glory of the kings of the people, they of the Spear-Danes, how the Athelings were doing deeds of courage.* Was the translator paid by the comma?

Naturally, Headley's translation has a modern ring to it. And therein lies the reason for its appeal. Every line reminds us that this is both an ancient saga, *and* that she is writing for a modern audience.

Here we have *Beowulf*'s instructions on what to do with his armour if he is killed. First, a Victorian translation:

*To Hygelac send, if Hild should take me, best of war-weeds, warding my breast, armor excellent, heirloom of Hrethel and work of Wayland.*

And here we have Headley's translation of the same passage:

*If warfare revokes my pass to Earth's kingdom, just send this mail-shirt made by Weland—willed to me by my grandfather Hrethel—to Hygelac. Horrors happen, I'm grown, I know it. Bro, Fate can fuck you up.*

The meaning of both passages is the same. Headley's version is the one that we expect from a 21st century fantasy—perhaps an urban fantasy. Headley's translation of another passage is consistent in its modern usage, even while showing the traditions of heroic poetry:

*No shit, though, Unferth, if you were the bitter-brawling brave you claim to be, your king wouldn't have suffered a single night of Grendel's rampage.*

*Beowulf* wins by ripping off Grendel's arm. Then Grendel's mother—justifiably annoyed—attacks. Older translations described her as a monster of women or the monster-wife. Headley



describes her differently. Grendel might have been a mass killer, but his mother is an avenger ... her heart full of hatred. Grendel's mother, warrior-woman, outlaw ...and, an evil intruder, fueled by fury, a woman seeking vengeance for her son. A slightly more sympathetic view. But all that is to no avail, since Beowulf kills her too.

Later in life, Beowulf—now king of his people—encounters a marauding dragon who is too much for him. The epic poem concludes with his heroic funeral, and the closing words, *He was the man!*

This modern translation of Beowulf will no doubt horrify generations of classics scholars. And it is the translation for our time.

And to really conclude, I present the introduction to the Shrinklits version of *Beowulf*, by Maurice Sagoff (1970).

*Monster Grendel's tastes are plainish.  
Breakfast? Just a couple Danish.*

*King of Danes is frantic, very.  
Wait! Here comes the Malmo ferry*

*Bringing Beowulf, his neighbor,  
Mighty swinger with a saber!*

## Reviews: TV & Movies

By Keith Braithwaite

### *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*

Doctor Strange was never a favourite comic book character of mine, but in the hands of Benedict Cumberbatch, the MCU's Strange is certainly entertaining enough, though perhaps more as a supporting player, or part of an ensemble, as in *Infinity War* and *Endgame*.

Anyway, there are now two Doctor Strange films, and this second of the pair centers on a teenaged girl, America Chavez, who is able to travel from dimension to dimension while drawing upon storylines originating in the first Strange movie, and particularly in the *WandaVision* mini-series. Elizabeth Olsen's Wanda Maximoff/Scarlet Witch is as engaging, here, as ever.

The film packs in a lot of fan service, too, with the multiverse providing opportunity to cameo alternate-Earth versions of popular MCU characters Peggy Carter, Charles Xavier, Maria Rambeau, and even Black Bolt, he of the short-lived ABC/Marvel series *Inhumans*. Hayley Atwell, Patrick Stewart, Lashana Lynch, and Anson Mount all appear as these alternate versions of their MCU characters, along with John Krasinski as Reed Richards in a portent, perhaps, of what is to come. Often a collaborator with



*Multiverse of Madness* director Sam Raimi, none other than genre favourite Bruce Campbell puts in an appearance, as well!

With all this stunt casting, then, the film is a bit gimmicky and probably not for any but die-hard Marvel fans

### *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds*



Every *Star Trek* sequel (or prequel) series has promised to emulate the original 1966-1969 show, but few if any have successfully done so—some most definitely have not! But it's fair to say that *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* is as close to the spirit, at least, of the original as is possible in our contemporary television environment. Among the snazzier sets and special effects of this modern take on the old, familiar concept, there are enough call-backs, and in general, welcome similarities to

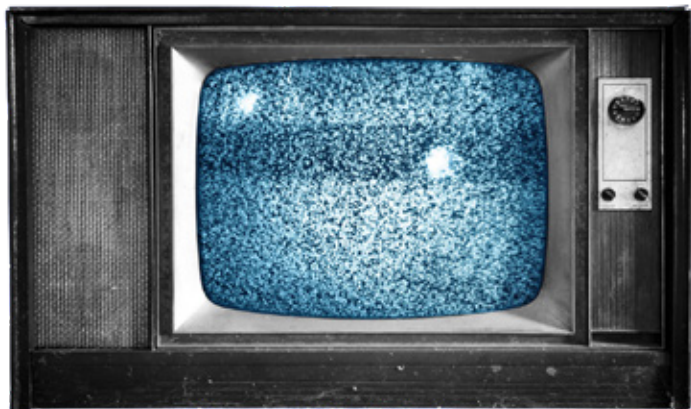
the original to elicit a smile from an old Trekker.

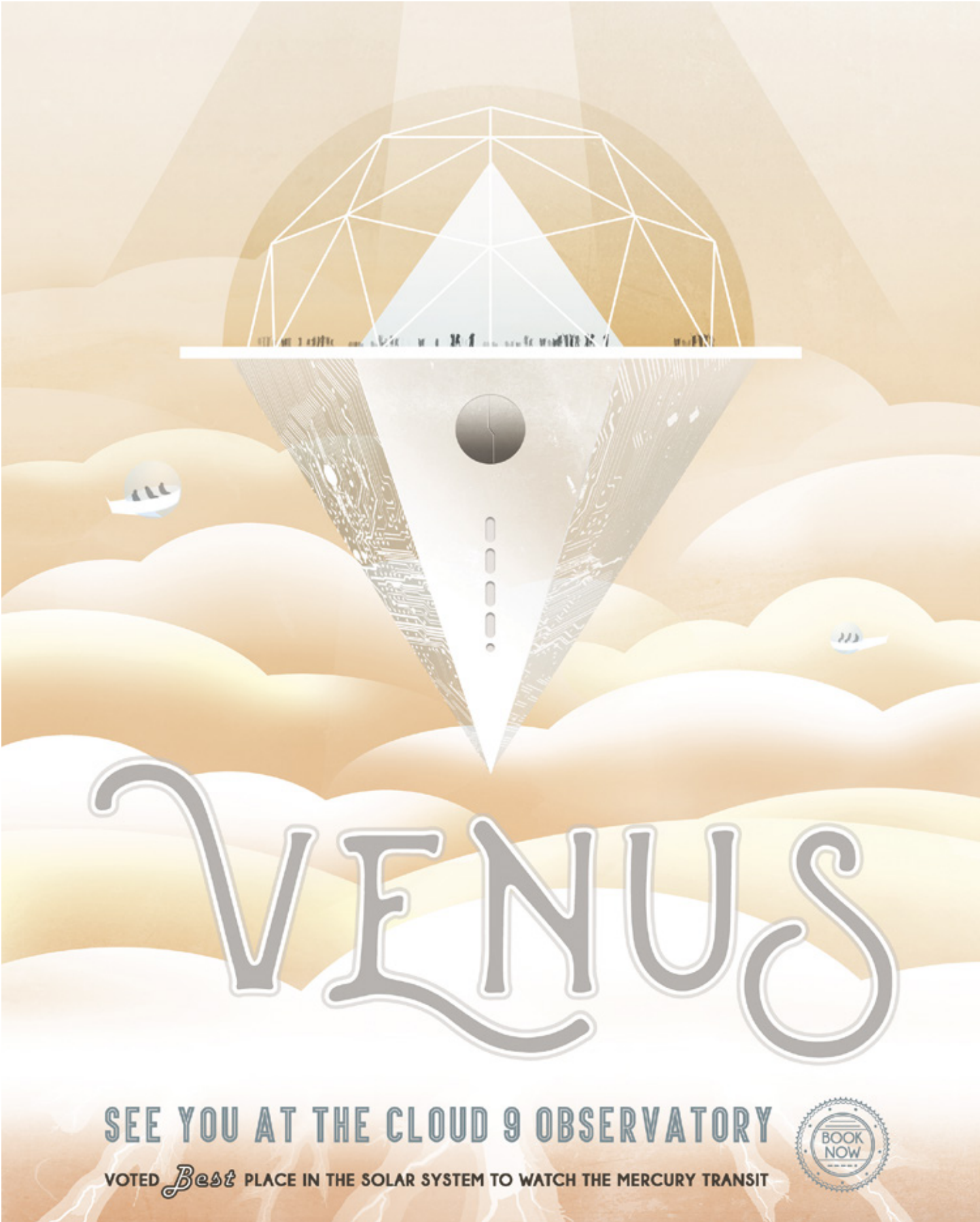
*Strange New Worlds*, first of all, is, essentially, episodic, eschewing the grand, season-long, often tedious story arcs of many of the other Trek shows. That, alone, hews closer to the original than we've seen in a long time.

Further, there are no puerile Neelix- or Quark-like plotlines, or any such silliness, and fans are able to enjoy the expanded stories of compelling characters like Number One and Nurse Chapel, who never really got the chance to step forward much in the original show. I like the interplay between Spock and Chapel, here, with a playful Chapel's subtle, and sometimes not-so-subtle, longing for something more with Spock, despite her understanding that such a relationship is, at best, unlikely. T'Pol, too, gets to shine a lot more than she did during her brief foray in the original's "Amok Time." And, there are interesting new characters aboard ship for us to get to know, and a couple of unexpected turns along the way.

I also like what the writers are doing with the Gorn, even though a little derivative of *Alien*, and, without giving anything away, this premiere season's closing episode is among *Trek's* best ever, revisiting and expanding upon an original-series classic!

*Strange New Worlds* isn't perfect, but it's the best *Star Trek* we've seen since Armstrong and Aldrin walked on the moon!





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