

**NEXT  
MonSFFA MEETING  
IS THIS WEEKEND**

**Sunday, January 22**

**1:00PM-5:00PM**

**St-François Room**

**Hôtel Espresso, 1005 Guy St.**

**Downtown Montreal**

**PROGRAMME**

**1:00PM**

**MONSFFA ELECTIONS:** Selection of 2012 MonSFFA Executive Committee.

**1:15PM**

**RADIO PROJECT UPDATE:** We'll quickly touch base regarding our ongoing group project, the production of an old-fashioned radio show. We expect to have a rough edit of the voice tracks ready for listening; feedback from club members will be welcome.

**2:15PM**

**BREAK/CLUB BUSINESS:** While we break mid-meeting, we'll briefly cover the latest club business.

**3:00PM**

**OPEN DISCUSSION: IS SCI-FI STILL COOL?:** SF was really cool when we were 8-years old. Is it still as cool today? Has the genre changed for the better or worse, or is it we who have changed as we've grown older?

**NEXT MONTH'S MEETING**

**February 19**

*Astronomy • Top 60 Sci-Fi Movies*

**Club's Christmas  
Celebrations Cap  
2011**

MonSFFA capped 2011's activities with the club's traditional Christmas Dinner/Party, the festivities taking place on Saturday evening, December 3. MonSFFen gathered at Les 3 Brasseurs restaurant on Ste-Catherine Street, downtown, to celebrate the season over a fine dinner, and later moved a few blocks west to party at the club's traditional Christmas watering hole, the "Not So Privateer" bar.

Some 20 or so folk settled in at a couple long tables reserved for us at the restaurant, exchanged holiday greetings, perused the menu, and ordered. A special fund-raising raffle was held between the main course and dessert; several MonSFFen won "Christmas gifts", including a giant toy Buzz Lightyear action figure, a ceramic tabletop statue of a dragon, and a couple DVDs.

Following dinner, all but a handful walked the few short blocks to the "Not So Privateer" to party. Over drinks, Christmas snacks (thanks to those MonSFFen who supplied these tasty treats), and conversation, our customary back-room pool "tournament" got underway and during the course of the evening, we held another couple raffles, including our Rewards Raffle, an exclusive draw for the club's volunteers and the means by which MonSFFA offers special thanks for their participation to these club members. We also collected several large bags full of toys and non-perishable food items for donation to Sun Youth's Christmas Basket Drive, this our customary charitable effort during the holidays. (Thanks to all who gave.) The party wrapped up at about 3:00AM when the last of our crew raised a final toast and made their way home.

We offer a nod of thanks to club president Berny Reischl for seeing to our dinner reservations, and to the staff of the "Not So

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ARE DUE.**

The Annual Membership Fees of the Following Club Members are...

**Overdue:**

BOOM, Hendrik  
DUROCHER, Marc  
KENNEY, Daniel P.  
NOVO, Fernando  
PENALBA, Theresa  
REISCHL, Bernard  
RUFIANGE, Yolande  
SINCLAIR, Julia

**Due this Month, January:**

Ø

**Due Next Month, February:**

KRIMP, Nick  
LUPIEN, Denise  
LUPIEN, Leslie

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*Thank you for your  
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**AMonSFF FORMULAIRE D'INSCRIPTION**

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INTERESTS/INTÉRÊTS: \_\_\_\_\_

Privateer” bar for their hospitality. Thanks, as well, to Keith Braithwaite, who provided the party music and also subsequently delivered our collected charity to Sun Youth.

We trust all of our club members and friends enjoyed a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

### Should Impulse Become Solely an e-Publication?

As a cost-cutting measure, it has been proposed that this news bulletin cease to publish a paper edition and offer only the electronic version available via the club’s Web site. It was noted that about half of our membership currently receive Impulse electronically, thus saving the club the expense of printing and mailing each of those members a paper copy. Were we to shift all of our members to the electronic version, estimates are that a further \$150-\$200 could be saved annually. Those savings could cover the rental of our meeting hall for a month, it was pointed out during discussion of this at the club’s November 20 meeting. The group was told that ever-increasing postal costs in particular, which comprise the bulk of Impulse’s expenses, are at the heart of the matter. And, as we live, today, in an online paradigm, a solely electronic news bulletin offers needed budgetary savings while taking nothing away from members in terms of club services.

But it was countered that a few of our older members are not online, or do not have regular Internet access, and so receive their timely meeting announcements and club news via the paper version of Impulse which arrives in their postal boxes. Consideration was given to making an exception in such cases and printing and mailing a paper version so as to insure that all members continue to receive full service. Also, the idea of printing a few paper versions to be made available at meetings for the sake of collectors and fanzine purists within the club was put forth.

Discussion on this question will continue as 2012’s activities start up; let us know what you think.

### Publication and Distribution of Warp

And while we are talking about one of the club’s publications, let’s take a moment to talk about the other.

Warp, the club’s magazine-style fanzine, is published quarterly. However, the nature of fanzine production often throws a monkey wrench into such schedules. Because amateur press publishing is a hobby, exercised in one’s spare time, efforts sometimes fall behind schedule due to a variety of

real-world reasons. Warp is subject to such setbacks but please note that the club makes every effort to keep the ’zine on track.

Like Impulse, Warp is available online. A .pdf of each fresh issue can be downloaded from MonSFFA’s Web site. Note that each issue is password protected. Club members are asked to e-mail club president and Webmaster Berny Reischl (at: president@monsffa.com, or: reischl@videotron.ca) to request the password for the latest or a previous issue (back issues are archived on the site, as well). Upon confirmation of your membership status, you will be sent the requested password, which will permit you access to the file.

The cost of printing and mailing Warp is considerably greater than that of Impulse, as you can imagine, Warp being a magazine-sized 24-page-plus full-colour fanzine. To trim Warp’s costs, the club, a while ago, introduced an electronic version as mentioned above. MonSFFen were encouraged to receive Warp electronically. Further, the very costly postal mailings of Warp were, in large part, suspended.

Currently, those MonSFFen who prefer to receive a paper copy of Warp can pick up their copy at a club meeting or event, thus saving the club the expense of mailing them their issue. Out-of-town members, of course, are mailed their copies, as are any members who have not picked up their issue at a MonSFFA meeting or event by virtue of not having attended. And so, expensive postal charges, while not eliminated, have been dramatically decreased.

Recently, overburdened Warp editor Cathy Palmer-Lister turned over responsibility for the distribution of Warp to club VP and Impulse editor Keith Braithwaite, who is familiarizing himself with the portfolio. Meanwhile, the club continues to investigate means of reducing production and mailing costs related to Warp.

### 2012 MonSFFA Meeting Dates Confirmed

All but one of our requested Sunday meeting dates for 2012 have been confirmed. The confirmed dates are: January 22, February 19, March 25, April 22, May 27, August 19, September 23, and November 18. Our requested October 28 date is unavailable; we are exploring alternates.

Outside-of-meeting events scheduled are as follows: Sunday, June 10, group outing (probably to the Star Wars exhibit expected this summer at the Old Port; details to come); Sunday, July 22, Annual MonSFFA Barbecue (should the forecast call for rain, we’ll bump the barbecue ahead a week to Sunday, July 29); and Saturday, December 8, Christmas Dinner/Party.

### 2012 Club Elections

At the first MonSFFA meeting of every year, the club elects its Executive Committee for the coming 12 months. The club’s 2012 elections will take place at our first meeting of this new year, on January 22. All MonSFFA members in good standing are encouraged to participate.

MonSFFA elects annually a president, vice-president, and treasurer—who together form the Executive Committee—and charges them with the responsibility of running the club on behalf of the membership. The three executives recruit advisors and appoint officers to assist them in carrying out this responsibility. Our outgoing Executive is as follows: Berny Reischl, president; Keith Braithwaite, vice-president; Sylvain St-Pierre, treasurer.

Any MonSFFA member in good standing who is responsibly and reliably able to carry out the duties of office may run for any one of the Executive posts. Candidates may nominate themselves or accept nomination from another member in good standing. Nominations are received by the chief returning officer, or CRO, usually just before the commencement of voting on election day. Warp editor Cathy Palmer-Lister, a former MonSFFA president, is currently our chief returning officer.

All MonSFFA members in good standing are eligible to cast a ballot. Members are asked to be present at the designated place and time in order to exercise their right to vote. Proxy voting is *not* permitted, except under special circumstances and by approval of the CRO (out-of-town members unable to attend the vote, for example, may have their ballots cast by the CRO in their absence, or make their choices via e-mail or other form of communication outside of the designated voting hour).

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## I M P U L S E

LE BULLETIN D'INFORMATION DE L'ASSOCIATION MONTRÉLAISE DE SCIENCE-FICTION ET DE FANTASTIQUE, L'AMonSFF

February/Février 2012 (Vol. 16, No./N° 2)

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1:00PM-5:00PM

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### PROGRAMME

#### 1:00PM

**60 SCI-FI FILMS IN 60 MINUTES:** We've challenged ourselves to collectively compile a list of the 60 best, must-see sci-fi films of all time in just 60 minutes! Come pitch your favourites and defend your choices to have your selections included!

#### 2:15PM

#### **BREAK/CLUB BUSINESS/OPEN**

**DISCUSSION:** While we break mid-meeting, we'll briefly cover a few items of club business then open the floor to audience-proposed SF/F or fannish topics the group wishes to explore.

#### 3:00PM

**SECOND STAR TO THE LEFT:** A lesson on locating the important stars and planets visible in our night sky. Learn from our resident expert how to identify major stars and tell Venus from Jupiter.

## NEXT MONTH'S MEETING

### March 25

*The Sounds and Music  
of SF/F*

## 2012 Club Elections

MonSFFa present at our January 22 meeting went with experience as the club held its annual election of its Executive Committee, returning to office last year's Executive, Berny Reischl (president), Keith Braithwaite (vice-president), and Sylvain St-Pierre (treasurer). Together, these three bring decades of club-running expertise to the table.

As has been the case for several years, now, continuing encouragement of greater member involvement in the club and the financing of MonSFFA's operations are expected to be the major challenges.

We congratulate Berny, Keith, and Sylvain on their election and wish them well as they take the helm for another year.



"Love" is that condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own.—Robert A. Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1966)



## Warp Wins New Canadian Fanzine Fanac Award as Best Fanzine

MonSFFA is pleased to receive the award for Best Canadian Fanzine of 2011 and we congratulate Warp editor Cathy Palmer-Lister, whose name appears on the certificate naming MonSFFA's "official newsletter" as winner. A small "fanned" trophy is also to be issued to her as editor of the winning 'zine.

The Canadian Fanzine Fanac Awards are a new series of awards celebrating the best in Canadian fanzine publishing and Warp will go

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MENARD, François  
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down in the annals of Canfandom as the first to earn this honour. Administered by Vancouver-area fan Graeme Cameron, the awards debuted at V-Con last year. Other winners were: Garth Spencer, Best Fan Writer; Taral Wayne, Best Fan Artist; and Lloyd Penney, Best LoC Hack. Also, a lifetime achievement prize was given to the unknown fan editor who published Canada's first SF 'zine in 1936, entitled The Canadian Science Fiction Fan. Congratulations to them all!



When love cannot possess, it is content to serve.—Spider Robinson, "Soul Search" (1979)



## First MonSFFA Meeting of 2012

MonSFFA's January 22 meeting was the club's first event of 2012 and saw the election of its Executive Committee take place. Last year's Executive was returned to office for another term (see lead item).

A group discussion on the question of whether science fiction and fantasy is as "cool" today as it was when folk first were drawn to the genre in the days of their youth generated a great deal of commentary. Some remarked that today's SF/F, as compared to that of previous decades, is diluted, catering to a mainstream audience and therefore much watered down. The fact that SF/F is so mainstream today robs the genre of any outré factor it may once have enjoyed.

A few folk noted that the stories they read as youngsters or teens were, upon a re-reading as adults, not quite as engaging as remembered. This might be true of some authors, it was agreed, but not all, by any stretch. Many books are as good when read today as when first read as a teenager, even better, arguably, in that the wisdom of years allows the reader a greater understanding and appreciation. While some generally supported the idea that the classics of science fiction and fantasy were so designated for good reason, others argued that the genre has grown up since those earlier days and modern SF/F is, for the most part, a more mature genus. Following on that thought was proffered a comparison of the childish superhero comics of yesteryear to those decidedly more adult-themed superhero graphic novels of more recent vintage.

Several folk spoke of the exhilaration experienced watching a favourite sci-fi television series or movie as a youngster and the corresponding disappointment felt when viewing the same again as an adult, with the discovery that the piece wasn't really very good at all. Many in the room commented that while they enjoyed the nostalgia of watching something again that excited

them as a youngster, they often had to reluctantly acknowledge, as an adult, that the thing didn't hold up all that well. Others liked the simplicity of a good story well told and noted that many contemporary films and television series suffer from an overindulgence of narrative so as to render the piece a convoluted jumble. Worse and pertaining to movies in particular, the visual effects are so often completely, suffocatingly overblown.

One MonSFFan noted that because it was all new and astounding stuff for one's younger self, it would be hard today to top the thrill and amazement felt upon reading one's first SF/F book or watching one's first genre movie or TV show, regardless of the quality of the material.

The conversation could have gone on but for the demands of the day's agenda.

The mid-meeting break gave way to a discussion of club affairs, including a proposal to publish MonSFFA's news bulletin, Impulse, henceforth exclusively as an e-zine (see next item).

The remainder of the afternoon allowed folk to hear and offer feedback on a rough edit of our ongoing "old-fashioned radio play" project, which features the voices of many MonSFFen in a series of short sketches. Reaction was favourable. Sound effects and music remain to be added. Also presented to the group were the simple and brief promotional spots for the club shot on video last summer.

We thank all those who helped to plan and run this meeting.



A man's way with women is in inverse ratio to his prowess among men. The weakling and the saphead have often great ability to charm the fair sex, while the fighting man who can face a thousand real dangers unafraid, sits hiding in the shadows like some frightened child.—Edgar Rice Burroughs, A Princess of Mars (1917)



## Members Approve Proposal to Publish Impulse as an e-Zine; July Issue to be Last Regular Paper Distribution

At the club's January meeting, members present further discussed the idea of publishing Impulse in exclusively electronic form as a cost-cutting measure. Annual savings to be realized are estimated at some \$200, related primarily to postal mailing costs. The plan is to shortly cease producing paper versions of the news bulletin and switch those MonSFFen currently receiving a paper edition—roughly half the membership—to the e-version available in .pdf format on the club's Web site.

Recognizing that a few of our older members either do not have, or have but limited Internet access, the club will still produce a handful of paper copies and mail these to said members via standard post. Thus will these MonSFFen continue to receive timely reminders of upcoming meetings and other time-sensitive information.

And so, we hereby advise MonSFFA members who are unable to receive the electronic version of Impulse to let us know, either in person at a club meeting or by letter, addressed to the club (MonSFFA, c/o 4456 Boul. Ste-Rose, Laval, Québec, Canada, H7R 1Y6). We will allow a few months for members to contact us, after which Impulse will transition to an e-publication. The last regular distribution of a paper edition of Impulse will be this coming July's mailing.

Note that a few paper copies will also be printed and made available at meetings for the benefit of collectors and fanzine purists within the club.



Nobody dies from lack of sex. It's lack of love we die from.  
—Margaret Atwood, The Handmaid's Tale (1986)

Love and hate are so confused in your savage minds and the vibrations of the one are so very like those of the other that I can't always distinguish. You see, we neither love nor hate in my world. We simply have hobbies.—Gore Vidal, Visit to a Small Planet (Television Play, 1955)



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1:00PM

**GUEST SPEAKERS: SF AND FANTASY;  
HOW DIFFERENT ARE THEY, REALLY?:**

We welcome writers Mark Shainblum (Northguard, Angloman), Jo Walton (Tooth and Claw, Farthing, Ha'penny, Half a Crown), and Alison Sinclair (Cavalcade, Darkborn series) for a discussion of their craft and whether there is really all that much of a difference between science fiction and fantasy these days!

2:30PM

**BREAK/CLUB BUSINESS:** While we break mid-meeting we'll briefly cover a few items of club business.

3:00PM

**NAME THAT TUNE, SCI-FI EDITION:** An exploration of sci-fi music, including some of the unique sound effects created for the genre, by means of a game of Name that Tune. Do you know your sci-fi soundtracks?

**NEXT MONTH'S MEETING**

**APRIL 22** *Bake Sale • Disabilities in SF • Cartoon Physics*

**Warp Distribution Policy**

We take a moment to reiterate the club's current practices regarding the distribution to club members of our quarterly fanzine, Warp. The steadily increasing cost, over recent years, of publishing and, particularly, of mailing printed copies of the fanzine to the membership has compelled the club to move the operation online as much as possible in order to trim expenses.

All MonSFFen in good standing are notified by e-mail upon the release of each edition of Warp. The fanzine is available as a .pdf by way of the club's Web site (www.MonSFFA.com). A case-sensitive password is included in the e-mail notification which allows club members access to the Warp file. Members can then download a copy of the latest issue and view the 'zine on their home screens.

But we recognize that some MonSFFen may wish to own a physical copy. These folk can, of course, print themselves a duplicate from the .pdf they've downloaded, or pick up a printed version of the 'zine in person at the next scheduled MonSFFA meeting. Printed versions of the most recent issues are available at all club meetings. We encourage members who desire one of the club-produced physical copies of Warp to acquire the publication at a MonSFFA meeting, thus saving the club the postal charges associated with mailing the fanzine via Canada Post.

Members who wish a club-produced printed version but are not necessarily able to attend each club meeting may request a copy be mailed to them. These members *must* contact Warp editor Cathy Palmer-Lister (cathyl@sympatico.ca) and ask that a printed version be sent to them via standard post. Please note that *only those members from whom we have received such a request will be mailed a physical copy of the fanzine.*

Any MonSFFA member who has not received a recent issue of Warp due them is asked to notify the club; we will correct, with all haste, any oversights which may have occurred.

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BURAKOFF, Mark  
REDMOND, Isis

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## Members Unable to Receive e-Impulse Asked to so Inform Club by July

Come July, MonSFFA will publish the last regular paper edition of Impulse, thereafter issuing solely the electronic version of the news bulletin. MonSFFA members currently receiving Impulse in paper form via standard post will be shifted to the e-version, available as a .pdf through the club's Web site.

However, recognizing that a few of our older members either do not have, or have but limited Internet access, the club will still produce a handful of paper copies and mail these to said members, assuring that they continue to receive timely reminders of upcoming meetings and other time-sensitive information.

MonSFFA members who are *unable* to receive the electronic version of Impulse are advised to let us know, either in person at a club meeting or by letter, addressed to the club (MonSFFA, c/o 4456 Boul. Ste-Rose, Laval, Québec, Canada, H7R 1Y6). We are allowing a few months for MonSFFA members to contact us and register to continue receiving Impulse in paper form.

Note that a few paper copies will also be printed and made available at meetings for the benefit of collectors and fanzine purists within the club.

## February MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA's February 19 meeting drew a good crowd and the group began by ambitiously drawing up a list of the 60 top, must-see sci-fi films of all time, giving themselves just 60 minutes to do so. Four panellists—Keith Braithwaite, Bernard Reischl, Sylvain St-Pierre, and François Menard—were selected to proffer their choices, with the rest of the group having opportunity to pitch suggestions as well. The idea was to put together a list of not only the very best in terms of script, performances, production values, and science-fictional quality, but of films most notable for one reason or another—unique visual design, landmark special effects, historical importance within the genre. A majority of the group had to agree on a selection before it could be added to the list and only science fiction films were to be considered; that is, movies with a predominantly science fictional theme or setting. The group had to agree on whether or not a film qualified as SF.

The exercise began effortlessly enough with several apparent nominees put forth and quickly approved by the group. But before too long, debates arose either as to whether a film qualified as SF, or was worthy of inclusion. As the clock inexorably advanced, panellists began to forget some of the films they had had in mind just minutes before, finding themselves desperately searching

for a viable suggestion as replacement, all of the time conscious of the ticking clock. With only minutes left, the group had managed to list 60 films but then realized they had completely overlooked a number of obvious examples. The list was quickly reviewed and a few selections tossed in favour of the better choices that had just come to mind! It was both interesting and amusing to hear the torrent of titles that issued forth only after time ran out, accompanied by comments along the lines of "how did we miss that one?"

MonSFFA's list of the 60 must-see science fiction films of all time, as recorded at our February meeting, is as follows, the films in no particular order of mention or preference:

- Forbidden Planet
- Blade Runner
- District 9
- The Fifth Element
- Conquest of Space
- Destination Moon
- Logan's Run
- The Omega Man
- The Time Machine
- Soylent Green
- Fantastic Voyage
- Minority Report
- Back to the Future
- The Incredibles
- The Fly (original)
- Galaxy Quest
- The Matrix
- TRON
- Star Wars (original theatrical version)
- War of the Worlds (original version)
- Invasion of the Body Snatchers (original)
- 2001: A Space Odyssey
- Planet of the Apes (original)
- The Day the Earth Stood Still (original)
- The Andromeda Strain
- The First Men in the Moon
- The Empire Strikes Back
- The Thing From Another World
- Chronicles of Riddick
- Colossus: The Forbin Project
- The Thing (John Carpenter's remake)
- Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan
- Escape from New York
- Wings of Honneamise
- Rise of the Planet of the Apes
- The Monolith Monsters
- Iron Giant
- Metropolis
- Silent Running
- Aliens
- This Island Earth
- Robocop
- Dark City
- Godzilla
- Final Countdown
- Voyage dans la lune
- Them
- Time After Time
- Gattaca
- Serenity
- The Boys from Brazil
- Westworld
- Terminator
- Stargate
- E.T.—The Extraterrestrial
- Quatermass and the Pit
- Close Encounters of the Third Kind
- Superman
- Terminator II: Judgement Day
- The Incredible Shrinking Man

The mid-meeting break was followed by Cathy Palmer-Lister's treatise on locating important stars and planets in the night sky. Distributing a series of star maps to the group, Cathy took her audience on a tour of the night sky over Montreal and environs, pointing out the brightest stars and planets and showing folk how to locate others by "jumping off" from those most prominent. Along the way, she detailed many of the constellations and a few of the stories behind them. Ideal stargazing conditions were discussed, with Cathy suggesting that in some cases, the light pollution experienced in or near cities actually helps in finding certain stars by washing out the thousands of dimmer stars surrounding them, and so making them easier to locate.

We thank our panellists, and all who helped to plan and run this meeting.

## Briefly:

- We are saddened to receive news of the passing of one our own, Dorothy Moir. Dorothy and daughter Lillian have been members of MonSFFA for nearly a decade. Lillian informs us that her beloved mother passed peacefully at Rosemont-Maisonnette Hospital on Thursday morning, February 9, following a brief and unexpected illness. In keeping with Dorothy's wishes, no visitation or service was held. The club offers sincere condolences to Lillian and her family.
- The world of SF/F art recently lost two of its most admired talents. French comics artist Jean "Moebius" Giraud died in Paris on March 10 after a long illness. He was 73. Giraud's career spanned some 50 years and included design work on such celebrated SF films as Alien and The Fifth Element. He was one of the originators of the SF/F magazine Métal Hurlant (in English, Heavy Metal) and collaborated with comics legend Stan Lee on an Eisner Award-winning Silver Surfer miniseries. Illustrator Ralph McQuarrie, whose striking conceptual paintings for Star Wars George Lucas credits with helping to sell the project, died at his home in Berkeley, California, on March 3. He was 82. McQuarrie also worked on the original Battlestar: Galactica TV series, designed the UFOs for Close Encounters of the Third Kind and E.T.—The Extraterrestrial, and won an Oscar for his design work on Cocoon.

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## NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, April 22

1:00PM-5:00PM

St-François Room

Hôtel Espresso, 1005 Guy St.

Downtown Montreal

### PROGRAMME

1:00-4:00PM

**FUND-RAISING BAKE SALE:** Throughout today's meeting we'll be running a bake sale to raise funds for the club. Members may contribute to the cause by, first, donating a small plate or tray of assorted dessert cookies, cupcakes, or fruit/vegetable snacks, and such (homemade or store-bought), and second, by purchasing said delicacies during the course of the afternoon. Bring your extra loonies and tloonies! Help *support* your club!

1:00PM

**DISABILITIES IN SF:** How does futuristic fiction deal with disabilities? Are the disabled portrayed in SF really at a disadvantage at all, given the genre?

2:00PM

**BREAK/CLUB BUSINESS:** We break mid-meeting and briefly cover club business.

3:00PM

**CARTOON PHYSICS:** The laws of physics in Toontown are not nearly as restrictive as the laws of physics in our world. We examine the phenomenon.

## ConCept's Future Shaky

We regret to pass along fairly reliable scuttlebutt suggesting that Montreal's long-running SF/F convention may very well be cancelled this year. It wouldn't be the first time.

Readers may recall that ConCept was most recently scrubbed in 2005, and before that, in 2000, after which MonSFFA took the wheel and successfully revived the event between 2001 and 2003. The con, while understaffed, managed pretty well for a few years following MonSFFA's intervention and marked its 20th anniversary in 2009, the same year the World Science Fiction Convention came to Montreal under the Anticipation nameplate.

But ConCept has struggled since, drawing fewer paying patrons of late and developing a now chronic shortage of reliable volunteer manpower. With the departure of long-time chair Cathy Palmer-Lister (among other veterans of the cause) after last year's event, the organization lost, largely to exhaustion, its most experienced and dedicated booster, who by sheer force of will, it seemed at times, kept the convention afloat, to the delight of ConCept regulars who continued to attend and enjoy the con, even as it laboured mightily to overcome its shortcomings and find a niche for itself in a changing convention scene that has seen corporate-sponsored mega-cons built on the ComicCon model rise to supremacy and snow under many of the smaller, fan run events. While Cathy remains involved as registrar this year, she has scaled back dramatically the time she devotes to ConCept, and the organizing group—including many relative newcomers suddenly thrust into positions of responsibility they were, perhaps, not quite ready to handle—has experienced difficulty getting the 2012 event off the ground.

We are given to understand that some folk who had volunteered to cover various important portfolios have either lost faith or interest and departed, or have simply found themselves in over their heads. Apparently there have been

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the Following Club Members are...

### Overdue:

D'ORTUN-BOYER, Lynda  
DUROCHER, Marc  
HAMMOCK, Christopher  
NOVO, Fernando  
PENALBA, Theresa  
RUFIANGE, Yolande

### Due This Month, April:

NADEAU, Marc

### Due Next Month, May:

BROWN, Lindsay  
BURAKOFF, Mark  
REDMOND, Isis

Standard membership is only \$25 annually. We offer a family rate of \$40. Add \$10 to either of these to enjoy our premium "Platinum" membership level. Please complete the form below, include payment (cheque or money order made out to "MonSFFA"), and mail to:

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4456 Boul. Ste-Rose  
Laval, Québec, Canada  
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*Thank you for your  
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INTERESTS/INTERETS: \_\_\_\_\_

marked disagreements as to how to proceed, resulting in decisions fatally delayed. Perhaps there have been personality conflicts, as there almost always are, to be fair, in any conglom. And there are always at least two sides to any such story so we won't take sides, cast blame, or speculate further here; suffice it to say that we trust all involved have ConCept's best interests at heart and are acting with the best of intentions.

While we are hearing opinion from many quarters that ConCept 2012 is in serious doubt, we choose to take a positive stance. We sincerely hope that organizers can find their way around whatever obstacles impede their progress and somehow manage to stage a con this year, even if circumstances dictate that a little water be put in the wine. For more than ever before, we fear that if we do not see a ConCept this year, we will not see another, perhaps for good, but at least for a good while. And we don't think any Montreal SF/F fan wants that. Unfortunately, it is often the case that we only realize how much we value a thing after it is gone.

## March Club Meeting Welcomes Guest Speakers

MonSFFA welcomed three guest speakers to a packed room for its March 25 meeting. The afternoon's topic centered on the differences between the science fiction and fantasy genres and the increasingly blurred line between the two. Locally-based writers Mark Shainblum (Northguard, Angloman), Jo Walton (Tooth and Claw, Farthing, Ha'penny, Half a Crown), and Alison Sinclair (Cavalcade, Darkborn series) found the presence of magic to be an element often found in fantasy but not in science fiction. But on the surface of it, the book-cover trappings of fantasy—dragons, chain mail-clad chicks, armoured knights and muscled barbarians swinging enormous great broadswords—almost always signal that the story is firmly in the fantasy arena, specifically epic fantasy. But the fantasy genre also encompasses horror and such recently popular fare as the paranormal romance. Similarly, the trappings of science fiction, including spaceships, alien worlds, bug-eyed monsters, astronauts and inexplicably bikini-clad astronautettes, suggest that a story is SF. Our three guests offered that there are so many crossovers these days that in some cases it's hard to classify a book as one thing or another.

This began a tangent on marketing books, which demands a certain classification for all but a few major mainstream authors, like Michael Crichton or Margaret Atwood, whose clearly SF novels nevertheless sat on the mainstream fiction shelves of bookstores.

At the end of the day, whether a book is science fiction or fantasy was of no particular concern to

our guests, or to many of the folk in the audience, either. Whether or not it is a good book is the most important consideration.

The mid-meeting break gave way to François Menard's presentation on sound effects and music in sci-fi. François began with a brief treatise on the creation of sound effects for genre film, in which ray-guns, space monsters, and such—things that do not exist—must be given an aural signature. For a conventional movie, the sound effects crew record, for example, a car screeching to a halt, a gunshot, or a barking dog without the need to alter the sound very much. But in a sci-fi flick, sounds must be created whole. To do this, sound men record, combine, and alter the tempo and pitch of sounds to fashion something completely original. The Enterprise's distinctive engine rumble, for example, combines the sounds of a white noise generator, an exhaust fan, and an air conditioner. The hum of Luke Skywalker's landspeeder is, in fact, the distant sound of traffic on the Los Angeles Harbour Freeway as heard through a vacuum cleaner tube. A microphone covered with a condom and thrust into a bowl of flour and water while an aerosol product is sprayed into the mixture produced the unique sound of Terminator 2's liquid-metal T-1000 morphing.

François continued with a quick overview of genre soundtrack music, noting that strings and horns often provide the grand tenor required of big sci-fi or fantasy adventure movies. Synthesizers lend a futuristic sound to sci-fi, and such devices as the Theremin, an electronic gadget that creates an eerie, otherworldly oscillating whine, are perfectly suited to science fiction. The Theremin was used to memorable effect in the original *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, for instance.

François also highlighted the works of some of his favourite composers—John Williams (*Star Wars*, *Superman*, *Jaws*, *Indiana Jones*, *E.T.*, *Jurassic Park*, to name a few of his many award-winning compositions), Jerry Goldsmith (*Star Trek*, *The Omen*, *Planet of the Apes*, *Alien*), James Horner (also *Star Trek*, *Cocoon*, *Aliens*, *Avatar*), Danny Elfman (*Beetlejuice*, *Batman*, *Mars Attacks*, and of course, *The Simpsons*), Graeme Revell (*Daredevil*, *Sin City*, *Chronicles of Riddick*, *The Crow*), and Basil Poledouris (*Hunt for Red October*, *Conan the Barbarian*, *Robocop*, *Starship Troopers*).

He closed his presentation with a game. Playing a number of short music excerpts, François challenged his audience to identify the film or TV series for which the compositions were employed. Some were easy enough to identify—*Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Halloween*, *X-Files*—while others proved more challenging, like *Waterworld*, *The Crow*, *Scanners*, and *Suspria*. Included were several sound effects, like the Doctor's sonic screwdriver, the Martian heat ray from the original *War of the Worlds*, and *Star Trek's* transporter. The group correctly identified all of the sound effects except a few of the roars of several of *Godzilla's* fellow monsters. Of the 96 pieces of music and sound, the MonSFFen present correctly identified 76. Not a bad score!

We thank our three guest speakers, as well as panellist François Menard, for a most enjoyable and informative afternoon. Thanks, also, to those MonSFFen who planned and ran this meeting.

## MonSFFen Asked to Help Club Trim Expenses by Receiving Club News Bulletin Electronically; Paper Version of Impulse to Cease Publishing After July Issue

Come July, MonSFFA will publish the last regular paper edition of *Impulse*, thereafter officially issuing solely the electronic version of the news bulletin. MonSFFA members currently receiving *Impulse* in paper form via standard post will be shifted to the e-version, available as a .pdf through the club's Web site.

However, recognizing that a few of our older members either do not have, or have only limited Internet access, the club will still produce a handful of paper copies and mail these to said members, assuring that they continue to receive timely reminders of upcoming meetings and other time-sensitive information. Note as well that a few additional paper copies will also be printed and made available at meetings for the benefit of collectors and fanzine purists within the club.

MonSFFA members who are *unable* to receive the electronic version of *Impulse* are advised to let us know, either in person at a club meeting or by letter, addressed to the club (MonSFFA, c/o 4456 Boul. Ste-Rose, Laval, Québec, Canada, H7R 1Y6). We are allowing a few months for MonSFFen to contact us and register to continue receiving *Impulse* in paper form.

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## NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, May 27

1:00PM-5:00PM

St-François Room

Hôtel Espresso, 1005 Guy St.

Downtown Montreal

### PROGRAMME

1:00PM

**SCI-FI FASHION SHOW:** The remarkable craftsmanship of SF/F fans results in a lot of amazing masquerade costumes and cosplay creations each year. We explore the many aspects of science fiction and fantasy costuming, one of fandom's oldest and most revered pastimes.

2:15PM

#### **BREAK/CLUB BUSINESS/OPEN**

**DISCUSSION:** We break mid-meeting to briefly cover club business, then open the floor to discussion of any SF/F or related topic suggested by the MonSFFen present. What's on your mind?

3:30PM

**MUPPETS IN SPACE:** We explore sci-fi parody through television comedy with particular focus on the venerable Muppets.

## NEXT MONTH

**SUNDAY, JUNE 10:** Group Outing to Star Wars Identities Exhibition (see lead item, center, for details)

## Group Outing to Star Wars Exhibition

In lieu of a June meeting, the club has organized a group outing to the Star Wars Identities Exhibition at the Montreal Science Centre for Sunday, June 10. This interactive exhibition explores through the prism of Star Wars' iconic characters the factors that shape our personalities. Featured is a collection of Star Wars costumes, props, models, and artwork culled from the Lucasfilm Archives. An absolute must-see for Star Wars fans!

We have secured for our group a discount on the admission rates (taxes included): adults, \$24; teens (13-17), \$15.50. There is still time to benefit from this discount; sign on and pay in full (cash, please) at our May 27 club meeting. After that deadline, anyone wishing to join us is certainly welcome but will have to buy their own individual ticket at full price, and may not be able to enter the exhibit at the same time as our group (tickets are sold for a specific entry time to avoid overcrowding inside the exhibition hall).

We will meet at 12:30PM *sharp* in the lobby of the Montreal Science Centre, located on the King Edward Pier, Old Port of Montreal. That's at the intersection of St-Laurent Boulevard and de la Commune Street, an approximately 10-minute walk from either the Place d'Armes or Champs-de-Mars Metro stations. Parking is available in the area for those coming by car, although it can be difficult to find a spot. Alternately, there is a pay parking lot adjacent the Science Centre (access via King Edward Pier entrance).

We will enter the exhibit together, we expect, some time between 1:00PM and 1:30PM (our exact entry time will be determined upon the purchase of our tickets, shortly after the club's May 27 meeting). As such, we will not be able to wait for latecomers, so make sure you arrive *no later* than 12:30PM in order that you are present well enough in advance of our call to the gate.

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DUROCHER, Marc  
HAMMOCK, Christopher  
NADEAU, Marc  
NOVO, Fernando  
PENALBA, Theresa  
RUFIANGE, Yolande

#### **Due This Month, May:**

BROWN, Lindsay  
BURAKOFF, Mark  
REDMOND, Isis

#### **Due Next Month, June:**

BELLEMARE, Josée  
SILVERMAN, Barbara

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## ConCept 2012 Officially Cancelled!

Despite the disconsolate scuttlebutt of late, we had hoped that the concom would find some way of pulling it all together this year, but it seems they have not and we can now confirm that ConCept 2012 is officially cancelled. As regular readers know, there are a number of ancillary reasons for ConCept's troubles but the principal difficulty is understaffing, with which the con has struggled for some years, now. The most recent few years have seen this problem at its most acute. There are simply not enough dedicated concom members to plan and run the operation. That, coupled with declining attendance in the face of such popular, massively funded super conventions as the Montreal ComicCon, and what some argue is contemporary fandom's eschewing of the general-interest SF/F con (the model upon which ConCept is patterned), has effectively doomed the long-running event not only this year, but perhaps for good. If ConCept has, indeed, held its last opening ceremony, we can but lament the passing of a top-quality little convention that has entertained and engaged SF/F fans for more than two decades.

But there is talk, tentative at the moment, of regrouping for a fresh attempt next year. ConCept has come back from the precipice before and we desperately hope that it will again.

Meanwhile, MonSFFA René Walling writes of his involvement in a group exploring the possibility of launching a new literary sci-fi convention in 2013. But nothing is solid as of yet, with only the name Perception suggested as the event's moniker. René promises updates.

In that ConCept would, in future, almost certainly have to drop from its roster actor guests for reasons of cost, perhaps René's group and ConCept's people should talk. A revamped ConCept and developing Perception sound to us rather similar, maybe enough so to consolidate resources. Just sayin'.

## April MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA's April meeting was held on the 22nd and kicked off with an amusing presentation by Joe Aspler on the laws of physics in cartoons. Outlining first the Newtonian laws of physics, Joe detailed how the physics of cartoon space, or c-space, differed from the familiar ways of things in our own universe.

Gravity, for example, only acts upon a cartoon character when he realizes that he has walked several yards off the edge of a cliff or the roof of a tall building. Said character remains suspended in mid-air until the moment he glances down to find that he has marched himself into a bit of a

predicament, whereupon he begins to fall.

Mechanical devices—particularly those manufactured by the Acme corporation—employed by 'toons like Wile E. Coyote and Yosemite Sam to best their foes perform to spec during test rehearsals but inevitably fail to operate as advertised when they need to. In fact, they often backfire on their operators with disastrous results as the intended targets sail through the set-up without suffering so much as a scratch.

The Law of Dramatic Necessity suspends the physical laws that govern our lives in order that dramatic purposes are satisfied. For instance, a 'toon will survive an explosion or vehicular impact that would maim or kill a human being to insure that the 'toon may return for the next scene.

To the delight of his audience, Joe screened clips from Disney and Warner Bros. classics to illustrate the c-space laws of which he spoke.

The mid-meeting break led to a lively and longer than intended discussion of apathy within the club (a particular concern of MonSFFA president Berny Reischl), addressed a few reservations from members as to the structure of meetings and related issues, and examined possible reasons for a certain dissatisfaction with MonSFFA recently expressed by some, including former members. So as not to focus solely on the negative, the group also outlined what it is that they like about the club. Notes were taken as a guide to drafting a questionnaire that the Executive hopes will help zero in on and remedy discontent. We do, after all, sincerely want folk to enjoy themselves as members of the club.

Danny Sichel covered the topic of "Disabilities in SF" during the latter half of the meeting, examining SF's technological solutions to such conditions as paralysis or blindness. Disability is a matter of perspective, of course. Professor Xavier is confined to a wheelchair, but the psychic power of his mutant mind certainly overcomes any mobility issues. Can he really be considered disabled? And are what we deem disabilities necessarily so? An alien race, presumably, does not perceive the universe as we do and so may not have developed eyes, for instance. From the perspective of the aliens, then, their "blindness" would not be a disability. Danny cited numerous examples from the lexicon of SF literature to illustrate his treatise.

During the course of the afternoon, a bake sale was held, boosting substantially the revenues normally generated by our snack bar. This extra cash will be directed to covering the cost of club operations. We thank those members who provided the food and drink, and of course, those who purchased a snack or two.

We thank, too, our panellists for their entertaining and edifying presentations, as well as those MonSFFA members who planned and ran this meeting.

## After July Issue, Paper Impulse to be Dropped in Favour of Electronic Version; Special Arrangements Made to Accommodate Club Members without Internet Access

This is the second to last official paper edition of Impulse. Come July, MonSFFA will publish the last regular paper Impulse, thereafter officially issuing solely the electronic version of the news bulletin. MonSFFA members currently receiving Impulse in paper form via standard post—roughly half the membership—will be shifted to the e-version, available as a .pdf through the club's Web site.

However, recognizing that a few of our older members either do not have, or have only limited Internet access, the club will maintain production of a handful of paper copies at each issue release and mail these to said members, assuring that they continue to receive timely reminders of upcoming meetings and other time-sensitive information. Note as well that a few additional paper copies will also be printed and made available at meetings for the benefit of collectors and fanzine purists within the club.

MonSFFA members who are *unable* to receive the electronic version of the news bulletin must advise the club within a few weeks in order that they continue to receive a paper version of Impulse by special arrangement after July. Let us know as soon as possible, either in person at a club meeting or by letter, addressed to the club: MonSFFA, c/o 4456 Boul. Ste-Rose, Laval, Québec, Canada, H7R 1Y6.

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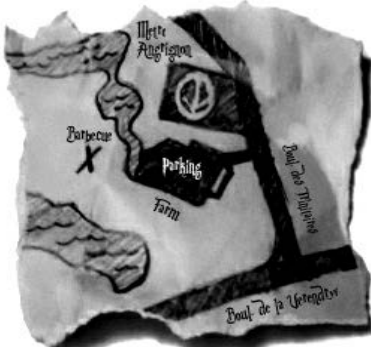
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## CLUB'S SUMMER BBQ IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, July 22

10:30AM-4:00PM

Parc Angrignon, Lasalle



### MonSFFA MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS INVITED TO SPEND A RELAXING DAY IN THE PARK

We will gather about 10:30AM at or near our traditional spot behind the Angrignon Metro station and next to the parking lot in front of the now-closed Angrignon Farm (see map)

**Bring your own chairs, picnic blankets, food and drink; we supply the cooking grill. Don't forget your sunscreen!**

If rained out, event bumped to following Sunday, July 29, same place and time

### POOL PARTY/BARBECUE

SATURDAY, JULY 28, Anytime after Noon  
15 Dumont Street, Ste-Eustache  
Hosted by Wayne Glover (450-473-2503)

**Bring Your Own Cuts of Meat  
to Barbecue!**

## Final Printed Issue of Impulse; Electronic Version Continues

As a cost-saving measure, MonSFFA is discontinuing production of the printed version of Impulse. This issue is the final official printed edition of the club's news bulletin. Almost.

The club has made an exception in order to serve those few MonSFFen who do not have an Internet connection for one reason or another and cannot receive the electronic version of the news bulletin, which continues publication as usual and is available through the club's Web site. MonSFFA members who have been receiving Impulse to date in paper form via standard post—about half the membership—are now shifted to the e-version. For all intents and purposes, the e-Impulse becomes the prescribed version of this publication and will be distributed to all but those few above-mentioned MonSFFen.

Note as well that a few additional paper copies will also be printed and made available at meetings for the benefit of collectors.

## MonSFFen Encouraged to Receive Warp Electronically

MonSFFA's fanzine, Warp, meanwhile, continues to be available in either printed or electronic form, with members encouraged to adopt the electronic version in order to maximize savings by the club related to the cost of printing and mailing. Here's how that works:

MonSFFen are notified by e-mail upon the release of each edition of Warp. The fanzine is made available as a .pdf by way of the club's Web site ([www.MonSFFA.com](http://www.MonSFFA.com)). A case-sensitive password is included in the e-mail notification which allows club members access to the Warp file. Members can then download a copy of the issue and view it on their screens.

Recognizing that some members may wish to own a physical copy, these MonSFFen may pick up a printed version of the 'zine in person at the next scheduled MonSFFA event. Printed versions of the most recent few issues are available at all

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### Overdue:

BELLEMARE, Josée  
D'ORTUN-BOYER, Lynda  
DUROCHER, Marc  
HAMMOCK, Christopher  
NADEAU, Marc  
PENALBA, Theresa  
RUFIANGE, Yolande

### Due This Month, July:

BENNETT, Paul  
MORROW, Gordon

### Due Next Month, August:

CIASCHINI, Lynda L.  
GLOVER, Wayne  
NOVO, Alice

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club meetings. We encourage members who desire one of the club-produced physical copies of Warp to acquire the publication at a MonSFFA meeting, thus saving the club the postal charges associated with mailing the fanzine via Canada Post. Members who wish a club-produced printed version but are unable to attend each club meeting may request a copy be mailed to them. These members *must* contact Impulse editor Keith Braithwaite (450-692-8831 or Keith1958@live.ca) and ask that a printed version of the specific issue be sent to them via standard post. Please note that *only those members from whom the club has received such a request will be mailed a physical copy of the fanzine.*

## The End of Polaris as We Know It

Polaris 26 (July 6-8, 2012) marked the end of an era. The popular, long-running fan-run convention, which featured a good many A-list sci-fi television and movie stars over the years and drew several thousand attendees at its peak, is no more! There are many factors that prompted the TCON Society, sponsors of Polaris, to fold the convention in its current form, but two reasons stand out in particular, according to Andrew Gurudata, a former Montrealer who sits on the TCON board and has been involved with Polaris for a dozen or so years.

Polaris is confronted with a declining pool of volunteers from which to draw, not unlike the problem that has beset Montreal's ConCept. Further, the con faces competition from a couple of big, professional conventions, not only for the attention of fans, but for marquee guests. With two such big autograph shows annually, along with all of the other conventions and sci-fi events running in the Toronto area, Polaris is of late finding it more difficult to book name guests, and to draw fans, whose con-going budgets are increasingly stretched thin in a saturated market. While financially healthy today, Polaris cannot, in the long run, stand against the big procons. In addition, the 800-pound gorilla of SF/F conventions, San Diego's Comic-Con, like Polaris, takes place in July and has become such a behemoth—reports suggest the 2012 event drew some 150,000!—that it pulls both potential Polaris guests and attendees into its gravitational field like never before.

The TCON folk have seen the writing on the wall: Polaris cannot, ultimately, survive in its present form. As such, organizers have opted to downsize their event. A simple relax-a-con, sans programming of any kind, is planned for mid-July next year. And, a smaller convention celebrating the 50th anniversary of Doctor Who is set for the first weekend of November, 2013. The thinking is that this smaller event will require considerably fewer volunteers than Polaris, and will face fewer competitors in November than in July.

But the plan has left many Polaris veterans disenchanted. Out-of-towners especially are wary

of travelling in November, as winter looms. Also, the focus on Doctor Who offers little of interest to those who are not avid fans of the good Doctor. Organizers say the event may well include non-Who programming; nothing is as yet carved in stone.

Meanwhile, TCON's surveys suggest that the people who attended Polaris regularly were drawn to the event not so much because of the TV and movie stars, but primarily for the panel and other programming, and to enjoy the social aspects of the convention. Polaris has always managed to stage a thoroughly satisfying hybrid of the star-focused procon and the traditional programming-centered, fan-run con, offering, to borrow a Trek title, the Best of Both Worlds. A lot of folk were disappointed to hear that that seems to no longer be possible.

Finally, the TCON Society is open to ideas as to future events. Groups or individuals will be invited to put together proposals for consideration.

## May MonSFFA Meeting

MonSFFA's May meeting was our last before the summer break and took place on the 27th. Featured were Sylvain St-Pierre's look at costume design in sci-fi and Josée Bellemare's appreciation of the Muppets' wacky science fictional outings. Attendance was healthy and those present very much appreciated the comfortable couches and armchairs of the alternate function room into which we were booked as our usual room was unavailable. We are toying with making this alternate room our regular meeting space.

Sylvain was first up and Impulse takes this opportunity to apologize for the erroneous outline of his presentation published in the "Events Column" of our last issue. We mistakenly had Sylvain down for a treatise on masquerade costuming, when in fact, he planned to speak on futuristic costumes as seen in SF/F film, television, and comics.

From the silver jumpsuits worn by space men and women in the classic Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers exploits of the 1930s to the form-fitting body armour donned by the superheroes of current blockbuster movies, Sylvain screened numerous images while tracing the influences and many different styles developed for the "Wardrobes of Tomorrow" represented in our favourite sci-fi adventures over the years. Pretty cool stuff!

Following the mid-meeting break, Josée shared with the group her admiration for the sci-fi parody hilariously realized by the lovable Muppets. The well-known, Star-Trekkish Pigs in Space skits are particular favourites, if the opinions of the assembled MonSFFen are to be taken as a barometer. Popular, too, are the scientific misadventures of Dr. Bunsen Honeydew and his hapless lab assistant, Beaker.

Time allowed for a period of open discussion; we speculated on what film projects might be upcoming in the wake of The Avengers and other of this year's hit movies.

Thanks to our two presenters and all of the usual suspects.

## Group Outing to Identities Star Wars Exhibition

Rather than scheduling a club meeting in June, the club opted for a group outing to the Star Wars Identities Exhibition at the Montreal Science Centre in the Old Port. Identities explores through the prism of Star Wars' archetypal characters the factors that shape our personalities. About 15 MonSFFen gathered in the lobby of the Science Centre at noon Sunday, June 10. Our scheduled entry was delayed by a half hour but was worth the wait.

Featured is a marvellous selection of Star Wars costumes, props, models, and artwork culled from the Lucasfilm Archives. Many of the iconic costumes and superbly detailed shooting models of the spaceships that appear in the two Star Wars trilogies were on display, as well as life-sized props and original pre-production drawings, sketches, illustrations, and mock-ups produced by a variety of remarkable artists as the movies were developed. These pre-production items were of great interest and among them were illustrator Ralph McQuarrie's original concept paintings, employed by George Lucas to convey to studio chiefs and others his vision for the first and subsequent Star Wars films.

As folk moved through the exhibit, an interactive "game" allowed them to fashion their own Star Wars character by selecting various aspects of those factors that influence our individual development as people, beginning in childhood and continuing into our adult years. A visual representation of each visitor's Star Wars alter ego could be viewed on a large screen as one exited the exhibition area.

Identities, running throughout the summer, is an outstanding exhibit well worth the price of admission, especially of course, for Star Wars fans.

We thank club president Berny Reischl for booking this wonderful group outing.

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## NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, August 19

11:00AM-5:00PM

St-François Room

Hôtel Espresso, 1005 Guy St.

Downtown Montreal

### PROGRAMME

11:00AM

#### **SCI-FI CULT CINEMA SCREENING:**

Join us for some offbeat low-budget independent film fun.

1:00PM

**FANCRAFT WORKSHOPS:** MonSFFen encouraged to bring in variety of sci-fi craft projects for workshop session. Share your crafting skills with fellow club members. (See lead item for details.)

2:15PM

**BREAK/CLUB BUSINESS:** While we break mid-meeting we'll briefly cover a few items of club business, including plans for "Garage Sale" fund-raiser in September.

3:00PM

**COLLECTING:** Show and tell the group about your sci-fi collections; general discussion of collecting hobby. (See lead item for details.)

### NEXT MONTH'S MEETING

**SEPTEMBER 23** *One-Season*

*Wonders • Art of Marquise*

*Boies • Fund-Raiser*

## August Club Meeting to Focus on Crafts, Collecting

MonSFFA's meeting schedule resumes this month on Sunday, the 19th (see Events column, left). Our August meeting has, for several years now, been devoted to craft workshops and this year we are asking club members to bring in any SF/F-themed projects they may be working on to show the group while offering how-to tips on the given craft—scale plastic model-making, wood carving, knitting, scrapbooking, etc. Share with fellow club members your unique knowledge of the techniques employed in the fashioning of a particular work of "sci-fi fancraft" and at the same time learn about other crafting media. A few MonSFFen have advised us in advance of planned demonstrations, including a primer on creating stained glass art.

In addition, we are asking folk to bring in a sampling of some of their sci-fi collections—rare books, comics, toys, T-shirts, action figures, original art, the autographs of SF/F stars, etc.—and talk about their collections. How did you come to collect the particular things that you collect? Which is your most valuable piece? What interesting tales can you tell about the prize items in your collection and your pursuit of these? In that some collections may be too unwieldy to transport, instead snap a few photos of your treasures and load the pix onto a flash drive so that you may show these to the group at the meeting.

In broader terms, we'll discuss the phenomenon of collecting and ask why people collect, what satisfaction is derived from the hobby, and when does it all become too much?

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HAMMOCK, Christopher  
MORROW, Gordon  
NADEAU, Marc  
PENALBA, Theresa

#### **Due This Month, August:**

GLOVER, Wayne  
NOVO, Alice

#### **Due Next Month, September:**

BOIES, Marquise  
BRAITHWAITE, Erin  
BRAITHWAITE, Keith  
BRAITHWAITE, Scott  
DUROCHER, Dominique  
GAREAU, Paul  
IMBEAULT, Christian  
MOIR, L. E.  
WHITELAW, Maureen

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## e-Impulse

We remind MonSFFen that as of this issue, Impulse is officially an electronic publication. As a cost-saving measure, the club has discontinued production of the printed version of Impulse and now delivers the news bulletin to all members electronically (excepting those few who cannot receive the electronic version of the news bulletin and for whom special printed issues are produced).

MonSFFA members who have been receiving Impulse in paper form via standard post have been shifted to the e-version. The current and back issues of Impulse may be downloaded in .pdf format from the club's Web site ([www.MonSFFA.com](http://www.MonSFFA.com)).

## Summertime, and the Livin' is Easy

We remind club members that MonSFFA moves to a more relaxed beat during the summer months as the Executive and many other of the volunteer-members who contribute to the running of the club are, at various times during this period, on vacation and therefore unavailable for club commitments. The club still gets done what has to get done, like membership renewals and Web site updates, but usually not quite as promptly as during the rest of the year.

We thank MonSFFen for their understanding and wish everyone a pleasant rest of the summer.

## A Quiet Club Barbecue

The club's annual summer barbecue took place this year under a hot sun on Sunday, July 22, in an uncharacteristically quiet Parc Angrignon. Largely absent were the often boisterous youth groups and families that usually populate this expansive common in suburban Lasalle on summer weekends. On this particular day, MonSFFA was one of only a handful of encampments enjoying a summer cook-out in the park. Thus were the surroundings a little quieter than usual, which was fine, and the park's picnic tables in abundant supply. And, we were able to claim a prime spot under a copse of shady trees, which proved advantageous as the midday sun blazed and the temperature rose, mitigated just slightly by a light breeze.

Perhaps it was the heat that kept people away speculated the dozen-plus MonSFFen gathered,

or some of the festivals and parades going on downtown. Whatever the reason, our group certainly enjoyed the quieter, less crowded ambiance as we lunched, quaffed cold drink, and enjoyed each other's company. Keith Braithwaite and Mark Burakoff prevailed in a trivia contest, winning DVD copies of the Morgan Spurlock documentary *Comic-Con—Episode IV: A Fan's Hope*.

As the afternoon drew to a close, a few were doused by water balloon, then we all packed up and headed home, another successful MonSFFA summer barbecue concluded.

The summer siesta continued for MonSFFen the following weekend as Wayne Glover hosted his annual backyard pool party.

## ConCept, Polaris and Others Fall Victim to Rise of the Comic-Con

Though both ConCept in Montreal and Polaris in Toronto have folded or downsized for a variety of reasons (not the least of which is a dearth of volunteers), one factor that has surely played a role in both cases, and in others across North America, is the rise in recent years of the big autograph shows and super-sized Comic-Con-like conventions. These for-profit behemoths draw tens of thousands by offering star-packed guest rosters that no traditional fan-run operation can hope to match. It all comes down to money. The giant procons have a lot more of it than the traditional fancons. For every star attraction that a fancon may line up, the local Comic-Con lines up three or four. And those deep pockets are now prompting many sci-fi television and movies stars to sign on to the Comic-Cons over the smaller fancons.

But the Comic-Cons generally offer little more than guest Q&A's, autograph sessions, and an often overcrowded dealers' room. Some feature a masquerade or other sort of costume contest. And, one spends a lot of time lining up for one thing or another at a Comic-Con, a perennial complaint of even those most enthusiastic boosters of such events. The traditional fan-run SF/F convention offers the same—albeit on a smaller scale but without the lengthy line-ups—and more! Multiple panel discussions, workshops, evening dances, after-hours partying, to name just a few staples of the traditional North American fan-run sci-fi convention that surveys suggest a lot of SF/F fans like most of all.

And yet, Comic-Cons continue to draw herds of people, far exceeding the attendance numbers of the typical fancon. But if sci-fi fans find the array of activities at a fancon more robust, more appealing than the relatively narrow programming offered at the big shows, why are the fancons pulling in far fewer folk? Some of the reason can probably be traced to poor or inadequate marketing and advertising (again, it always comes down to money). However, a big part of the explanation is that the Comic-Con crowd consists of traditional sci-fi fans, to be sure, but also, and in much greater number, of what we'll call "casual fans", folk who are drawn like moths to the flame of celebrity culture, and perhaps to a particular comic book superhero, TV series, or film franchise, but who are not particularly avid enthusiasts of the greater science fiction and fantasy genre. They like those few things that they like but have no interest in exploring the genre any further. They will probably never attend a traditional sci-fi con, join a sci-fi club, read a sci-fi novel, or spend much time on a sci-fi Web site. Their interest in and knowledge of the genre is rather limited. But there are a lot of casual fans and the Comic-Con-like shows provide them with all that they want, which is a very small piece of the SF/F pie.

Ironically, the casual fan may have come to be as a result of the mainstreaming of the genre in recent decades. So much of popular culture today features some element or other of sci-fi that, in a way, everyone is now a sci-fi fan.

So traditional SF/F fans, those who appreciate what fancons offer and have more than a passing interest in the genre, find themselves vastly outnumbered by the less devout, if you will, and can do little to halt the inexorable decline of their natural habitat.

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## NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, September 23

1:00PM-5:00PM

St-François Room

Hôtel Espresso, 1005 Guy St.

Downtown Montreal

### PROGRAMME

1:00PM

**THE ART OF MARQUISE:** One of the club's talented artists shows some of her portfolio and speaks on her influences, creative inspiration, and illustration techniques.

2:00PM

**THE REAL CSI:** The modern police force applies cutting-edge science to help solve crime, but fans of CSI and similar television shows should take the Hollywood depiction with a grain of salt. One of our members happens to work in the field and separates for us the science from the science fiction.

3:15PM

**BREAK/CLUB BUSINESS:** While we break mid-meeting we'll briefly cover a few items of club business.

3:30PM

**ONE-SEASON WONDERS:** We recall sci-fi TV series that didn't make it past a single season; many deserved the programmer's axe, but certainly not all!

NEXT MEETING  
OCTOBER 28

## Crafts and Collecting

After a mid-summer break, MonSFFA's monthly meeting schedule resumed on August 19th, welcoming a good crowd for what has become something of an August custom these past few years: the club's annual crafting workshop. MonSFFA are encouraged to bring in a variety of sci-fi-themed craft projects that each may be working on and share their particular knowledge of their chosen craft with fellow club members. Types of crafting are outlined, techniques are demonstrated, and folks given the opportunity to try their hand at things.

In past years we've collectively learned about digital illustration and photo retouching; the techniques applied to scale model-building; how to fold origami dragons, aliens, and spaceships; of the various popular wool-and-thread crafts like knitting and cross-stitching, of scrapbooking, dollar-store jewellery-making, and a lot more. Some crafts are simple and quick, others more challenging. All are fun!

Of the "more challenging" variety this year was the production of stained glass art. Cathy Palmer-Lister gave a detailed lesson on this hobby. With examples on hand for perusal, Cathy charted in a PowerPoint presentation the processes involved, fielding many a question as she spoke. Keith Braithwaite and young Isis Redmond, meanwhile, each offered a "simple and quick" demonstration of papercraft. Keith wrapped coloured construction paper around cardboard toilet paper rolls to fashion stylized superheroes. Isis drew then cut out various paper figures and glued them to Popsicle sticks to easily create hand puppets.

In addition, Berny Reischl offered a primer on using Cloud Computing to store and later conveniently retrieve for presentation digital artwork or photos.

Added to the agenda this year was a segment on sci-fi collecting. Club members joined in a general discussion of collecting such things as science fiction books, comics, and action figures. A quick show of hands revealed that almost

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IMBEAULT, Christian  
MOIR, L. E.

### Due Next Month, October:

BOOM, Hendrik  
KENNEY, Daniel P.  
PELLEY, Lynda  
PETTIT, William S.  
ST-PIERRE, Sylvain  
WADSWORTH, Beulah

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everyone in the room had at least one collection of some kind, and often several. The joys of collecting interesting sci-fi treasures were talked about, as were the pitfalls. Those collecting for the love of a particular thing as opposed to those collecting for profit were compared, and it was noted, are not always mutually exclusive. Novices were warned off anything that was labelled “collectible”. Such items are not nearly as rare as one might be led to believe, and almost certainly will not accrue much in value. Truly rare and valuable items are those usually a number of years old but still in excellent condition that were not produced with the collectibles market in mind. Certain space-themed toys of the 1960s, like the Major Matt Mason series or G.I. Joe’s Mercury astronaut and capsule were cited as examples.

A few folk brought in items from, or photos of their collections and took a few minutes to talk about what they collect and why, how many items are contained in the collection and which pieces are the rarest, most valuable, were most difficult to acquire, and so on.

Isis Redmond proudly showed her Hello Kitty sticker collection, holding up the book in which she had pasted her stickers for all to see. She collected these because she likes the colourful characters.

Keith Braithwaite brought in his collection of 12 unique Star Wars drink cups, each with the large sculpted head of one of the Phantom Menace characters serving as the cup’s cover. These were given out in conjunction with the release of the film and were available for a very limited time at three different fast food outlets, each franchise offering four of the promotional cups. When Keith discovered that one of the franchises had no restaurants in Québec, he told of driving to Plattsburgh, New York, weekly for a month in order to be sure to complete his collection! He had a lot more free time and disposable income back then.

Lastly, François Menard screened photos of his collection of Masters of the Universe toy action figures, which includes a couple of uncommon villains. These he has picked up over the years and began collecting because of his fondness for the fantasy-adventure TV show he enjoyed as a youngster. François noted that his collection remains incomplete in that the rare figures he is missing are simply too expensive to purchase today, highlighting one of the unfortunate pitfalls of collecting, particularly for completists. Toy producers, it was posited, take advantage of those collectors who insist on obtaining every figure in a line by releasing several different versions of the same figure, changing only the costume or accessories.

A cult film screening immediately preceded the meeting.

Our thanks to all participants!

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## Future Bleak for ConConcept in Wake of Montreal Comic-Con

Cancelled this year and hoping to regroup for 2013, Montreal’s ConConcept SF/F convention faces an uphill battle in the wake of the just-completed Montreal Comic-Con 2012. We’ll get to why that is in just a moment, but first, a quick word about this year’s Comic-Con.

We don’t have the official attendance numbers but pre-show estimates suggested that this year’s well-publicized Comic-Con would draw about 30,000, some 10,000 more than last year’s event, at which, reportedly, several thousand were turned away because the Place Bonaventure locale was at capacity and officials refused to allow any more people into the hall. This year’s Comic-Con was held at the larger Palais de congrès and presumably, the event got bigger, taking full advantage of the additional floor space. One attendee we spoke to on Saturday, September 15, the busiest day of the con, described the venue as “packed” and the attendees as a diverse crowd of young and old, all having a blast. The guest list included both William Shatner and Patrick Stewart, appearing on stage together (Star Trek fans must have been beside themselves!), among dozens of television and movie stars, and comics industry luminaries.

Now let’s look at why ConConcept is facing that uphill battle. We’ve already discussed in this publication how smaller, fan-run conventions like ConConcept simply cannot match the kind of guest roster that a big-budget, for-profit operation like Comic-Con can advertise. In order to successfully share these stumping grounds with the elephant, ConConcept the mouse would have to find a niche that the big shows like Comic-Con here, and Fan Expo in Toronto, do not serve. We know that the big shows tend to limit themselves to star guest panels/Q&A’s and autograph/photo sessions, a giant dealers’ room, and often, some kind of costume competition, but little else. There may be some ancillary programming on the outskirts—gaming, maybe, a couple of discussion panels, these usually sparsely attended in that they are scheduled opposite one of the big stars of the show—but any such is pretty much an afterthought. Last year’s Comic-Con was like that. And yet multi-track panel programming (featuring a wide variety of topics and not always centered on the star guests), workshops, room parties—staples of the traditional fan-run North American science fiction convention—remain popular with a sizable segment of fandom. This might be the niche market that ConConcept could claim. Other Canadian fan-run cons have been thinking just that. A survey of its attendees conducted by Toronto’s Polaris found that most put panel programming and room parties at the top of their lists of reasons for attending. For many of these folk, which stars will be appearing at the con is secondary. Polaris, one of the larger fan-run cons built, like ConConcept, on the traditional North American sci-fi convention model, and one that has managed to offer, over the years, guest lists at least competitive with some of the big shows, has recently decided to downsize in the face of increasing local competition from such powerhouse outfits as Fan Expo, which draws upwards of 60,000 against Polaris’ typical 1500-2000. Organizers of the downsized Polaris plan to cater to that panels-and-parties clientele. Similarly, ConConcept would have to do much the same here in Montreal.

But in the wake of Montreal Comic-Con 2012, that’s going to be a little more daunting a challenge, given that Comic-Con’s organizers seem to be thinking about that very same niche as well. This year’s event expanded not only in terms of attendance, but from a two-day to a three-day affair, extending well into the evening hours where in past years things were pretty much done for the day by supertime. Most significantly, however, programming was boosted, offering a lot more panels and workshops than last year’s token few, often featuring some of the non-headlining guests. And that’s not the only change that mirrored a typical ConConcept programming schedule, albeit a greatly magnified one. A series of independent sci-fi and horror film screenings were included, too, just as ConConcept has been featuring in recent years, only on a much grander scale. Also included was not a DJ’ed dance, but a live concert by guest James “Spike” Marsters and his band.

Granted, the price of all this fun was considerably magnified as well, particularly if one were to buy VIP tickets and take in the extra-cost events, but clearly, people are willing to pay more in that they are getting a lot more bang for their buck.

After this year’s Comic-Con, any niche that ConConcept (or any proposed new convention like Perception, mentioned in our May-June issue) may think about occupying is going to be much smaller. Fans of literary sci-fi remain largely unserved, but who’s to say Comic-Con won’t soon begin tapping into that demographic?



# I M P U L S E

LE BULLETIN D'INFORMATION DE L'ASSOCIATION MONTREALAISE DE SCIENCE-FICTION ET DE FANTASTIQUE, L'AMonSFF

October/Octobre 2012 (Vol. 16, No./N° 9)

## NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, October 28

1:00PM-5:00PM

2nd Floor, Hôtel Espresso

1005 Guy Street

Downtown Montreal

### PROGRAMME

1:00-5:00PM

**MONSFFA SCI-FI GARAGE SALE:** See advertisement, adjacent.

1:00PM

**THE CSI EFFECT:** Fans of television's CSI shows should take Hollywood's depiction of forensic science with a grain of salt. One of our members happens to work in the field and separates for us the science from the science fiction.

2:00PM

**HOLLYWOOD HALLOWEEN:** With Halloween upon us, we examine some of the creepiest, most shocking, most frightening moments Hollywood horror movies have scared up over the years.

3:30PM

**BREAK/RAFFLE/COSTUME PRIZE:** We break to hold raffle, award prize for the scariest Halloween costume in the room.

4:00PM

**FAN FICTION AS INTRODUCTION TO SF/F:** Does fan-produced material serve as a good entry point into the greater SF/F genre?

## MonSFFA SCI-FI GARAGE SALE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2012

1:00-5:00PM

2ND FLOOR, HÔTEL ESPRESSO

1005 GUY ST.

(CORNER RENÉ-LÉVESQUE)

DOWNTOWN MONTREAL

ALL FANS OF SCI-FI WELCOME!

BUY and SELL Sci-Fi Books, Toys, Collectibles, etc.

Plus: Raffle, Snacks and Drinks, Prize for Scariest Halloween Costume, and More...

### TWO WAYS FOR YOU TO SELL YOUR SCI-FI TREASURES:

1. Rent table space for flat fee of \$5 and staff your own booth during course of afternoon's MonSFFA club meeting, profiting entirely from your sales.

2. Leave selling to our staff while you enjoy meeting for 10 percent commission on sales.

*Fees and sales commissions collected by MonSFFA will be directed towards club's operating expenses; this is a fund-raiser for the club.*

E-mail Cathy Palmer-Lister to reserve table space: Cathypl@sympatico.ca

Set-up will take place shortly before meeting begins, please arrive early if bringing in stuff to sell.

## Sell Your Sci-Fi Stuff at Club's Garage Sale

In addition to the programming we've planned for our "Halloween" meeting (see events column, left), we will also be holding a "Sci-Fi Garage Sale" (see advertisement, above). This is an event

DOES YOUR  
NAME APPEAR BELOW?  
CHECK THIS SPACE TO  
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ARE DUE.

The Annual Membership Fees of the Following Club Members are...

### Overdue:

BOIES, Marquise  
DUROCHER, Dominique  
GAREAU, Paul  
HAMMOCK, Christopher  
IMBEAULT, Christian  
MOIR, L. E.  
MORROW, Gordon

### Due This Month, October:

BOOM, Hendrik  
KENNEY, Daniel P.  
PELLEY, Lynda  
PETTIT, William S.  
ST-PIERRE, Sylvain  
WADSWORTH, Beulah

### Due Next Month, November:

JANSSEN, Steven  
KNAPP, Brian  
KNAPP, Cathy

Standard membership is only \$25 annually. We offer a family rate of \$40. Add \$10 to either of these to enjoy our premium "Platinum" membership level. Please complete the form below, include payment (cheque or money order made out to "MonSFFA"), and mail to:

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

## MonSFFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please print legibly. Cut out form and mail as per directions.

## AMonSFF FORMULAIRE D'INSCRIPTION

Complétez lisiblement. Découpez le coupon et postez tel qu'indiqué.

NAME/NOM: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE/ÂGE: \_\_\_\_\_ TEL./TEL.: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS/ADRESSE: \_\_\_\_\_

No. & Street/N° et Rue

Apt./App.

City/Ville

Province

Postal Code/Code Postal

E-MAIL/COURRIEL: \_\_\_\_\_

INTERESTS/INTERETS: \_\_\_\_\_

pioneered by MonSFFA a few years ago when the club was involved in running ConCept.

The con included in the dealers' room several tables staffed by ConCept volunteers at which folk attending ConCept could drop off some of their old SF/F books, comics, action figures, toys, games, collectibles, etc., affix a price tag to the items, and put them up for sale on consignment during the course of the convention. ConCept's garage sale staff took care of selling the items for folk, collecting a nominal fee and percentage of sales for the service. As ConCept is cancelled this year, we thought we'd adapt the Sci-Fi Garage Sale for one of our meetings.

MonSFFen and other sci-fi enthusiasts are therefore invited to attend our October 28 "Halloween" meeting and bring with them any sci-fi merchandise they may wish to sell. We are offering two ways for you to sell your treasures: 1) rent table space for a flat fee of \$5 and staff your own booth during the course of the afternoon's meeting, profiting entirely from your sales, or 2) leave the selling to our staff while you enjoy the meeting for a 10 percent commission on sales. Fees and sales commissions collected by MonSFFA will be directed towards the club's operating expenses; this is a fund-raiser for the club.

The meeting/garage sale will take place from 1:00-5:00PM, Sunday, October 28, at the Hôtel Espresso, 1005 Guy Street (corner René-Lévesque), downtown Montreal. We'll be on the second floor. Set-up will take place shortly before the meeting, so arrive a little early if you are bringing in stuff to sell. There's still table space available; e-mail Cathy Palmer-Lister to reserve yours: Cathypl@sympatico.ca

We'll also be holding our usual mid-meeting raffle and, as always, have snacks and drinks available in exchange for the donation of a loonie or two. So remember to bring lots of change! And as Halloween is just days away, feel free to dress in spooky garb. There'll be a prize for the scariest costume!

### e-Impulse

We remind MonSFFen that Impulse is now officially an electronic publication. As a cost-saving measure, the club has discontinued production of the printed version of Impulse and now delivers the news bulletin to all members electronically (excepting those few who are not online and cannot receive the electronic version of the news bulletin, and for whom special printed issues are produced).

MonSFFA members who have been receiving Impulse in paper form via standard post have been shifted to the e-version. Upon the release of each issue of Impulse (approximately every month), a .pdf of the issue is e-mailed to each MonSFFA member. In addition, that latest issue, along with

back issues, may be downloaded as a .pdf from the Impulse page of the club's Web site ([www.MonSFFA.com](http://www.MonSFFA.com)).

### September Club Meeting

MonSFFA's September 23 meeting saw two of the afternoon's planned presentations regrettably scrubbed. Shortly before the meeting, we were advised by the scheduled presenters of their being, at the last minute, unavoidably indisposed. Fortunately, we were able to extend our third listed presentation beyond its original time allotment as presenters Josée Bellemare and Berny Reischl had on hand more than enough material.

Josée and Berny screened stills and video clips from some of sci-fi TV's many "one-season wonders", and provided brief synopses of the shows. Most of these, some dating back to the 1960s and '70s, were laughably ridiculous prime-time hopefuls for the poor quality of which predictably resulted in their cancellation after airing but for a single season or less. Some particular stinkers lasted for only a handful of episodes before the plug was pulled. Automan, a cheesy sci-fi actioner about a police officer and computer programmer who creates a holographic crime-fighting AI, ran for just 12 episodes—half a season—on ABC in the mid-'80s. Of the same era, NBC's Manimal aired even fewer episodes. This one was about a man with the ability to transform himself into any animal, a talent which he used in helping the police solve crimes. Other such gems highlighted included the atrocious Battlestar: Galactica follow-up, Galactica 1980, and The Man from Atlantis, featuring Patrick Duffy as a super-powered citizen of the fabled lost city with a goofy swimming technique who is recruited by a top secret research agency. Future Cop, meanwhile, was similar in concept to but predated RoboCop by several years, and was a rather poor interpretation of the idea. And as it was a silly sit-com, we might forgive Mr. Merlin its trespasses; the show saw the Arthurian wizard running a garage in modern day San Francisco!

On the other hand, there were those series that were quite good and quickly developed a solid core of devotees. Kolchak: The Night Stalker, Space: Above and Beyond, American Gothic, and Firefly were among the fondly remembered series cut short. But regardless of superior quality, critical acclaim, or a devoted following, such shows ultimately met the programmer's axe just as surely as did their less worthy cousins. Fans have long complained of network impatience with new shows that do not perform well enough out of the gate. A new series needs time to establish itself, grow its audience, they say. But show business is just that, a business. And with a lot of money on the line, networks rarely have time for such arguments. A show that doesn't attract a sufficient number of viewers, and thus advertising dollars, is not long for the TV sked, regardless of engaging storylines, top-notch acting, superior production values, or anything else! Occasionally, particularly notable series have managed to squeeze, perhaps, another half-season out of programmers, but in the final calculation, were still axed before they could really reach their stride. Some of these shows remain popular with fans years later, despite their premature demise, which often left storylines frustratingly unresolved.

Between the best and worst were many short-lived series that ranked well with MonSFFen, including comic book superhero shows The Flash and Birds of Prey, creepy Body Snatchers-like Invasion, demonic Brimstone and Point Pleasant, and X-Files spin-off The Lone Gunmen.

With a representative of the recent Montreal Comic-Con present to gather feedback, we discussed during the latter part of the meeting our impressions of the event (largely positive) and offered suggestions for improvements next year. We also touched on upcoming club events.

For their contribution to our September meeting, we extend thanks to Josée and Berny, and to all of the usual suspects. Those presentations that were cancelled will be rescheduled for another meeting.

### Get Well Soon

We send our best wishes to club VP and Impulse editor Keith Braithwaite, who is recovering from an attack of Bell's palsy which has left half of his face paralysed. In the large majority of such cases, we are given to understand that facial movement returns to normal within between a few weeks and a few months of affliction. Get well soon, Keith.

We are also hearing that recurrent Warp cover artist Marquise Boies has been a bit under the weather of late, and wish her a quick return to health, as well.

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### Visit MonSFFA on the Web / Visitez l'AMonSFF sur internet: [www.MonSFFA.com](http://www.MonSFFA.com)

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November/Novembre 2012 (Vol. 16, No./N° 10)

## NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, November 18  
1:00PM-5:00PM  
St-Francois Room  
Hôtel Espresso, 1005 Guy St.  
Downtown Montreal

### PROGRAMME

1:00PM

#### FAN FICTION AS AN INTRODUCTION

TO SF/F: Discussion on the question of whether fan-produced material (fan fiction, fan films, etc.) serves as a good entry point into the greater SF/F genre?

2:15PM

**BREAK/RAFFLE/CLUB BUSINESS:** We break for an appetizing nosh at the snack table and to hold our usual mid-meeting raffle, after which we'll cover club business, focusing mainly on meeting programming ideas for next year. Your input is welcome and encouraged!

3:30PM

**THE WORD IS GIVEN:** Game in which players are challenged to identify a SF/F novel or short story, movie, or television series given just a few related words.

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## Club's 2012 Christmas Dinner and Party

**SATURDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 8**  
Details to Follow Next Issue;  
Watch this Space!

## 2012 Christmas Dinner and Party

We are currently making plans for our 2012 Christmas Dinner and Party. We expect to be able to finalize these plans and give details at our November 18 club meeting. This holiday event is scheduled for Saturday evening, December 8, so keep that date open!

An official invitation will appear on the club's Web site and be published in the December edition of this news bulletin, scheduled to be released at the end of November.

## Membership Renewals

We don't want to sound like a broken record, here, but we must remind MonSFFen to *please* renew their club memberships *on time*, either at a club event, or via postal mail. We have noted that some 2012 renewals have come in a month or more late. Better late than never, of course, but remember that the club is funded primarily by the membership fees each of us pays annually, and that a steady cash flow is essential to the continued operation of the club. Incoming cash comes in large part from the regular monthly collection of annual membership fees.

Many of you pay your fees at club meetings, others at events at which MonSFFA is present, like conventions. As Montreal's local convention, ConCept, was cancelled this year and did not take place last month as usual, those who customarily renew their MonSFFA memberships at that event had not the opportunity to do so. To these folk, we ask that you please not further delay your fees payments! We remind you that you can make

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ARE DUE.

The Annual Membership Fees of  
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BOOM, Hendrik  
DUROCHER, Dominique  
GAREAU, Paul  
KENNEY, Daniel P.  
MOIR, L. E.  
MORROW, Gordon  
PELLEY, Lynda  
PETTIT, William S.  
WADSWORTH, Beulah

### Due This Month, November:

JANSSSEN, Steven  
KNAPP, Brian  
KNAPP, Cathy

### Due Next Month, December:

REISCHL, Bernard

Standard membership is only \$25 annually. We offer a family rate of \$40. Add \$10 to either of these to enjoy our premium "Platinum" membership level. Please complete the form below, include payment (cheque or money order made out to "MonSFFA"), and mail to:

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H7R 1Y6

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Complétez lisiblement. Découpez le coupon et postez tel qu'indiqué.

NAME/NOM: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE/ÂGE: \_\_\_\_\_ TEL./TEL.: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS/ADRESSE: \_\_\_\_\_

No. & Street/N° et Rue

Apt./App.

City/Ville

Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code/Code Postal \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL/COURRIEL: \_\_\_\_\_

INTERESTS/INTERETS: \_\_\_\_\_

your payments at our upcoming November 18 meeting, or send the club your cheque via Canada Post. (If you have already mailed us your renewal, we thank you for your continuing patronage.)

To know when your annual MonSFFA membership fees are due, refer to the expiration date marked on your membership card, the front page of Impulse (column, right), or the list of members whose fees are due posted at each club meeting.

MonSFFA's membership fees have not increased in years! \$25 remains the base individual rate for a year's membership in the club. That's a bargain at just pennies over \$2 per month! Family memberships are available at \$40, covering up to four people. Add \$10 to either of these rates to enjoy our special Platinum membership level.

### Sci-Fi Garage Sale Raises Funds for Club at October Meeting

Several MonSFFen took the opportunity to sell off some of their old sci-fi books, comics, collectibles and such at the club's Sci-Fi Garage Sale, which ran concurrently with MonSFFA's October 28 "Halloween" meeting. These folk offered several tabletops-full of their bargain merchandise to fellow MonSFFen during the course of the afternoon. The event succeeded in putting a few dollars in the pockets of some of our members, although many promptly spent said profits buying stuff from other vendors! As sponsor of the garage sale, meanwhile, the club raised a healthy stipend for its coffers in table rental fees and a cut of sales revenue.

The MonSFFA meeting itself featured, first, a fascinating and most illuminating hour on the forensic sciences employed by the modern police force to help solve crime. Club member Steven Janssen happens to work in the field, computer crime being his particular area of expertise, and spoke primarily of cyber crime-solving techniques, both real and as shown on television series like CSI. He compared authentic forensics methods in general with those often fancifully depicted on the many CSI-type television programs currently popular. One of the common errors portrayed on TV, for example, is the swiftness at which various forensic tests are conducted and a conclusion readily reached that seals the suspect's fate, usually over the course of a commercial break! These things take rather longer to unfold in the real world—weeks and months, and sometimes years, rather than hours or days.

In keeping with our Halloween theme, Keith Braithwaite followed the mid-meeting break with his presentation on the methods Hollywood filmmakers utilize to scare their audiences. He screened numerous clips from such sci-fi and horror films as *The Shining*, *The Thing*, *Alien*, *Jepers Creepers*, and *The Birds* to illustrate the careful and clever use of lighting, editing and pacing, and sound to frighten moviegoers.

As time was short, our planned discussion of fan fiction as an introduction to the greater SF/F genre was pushed to November's meeting.

Josée Bellemare and young Isis Redmond shared the prize we offered for scariest Halloween costume. Congratulations!

We thank in particular for their contributions to this meeting presenters Steven Janssen and Keith Braithwaite, and garage sale coordinators Cathy Palmer-Lister and Josée Bellemare.

### Disney Buys Lucasfilm

The Walt Disney Company's recent purchase of George Lucas' Lucasfilm makes the Mouse House an even more powerful popular entertainment juggernaut than it already was. The \$4.05 Billion deal gives Disney control of the lucrative Star Wars and Indiana Jones franchises, among other important film industry assets like Skywalker Sound and pre-eminent special effects studio Industrial Light and Magic. Disney announced concurrently with the news of its purchase that it will begin turning out new Star Wars films, one every few years, apparently, beginning with Episode 7 in 2015.

When first developing Star Wars, Lucas originally conceived of a three-trilogy epic, but after the release of *Revenge of the Sith*, the closing film of the second "prequels" trilogy, he seemed to abandon the idea of ever making episodes 7-9, preferring instead to tinker some more with the existing films and re-releasing the lot on Blu-Ray and in 3-D.

But now, as Lucas moves closer to retirement, he has decided to "pass Star Wars on to a new generation of filmmakers." He'll keep his hand in, however, as an advisor on the new movie.

Star Wars fans are cautiously optimistic at the prospect of Disney taking control of their beloved franchise, with most expressing excitement about impending fresh Star Wars adventures. Some worry, however, that the studio will imprint its puerile brand on the Star Wars universe while others counter that Lucas pretty much did that on his own with the introduction of the Ewoks, and especially with Jar Jar Binks! To be fair, Disney, which acquired Marvel Entertainment in 2009, has allowed the creative people there a free hand, resulting in the wildly popular and successful series of superhero movies that culminated in this year's *Avengers*, a \$1 billion-plus earner.

Disney also bought, in 2006, Academy Award-winning digital animation studio Pixar, which was founded in 1979 as The Graphics Group, an arm of Lucasfilm's Computer Division. Lucas later sold the animation studio to Apple founder Steve Jobs.

Meanwhile, Harrison Ford has reportedly stated that he'd consider reprising his role as Han Solo in the new film. Carrie Fisher, too, has suggested she'd be ready to return as Princess Leia. Presumably, the story would join our now aged heroes as they face some resurgent threat to Galactic peace years after the fall of the Empire depicted in *Episode 6: Return of the Jedi*. Their Force-gifted children would no doubt stand with them against the disciples of the Dark Side, just as Lucas had initially envisioned for his third trilogy.

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**MonSFFA's  
2012 CHRISTMAS  
DINNER AND PARTY**

**Saturday, December 8  
6:00PM, downtown**

IRISH EMBASSY PUB AND GRILL  
1234 rue Bishop (Guy Metro;  
two streets east of Guy, near corner  
Sainte-Catherine; tel.: 514-875-8777)

**MonSFFA's members, their  
families, and the club's many  
friends, are invited to join us in  
celebration of the festive season.  
Note that this year, both the  
dinner and party will be held  
at the same venue.**

**SPECIAL CHRISTMAS MENU**

*Choices include Prime Rib,  
Turkey, Maple-Glazed Salmon!*

**Price: \$20 plus taxes, 17% gratuity**

PLEASE NOTE: payment by cash or credit  
card only; debit cards not accepted

Reservations under name of  
Bernard Reischl/MonSFFA

***Dinner and Drinks • DJ • MonSFFA  
Christmas Raffles! • "Rewards Raffle"  
for volunteer members!***

***PLEASE NOTE:*** Circumstances  
have, regrettably, prevented us from  
organizing for our traditional seasonal  
charity this year. We are therefore  
asking individuals, in the spirit of the  
holiday, to give to a local food bank  
or Christmas toy drive.

**An SF/F Christmas**

The delightful pandemonium of the Christmas season includes, for many, the tradition of watching the numerous Christmas specials and perennial holiday movies that are broadcast on television in December. That got us to thinking about science fiction and fantasy movies in which Christmas is featured, and on the other hand, Christmas movies that feature manifest SF/F elements. Of course, when dealing with stories that involve a magical personage able to deliver gifts to every boy and girl in the world in the span of a single night by means of a sleigh pulled by supernaturally flight-capable reindeer, one has already most certainly entered the dominion of fantasy! More than a few Christmas movies, not surprisingly, feature the portly red-suited elf and his airborne caribou.

One of the best is *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947), in which a department store Santa turns out to be the genuine article and succeeds in restoring a sceptical 6-year-old girl's belief in the magic of Christmas.

But science fictional notions, too, make their way into the Santa Claus narrative, as in the 1984 film *The Night They Saved Christmas*, in which Santa's secrets include an Einsteinian contraption that slows time, allowing him to make all of his deliveries in that one night, and a cloaking device of sorts that prevents detection of "North Pole City."

Also released in 1984 was the horror/comedy *Gremlins*, in which a young boy receives a pet "Mogwai" named Gizmo for Christmas. A glass of spilled water and a few meals eaten after midnight later, and all hell breaks loose!

2007's *I Am Legend* is another film in which all hell breaks loose. It's Christmastime in Manhattan when a man-made viral outbreak occurs that quickly spreads worldwide, leaving Will Smith as one of the few uninfected human beings left on a planet populated by blood-thirsty vampires.

2009's *Silent Night, Zombie Night,*

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meanwhile, takes place in Los Angeles at Christmastime and centers on a police officer holed up with others, as a viral outbreak turns the good citizens of L.A. into zombies.

The horror genre, oddly, has tapped into Christmas on a few occasions. One of the first slasher flicks, the Canadian-made *Black Christmas* (1974), with Margot Kidder and Andrea Martin, tells the tale of a college sorority stalked by a demented serial killer during Christmas break. Inspired in part by a series of real-life murders that took place in Québec around Christmas, a remake was produced in 2006 and released on Christmas Day.

The 1984 cult favourite, *Silent Night, Deadly Night* (not to be confused with the above-mentioned *Silent Night, Zombie Night*) is about a young boy who witnesses the brutal murder of his parents by a man dressed as Santa Claus and grows up to become a killer himself. The film spawned four sequels and is, apparently, scheduled to be remade sometime soon.

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* features time-travelling ghosts, which we suppose qualifies it as both horror and science fiction. This Dickens holiday classic has been brought to the screen countless times, from the adaptations of the early 1900s to the definitive 1951 version starring Alastair Sim as Ebenezer Scrooge to the more recent 2009 edition featuring rubber-faced comedian Jim Carrey, who plays Scrooge and all three of the Christmas ghosts in spectacular performance-capture 3-D.

Carrey also starred in a big-screen adaptation of a small-screen holiday masterpiece. The 2000 film, however, is not quite as appealing as the 1966 Chuck Jones-directed animated TV special *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, featuring the sonorous voice of horror icon Boris Karloff. The Grinch and the Whos are arguably alien beings living on an alien world, despite that world's resting on a speck of dust in a clover flower in the TV special, or within the frozen crystal structure of a snowflake in the film.

Movies like *Scrooged* (1984) and *Christmas Cupid* (2010) are simply modern variations of *A Christmas Carol*. In *Scrooged*, Bill Murray plays a cynically cold-hearted and selfish television executive charged with producing a live Christmas Eve broadcast of *A Christmas Carol*. He is himself haunted by three ghosts who show him the error of his ways and so change his perspective for the better. Similarly, Christina Milian is career-focused L.A. publicist Sloane Spencer, who finds little time for her family and friends as the Christmas day premiere of a client's new movie approaches. But that client accidentally chokes on a martini olive and dies, only to return as a ghost, Jacob Marley-like, to tell Sloane of her imminent visit by three spirits who will offer her a chance at redemption.

There's a romantic angle thrown in that highlights Sloane's generally sad history with men over the years, particularly involving an ex-boyfriend who she unceremoniously dumped back in college, and who has just re-entered her life, but this is essentially another take on Dickens' timeless Christmas story.

This theme of redemption drives the 1998 Christmas movie *Jack Frost*, in which a musician (Michael Keaton) preoccupied with his career comes to realize that his push to succeed is keeping him from his wife and son. But while driving home from a gig through a winter storm to be with his family at Christmas, he crashes his car and is tragically killed. Magically returned to this mortal world as a snowman, he helps his son overcome the loss of his father and gets a second chance at being the kind of dad he never took the time to be when he was alive.

Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) has become a beloved Christmas tradition on TV. Jimmy Stewart stars as small-town businessman George Bailey, who finds himself in a grave financial pickle one Christmas Eve and contemplates suicide. Visited by his guardian angel, he allows that killing himself might not be the best solution to his problems in that his death would greatly sadden his family and friends. He supposes that it might have been better had he never been born in the first place, until the angel persuades him otherwise by showing him, in a chilling alternate-history sequence, what dismal lives his loved ones would have lived had he never been born.

*It Happened One Christmas*, a 1977 made-for-television movie starring Marlo Thomas, Wayne Rogers, and Cloris Leachman, is a gender-reversal remake of the Capra classic.

*Elf* (2003) is a fish-out-of-water comedy; Will Ferrell plays a man who, as an orphaned infant, was adopted by a family of elves working for Santa Claus at the North Pole. His oversized proportions, relative to the elves, and weak toy-making skills cause him to question his heritage. When he is told of his origins, he sets out to find his biological father, who works for a publisher of children's books in Manhattan. Hilarity ensues!

*Once Upon a Christmas* (2000) and *Santa Baby* (2006) each offer a story of Santa Claus' daughter. In the 2000 film, Kristin Claus works to move one family—a work-obsessed single dad and his two spoiled kids—from her father's Naughty list to his Nice list, lest the now not so jolly old elf, disillusioned by the swelling number of naughty children in the world, cancels Christmas! Former *Playboy* centerfold model Jenny McCarthy stars in the 2006 movie as a successful businesswoman running her own marketing firm who must return to the life she left behind at the North Pole and fill in for her pop, who has taken ill. She applies her business and marketing skills to the improvement of the whole Christmas operation. Both movies generated sequels, *Twice Upon a Christmas* in 2001 and *Santa Baby 2: Christmas Maybe* in 2009.

An earlier film, *Like Father, Like Santa* (1998) had a similar premise—a ruthless toy tycoon is secretly the son of Santa Claus, and travels to the North Pole to put down a coup attempt.

In *A Muppet Family Christmas* (1987), a television special shot in Toronto, Kermit and friends pay a surprise Christmas visit to Fozzie Bear's mother's farm. Muppets from *Sesame Street*, *The Muppet Show*, and *Fraggle Rock* are cast. And Jim Henson himself is featured in a cameo!

*The Man in the Santa Claus Suit* (1979) tells of how the lives of three different men are transformed when they don a magical Santa Claus costume rented to them by a mysterious shopkeeper.

We note that in *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (2005), Father Christmas is seen as a harbinger of the fantasy world of Narnia's liberation from the curse of the White Witch.

Father Christmas, the British Santa Claus, also is featured—well, in a manner of speaking—in Terry Pratchett's *Hogfather* (2006), a two-part TV movie adapting Pratchett's 20th Discworld novel. The *Hogfather*, who grants wishes to children and brings them presents on December 32nd, *Hogswatchnight*, is the Discworld equivalent of Father Christmas. The *Hogfather* has gone missing and Death must take his place while Death's granddaughter, Susan, attempts to find out what happened!

And finally, what would Christmas be without toys? And what would a movie about toys be without a nod to Christmas? The animated film *Toy Story* (1995) delivers that nod in its closing scene.

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*Impulse is put together monthly by Keith Braithwaite of behalf of MonSFFA and is available on MonSFFA's Web site courtesy Kurt Schmidt. Contact Keith in regards to this publication by any of the following means: In person at a MonSFFA meeting • E-mail: [keith1958@live.ca](mailto:keith1958@live.ca) • Voice mail: 450-692-8831 • Via the club's mailing address, to the attention of "Impulse": MonSFFA c/o 4456 Boul. Ste-Rose, Laval, Québec, Canada, H7R 1Y6*

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