

WARP 66

Winter 2007 ❄ Volume 21 ❄ 01

❄ *Josée Bellemare*

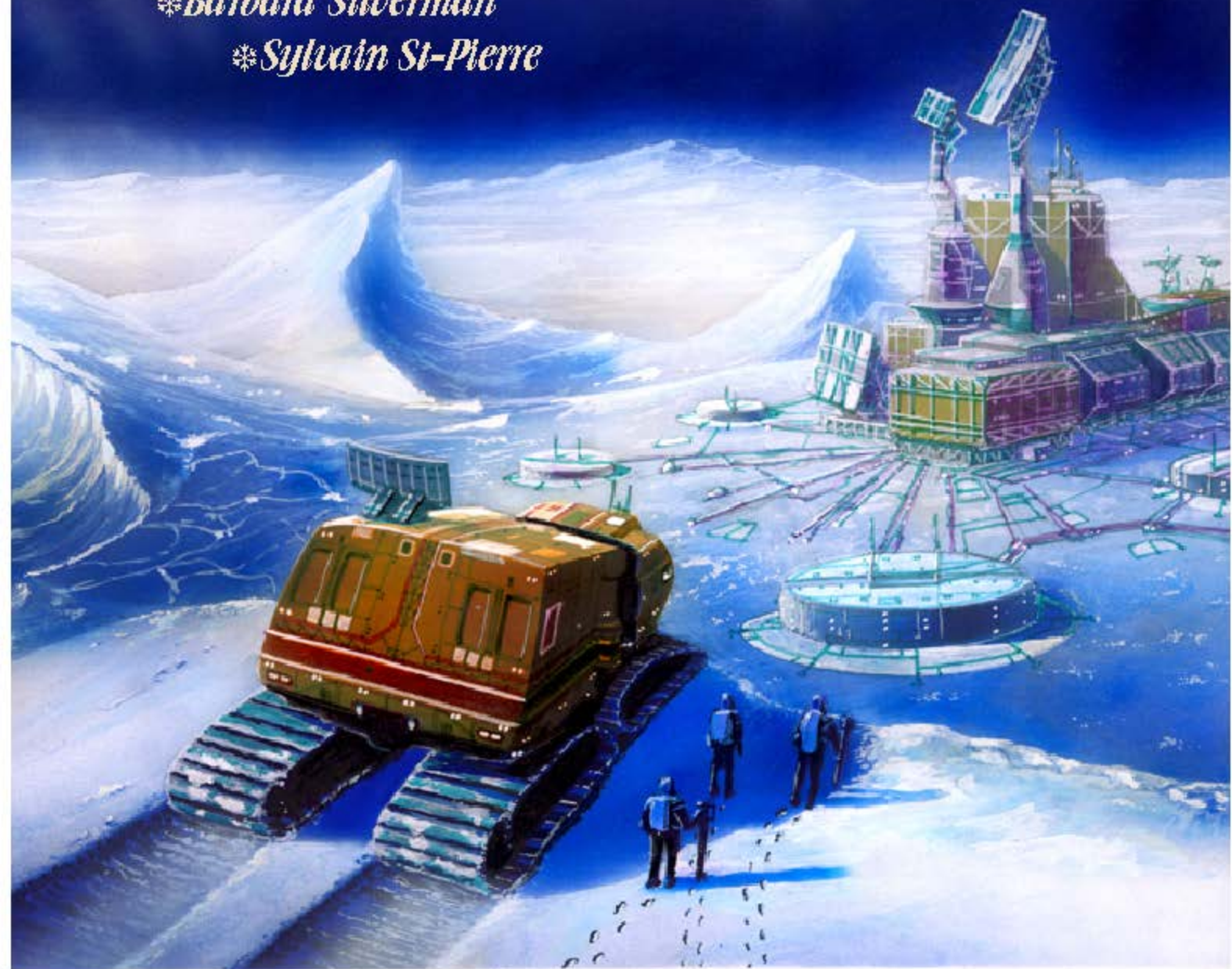
❄ *Mireille Dion*

❄ *Nikolai Krmp*

❄ *Fernando Novo*

❄ *Barbara Silverman*

❄ *Sylvain St-Pierre*



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All members in good standing! Please help us plan our activities!

On the Cover

Polaris: Explorers of the future
Original art by our own Jean-Pierre Normand!

Write to us:

MonSFFA

PO Box 1186
Place du Parc
Montreal, QC,
H2X 4A7

www.monsffa.com

President:

president@monsffa.com

editor:

cathyp1@sympatico.ca



MonSFFA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Except where noted, all MonSFFA meetings are held
Sundays at 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM
at the Days Inn, St-François Room,
1005 Guy Street, corner René Lévesque.

Programming is subject to change.



January 21, 2007

Elections

Fan Fiction – An exercise in Fan Fiction writing & Writing Workshop

Hidden Gems

February 18, 2007

Crime & Punishment

The Face Behind the Mask



March 25, 2007

Gerry Anderson Revisited

Sci-Fi Bake Sale – Finger Foods of Fandom



April 22, 2007

Guards, Ghouls & Stargate

Stargate: A 10-Year Retrospective



May 27, 2007

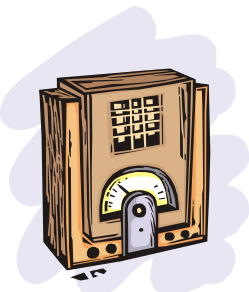
Win, Lose, or Draw

Sci-Fi Advertising



June 10, 2007

Fan Audio / Radio Drama



July 29, 2007

MonSFFA BBQ
(August 5, 2007 rain date)

The Real Fine Print: WARP is published quarterly by the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA), a non-profit organization of fans interested in sharing their love of science fiction and fantasy. The opinions expressed in WARP are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of MonSFFA or the editor. To reprint any article, please contact the writer, or ask the editor to pass on your request. The use of copyrighted material is generally discouraged, but it's hard to talk about Star Wars without stepping on toes; our apologies to the copyright holders, no serious infringement is intended. This is an amateur production, your tolerance is appreciated by your fans.

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MONSFANDOM

November 2006-January 2007 / 24



Dear MONSFFen:

I'm taking some holiday time to write a few locs here and there, and I am typing this up on a new Palm Tungsten E2 and keyboard. My Christmas was lots of fun, with some pretty nifty presents.

However, I am taking it slow and easy these days...I think Yvonne got the word out to some folks that I had a rather radical eye operation on December 5th, and it will take some time yet to heal. I am mostly monocular, and there is some pain from time to time. I look like Popeye on a bad day.

Anyway, here are some comments on Warp 65...hey, retirement age?

My, look at all those reprobrates on

the front cover, burning and dueling, and spreading strange ideas to children and adults alike. Hope you all had fun doing it!

I plan to put together a new convention list in the new year, but I see you've already got a good list, especially of Toronto conventions. I think our plans are to go to Ad Astra, and that may be it. Our interests have always been wide-ranging, but we've never really had the interest in anime or horror.

My letter...as you can see, I've continued with archiving my letters on my LiveJournal. I think there's about 120 of them, just from the second half of 2006. I think I'll continue to archive them in 2007.

Lots of interesting articles and story chapters here. I can't offer much more of a comment here, but I hope the good writing continues. Any club needs this kind of participation.

Clubs like the Bonaventure and SF Vortex. I know zines can be expensive to publish, but if there are .pdf versions of these clubs' zines available, I'd like to see them.

I had to wonder what the response to a furry con would be in Montreal, especially since I've never seen one in the Toronto area. Looks like it was

some fun, though, especially for those raunchy furrries, hm? I know some of the furrries in Toronto, and they probably had a fine time there.

Did Berny kill Alice yet? Hmm? Hmm? Us bloodthirsty types want to know!

Time to go, mostly because I've got to go to work tonight. Many thanks to all for making the club and zine work, and Yvonne and I wish you all the best in 2007, The Year of the Boar. See you then,

Yours,

Lloyd Penney

Hi, Lloyd!

Nice to hear from you, as always, and I hope you regain binocular vision soon!

About the zines: Vortex has decided not to publish anymore due to burnout. They will continue to e-mail members with interesting news as it happens. I have not been able to find a website for the Bonaventure.

Alice still lives, but has been threatened with being elected to MonSFFA's executive!

Yours in fandom,

Cathy

Hi Keith, Cathy, et al:

I am sending you a copy of the latest issue of Neo-opsis to introduce you to this magazine if you are not already familiar with it. Neo-opsis must now be the number one science fiction magazine in Canada since On Spec seems to have abandoned that role.

Please note the subtitle on the cover: "Science Fiction Magazine." On the other hand, On Spec—which formerly used the subtitle "Magazine of Speculative Fiction"—now calls itself "Magazine of the Fantastic." Reading through recent copies of On Spec, I could find very few stories that could be considered science fiction by the most generous definition.

The move by On Spec away from science fiction into fantasy—often a very dark fantasy—seems to me to indicate a trend among magazines, especially those on the Internet.

There's a little self-promotion in this, too. I have a story in this issue of Neo-opsis.

Les Lupien
Brossard, QC

Hi, Les!

Congratulations on having your story published in Neo-opsis! As it happens, I am familiar with both magazines, and I am sorry to hear that On Spec is moving so far from its roots.

Keith has promised to bring Neo-opsis to our January 21st meeting, and I look forward to reading your story.

Fans unfamiliar with Neo-opsis and On Spec might want to check out their respective websites:

Neo-opsis: <http://www.neo-opsis.ca/>

On Spec: <http://www.onspec.ca/>

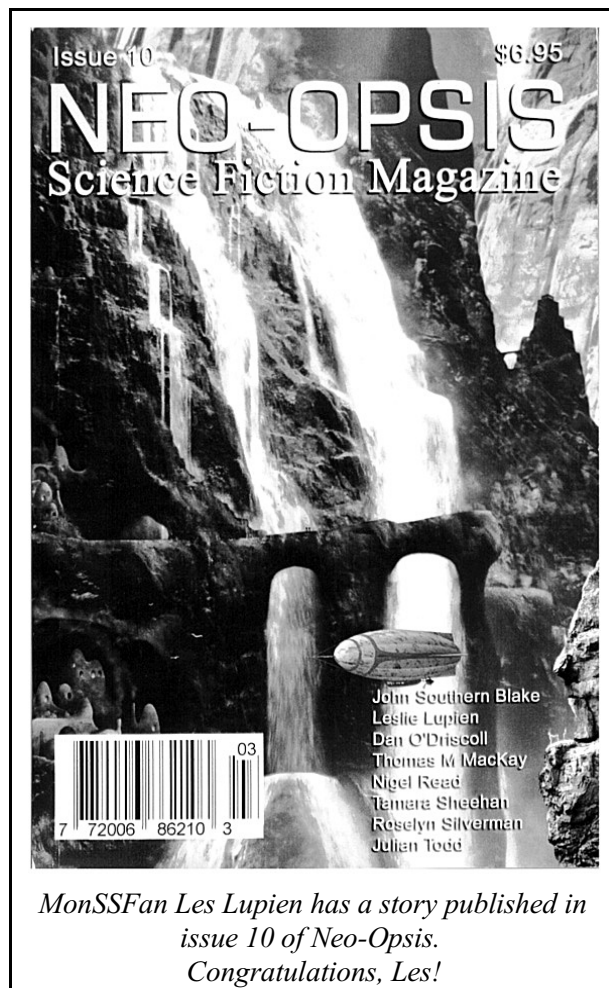
Yours in fandom,
Cathy



MonSFFA Person,

I'm wondering if you would mind sending along the enclosed to Georges T. Dodds, who does book reviews for Warp. Perhaps it could be put in an envelope with other correspondence for him. Or maybe he comes into your offices or attends meetings.

Mr. Dodds wrote a review of my novel, The Stars of



Axuncanny, for the SF Site, and the enclosed is a letter thanking him. I tried sending it in care of the SF Site in Ottawa and someone there apparently wrote in the Ste-Ann-de-Bellevue address for forwarding. However, the letter was returned to me by the post office. And so now I'm trying to get it to him through you.

With much thanks,

David Simms
Berryville, VA, USA

Hi, David!

Your letter arrived late – very, late! Looks like we are still having problems with Canada Post. I'm surprised they couldn't find Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, though. They did recently issue a Macdonald College postage stamp!!

Georges is one of our members and Keith tells me he has forwarded your letter. Let's hope it get there this time!

Yours in fandom,
Cathy



Paw Prints in the Sand

What do ibises, cats, bulls, and crocodiles have in common? Answer - they were all part of the animal cults and animal worship of ancient Egypt. All were mummified after death, all had burial sites dedicated to them.

Proof of animal cults, dating back to the fourth millennium BC., have been found at such sites as Badari, Naqada, Maadi and Heliopolis. Here gazelles, dogs, cattle, monkeys and rams were buried with great care and lavishly provided with grave goods.

Though existing from predynastic time, animal cults become most popular during the Late and Ptolemaic periods, from around 664 – 30 BC. Each town had its own sacred animal which lived a pampered life in and around the temples and religious centres.

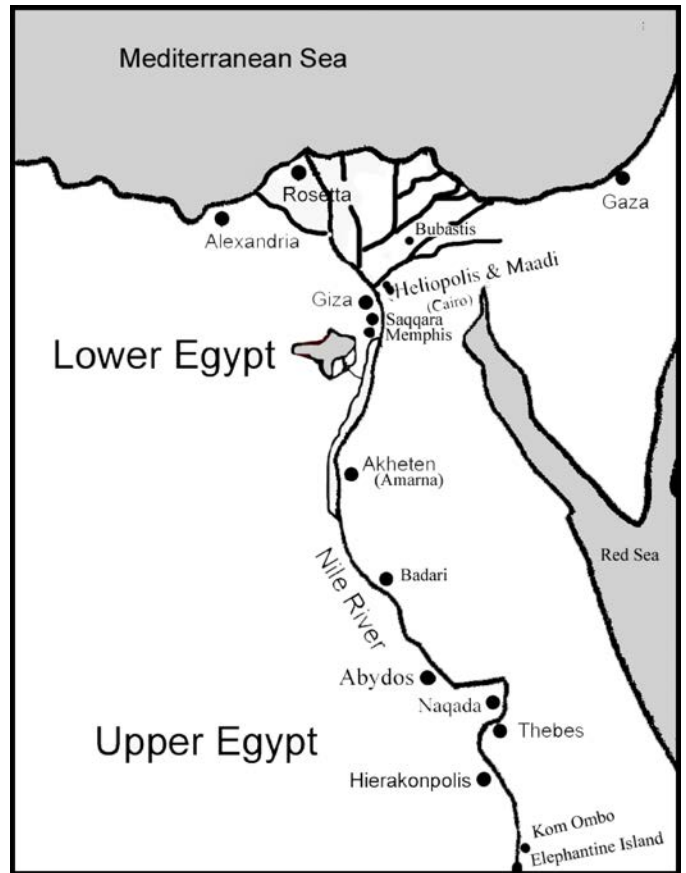
Rarely worshipped as gods themselves, these animals were considered to be a manifestation of the gods, a vehicle, or abode, through which the gods could make known their will and, in turn, the faithful could demonstrate their devotion to the god.

The Apis bull of Memphis was thought to be a manifestation of Ptah, the ram of Mendes was connected to Osiris-Re and the ram of Elephantine was supposed to be the manifestation of Khnum. Throughout Egypt there are vast necropolises containing millions of mummified animals – cats at Bubastis, rams at Elephantine, crocodiles, snakes, falcons and ibises at Kom Ombo, while at Abydos there are ibises and falcons. The catacombs of North Saqqara are believed to hold four million mummified ibis.



Next to the Apis bull, one of the most popular cults was that of Bastet or Bast. Considered to be the daughter, or sometimes the sister and consort of Re, later on she became the wife of Ptah. Originally she was a fierce, vengeful goddess portrayed as a lioness, symbolizing the warmth of the sun or the rage of the sun god's eye. From around 1000 BC she became more peaceful and benevolent, taking on the shape of a cat. Looked upon as the goddess of fertility, sex and love she protected her devotees from disease and evil spirits. Her principal place of worship was

Bubastis where thousands of mummified cats were dedicated to her, and in her name cats were loved and respected. The cult reached its height from 660 – 30 BC



and became so revered, that killing a cat was an offence punishable by death.

Today's Egypt might not have room for animal cults, but there is one place where once again dogs, cats, donkeys and birds are treated like royalty – SPARE, the Society of the Protection of Animal Rights in Egypt. Officially registered in September 2001, it was started in 2000 by Amina Abaza and her husband Raouf when they rented a small portion of land on the Saqqara Road 20 minutes from downtown Cairo. Starting out as dog shelter it was the first registered animal shelter in Egypt. Here animals of all sizes can find shelter within its doors. Not considered gods, they are nevertheless treated as such.

Thanks to SPARE, yesterday, today and tomorrow are linked by paw prints in the sand. 🐾



Crocodile Mummy

Christmas Scenes

Josée Bellemare

Doctor Who

Set a day or two after "Christmas Invasion".



The Doctor and Rose had enjoyed a quiet dinner with Mickey and Jackie. During the night, as everyone else was sleeping, the Doctor was thinking. After all that happened he wanted to do something for them to make up for the past couple of days.

Carols were playing on the radio when he was inspired. He spent the rest of the night planning the details. It was going

to be perfect.

In the morning they unwrapped their presents and the Doctor told everyone that they would be taking a trip after dinner.

"Where are we going?"

"Forget where, I want to know when?" Mickey asked.

"You'll all have to wait until this evening. It's all planned. The TARDIS wardrobe even has your costumes picked out in your sizes."

"Even yours?"

"Yes Rose, for once I will make an exception and dress for the occasion."

"This I gotta see."

"And so you will, tonight."

The rest of the day was spent watching various news and Christmas specials on the T.V. After dinner the Doctor ushered everyone into the TARDIS.

"The changing room is the second door on the left for the ladies and the third door on the right for Mickey and myself. We'll meet up in the control room in half an hour.

The men were ready first, Rose and her mother followed not long after.

"So where are we going?"

The Doctor pushed buttons and levers and the TARDIS whirred to life for a few minutes and settled down.

"So, where are we?"

"St-Nicolas Church, Oberndorf, Austria, 1818."

"What's so special about this place and time?"

They walked out in the snow and the Doctor led the way to a small church.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are at the world premiere of *Silent Night!*" *

Charmed

It was a few days before Christmas at the Halliwell manor and the sisters were putting the finishing touches on the decorations.

It was the first Christmas as a couple for Paige & Henry and Pheobe & Coop.

So much had happened in the past year, the family was looking forward to celebrating.

The tree was finished and the mantel was decorated with stockings with everybody's name on them. Piper had been cooking for days, getting ready for company.

Coop and Pheobe were coming down the stairs.

"Okay, second floor all done."

"Mistletoe" Paige orbited the last of the decorations in place, just in time for Pheobe and Coop to make use of it.

"Come on you two, break it up."

"Hey, next to Valentine's, Christmas is the busiest time of the year for Cupids."

On Christmas Eve the family was getting together for dinner.

They were all around the table, the sisters and their husbands, the boys and Victor. For some reason the ladies were eating more than usual.

"Take it easy girls, there's enough food for everybody. You'd think you were eating for two."

The sisters stopped chewing and looked at each other then looked at their husbands with a smile of anticipation on their faces.

The men hugged their wives and Victor laughed.

"*Merry Christmas!*" *

Smallville

It was Christmas Eve and Oliver Queen was going to the Kents later that night but first he had someplace to go that afternoon.

He was waiting for Lois with a surprise for her. Just then she walked out of the newspaper office and got in the car.

"So where are you taking me that's so secret?"

"Memorial Hospital. And no, I'm not sick, we're visiting someone."

"How sweet of you."

They got to the hospital and Oliver got a bag out of the back seat. When they got in they were met by the hospital administrator.

“Mister Queen, I can’t tell you how we appreciate what you’re doing for the children.”

“Children?”

“Lois, you’re going to help me pass out toys to sick kids. Now you and I are going to get in costume.”

“Don’t tell me you’re Santa?”

“No, I found someone else to play Santa. You and I are going to be elves.”

He pulled green costumes out of his bag.

“First Robin Hood and now this. What is it with you and green tights?”

Oliver just laughed. *

Stargate

SG1 was getting ready for another mission. The M.A.L.P. had shown that it was winter around the Stargate so the team members were putting on cold weather gear.

“As far as we can tell, it’s the beginning of winter. There’s about 60 centimetres of compacted snow with a layer of loose powder fresh from last night. The sky looks clear for the next few days.”

“Thanks for the information, General. We’ll bring you back a snowball.”

“You do that. SG1, you have a go.”

The team went through the gate and on the other side, found a view to take their breath away. Forests with snow covered trees and ice capped mountains.

“Okay people, let’s check this place out.”

They were making their way across the clearing when they heard something.

“Colonel Mitchell, I could swear I’m hearing sleighbells.”

“I, too, hear them. The noise is coming from the treeline.”

Sure enough, someone in a horse drawn sleigh was coming towards them.

“Welcome strangers. Come, I will take you to our village.”

“How did you know we would be here?”

“A hunting party found your machine yesterday and we were waiting for your arrival. Come, you can warm yourselves up and talk to our people. I’m sure you have many questions.”

“Sounds good to me. Okay team, let’s go. By the way, I’m Colonel Cameron Mitchell, Colonel Samantha Carter, Dr Daniel Jackson and Tealc.”



“Colonel Mitchell, I could swear I’m hearing sleighbells.”

They all got in the sleigh.

“My name is Marcus. You are from earth, are you not?”

“Yes we are. How did you know?”

“Our ancestors are also from earth. They were brought here 1500 years ago from many different lands by Nicolas.”

“Nicolas?”

“He was a Holy Man and one of the Ancient Ones. He ascended not long after bringing us here. His spirit still watches over us and protects us from enemies. As soon as someone comes through the Stargate or flies into orbit, he knows if they are good or evil.”

“Yes. You’re in luck, we are celebrating our Festival of Light. Many of our ancestors had celebrations of some kind or another at this time of year so we combined them all into one Holiday.

“People, we have visitors from our ancestral homeworld and Nicolas has welcomed them. Let us do the same.”

The crowd cheered.

“Feel free to walk around the village, talk to the people. They must have as many questions for you as you do for them. You are the first visitors we’ve had from earth since we’ve been here.”

The team spent the rest of the day walking around, meeting the people. Just before the big party SG1 got together to compare notes.

“Okay people, what have we got? Daniel?”

“The people here have excellent written records. Their ancestors came from all over our planet: Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America. It was difficult at first but they managed to all come together to form one community.”

“Colonel Carter?”

“They get visitors every so often, from different planets. As Marcus said, this Ancient seems to know if their intentions are hostile or not. If hostile, they are automatically sent back from wherever they came from. The others are welcomed as friends.”

“Indeed, Colonel Mitchell, I have been told that over the years, Goa’uld invasions have been turned back, and recently a Prior of the Ori was turned away without any trouble.”

“So, let me get this straight, the historical figure we know as Saint Nick is actually an Ancient. He brought these people here a millennia and a half ago, has ascended, but keeps on protecting the planet and he really does know if you’re naughty or nice.”

“It would appear so, Colonel Mitchell.”

“This is going to make quite a report.”

“Merry Christmas Sir.” *

The Perfect Gift!

The Fernster

All through the house, nothing was still, not even the mice!

A jolly fat man was checking his long list and ticked off the name James T. Kirk once, and then he stepped into his magical device with a smile. With a pop and a flash, he vanished from sight! Oh, what wonders will he see?

“There he is! Why he looks so cute, with his curly brown hair and freckled face,” said old Saint Nick to himself.

Through the busy store, holding his mother’s hand, strolled little James, eyes wide open with awe. Toys, toys and more toys were all about in this place! His mom spoke to him and said, “Don’t wander off too far, JT, and don’t touch the toys!” and released his hand. As she turned to the sales person, James wandered off slowly, his eyes gazing around at all the toys before him. Toy Soldiers, Monopoly Games, Magical Flutes, Little Green Men, and hundreds more were all about.

“So what shall it be I wonder.... Will he pick the nice football, or a green coloured kite?” wondered the jolly fat man.

Slowly James moved about the toy department, and suddenly his eyes fixed upon a thing of beauty. A shining red tricycle with blue ribbons on the handle bars! He gazed at the toy, and wished it was his! Oh what wondrous trips he could take with this beautiful tricycle! He looked for his mom, but she was nowhere in sight, he had wandered off too far! James began to feel fear, was he lost? Did his mom leave him alone in this big place all by himself? The dream of his tricycle was quickly replaced with the fear of a 5 year

old of being lost from his mom!

“Here he is Madame!” said the store clerk to his mom, having spotted the lost young boy in the toy department! “JT come here,” said his mom, taking him by the hand. “Come along, we are leaving the store!” she said and James’ dream vanished from his mind as he followed his mom home.

Meanwhile, old Saint Nick smiled and checked the name James T. Kirk a second time on his long list! He smiled and with a push of a tiny button, and with a pop and a flash, he vanished from sight!

Upon his return, the jolly fat man stepped out of his magical device and smiled to the head elf

“Prepare a Shiny Red Tricycle with Blue Ribbons on the handle bars for our friend James T Kirk,” and with his knowledge of the future, he smiled again and said “and have the name Enterprise printed on it!” and with a jolly chuckle he looked at the next name on his long list.

So the jolly fat man checked off the name Buck Rogers once, and then stepped into his magical device with a smile. With a pop and a flash, he vanished from sight! Oh, what wonders will he see this time? *



Use your MonSFFA membership card when you buy your own perfect gift, and SAVE!!

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<http://www.legendsactionfigures.com>

MÉLANGE MAGIQUE: 15% off all merchandise (1928 St-Catherine West)

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PREPARING FOR NIPPON 2007

Part Ichi (One)

Sylvain St-Pierre

When I started writing these lines, I had just received the third Nippon Progress Report and realized that there was less than a year left before the 65th World Science Fiction Convention in Yokohama. Now, after many delays, there is less than nine months to go. YIKES! I intend to attend, and firmly believe in not waiting until the last minute to prepare. I have found that getting ready well in advance is a good policy, and it is no doubt an even better one when travelling to such a distant and exotic country as Japan.

Let's see, what should I consider?

When should I go? Hmm... The convention itself is from August 30th to September 3rd. According to my calendar, that's Thursday to Labour Day Monday, the traditional Worldcon date. I checked, because I knew that Worldcon committees are starting to look at alternative dates to get better rates. As it turns out, Labour Day is not even a holiday in Japan but it will be handy for the many North American fans that are expected.

I have wanted to visit Japan for ages, and would be a fool not to plan for a few extra days. Should I go before or after the con? A quick Internet check of average temperatures reveals that this area is quite muggy in August; so if I want to increase my chances to be comfortable, I should go sightseeing after the con. In addition, the Progress Report mentions that a fanish couple plans to organize a post-con tour if enough people are interested. How convenient! Another check: Ken Smookler and Alice Colody at alice.colody@sympatico.ca. They're Canadians, even better! I quickly sent them an e-mail, and later received confirmation that I am not alone in wanting to go and that the tour will indeed take place. Banzai!

This confirms that reading the Progress Report from cover to cover is also good policy, for it has plenty of information about where to go and what to do. Japanese fans are obviously well aware that this is going to be a novel experience for most of their visitors, and they are doing their best to make things easier.

While it is still a bit too early to decide exactly where I will stay, I have already bought an excellent tour guide and there are numerous enticing places, within easy reach of Yokohama, that have grabbed my attention.

Should I still brush up on Japan? Of course! I have already gathered a few useful details, but no doubt that can be improved. Things like knowing that credit cards are far less widely accepted over there than in the West, so it's a good idea to bring plenty of cash and traveller's cheques. What else? Meals tend to be expensive in the Land of the Rising Sun, but there are affordable eateries in department stores and around train stations, which are found everywhere. I am not too worried about eating native style: I love Japanese food and am quite dextrous with chop-sticks.

How about learning Japanese? It would be of course tremendously useful, even at a very basic level. But my first attempts revealed that it is not an easy language for a Westerner, no matter how many anime series I've seen. Pronunciation is a breeze, but the grammar is hard to figure. So I'll try to get at least a few key words and sentences right, will bring a good dictionary and hope that I will not insult anybody's mother when asking for the nearest bathroom.

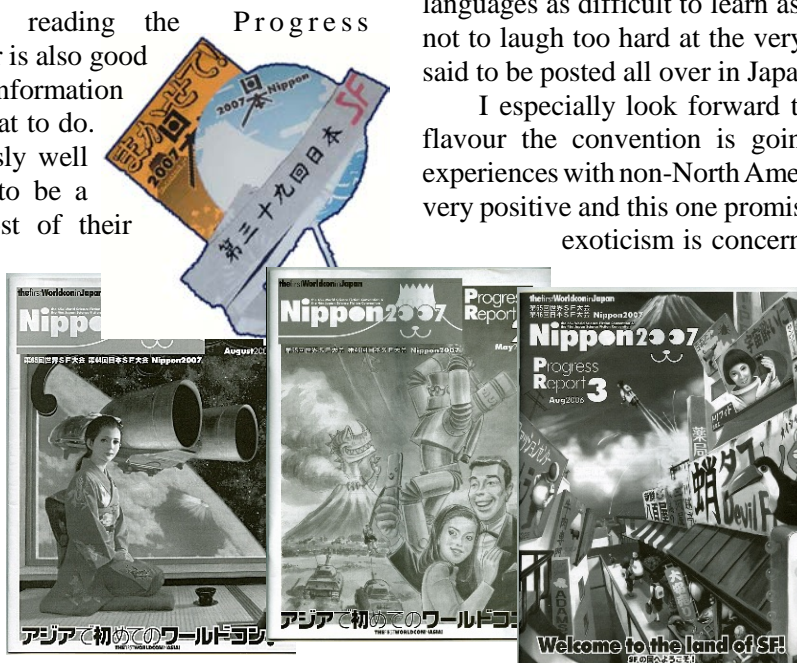
Language should not be much of a problem during the convention itself: according to Nippon's Web site (<http://www.nippon2007.org/>) the event will be held mostly in English, with plenty of translation available. There is also mention of the fact that a new vocal translator device will be introduced in Japan "in the next few months", but it will probably be quite expensive and almost certainly not too accurate at first.

I am told that Japanese people find our Western languages as difficult to learn as we do theirs, so I will try not to laugh too hard at the very strange English which is said to be posted all over in Japan.

I especially look forward to seeing how much local flavour the convention is going to have. So far, my experiences with non-North American worldcons have been very positive and this one promises to top them all as far as exoticism is concerned. Their bidding period

promotional material – custom fans and headbands – was already quite colourful, and I really like their Progress Report covers. I will try to keep you informed on further developments. ✨

Learn more about Nippon 2007 from their website: <http://www.nippon2007.org/>



Sunnydale Witch Meets the Charmed Ones

Josée Bellemare

The car drove up to the manor. "1329 Prescott street. This is it, the Halliwell manor"

"Are they really more powerful than you are?"

"Individually, I don't know, but when they harness the power of three, as the Charmed Ones they're the most powerful witches on the planet."

"Wow"

The driver was a red head in her late twenties and the navigator was a brunette a few years younger. Both ladies got out of the car and walked up the steps to the front door. Seconds after they rung the door bell a man in his mid thirties answered.

"Can I help you ladies?"

"Hello, you must be Leo Wyatt. We'd like to speak to Piper Halliwell please. I have a letter of introduction from the London coven."

"Why don't you come in."

Just then Piper walked down the stairs. "What can we do for you?" Piper led everyone to the sun room where they all sat down.

"Ms Halliwell, it's an honour to meet you. I've heard a lot about you. My name is Willow Rosenberg and this is my partner Kennedy. I have a letter of introduction from the London coven. It will explain why we're here." Willow handed Piper the letter who started reading with Leo reading over her shoulder.

"According to this, part of an artifact was recently found in San Francisco when a construction crew was digging out the foundation for a new building project."

"When all three pieces come together and the right spell is said, the statue comes to life and does its master's bidding. If that happens, only a counter spell can stop it. It can't be vanquished."

"So why did you come to us?"

"Because we need the Charmed Ones' help. First, one piece of the statue is in the hands of demons and two, the spell to bring the statue to life is in a book that was kept at Magic School, which means that it's more than likely they know the spell already."

"What do you think the Charmed Ones can do?"

"Leo can help me find not just the spell to activate the Golem but the one to stop it as well. I'm also going to need help identifying the demon that holds the artifact and vanquishing him."

"That's all well and good but what's your part in all this?"

"That's a cheap shot." Kennedy spoke out.

"No, it's okay Kennedy, that's fair. I'll do whatever I can. I am a powerful witch in my own right and Kennedy is a Slayer. I'm sure that if we pool our resources we can get the job done."

"Alright, let me call my sisters and we'll see what we can find out."

"If you can give me the name of the statue I can go to Magic School to do some research."

"It's called the Golem of Astaroth."

"Okay, I'll see what I can find out."

"Not much I can do until the fighting starts so is there something else I can do in the meantime?"

Just then a little boy came running in the room. "Mommy, I'm hungry. Can I have a cookie?"

"In a minute sweetheart, Mommy has company."

Wyatt turned to look at Willow and Kennedy who smiled back at him. "Nice ladies, good magic."

The adults in the room all looked at each other, then back at Wyatt. "If my little guy says you can be trusted that's good enough for me."

"Is it true he's the next King Arthur? Did he really pull Excalibur from the stone? Could I possibly see the sword?"

"In order, yes he is, yes he did and maybe later."

"Mommy, cookie."

"Tell you what, why don't I keep an eye on the boys while you do your magic thing."

"Alright. Wyatt can show you where the kitchen is."

Kennedy got up and took Wyatt's hand. "Okay little fella, let's get some cookies for you and your brother. I hear your mom is a great cook."

"Why don't the rest of us check out the Book of Shadows. My sisters can join us when they get here."

The witches went upstairs to talk magic, comparing spells and potions and Kennedy settled down to play with the boys. About an hour later, Phoebe and Paige orbed into the attic to see Piper and Willow working on a vanquishing potion.

Meanwhile, Kennedy was talking to Wyatt. "I hear you have a really nice sword. Maybe you can show it to me before I leave."

"Okay"

"You know, if you have a couple of toy swords, I could show you some really cool moves."

Wyatt smiled, held out his hands and two plastic swords orbed in.

"We can't tell your mom or dad about this. You know parents don't like it when you play with sharp things so it'll be our secret, okay."

"Okay"

"We start by placing our feet this way..."

So for the rest of the morning Kennedy taught Wyatt how to safely use a sword. In spite of his age, he proved to be an excellent student and learned quickly. "Giving the next King Arthur his first sword fighting lesson. How's THAT for bragging rights. Remember Wyatt, our secret and if your mom or dad sees you practising, you tell them you saw those moves on TV. Maybe I can give you another lesson next time I'm in town. Now hide the toy swords before your mom comes back down."

By lunch time they were all sitting around the table comparing notes. Leo had been able to find out a lot at Magic School. "The demon that holds one piece of the statue is called Logar. He's a mid level demon. He's ambitious and hoping to make a name for himself in the underworld."

"So one piece is in the hands of this Logar, one piece is protected by the Coven and the third piece is presently being examined by experts at a local museum."

"So we have to get the piece from the museum and the one in Logar's possession."

"What will you do when you get the pieces?"

"Take them back to the Coven in London. They have a special vault where they keep potentially dangerous artifacts. They will be safe there"

"So tonight we break into the museum and take back the artifact."

"Can't I just orb it to us?"

"No, you can't. The level of magical energy the piece have protects them from outside magic. The animation and deactivation spells only tap into the magic already there."

"Okay, so back to breaking in. We'll pack extra vanquishing potions in case we run into some demons."

"What about Logar's piece?"

"When we have the piece from the museum he'll come to us and we can vanquish him then."

"So what do we do until tonight?"

"Would you like to visit Magic School?" Leo offered.

Willow and Kennedy looked at each other, a look of childlike anticipation on their faces. "Really? We could do that?"

"I don't see why not. We can go right after lunch if you like. I'd be honoured to have the two of you as guest speakers: Willow could speak to the spell casting class and Kennedy could give a demonstration for the self-defense class."

"We'd love to."

"In the meantime finish your plates, I made chocolate cake for desert."

"Let me guess, Devil's food and you want us to help you defeat it?"

"Of course, what else would you expect from a witch?" They all laughed and enjoyed the rest of the meal.

Around 1:30 they all left for Magic School, dropping the boys off at the daycare.

Willow's presentation for the spell casting class was a great success and Kennedy's demonstration with various weapons impressed the students. The tour of the school had both ladies speechless until the got to the library. "Oh my god, this place is incredible. Look at all these books. Giles would love it here."

"Who's Giles?"

"Rupert Giles, he was the librarian at the high school back in Sunnydale. When we blew up the high school he opened up a magic supply shop in town. He's also on the Council of Watchers."

"Wait a minute, you blew up the high school?"

"Graduation ceremonies. It was the only way to stop the mayor who had ascended to a giant snake demon."

"And watchers? What's that?"

"They're a secret society of men and women who keep track of supernatural and magical happenings in the world. They also guide and train slayers and potentials."

"What are slayers?"

"Vampire slayers. In every generation there's only one and she has to die for the next one to gain her powers."

"Until Willow found a way to activate all the potentials at once, all over the world. Those of us training in Sunnydale were able to defeat the First and it's army. Once we has stopped enough of the vampires to stop them from escaping, Spike took care of the magical clean up with the help of a special amulet. The caves collapsed and the whole town fell in. It's now Sunnydale Canyon. Officially it was caused by an earthquake. Since then, they rebuilt the Council and some of us have been going around the world locating slayers, explaining to them what they are and training them to use their powers."

"Sounds like you guys keep busy. Don't you ever want a normal life? Settle down, have a family?"

"I grew up over a hellmouth. Fighting things that go bump in the night is all I know. In Sunnydale, surviving the supernatural was a way of life. As for a family, I have friends: the original Scooby gang, and as long as Kennedy and I are together, I'm happy."

Willow took Kennedy's hand, squeezed it and smiled. "Mind you, when we've trained enough slayers to carry on maybe we will settle down in one spot."

They all went back to the manor. "I figure we should hit the museum sometime after 11 tonight. I suggest we have dinner then go over to P3 to set up an alibi, just in case. At eleven, Willow, Paige and I orb to the museum and get the artifact while Kennedy, Phoebe and the guys hang out at the club for appearance's sake." "Sounds good to me." Willow said.

"Do the two of you have a place to stay while in town?"

"We had planned to stay at a motel not too far from your place."

"It would be better if you stayed at the manor during this operation. It'll be safer and more practical. You can use the guest bedroom."

"Okay, we can get our travel bags out of the car. Thank you for your hospitality."

"No problem."

While Piper went to the kitchen to start dinner, Leo shoed Willow and Kennedy to the guest room and Phoebe and Paige went back to their own places to get ready for later that night.

At Phoebe's loft, she and Coop were getting ready. "So we're supposed to give your sisters cover while they pull off a museum heist" Coop said chuckling.

"That's about it" she answered, laughing as well.

"I have to say, you and your sisters lead a very interesting life." Coop gave Phoebe a quick kiss and finished getting ready.

Meanwhile Paige and Henry were also getting ready.

"Do I really want to know why you need an alibi tonight?"

"As a police officer you're better of not knowing the details. Just know that it involves magic and that's it's for the greater good." Henry just shrugged his shoulders.

They all arrived at P3 within a few minutes of each other and settled down at their usual table. The evening went well. The band was good and the couples danced. Around 11 Piper, Paige and Willow excused themselves for a few moments. They went out the back door, put on black jackets and Paige orbed them in the museum.

Piper dug into her bag and pulled out latex gloves. "Here, put these on, we don't want to leave fingerprints."

"Sounds like you've done this before."

"Sorry, that's classified."

Paige pointed at the locking mechanism of the storage room. "Unlock" The door glowed blue and a click was heard. Willow went to the storage room computer and started typing. "Here, row 3, second shelf, bin C. Now to erase proof of existence from the computer... There, all done."

"You're pretty good with a computer. Ever consider making a living at it?"

"That's classified." Willow smiled and Piper nodded her head.

"I have it." Paige came back with part of a statue.

They left the room, relocked the door and orbed back to the alley behind the club. They took off their jackets and went back to the table. The sisters agreed to meet up at the manor the next morning. Paige and Henri left first, then Coop and Phoebe. Willow and Kennedy had one last dance before leaving with Piper and Leo. When they got back Piper positioned the crystals around the manor and they all went to bed.

Not everybody rested that night. In the underworld demons were plotting.

"It is as you said Logar: the Sunnydale witch went to the Charmed Ones for help and now they have the third piece of the Golem of Astaroth. What do you plan to do?"

"I plan to take her partner hostage. When the witches come to rescue her the manor will be defenceless. While one team is keeping them busy here, I will go and get the artifact. Once I have all three pieces, not even the Charmed Ones will be able to stand in my way. It's almost dawn at the Halliwell's. My informants tell me that the slayer runs several miles every morning before breakfast. That will be the perfect time to grab her. Get a team ready and remember, she has the strength and training of a slayer: she will put up a fight."

"As you order Logar" The demon shimmered out and Logar walked over to an altar and picked up his piece of the statue.

On the surface, Kennedy was doing a few stretching moves before starting on her run, then she started jogging around the block. As soon as she was out of sight of the manor the demons made their move.

In the underworld the demons put Kennedy in a magical cage that was not only orb proof but gave our a shock when mortals touched the bars. "Now we wait for the witches."

It was Willow that first got worried. "I wonder where she is, she never takes this long for her morning run."

"Maybe we can scry for her using a personal item."

Willow reached for a medallion around her neck and opened it. "Use this. It's a lock of her hair. She has one of mine in a matching medallion. What? We may kick demon butt on a regular basis but we're still romantics."

"The crystal is in the attic."

Piper went upstairs with Willow while Leo gave the boys their breakfast. As Willow was twirling the crystal over the city map Phoebe and Paige orbbed in.

"Hi, who are you looking for?"

"Kennedy. She's missing. But I can't seem to find her. It's as if she's not in the city."

"Do you think demons took her?"

"Could be. Makes sense, they could be holding Kennedy hostage in exchange for our piece of the Golem."

"We have to rescue her."

"The three of us will go. We have the power of three. I need you to stay here with Leo and the boys, keep an eye on the manor and protect the artifact. Start making some vanquishing potions while I go explain the situation to Leo."

When Piper got back to the attic her sisters were ready to go with plenty of vials for all three. Willow handed the three the lock of Kennedy's hair. "This should help you find Kennedy. Bring her back to me."

"We will, don't worry." They orbbed out and Willow went down to the kitchen with Leo and the boys. It was Wyatt who offered comfort.

"Don't worry, they'll be back."

"Thank you Wyatt."

"Wyatt's right, Willow, the sisters have done this sort of thing lots of times, things will be fine."

They materialised in the underworld in Logar's cave.

"Am I glad to see you guys. Don't touch the cage, it's electrified and the demons said it was orb proof."

"That's right witches." A dozen demons shimmered in and started throwing fireballs and lightning bolts but the Charmed Ones were vanquishing the demons one after the other. When they were all gone the sisters turned their attention to the cage.

"Stand back!" Piper blew up the door. At the same time Logar was attacking the manor. He knocked out Leo first then Willow and moved in on the fragment when Wyatt orbbed in.

"No"

"Out of my way child."

"No! Go away!"

"What can you do?"

"Sword" Wyatt orbbed in Excalibur and attacked Logar using some of the moves Kennedy taught him. When Logar was vanquished, Wyatt orbbed Excalibur back in it's place. Then he healed the cut on his father's head and Willow's hurt shoulder.

That's when the sisters and Kennedy came back.

"Mommy!"

Willow hugged Kennedy.

Piper notices the overturned table and broken vase. "What happened here?"

"Logar was here."

"I squished him and fixed Daddy's head."

"Squished? You mean you vanquished him?"

Wyatt smiled and nodded his head energetically.

"Good boy! Wait a minute, Daddy's head?"

"I got cut when I hit the table."

"What about the fragment? Did he have it with him?"

Paige picks something up off the floor. "This what you're looking for?"

"Yes, thank you. Now that we have the pieces we came for, our job here is done."

"We don't have to leave just yet, do we? I thought we could take a day or two and do some sightseeing. Besides, I haven't seen Excalibur yet."

"I'm sorry but we have to get the fragments to the Coven as soon as possible. We can come back for a visit another time."

"It's a shame about the sightseeing but we'll see what we can do about Excalibur before you leave."

Kennedy and Willow put the fragments in a special case, packed their bags and put them by the front door. Then everybody went up to the attic. Piper led the way to a dark corner and pulled off a tarp. Under it was a boulder with a sword sticking out of it.

"Excalibur" Kennedy said in an awed whisper. "Can I try pulling it out?"

"Go ahead."

She approached the sword, grabbed the hilt and pulled with all her strength. Nothing happened.

"Oh well, it was worth a shot."

"Wait," Wyatt said. He walked up to the sword, placed a chair in front and climbed on it. He then grabbed Excalibur and pulled it out.

Kennedy got down on one knee in respect and Wyatt, with a maturity beyond his years, tapped Kennedy on the shoulders and declared: "Lady Kennedy!". He then put the sword back in the stone, got down from the chair and left the room.

"Time to go, Kennedy, our plane leaves in a couple of hours."

"Coming."

They all went downstairs but before they left, Wyatt, back to his playful self, came up to Willow and Kennedy with a teddy bear in hand.

"Hug teddy goodbye."

They both bent down to hug Wyatt and his teddy goodbye.

"Come back and see us if you're ever back in San Francisco."

As they drove of the Halliwells waved goodbye. *

FANFICTION, OR THE FUN THAT NEVER ENDS

Mireille Dion

(Fanfic addict, and proud of it)

Fanfiction. It is a word that doesn't mean much to most. It is a word that means lack of quality to many, but also a word that means that the sky is the limit for those who have discovered the riches of this side of almost any fandom that exists to this day.

But what, exactly, is fanfiction? Where does it come from? How good is it and why does it endure long after the official material has gone out and dried up?

What is fanfiction?

Basically, fanfiction is simply a story written for fun by a fan of one or several fandoms, and is meant to be enjoyed by fellow fans; authors of fanfiction don't have any intentions to make money out of their fanfiction stories, nor do they attempt to, copyrights oblige.

Fanfiction as it now exists evolves from the paper media known as fanzine.

Not so long ago, fanzines were the only way for amateur writers to share their stories with fellow fans. However, not all the fics were shared back then as lack of space in the zines forced the editors to select what they would publish next.

Nowadays, the web has fixed that problem and anyone able to follow posting instructions can share his/her fan stories with anyone interested to read them.

Considering that no one but the fan writer controls what is included in those stories, the fics, as they are called, can range from G to NC-17 ratings, and from romance, action, or humour to horror, heavy drama and anything else possible.

The stories can also be quite conservative in terms of what is established in the fandom, or else explore new possibilities and even break barriers with their audacity (as in the popular alternative universes).

As for who writes such stories, the answer would be: just about anybody.

Indeed, some fanfiction writers are as young as 12 years old, while others are teenagers, young adults, female or male fans with too much time on their hands, or even older people.

In short, fanfiction knows no bound either in its content, its thematics, or its adepts and/or writers.

To read or not to read fanfiction; that is the question

It is a misconception that fanfiction is synonym of lack of quality. Granted, there is a fair number of fan stories that are not all that well written and that could never hope to be published, but there are also just about as many pure gems in terms of creativity, writing skills and/or well-built entertainment. The trick is, of course, to find those, but that is where the fun begins for the reader.

Although many writers run their stories through re-reading, edition and beta-readers before posting them, others writers don't. However, those who don't are easy to spot and a reader can simply stop reading the bad fic and search for another story to enjoy. As a result, readers still end up reading only the well-written fics, which become a trove of enjoyable entertainment and endless fun involving their favourite characters.

One way to spot the good fics is to check the number of reviews/comments that they have received so far. In general, a very reviewed fic tends to deliver just as much, if not more fun, than any official novel, movie, or episode. This isn't an absolute rule, though, as the age of the readers influence a lot what they will enjoy. Therefore, many fics that seem unpopular are, in fact, an overlooked work of art that just didn't hit the fancy of the usual readers that roam the website where they are posted.

So, fanfiction is a good source of good stories; the trick is simply that it is up to each reader to weed out the bad fics from the excellent stories that are offered to him/her.

Finding good fanfiction?

One of the easiest ways to locate good fanfiction is to type 'Fanfiction' and your fandom (or favourite characters) in any search engine on the web. Beware, though: not all the fanfic websites archive good fanfic.

My advice is to try and locate 'the' big source of fanfiction of your favourite fandom(s). In general, those websites are talked about in e-mail groups (like yahoo groups), or through the links of fan websites. There are also some groups that specialize in recommending great fics and gathering links to those; they, too, are a good place to start your search.

Another good way to get started is to use www.fanfiction.net (multi-fandom archive that welcomes anything except adult material) as a first sample, and, when finding an author you enjoy reading, check if he/she mentions other archives in his/her profile. From there, locating more good fics usually becomes a child's play.

The C2s (list of favourite fics) of ff.net are also very helpful to catch only the good fics instead of wading through the virtual swamp of fics that have been posted so far in your favourite fandom(s).

The endurance of fanfiction

One of the first thing that you'll probably notice if you visit a fanfiction archive is that some people still write fanfics in fandoms that have long since disappeared from the regular media; those fics are also read by many fans, which mean that for them, the officially dead fandoms are still very much alive.

Why is that?

One of the answers is that, unlike the official spin-offs, fanfiction is free (to produce and to enjoy), thus doesn't depend on anyone's decision to thrive on. All it requires is an internet connection and a computer to use the said connection.

Then, there's also the fact that in most fandoms, there are too many fics to be read in a lifetime, with more being added every day. Fanfiction thus becomes a source of constant fun, making the fandom grow and expand more at the rhythm of daily new posts and stories than to that of the official additions by the official author(s).

Finally, there's the fact that fanfiction can also go further than the official material. As such, it provides the reader with a greater range of reading and emotional experiences, which enrich the fandom thanks to their great diversity.

Useful vocabulary and abbreviations:

Finally, before I leave you to check the world of fanfiction for yourself, here is a little vocabulary list that is the basic of fanfiction for any fandom.

Ratings:

Rated G: everything can read it

Rated PG: for children older than 8 years old

Pg-13: Contains some violence, romantic or thematic elements that are not suitable for children under 13 years old

Rated-R: Not suitable for a young audience and is for older teenagers and adults (usually, those fics deal with either torture, abuse or really tough thematics)

Nc-17: adult fics with sexual content

Vocabulary and expressions:

Extended universe (EU): A fic that goes beyond the official material, but still tries to stick to the official storyline and plot.

Alternative universe (AU): A fic that uses the characters and universe of a fandom, but changes events and starts down a whole other storyline that can go as far as not restraining itself to 'anything' we know of the official material. AUs include what-ifs possibilities, crossovers between fandoms, and even taking the beloved characters and setting them in times and places where only their personalities and names remain as we know them.

Cannon: Story that takes place within the official time-frame of the official chronology/series. That kind of story does not contradict the official chronology of the

fandom in any way. It can be a missing scene in a movie or a novel/episode, or simply a story inserted in between official material but that respect everything established in the official chronology. In short, it's anything but an AU story.

Romance, filk, or mush: all synonyms for romantic stories

Angst: Fic in which issues (mostly of a romantic nature, but not always) are left unsolved until the end of the story, much to the entertainment of the reader.

PWP: Stands for "Plot, What Plot?" and is used to indicate that a fic has no real plot, yet can still be very good as the characters go through a very short moment of their every-day lives (like cooking, or spending some time with their children, etc.).

Action, adventure, humour, etc...: do I need to say more?

Slash: Nickname for stories involving homosexual relationships (not necessarily sexual). It is what most people will think about when talking about fanfiction, but, in truth, it is but one of the many possibilities explored in the world of fanfiction. That it happens to be a popular possibility doesn't make it the defining element of fanfic writing/reading.

X/Y : Replace the letters by the initial of favourite characters and you have an abbreviation for the shipping associated with a fic. Ex: L/V for Luke/Vader fics. Or H/H for Harry/Hermione fics. In a usual description of fic, the shipping is identified, followed by the category of fic (romance, action, slash, etc.)

Beta-reader: The fanfiction version of a proof-reader/editor.

Challenge: When they are part of groups or forums, writers are sometimes issued a challenge to create a story that respects certain criteria. Those limitations can range from a general thematic to specific ideas or number of words. When such a challenge falls, it usually generates many stories from various authors, all with the same basic idea since they all answered the same challenge.

Feedback/review, R & R, (FB): There is nothing more wonderful for a fic writer than this. Well, perhaps there is, but authors love it anyway. Posting feedback is what readers do to thank the authors for spending time writing stories for them. It's also what keeps writers writing so much fanfic for their readers.

Flames: Flames were once a fad on the web, but nowadays, they are not welcome anymore except in particular circles of fic exchanges. Flames are destructive comments that attack the work of a writer, or worse, the writer himself/herself. While not all authors are very talented or all the stories, pleasant, there is no excuse for that kind of behaviour toward a fellow human being and fan. That is the word in most places.

Live journal/ LJ : Newcomer in the world of fanfiction,

Live Journal is yet another type of archive that is available on the web. This one is characterized by the daily blogs of the members and their sharing of whatever crosses their minds (Fics, thoughts, etc.)

Lurker: Person who reads fics but never posts or reviews them. The danger of lurking is that they never contact the authors, thus the writers don't know if what they write is worth being read and, eventually, stop posting per lack of reactions...

Plot bunnies: nickname given to a story idea when it 'bites' a writer ;P

OOO: Abbreviation of the expression out-of-character. This expression is used by a reader in reviews to express his/her opinion about the writer's characterizations of known characters in a fic. Depending how it is used, it can become a flame... be careful if you ever use that abbreviation.

Original character/ OC: This expression refers to characters that have been created from the start by the fic writer. The characters are not part of any official release, but they are presented in the fic as main characters for this story.

Off-topic/OT: Subject line tag, stands for Off-Topic.

Any other conversation that doesn't have to do with the concerned fandom.

Profiction: Expression that refers to any and all the books, comic books, TV series and other official stories that are licensed by the official producers/publishers.

REC: Code written in the subject line of an e-mail in which fics recommendations are made. (It can be a good way to catch good fics.)

Shipping: pairing of characters that identify the subjects of the fic (ex.: L/V, H/H, M/S, B/WW, etc.)

TBC: To be continued

And there, you're all set to explore the little but ever-expanding world of fanfiction. In a way, searching for good fanfic is like going fishing... You never know what you'll catch, but if you're in the right pond at the right time, you can make terrific catches.

Good virtual fishing!!!

Mireille Dion, using the pen name, Meryl Heavens, is the author of Atlantis2: A Question of Survival.

Website: http://www.geocities.com/meryl_heavens

CONVENTIONS & EVENTS

Ad Astra 26, March 2-4
Crowne Plaza Toronto Don Valley
Toronto, ON
Guests: TBA.
www.ad-astra.org

FilkONtario 17, March 23-25
Guests TBA.
www.filkontario.ca

World Horror Convention 2007, Mar 29-Apr 1 '07
Toronto, ON
GoHs: Michael Marshall Smith, Nancy Kilpatrick. AGoH: John Picacio.
www.whc2007.org

BORÉAL 2007, April 27, 28, 29, 2007
24e congrès de la science-fiction et du fantastique and hosting the 34e Convention nationale française de science-fiction
<http://www.congresboreal.ca>

Anime North, May 25-27
Toronto, ON
www.animenorth.com

Polaris (Formerly **Toronto Trek**), July 6-8
Toronto, ON
Guests: Torri Higginson, others TBA
<http://www.tcon.ca/tt21>

Westercon 60: Gnomeward Bound, July 6-9 '07
San Jose CA

GoH: Tad Williams. AGoH: Theresa Mather
<http://westercon60.org>

Archon 31 – the Ninth Nasfic, Aug 2-5 '07
Collinsville IL
GoH:Barbara Hambly. AGoH: Darrell K. Sweet. Media GoH: Mira Furlan. Gaming GoH: James Ernest.
www.archonstl.org/31

Nippon 2007 / Worldcon 65, Aug 30-Sep 3:
Yokohama, Japan
GoHs: Sakyo Komatsu, David Brin. FGoH: Takumi Shibano.
AGoHs: Yoshitaka Amano, Michael Whelan
www.nippon2007.org

Anthrofest 2007, Montreal, details TBA.
<http://www.anthrofest.org>

Otakuthon 2007, Concordia, Montreal.
Details TBA
<http://www.otakuthon.com>

Con*Cept 2007, October 12-14, 2007
GoH David Weber, others TBA
<http://www.conceptsf.ca>

World Fantasy Convention 2007, Nov 1-4, 2007
Saratoga Springs NY
GoHs: Carol Emshwiller, Kim Newman, Lisa Tuttle. SGoHs: Barbara & Christopher Roden, George Scithers. MC: Guy Gavriel Kay
www.worldfantasy.org

The Last Mage: The Dragon's Mouth

Nikolai Krimp

The story so far: Jennifer Wells works for a bio-hazard lab located deep inside a mountain just south of Seattle, Washington. Following a car accident during a mysterious storm, she awoke in the body of a young elf called Shannon. In the company of Shannon's friend, Roma, and a hobbit, Treymane, she finds herself caught up in events resulting from the finding of a box in the ruins of the "Cave of the Ancients" – Jenny's former laboratory. While trekking through the forests that now grow where highways once ran, Jenny was attacked and nearly killed by a marsh cat. When the companions reached the safety of Shannon's home, they learned that they must now journey on to find Teagan, Shannon's aunt, and the only one likely to be able to explain what's been going on. Encounters with slavers and Blood Imps, and bad news from Water's Edge force, a change of plans. They must now travel through the Shadow Forest.

Chapter 4

On the evening of the third day since leaving the bay, Malodor and his band arrived at the outskirts of Storr. Here he gave his final order. First he would speak with the old woman (Annabelle) and get what information he could, then the village was to be razed to the ground with all of its villagers killed. There were to be no witnesses left alive.

It was very dark this night. No moon or stars were out. Malodor also noticed that there was no movement within the village. He ordered his men to spread out and enter with care, for he didn't want to fall into any traps that the villagers had prepared for them.

Annabelle had sensed his coming and had prepared for him. The people in the village who could fight lay in wait for him. Their only chance was the element of surprise. All the rest including the children were hidden in the forest for, if they failed, some one had to tell what happened. Silently the old woman crept out the back of her house and lay down in a field. From here she would rise up and strike the black druid down before he could react.

The orcs were well spread out as they entered the village. Malodor and ten of his men made their way silently down the main road until they stood in front of Annabelle's house. Malodor knew she wouldn't be in there and that she wouldn't be caught off-guard. So he had prepared himself for battle.

"Old woman!" he called. "I didn't come here looking for a fight. All I want to do is ask you some questions," he continued as his eyes strained to see past the shadows and into the field behind the house. "There is no need for anyone to get hurt."

Suddenly the old woman stood and raised both of her arms. A blue flame shot forth at the druid. It engulfed him and he screamed in pain. The flame died out just as quickly as it hit him. His cry of pain turned into laughter as he raised his hands.

"Prepare to die, old woman," he snarled and a red flame shot forth and engulfed her.

The red flames hit Annabelle knocking her to the ground, but she was up quickly and returned with her blue flame. The dark druid was surprised to see her standing again and

prepared another assault, only this time with all of his power. The old woman screamed as the red fire engulfed her and wouldn't go out. She hadn't counted on him to use all of his power so soon. Her plan had been to slowly drain him of his strength and then deal him a deadly blow, but Malodor wasn't playing by the same rules. He wanted this to end quickly so he could search for the box. It was over in a moment and all that lay where Annabelle had stood was a small pile of dust. The men of the village froze in terror when they saw their shaman die before their eyes. Angered, they raised their bows and let their arrows fly. Twenty orcs fell. Then the druid ordered the rest to charge. The archers didn't have the time to reload as the orcs fell upon them. Their scimitars cut down the villagers like a knife going through soft butter. The lancers impaled the people at will. Those villagers who had swords fared a bit better, but still they were no match for the battle-hardened raiders. When the last man fell, the orcs began to search for the other villagers. They searched everywhere, but found no one. Enraged, Malodor ordered his men to loot and burn the village. They even burned the fields. He would leave nothing for the survivors.

Once Storr was ablaze, Malodor and the remainder of his band left the village. He would return to his ship and plot his next move.

Jenny, Roma and Treymane lay hidden for two days watching the imps as they hunted and celebrated, but on the third morning they awoke to an empty camp across the river. No one dared to cross. They spent most of the morning creeping up and down the shoreline searching for any sign of those bloodthirsty imps, and only when they were absolutely sure that there would be no surprises waiting for them, did they chance the crossing.

The water was about knee high for Jen and Roma, but to the hobbit it came well past his waist. Roma had to grab him when he slipped and went under. She held onto him until they reached the other side. The forest here was full of foliage, yet its colour was that of a grayish green. There were no birds chirping, nor crickets, nor frogs. It was disturbingly quiet. The path, though wide enough, was overgrown with weeds

and small bushes, indicating that not many travellers had passed here.

Not daring to venture far from the trail, they began a search to see if there were any remains of the slavers that had been captured here a couple of nights ago. After careful searching all they found was a few bits of clothing belonging to one of the Highbinders.

It was getting closer to noon so they wasted little time and broke into a trot, trying to make up for the time they had lost.

Jenny, leading the pack, had a hard time keeping focussed on the trail ahead. All she could think about were those foot tall imps dancing around the fire. Fortunately the crossing was at the narrowest part of the forest. Only a good day's march and they would be home free, but they had wasted so much of the morning, that they might have to spend a night in this place, unless good fortune would be with them and the way was a lot shorter than Roma had indicated. They kept up their fast pace until they were exhausted. They stopped and in whispers decided to spend the night as close to the road as possible. In the failing light they searched for a hide-away, but none could be found. Finally the decision was made to spend the night high in a tree. This way they wouldn't be seen from the ground and if they stayed well below the treetop, its branches would provide protection from above. So up they climbed and secured themselves with their belts so they wouldn't fall. It was agreed that one would always remain awake and warn the others of any oncoming danger. It was very uncomfortable and they all had trouble falling asleep, but their exhaustion soon took over, their heads bowed and they were out like torches dipped in ice water. The three hadn't slept but half a night when the forest became alive with shrieks and howls. At one point the noise was so loud that they thought the creatures were upon them. They heard animals or whatever passing just below where they were sitting. One creature even stopped and rubbed its back on the trunk of their tree.

That was it! They didn't sleep for the rest of the night. When they were sure that the creatures had gone, then and only then, did they chance a few whispers amongst themselves. Once more before dawn these night hunters returned and rested under the very tree the three were hiding in. They stayed until the first signs of dawn appeared and then just vanished. None of the three saw where they went. They just disappeared. As soon as the party felt it was safe to leave their lofty sanctuary, they climbed down and began a fast jog.

In the morning light, as they neared the East River, the trio ran right into a party of half-a-dozen goblins. The creatures were so surprised that all six screamed and scattered in all directions. This proved to be a stroke of good fortune for the friends, giving them time to draw their weapons, because moments later the six had regrouped and attacked. Roma and Jenny had time to let loose an arrow each, dropping two of the goblins. Treymane, with drawn short sword and long dagger, ran headlong into two goblins. Before they could react, the closest took a fatal wound as the hobbit's long knife cut deep and long into his gut, but the

hobbit had his hands full with the other. The remaining two fell upon the girls with such a ferocity that Jenny had to back up. Jenny and one goblin in turn parried and lunged, forcing the other to fight defensively. Roma on the other hand, fared better with her opponent. Running at her with his weapon held forward, Roma, sidestepped him and cut him across his back as he ran past her. This took the fight out of him and he disappeared into the forest, ... probably to seek help. The hobbit's foe also lost his appetite for battle and joined his fleeing friend. Jenny by now had gotten the upper hand and soon had her rival bleeding from every part of his body. Weakening fast, he made one last ditch effort and charged Jenny. He never got within striking range, for another knife thrown by the halfling found its way straight through the heart.

"We'd better hurry for the others will bring help," cautioned Roma.

They gathered up their belongings and ran off in the direction of the river. The river was not far ahead for they could hear its rushing waters. From behind shouts could be heard as more of the goblins took up the chase. The party ran as fast as they could with their gear. The creatures were not so burdened and could run much faster. The orcs would have caught them, had the trio not run out of road and plunged into the East River. The swift current quickly took them around the bend and out of sight. Spitting water and fighting to keep their heads aloft, they slowly swam through the fast current to the other side. A few times Jenny thought of letting go of her equipment, so she could swim more easily, but she didn't give up. Her weapons and supplies would come in handy. Roma had managed to sheath her sword and to help Treymane who was struggling to stay afloat. Twice she pulled his head above the water. Finally she told him to hold on to her pack and she towed him towards the other side.

Exhausted, they pulled themselves up onto the bank and just lay there. The goblins could be heard thrashing through the underbrush searching for them, but for now they were safe from these creatures. They were on the other side and would not enter the water: goblins can't swim. Feeling safe for the first time since they entered the Shadow Forest, the three fell asleep.

After some time, with most of her strength back, Jenny stood up and looked around. Checking that none of their gear was lost, the three set out into the forest. Just before dark they found a small clearing, just perfect for setting up camp. A hot tea after the cold swim in the river would warm their bones and would ease them into a better sleep.

The hobbit had the last watch and didn't hear the approaching elves until they were upon him. He did manage to cry out an alarm, which woke the others. Startled, they sat up only to see about a dozen elves who had encircled their camp and held double-edged blades at their throats.

"Who are you?" another elf walking into their camp demanded, "and what are you doing here in Maitland?"

Upon examining each of the group, he stepped back and said, "She," pointing at Jenny, "can stay, but the two of you must return, or face arrest."

“These two are with me,” Jenny interjected. “We are on our way to meet with my aunt, Teagan.”

Staring at her the elf turned to his men and said, “Very well then, arrest them all.”

All of their equipment was confiscated and with hands tied behind their backs, they were put onto three of the elves' ponies. Then the riders mounted behind their captives and rode off onto the grassland with a fourth horse and rider carrying their gear.

No one spoke as they headed farther north. Treymane was the least worried of the three. They were heading in the same general direction and they didn't have to walk. As for the arresting part, he would face that when they arrived wherever they were going. He had been to Maitland before, and he knew the elves were honourable and fair. Roma, on the other hand, had never been to this land before and never had to deal directly with any elves, other than Shannon.

Jen was the only one who struck up a conversation with her captor. She found out that his name was Kirin and that he was from Misty Falls.

“What's going to happen to us when we reach your home?” she asked.

“I really can't say,” the young elf answered. “First, we'll probably find out who you and your friends are and then, if you don't pose a threat to our land, we'll either let you stay or escort you to the nearest border. If on the other hand, you aren't who you say you are ... well let's just say, our jails aren't very comfortable.”

They continued all day stopping only to rest the horses and eat. Jenny kept up their conversation and believed that she had made a new friend, while the others rode in silence. By the time they stopped for the night, the sun was already setting over the Saradan Sea. There was just enough light left to gather some firewood to keep them warm during the night.

“Out here on the plains the nights get much cooler than in the forest,” explained Kirin as he brought Jenny her food and blanket.

“How am I supposed to eat with my hands tied behind my back?” she asked.

The four captors consulted each other just outside hearing range and after a few minutes Kirin returned. “Do I have your word that you will not try to escape if we untie your hands?”

The three looked at each other and agreed. Their hands were freed and the blood circulation returned. They ate their supper in silence.

Over the next few days Jen got to know more about the elves. She found out that Maitland once existed over the whole continent. When the humans came, they arrived with force, slowly driving the elves back until the inland sea separated the two enemies. Wars were fought for more land, but here the elves along with the dwarfs made their stand and kept the humans from advancing further. Kirin told Jenny about the many battles he had been in and how they defeated the orcs once before when they invaded Maitland some thirty years ago. They continued to talk while they rode on towards Misty Falls. She had even grown to like Kirin. A sense of trust existed between the two parties, so that when they

reached Misty Falls, their captors let them enter the village unbound. They were led to one of the barracks near the west wall. Here under guard they would stay until their hosts determined if they would be freed or put into the dungeons.

They had entered through the Southwest gate and rode down one of the larger streets to where the Home Guard lived. The barracks were long houses at least a hundred feet long and thirty feet wide. Each housed about seventy soldiers, who came from all walks of life. Some were farmers, or millers or hunters and some were ordinary merchants. Every year each elf had to give some of his time to the protection of Maitland.

As they passed through the village, Jen could see that the homes were built of stone and wood, with thatched roofs. All were brightly decorated with flower boxes on every sill. Little whitewashed picket fences surrounded the houses. Though the grass was kept short, trees were never cut. Homes or out buildings were built to around the trees. She made a mental note of how everything was in its proper place, unlike the cities that she remembered.

After dismounting, the three were ushered into one of the barracks near the high cliffs. There they were brought into a very sparsely furnished room, which had only two bunk beds, a table and a couple of chairs. For a while no one spoke, each lost in his or her own thoughts. The hobbit placed one of the chairs near a window and sat down. From here he could see the goings on in the other buildings. Jen lay down on one of the bunks and closed her eyes. Roma was the only one who paced the floor. Escape was her only thought. She checked out every wall and window. When she checked the door, to her surprise she found it unlocked. She opened it and was greeted by the same guard that she rode in with.

Kirin, bearing all of their information, went to the Great Hall to address the Council of Elders. Here he would seek permission for the party to cross elven land safely and freely. He explained that they were on their way to Caldor to visit Shannon's aunt Teagan. He also gave the elders the news of the attack on Water's Edge by orc raiders. When Kirin finished, he was asked to wait outside while the Council deliberated the party's fate.

“I'm afraid you can't leave just yet,” he said smiling at her. “Kirin hasn't returned.”

Apologizing, Roma closed the door and returned to her pacing. She glanced over at Jenny who was fast asleep. Turning her eyes to Treymane, she wondered what was so intriguing that could keep him glued to the window, so she walked over and peered out. There on the side of the cliff wall, were elves climbing without ropes or aid of any kind. She watched as they climbed up and then back down again. These were in training, she supposed. Out in the yard was another group sparring with one another.

Jenny, fast asleep, dreamed she was home with her family again, but this time a stranger was among them. Someone she didn't know. The stranger was saying something, but Jenny couldn't hear what she was saying. She asked the girl to repeat again what she had said, but the girl

was suddenly surrounded by a white light and began to rise up off the ground.

“Wait!” Jenny shouted, but it was of no use. The figure just floated upward, through the ceiling, and disappeared. She then found herself lying in a field of flowers. The sky was blue with white puffy clouds floating by. Jen closed her eyes and let the warm summer's breeze cool her cheeks as she dozed. Suddenly the scene changed. A hot arid ground replaced the field of flowers. She jumped up only to find herself stuck in what seemed to be a mud hole. She could hear someone laughing. Looking around frantically, Jenny saw a horse and rider coming at her in full gallop. She tried desperately to get her feet unstuck, but to no avail, she just stayed where she was. The rider was closer now. She could hear the horse's hooves as they clattered on the loose stones scattered everywhere. When Jenny looked down at herself again, she found in her hands the little box. Looking up again, the rider was almost on top of her, when she screamed, “YOU CAN'T HAVE IT!” She woke with a start covered with sweat.

Hours passed before the council finished deliberating and recalled Kirin to stand before them.

“Kirin,” spoke Graveen the counsel elder, “ you will bring the strangers here after they have eaten, where they will be judged by us.”

Kirin bowed and left the hall. Before he returned to the barracks where the three were being held, the young elf stopped off at the inn next to the river. Here he spent a few silver coins and bought three meals comprised of roast mutton, bread, cheese and a jug of fine wine, which he carried back to the barracks for the three guests. The party was hungry, for they hadn't eaten since early morning and they attacked the meal like starving marsh cats. Finally, when all were finished, Jen asked Kirin if he had heard from the council. He delivered the message and then took them to another part of the long room where they could wash up before their meeting. They thanked him for the food and then stepped outside. The three passed two more rows of barracks and some different looking houses. These buildings, Kirin explained, were where the officers and their families lived. They crossed a stone bridge that spanned a narrow part of the Misty River. Here they passed the merchants' part of the city, which consisted of stone masons, a miller, even a healer they could see, because she was tending her herb garden. The scene on this side of the bridge was totally different from where they had just been. Here children played tag and hide-and-go-seek while their mothers shopped or stood talking with neighbours and friends. The smells from the cooking of food in the marketplace made them wish they had nowhere else to go, but could stay forever. It was a beautiful city, filled with friendly people.

They continued up the cobblestone street to the Great Hall. Here they waited outside the big oak doors until Kirin came back out and summoned them.

Jen noticed how effortlessly Kirin pushed aside one of the big heavy doors to allow them entry. The insides looked like the barracks. Very little furniture greeted them as they

passed through the front rooms that were used when private conversations or plans needed to be discussed before presenting them to the council. They passed through four rooms before they stood in front of another set of ornate doors. This led to the Great Hall and the Council of Elders. The two guards outside opened the heavy carved doors and Kirin led the three in. Both sides of the hall were decorated with wall hangings depicting battle scenes from ages past. One left Jenny staring. It must have been twenty by twenty feet large. It had the scene of a great battle. An elven army was climbing a hill with another dwarven army holding back the attacking orcs. On the very top of the hill stood what looked like a female mage. In her right hand she held a staff firmly affixed to the ground and with her left she had blue lightning shooting forth at the enemy below. Something familiar stirred inside, but she couldn't put her finger on it. When Kirin touched her arm, Jenny jumped and brought herself back to reality.

The three were marched up and halted in front of a long table. On the other side of it sat the ten members of the Council of Elders. Roma began to feel uneasy, while Treymane showed no emotion at all. Jenny couldn't help but stare everywhere to see the different hangings. It was Graveen who stood, bringing everyone's attention to the council.

“Kirin tells me you are Shannon Brightstar, daughter of Annabelle Pennifeather and niece of Teagan Twostars,” he stated, “ and that you three are on your way there now.”

“That is correct,” she answered.

“Can you tell me why?” the elder asked.

“We don't know the whole reason,” Jenny continued, “but my mother explained that we should make haste and not delay until we met with my aunt.”

Graveen sat back down and began to deliberate with the persons next to him, when a female at the end of the table rose and spoke.

“I have met Shannon once before,” she began, “and this girl who stands before us matches her description, but what puzzles me is that she does not recognize me.”

Kirin, who was standing behind Jenny, leaned forward just enough so that he was not noticed and whispered. “Her name is Careen Sundancer, daughter of the late general Arthor Stormqueller.”

Jenny stepped forward and addressed the elf. “I'm sorry Careen, but it's been a while and with all that's happening around us, our previous meeting slipped my mind. Rest assured that I haven't forgotten the daughter of the great General Stormqueller.”

A small smile appeared across Careen's face as she nodded her approval and sat back down.

Then Graveen stood again and said, “It seems you have more than proven to us who you are and you are free to go, but before you leave, I'm afraid I have some bad news for you from Storr. Your village was attacked some weeks back and I'm sorry to have to tell you that your mother was killed. An orc raid was blamed and the village was razed to the ground. Only a few who hid in the woods survived. We are on high alert and cannot spare anyone to help you once you leave Maitland. We can provide an escort as far as the border to

whichever land you wish to go to, but from there on, you're on your own."

Stunned at the news, Roma wanted to know if her father was still alive, but knew that these people here wouldn't know that. Somehow she had to find out. But ... how? It was Jenny who took her by the arm and led her from the hall. Kirin told them to wait for him outside, because he had something to ask the council. Worried that he would give them away, Jenny guided the shocked Roma through the outer rooms and outside to where night had already fallen. Here they waited until the elf warrior returned. With a smile he invited the three to sup and sleep at his house tonight. "Arrangements" he spoke, "have been made for tomorrow's departure. We leave at first light for Caldor."

They realized that going back wasn't what Annabelle would have wanted. So their minds were made up. They would go forward to Teagan's. She would know more of what happened in Storr and what to do about it.

The walk back to the barracks to collect their belongings was a silent one, each deep in their own thoughts. Jenny, who hardly knew the woman, felt a great loss. Roma felt as if a part of her had been ripped away. She would never see her father again. In fact she wouldn't even be there for his burial. The hobbit was sad for his friends. He knew what they were feeling, for when his Uncle Ruffus died, he cried for a long time. He remembered sitting by the hearth staring into the flames and listening to the stories of his adventures with Duncan the dwarf and Teagan. Oh how he wished at that time to be with them on some quest! Now he was on one and it didn't feel the same at all.

At the barracks they collected their equipment and followed Kirin to his house. He lived a few streets south of the West Gate. When they arrived, it was too dark to make out any features of the building. All one could see was the light of many candles streaming out of the kitchen window. The others had been shuttered for the night.

They entered by the kitchen door and found Alicia, Kirin's mother, stooped over a large kettle hanging in the hearth. She was stirring the stew with a long wooden spoon. As they entered, she turned and greeted her son and his friends with a nod of her head and a smile.

"You must be hungry," she said as she walked over to a cupboard and brought out some plates and spoons, while Kirin filled a pitcher with some homemade wine.

Beckoning the friends to sit down, she began to fill their

plates. Jenny couldn't help notice how easily the well-rounded elf moved around, never losing her smile. As her son filled the flagons, she sat down and also helped herself to a plateful. No one spoke. The four ate hungrily, for they knew that this would probably be their last home cooked meal for some time. When they had finished their meal, Kirin refilled their cups and sat back down. His smile vanished.

"Now that you're all well fed," he began, "it is time for the truth."

The three gazed at one another with surprise. "What do you mean, the truth?" asked Jenny.

"When you stood before the council, you did not recognize the general's daughter, because you are not Shannon. You may look like her, but you're not her. So if you are not Shannon, then who are you?"

Jenny looked towards Roma for help, but her friend couldn't offer any. The same was true for the hobbit. Finally she looked back at her friends and said, "We've got to trust someone, or we won't make it to Teagan's house."

All agreed by nodding their heads.

"My name is Jennifer Wells," she began. "This body belongs to Shannon, but my mind is in it. Shannon's mind right now is in my body. Exactly how this was achieved only Teagan can explain, for I wouldn't know. I was brought here because of this," and she held up the tiny ornate box. "Inside is what we, from your ancient past, called a disease. This tiny thing has enough power to kill every living creature here on this earth. At my place of work we manufactured these types of biological bacteria into highly contagious weapons. It is for this reason that we must get this to Teagan as quickly as possible and then I can get back to my time. I know how to destroy this, but I'm going to need help. So please don't give us away. At least not until you've spoken to Teagan and verified our story."

"How do I know you're telling me the truth?" he asked.

"After telling you my real name, why would I lie about this?" Jenny answered.

Kirin pondered for a while and then raised his flagon, stood and said, "To a safe journey to Caldor."

They all drank to the toast and then Alicia brought out some fresh baked blackberry pie. "One can't start a journey without a piece of my pie," she said. "Tomorrow I will fill your backpacks so you can eat well on your long travel."

They spoke for a while longer and then each was given a place to sleep. Morning would come soon enough.

The Last Mage continues in WARP 67



Pan's Labyrinth

Reviewed by Sébastien Mineau



Far from being a bedtime story, the latest epic of Guillermo Del Toro is nonetheless a spectacular cinematographic experience.

It is based on a somewhat childish story. A long time ago a princess of the "underworld" escaped to the surface of the earth and died, her father knowing her soul would return one day, opened "portals" (in this case *The Faun's Labyrinth* (yeah, someone messed up in

translating the title)) all over the world. This is of course the story of how she (Ofelia) needs to complete 3 tasks before the full moon in order to return to her kingdom.

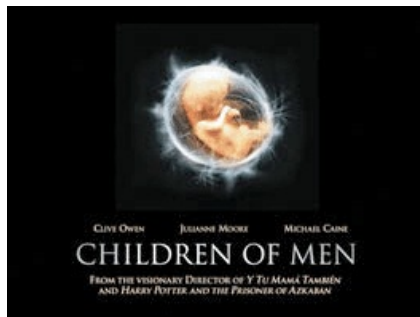
Now this movie takes place in Spain around "D-Day" which might explain the incredible courage that fills the heart of little Ofelia, but I think that for most people, completing the first 2 tasks (while not all that difficult) would be a lot more scary.

I'll let you go see it in theatre (Matinee perhaps if you don't like subtitled movies) to get the whole story. I rate this movie PG-13 due to blood, violence, coarse language and the certain maturity you need to understand most of it.

A very good movie that I do press you to go see in theatres. *

Children of Men

Reviewed by Sébastien Mineau



Okay so a lot of critics have been going over this movie as the new *Bladerunner* because it's a vision of a not so distant future where the world is in chaos.

Now I'm a big fan of Clive Owen, and the acting of this movie is very decent, but I think that in this day and age I don't really want to pay 10 bucks to sit through a movie that is about as enjoyable as watching CNN (heck, Wolf Blitzer can be less depressing most of the time). The story is basically about a group of people trying to get human kind's first born in about 20 years to a special, somewhat rebel, scientist group. Of course this poor chap gets drawn into a twisted plot and ends up paying the price for it.

I'll let you judge it by yourself, but *Children of Men* is a movie I'll have to recommend as a rental. And that's if you're an Owen fan. If not, wait until it's on TV. *

The Good German

Reviewed by Sébastien Mineau

Now I always loved good old classic black and white movies. And in the



recent years I've been blessed with more and more movies being shot with this "old style and look": *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, *The Call of Chtulhu*, and now, *The Good German*.

I did appreciate this movie. Steven Soderbergh and George Clooney have always been a great team (the

Dany Ocean movies), they brought to the screen a post war drama mixed with plenty of footage from World War II. Tobey Maguire's character showed us a little bit of what we could expect from the upcoming "Spiderman 3" and Cate Blanchett performed flawlessly as the Jewish wife of an ex-SS officer.

Now, if you're looking for a night out at the movies and you want to dive into a somewhat chaotic enigma and drama, that's the movie for you. I see it as a mix between *The Maltese Falcon* and *Casablanca*.. okay you can add a little bit of *Gone with the Wind* to that too.

A good movie, I think it's a good matinee, but I'll be waiting for the DVD and hoping for enough bonus material to be thrilled. *

Through The Viewfinder: Con*Cept 2006 (Montreal, QC) October 13-15, 2006
Reviewed (and photographed) by Charles Mohapel

Working as the Official Con Photographer for Con*Cept 2006, I have a different worldview from the average attendee. First of all, I need to get photos of Registration, the Dealers Room, the Art Show, the exhibits, and the programming rooms. Once this is out of the way, I can focus on my specialty – shooting candids of people.

As someone who has been the Official Masquerade Photographer for the 1992, 1995, 2002, and 2006 Worldcons, I have a particular fondness for costumers, both those wandering around wearing hall costumes, and those competing in the Masquerade. At some of the more cozy conventions like Con*Cept and Ad Astra, people wearing hall costumes are strongly encouraged to enter the Masquerade – some of them have even won Novice and Journeyman awards for Presentation and Workmanship.

By the way, the International Costumers Guild (ICG) has not bowed to overblown Political Correctness and overreacted by changing “Journeyman” to “Journeyperson”, nor created some inane doppelganger for “Workmanship”. Given that the current ICG President is Nora Mai and she serves until the next CostumeCon (CostumeCon 25 is March 30-April 2, 2007), I don’t see this changing any time soon.

Robert Charles Wilson, our English Author GOH, came in on a roll, having won the Best Novel Hugo for “Spin” at

LAcon IV, the 2006 World Science Fiction Convention (Worldcon) held in Anaheim, CA from August 23-27.

Élisabeth Vonarburg, our French Author GOH, was also a big winner, having been awarded the lauréate du Grand Prix de la science-fiction et du fantastique québécois pour les deux premiers tomes de “Reine de mémoire”. www.grandprixsffq.ca/accueil.htm

Steve Bacic, our Media GOH, was a big hit, particularly with the ladies, including a number of members of his fan club, which included at least one happy Norwegian lady. I found him to be very entertaining, whether he was participating in an relaxed Q&A session while perched on the back of a comfy chair or on a bar stool borrowed from the bar (with their permission), or sitting at a table in the Dealers Room. Steve made the con memorable for many fans by posing with them for numerous photos. The man is a real professional and very down to earth.

Even though he was present on Sunday only, David Winning (Director on “Stargate: Atlantis” and “Andromeda”) was another charming guest and the interplay between him and Steve Bacic provided many fans with memories to treasure.

Personally, I had a great time and anybody who missed Con*Cept 2006, missed a good time. *

Con*Cept 2006 Guests of Honour



Patrick Senecal with GoH, **Élisabeth Vonarburg**



MonSFFen Gordon Morrow and Meryl Heavens (Mireille Dion) with GoH, **Robert Charles Wilson**.



Fan GoH, **Larry Stewart**, is himself “honoured” by OSFS.



Media GoHs, **David Winning** and **Steve Bacic**, wonder if Charles should be considered “armed and dangerous”.



And speaking of armed and dangerous, Special Guests Arctic Wolf and Greylocks give their popular weapons panel.



The Display room featured costumes and props made by members of L'Alliance Impériale, and JJ Sobey's award-winning Narnia costume. (Torcon III masquerade)



Scratch-built, winner of 4 awards in the model competition.



Artist and MonSFFan Jean-Pierre Normand in the art show.



MonSFFan & Auctioneer, Paul Bennett, with his partner-in-crime, Sue Bennett.



"Obi-Wan Kenobi and Siri Tashi" (James Cork & Lillian Borno) Best Artisan, & Workmanship for Sewing, Finishing, &



Best in Show "Time Vortex: The Doctor, Rose, and Dalek" (Tessa Wojdylo & Andrew Gurudata)



Masters of Ceremonies: Eric Gauthier and Larry Stewart.

Appearing in each issue of Warp, "MonSFFAandom" collates abridged versions of the news and activities reports published over the last few months in Impulse, MonSFFA's monthly news bulletin.

Items published in Impulse, November 2006-January 2007, are collected here, forming this edition of "MonSFFAandom." As usual, we've placed in chronological order and held for last the monthly MonSFFA meeting summaries.

Let's begin: the October issue of Impulse sought from club members suggestions "as to a downtown restaurant at which the club may hold its annual Christmas dinner," adding:

...We have traditionally met for our holiday dinner at a centrally-located dining establishment and later convened at the familiar Park Place Bar on Mackay Street to enjoy an evening of festive partying. Our Christmas celebrations are scheduled this year for Saturday evening, December 9....

Having thus primed MonSFFen for the club's annual Christmas dinner/party, Impulse followed the next month with this year-end reminder:

Please Renew Your Club Membership on Time!

The festive season is upon us and while we look forward to celebrating with family and friends, we trust those MonSFFen whose annual fees become due during these often hectic holiday months (check the expiration date on your membership card) mind the importance of renewing their memberships on *time*. Steady cash flow facilitates the smooth operation of the club. We'll be pleased to receive your MonSFFA membership renewals via the club's P.O. box.

Our yearly dues remain unchanged at \$25, which works out to only about \$2 per month!

The December issue also ran the anticipated meeting dates for the coming year:

2007 MonSFFA Meeting Dates

The club's meeting dates for next year, pending confirmation of the bookings by the Days Hotel, are as follows: January 21, February 18, March 25, April 22, May 27, June 10, August 19, September 23, October 21, and November 18.

The club's annual barbecue-in-the-park will take place on Sunday, July 29 (should inclement weather prevail, the event will be moved to the following Sunday, August 5).

Our traditional Christmas party will be combined in 2007 with the club's 20th anniversary celebrations, scheduled for Saturday, December 8....

Further, MonSFFA's annual election procedures were explained:

2007 Club Elections

MonSFFA's selection of its 2007 Executive Committee will take place off the top of the first club meeting of the New Year on January 21. All full club members are encouraged to participate in this process.

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 Executive recruits advisors and appoints officers to assist them in carrying out this responsibility.

Any full 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 full member in good standing. Nominations are received by the chief returning officer, or CRO, usually just before the

commencement of voting on election day.

All full 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.

December's issue also reported on recent movie premieres co-sponsored by the club and enjoyed by MonSFFen, including "the hit comedy Borat, the time-warping The Fountain, and the horror thriller Turistas."

The issue closed with a brief item touting "MonSFFA's own Charles Mohapel." Charles, "who has snapped many a WorldCon masquerade, often as official photographer," the entry informed, was at the helm of an ambitious project at this year's WorldCon in L.A. "He organized a team of 12 photographers that covered the entire convention for the con's 'Day in the Life of WorldCon' project, patterned after the 'Day in the Life of...' series of coffee table books."

January's Impulse opened with coverage of the club's 2006 holiday celebrations:

2006 Christmas Dinner and Party

MonSFFA's final event of 2006 was the club's Christmas dinner/party, held on the evening of December 9. Some 25 or so club members and friends began their festive celebrations with dinner at Guido & Angelina's Restaurant in the AMC Forum, downtown. The group then moved a few blocks east to party at the familiar Park Place Bar on Mackay street, which has received MonSFFA's seasonal revellers, now, for more than a decade. There ensued an evening of music, conversation, drinks and, as always, *pool*. The bar's backroom pool table was quickly appropriated and remained

in use until closing time as between beers, a succession of MonSFFen queued up to poke their balls with a long stick.

Meanwhile, movie passes and other prize items were raffled off to raise a few dollars for the club. A couple of these items were deemed worthy of auction and were put on the block, adding a generous portion to the raffle revenue.

Keith Braithwaite saw to the collection for charity of non-perishable food items and a number of toys, and was pleased to report that club members' beneficence filled the trunk of his car. Keith later delivered the haul to Sun Youth as MonSFFA's contribution to that organization's annual Christmas basket drive.

Our thanks to MonSFFA president Berny Reischl, who organized the dinner at Guido & Angelina's; Keith, who in addition to overseeing our collection for charity, also set up the Park Place party and provided the evening's musical soundtrack; and Debbie and Heather, our wonderfully welcoming Park Place hostesses. We appreciate, as well, the donations of raffle/auction items for the party.

We trust all MonSFFA members, their families and friends, enjoyed a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The issue then reported on the confirmation of the coming year's meeting dates:

2007 MonSFFA Meeting Dates Confirmed

MonSFFA's 2007 meeting dates have been confirmed. MonSFFA meets once a month, except in July and December, on a Sunday afternoon from 1:00-5:00PM, typically in the St-François room of the downtown Days Hotel, 1005 Guy Street. Some of our meetings include a morning session, usually scheduled from 10:30 or 11:00AM to about 12:30PM, during which special projects are undertaken or other such activities take place. An informal dinner at a nearby restaurant often follows each meeting....

The item reiterated the dates listed in December's Impulse, now made official, along with those of the club's summer barbecue and combined 20th anniversary/Christmas party.

The club's annual election procedures were also run again.

A brief pre-meeting primer on fanfic capped the issue:

FanFic Topic of this Month's MonSFFA Meeting

The principal topic at the club's first meeting of 2007 (January 21) will be fan fiction. Customarily shortened to "fanfic," or simply "fic," fan fiction is that particular brand of unauthorized amateur writing based on a published work, or a television series or movie franchise. Some may expand the definition to include amateur-level original fiction as well as authorized publications rooted in an original work. The general understanding, however, is that a fanfic story is one set in the universe of an original work employing characters created by the original's author.

We will allow the wider definition of fanfic at our meeting so as to include amateur works of original fiction. MonSFFen are welcome to actively participate in the meeting as detailed in the sidebar, this page.

It is interesting to note that much of fanfic centers on romantic and/or sexual relationships between characters. These are sometimes extrapolations of relationships found in the original work or, often, pairings not intended by the original's author. Some such stories depart entirely from the canon of established characters, portraying them as homosexual, for example, or perhaps as practitioners of BDSM.

Fanfic authors may also pen "crossovers," in which characters from two or more original works are brought together.

Scholarly studies have recognized an element of wish-fulfillment in fanfic. Authors regularly insert themselves or a thinly veiled representation of themselves into their stories, often in the form of a protagonist exceedingly idealized to the point of cliché. Such a

character typically dominates the story, saves the day, wins the respect and admiration of the original work's characters, and the heart of one in particular, the fanfic author's favourite.

Fan fiction has been described as the present-day version of the oral tradition of shared stories, in which a popular legend or fairy tale may be retold from a different perspective, enhanced, or substantially changed. When corporations own what amount to contemporary myths, fan fiction provides an outlet for ordinary folk to contribute to their own culture.

The advent of the Internet has allowed fanfic writers an inexpensive means of widespread distribution; one of the most popular Web sites dedicated to fan fiction is: FanFiction.net

A sidebar was included, requesting both original and fan fiction from the membership:

Original and Fan Fiction Wanted for this Month's MonSFFA Meeting

We invite and encourage any MonSFFAn who has penned or is currently writing a work of either original or fan fiction to bring in to our January 21 club meeting a single-page outline or excerpt to share with the group. Feedback may be offered and perhaps we can provide constructive suggestions on working out a particularly vexing scene, tackling a plot device, or drafting potent dialogue.

Further, we challenge MonSFFA's fan fiction enthusiasts to write the first draft of a short fanfic tale based on one of the following established works:

Encounters of the Very Close Kind
Beavra
MooseMan
The Simpletons' Life

or, an original SF, fantasy, or horror story of no more than 500 words under one of the following titles:

Remembrance of Things Past
Though This be Madness
The Instruments of Darkness

A Better World Than This

Which brings us to our monthly meeting reports for this installment of MonSFFA, dutifully reproduced here from the pages of the November and December issues of Impulse. These were the last two MonSFFA meetings of 2006:

October MonSFFA Meeting

The club held its October meeting on a blustery 29th of the month. Turnout was a little less than usual.

Star Wars was the principal focus of the afternoon's programming—a *Star Wars*-themed game of Pictionary preceded a live broadcast of the fan-produced Internet radio show *Star Wars en Direct*, a news and talk program. A brief feedback session on Con•Cept 2006 and the new gaming convention RoyalCon, both having recently taken place, was included off the top of the meeting.

The chairs of each convention—MonSFFA members both, incidentally—were present to receive constructive comment from folk who had attended either or both events. Few MonSFFen had anything terribly negative to say about the cons, most having thoroughly enjoyed themselves. RoyalCon was applauded for having provided as much of a variety of programming as possible for a specific-interest event. Con•Cept was appreciated for its unfailingly solid panel programming, robust masquerade, and lively Saturday-night dance.

The chairs provided insight into the behind-the-scenes operations of their respective events and spoke of improvements they expected would be made next year. While the neophyte RoyalCon experienced but a few bumps, Con•Cept struggled this year as a small and critically overworked conglom laboured valiantly to keep the full-weekend event running smoothly. Con•Cept chair Cathy Palmer-Lister explained that many of the little details—and a few of the big ones—went unattended as there were not enough qualified people to handle it

all. This likely contributed in substantial part to the drop in attendance experienced by the con this year. We learned that some 100 fewer people were on site compared to the previous edition of Con•Cept. Further, the dealers' room and art show ran at less than capacity.

But that which plagued Con•Cept behind the scenes was not noticed by the average attendee on the convention floor, noted one satisfied customer. The event's organizers were praised for managing to put on a fun and entertaining convention under rather trying circumstances.

The team, however, simply cannot continue to run the con without more help. Fresh blood is desperately needed next year and beyond, said Cathy. If Con•Cept is to survive long-term, a greater number of local fans—especially those with the organizational skills and experience demanded of such an event—must step up to the plate.

RoyalCon reported an attendance of 280, Con•Cept of 228. And while neither con expected to turn much of a profit, if any, both anticipated covering their operating costs and are making plans for 2007.

Our *Star Wars* Pictionary game followed the feedback session. Pictionary is a popular parlour game sometimes called Win, Lose, or Draw. Keith Braithwaite ran the game, beginning with an explanation of the rules:

At the beginning of each round of play, a member of one of two teams stands before an easel, felt-tip marker in hand. This "artist"—a talent for drawing is not a prerequisite, by the way—is given a phrase and must, solely by means of a sketch, get across to his or her team members that phrase. (For the purposes of this particular game, Keith had selected such *Star Wars* jargon as "targeting computer," "Cloud City," and "Rebel Blockade Runner.") The artist then decides on how many minutes—one, two, or three—he or she expects will be needed to get his or her teammates to figure out the phrase. The shorter the time the higher the points scored if successful.

The artist may indicate how many words make up the phrase but letters or numbers may not be included in the sketch. Nor may the artist speak to his or her team members, who call out loud their best guesses as the drawing progresses. Only when a word that is part of the phrase is correctly guessed can the artist write down that word. Should the team fail to arrive at the complete phrase before the clock runs out, the opposing team may offer a guess and if correct, steal points. The round thus completed, it's now the opposing team's turn at the easel. During the course of the game, each team must cycle through their roster so that all players take at least one turn as artist.

While the game was to be played this afternoon purely for the fun of it, Keith threw in a little incentive, offering a two-for-the-price-of-one deal to members of the winning team on any raffle tickets purchased during the upcoming mid-meeting break.

Two teams were quickly formed and the amusement began. Keith served as game host while young daughter Erin, accompanying dad to the club's meeting this day along with older brother Scott, operated the game's timer and kept track of the score. An avid *Star Wars* fan, Scott was eager to join in the fun and proved one of the better players and artists in the room.

Following the mid-meeting break, Sebastien Mineau set up for the broadcast of his *Star Wars en Direct* Internet radio program. Explaining to audience members the nuts and bolts of fan-produced Internet radio as he plugged in, he told the story of how he and a few of his fellow local *Star Wars* fans became involved in the project. A group of American fans producing an online *Star Wars* radio show inspired Sebastien and friends to launch a French-language version. When the American fans decided to cease production of their show, Sebastien's crew switched to English and picked up the ball.

Enlisting Keith as a guest co-host, Sebastien invited audience members to chime in with questions and comments during the discussion portion of the

program. The show ran for about an hour and featured the latest *Star Wars* news and a discussion of fans' fears of the cancellation-happy Fox network possibly pulling the planned *Star Wars* television series from the air should it fail to immediately perform up to expectations. Sebastien and Keith bounced opinion back and forth on the topic, welcomed comment, and fielded questions from both MonSFFA members in the room and listeners participating online.

While it is, of course, a couple of years too early to say which TV network's schedule will include the series, it's probably a good bet that Fox will carry the show. Should the series perform well and garner solid ratings, fans will have no need to worry about the network cancelling the program. Should the series falter in the ratings, however, the demands of the marketplace could very well see the show dumped, at which point it might or might not be picked up by a rival network. But with the kind of dedicated audience *Star Wars* boasts, it's likely that any *Star Wars* series would do well, at least initially. Also, it was conjectured, George Lucas has the kind of clout that might allow him to secure broadcast guarantees of a season or two.

Star Wars en Direct broadcasts bi-weekly and episodes are archived on the Web; for more information, e-mail: studio@swendirect.com

We thank the usual suspects for helping to plan and run this meeting, and appreciate the contributions of our program participants.

November MonSFFA Meeting

The club's last meeting of 2006 was held on November 19. Programming included a review of science fiction and fantasy fandom's unique lexicon followed by screenings of selected fan films. Some 25 folk were in attendance.

Keith Braithwaite opened the dictionary of fandom's terminology,

challenging his audience to define such peculiar fannish words, acronyms, and phrases as "faunch," "corflu," "SMOF," and "Pub Your Ish!" Keith, joined by Cathy Palmer-Lister, provided an historical perspective on fandom and the odd lingo of the sub-culture.

Fandom has adopted numerous terms to describe the science fiction genre, "scientifiction," "stf" (pronounced "stef," an abbreviation of *scientifiction*), and "skiffy" among them. Fans, it was noted, are quick to truncate words and phrases, resulting in such common fannish expressions as "con," "concom," "fanzine," and "sercon," short for, respectively, "convention," "convention committee," "fan magazine," and "serious and constructive." Acronyms, too, appear often in fanspeak; "BNF," "FIAWOL," and "GAFIA," for example, stand for "Big-Name Fan," "Fandom is a Way of Life," and "Getting Away From it All." Many fannish acronyms have ripened into verbs or nouns. "To gafiate," derived from GAFIA, for example, is to retreat from fandom while "a gafiate" is one who has done so.

Keith and Cathy also discussed the evolution of the science fiction fan community and offered their thoughts on a definition of modern fandom. While fans during the early years focused almost exclusively on written SF, today, the community is considerably balkanized, resulting in many sub-fandoms loosely connected by a shared interest in some aspect or other of science fiction, fantasy, and/or fandom. For many, fandom is a social vehicle.

For your information, to faunch is to yearn, desire, or to hunt for or acquire. Corflu, short for "*correction fluid*," is a term associated with fanzine production. A SMOF is a "*Secret Master of Fandom*," one who boasts much experience running conventions or clubs. And "Pub Your Ish!" is a popular slogan within fanzine circles meaning "publish your issue."

The latter part of the meeting featured screenings of a number of fan

films that MonSFFA president Berny Reischl had collected from the Web. These amateur productions range widely in quality and several of those Berny had selected boasted ample budgets and near-professional production values, stretching, maybe, the definition of fan film. The full-length *Star Trek* episodes produced by the New Voyages and Exeter crews were among such examples. Berny treated the group to excerpts of these, along with favourites like the intense comic book superhero medley *Grayson* and the *Star Wars* vignette *Duality*.

An audience always appreciates well-crafted comedy and the room was in stitches over a spot-on parody of Joss Whedon's *Firefly* and the classic *Troops*, a *Cops* spoof set on Tatooine.

Some fan films are designed simply to highlight the producers' skills at CGI modeling and animation, often with hopes of landing a job at a Hollywood special effects house. We viewed a number of such efforts, including a space battle pitting *Star Wars*' Imperial armada against *Battlestar Galactica*'s rag-tag fleet. Similarly, aspiring actors often produce audition reels to showcase their talents. One such example featured a monologue delivered with diabolical relish by a young actor playing the Joker threatening a group of hostages.

Perhaps the purest form of fan film is the truly low-budget, decidedly amateur effort set in the universe of a popular SF/F film or television series. Berny showed several of these, including a brief *Battlestar Galactica* adventure.

We thank the usual suspects for helping to plan and run this meeting, and appreciate the contributions of program participants Keith Braithwaite, Cathy Palmer-Lister, and Berny Reischl.

MonSFFA's BoA sat for about an hour before the start of the meeting to select meeting dates for next year and plan programming. ✨

The Face behind the Mask # 1
The Fernster

Hello fandom! This is the first of a series of challenges for your skills of observation and deduction. A series of photos of alien women is presented to you and your job is to match the alien face with those of the actresses who played those roles. So take on the challenge and guess who are the actresses behind the mask!

For this first issue we will start with some Romulan women!



- A – Romulan Commander
- B – Commander Toreth
- C – Karina
- D – Commander Donatra

- 1 – Dina Meyer _____
- 2 - Joanne Linville _____
- 3 - Annette Helde _____
- 4 – Carolyn Seymour _____

ANSWERS

A=2, B=4, C=3, D =1

The Last Words! #6
The Fernster

This is the 6th edition of the Last Words. Again in this issue we will mix the selection of films to include a wide selection of movie types. I hope you have enjoyed the previous editions of this game and your feed back would be welcomed. E-mail your comments and ideas to: fernster23@hotmail.com Now for this issue, we start with a really easy Last Word – straight from the world of adventure & treasure!

- 1) “Now bring me that horizon....ho hum...ho and really bad eggs.....drink up me hearties....Yo Ho!” (2 Pts)
- 2) “All Right!” (5 pts)
- 3) “I’ve never seen something like that before....it was HUGE!” (3 pts)
- 4) “Shed no tears for me. My Glory lives forever!” (5 pts)
- 5) “So it’s a good thing that we always keep a healthy supply of Head & Shoulders around in the house” Hint: a fake commercial with 3 persons from the movie (5 Pts)

1. Jack Sparrow – Johnny Depp – Pirates of the Caribbean – The Curse of the Black Pearl.

2. Bob Harris – Bill Murray – Lost in Translation

3. Lindsey Brown – Encounters of the very close kind (short version)

4. Dax – Starship Troopers II, Hero of the Federation

5. a) Ira Cane – David Duchovny
 b) Harry Block – Orlando Jones
 c) Wayne Grey – Seann William Scott

Score Card:

- 0-2 You’re in trouble...go back to bed...
- 3-5 You’re still not ready for the big time...
- 6-10 You’d better start going to the movies...
- 11-15 Average movie-goer...
- 16-20 Top notch movie freak! You scare me...
- 21+ Hey, you cheated!