

IMPULSE

MonSFFA • A MonSFF

NEWS BULLETIN
OF THE MONTREAL
SCIENCE FICTION
AND FANTASY
ASSOCIATION

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

January / Janvier 2006 (Vol. 10, No./Nº 1)

NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, January 22

1:00PM-5:00PM

St-François Room, Days Inn
1005 Guy Street, Montreal

SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

1:00PM

CLUB ELECTIONS: Selection
of MonSFFA's 2006 Executive
Committee.

1:15PM

SEEING RED: The club welcomes
guest speaker David Shuman, of
the Royal Astronomical Society of
Canada's Montreal Centre, who
will present a 3-D slide show on
the fabled red planet, Mars. 3-D
Glasses supplied.

3:00PM

BOARD OF ADVISORS MEETING:
We convene a special BoA meeting
to discuss plans for the coming
year and tap members for ideas re
meeting programming and other
activities.

NEXT MONTH'S MonSFFA MEETING:

February 19

Sci Fi TV, Urban Legends

Christmas Celebrations Close MonSFFA's 2005 Activities

MonSFFA closed 2005 with its traditional
Christmas dinner and party, welcoming some 20
members and friends to the club's annual celebration of
the season. The evening—Saturday, December 3—
opened with dinner at Reuben's Deli, downtown, after
which the group made its way to the familiar Park
Place Bar on Mackay street.

There MonSFFA's revellers gathered for an
evening of drinks, music, conversation, and, as always,
pool. The bar's backroom pool table was quickly
commandeered as an impromptu tournament began.
The sharp crack of cue strokes accented the festive din
until closing time, at about 3:30AM, when the last ball
was sunk and the club's 2005 Christmas party capped
another successful year of MonSFFA activities.

We are pleased to report that we collected at the
party several grocery bags worth of non-perishable
food, along with a number of children's toys, for
donation to local charity.

Our thanks to Debbie and Heather, our perennial
Park Place hostesses, as well as to Mark Burakoff,
who arranged for the dinner at Reuben's, and Keith
Braithwaite, who set up the Park Place party, provided
the evening's soundtrack, and saw to our collection for
charity.

Reminder: Renew Club Membership on Time!

The holidays are over and as we all get back
up to speed, MonSFFA takes a moment to remind
club members of the importance of renewing their
memberships *on time*. Steady cash flow facilitates the

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The annual membership
fees of the following MonSFFA
members are overdue:

BEAUDOIN, Dominique
BEDARD, Ginette
BROWN, Lindsay
COPOT, Robert
FAFARD, Alain
HAMMOCK, Christopher
KENNEY, Daniel P.
MINEAU, Sebastien

**Annual membership fees are
due this month (January) from
the following MonSFFA
members:**

Ø

Annual membership fees
will become due next month
(February) from the following
MonSFFA members:

SIMARD, Phil
TOWNSEND, Tamu

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membership in timely fashion.
Annual dues are \$25. Fill out the
membership application form,
bottom of page, include cheque
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MonSFFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

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smooth operation of the club.

Those members whose annual fees became due in the last couple month may be forgiven, of course, for letting slip their renewals in the midst of the hectic end-of-year and holiday season. Not to fret, we'll be pleased to process your MonSFFA membership renewals today.

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

2006 Club Elections

The club's selection of its 2006 Executive Committee will take place during the first 15 minutes or so of our January 22 meeting. 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.

MonSFFilms Chalks Up Christmas Sales

Several MonSFFilms titles are now available for viewing in Quicktime format via MonSFFA's Web site (www.MonSFFA.com). Shortly after club

president and MonSFFA Webmaster Berny Reischl put up these online versions of *Beavra*, *MooseMan*, and other of our award-winning fan films, we began recording on the site a respectable number of hits re our films. We are thrilled to report that just before Christmas, we received online requests for the purchase of numerous DVD copies of our films!

Wrote one buyer: "I loved your film *MooseMan*, which I saw at the Fantasia film festival.... I loved *MooseMan* so

much, I decided that it would only be fair to pay real money to be able to see it again."

Another was sold on *Beavra*, unseen: "...I'm going to trust the film's reputation and buy it...."

We were, of course, *very* happy to fill these orders, amounting to over \$200!

Our DVDs were destined, we were told, to households across Canada as Christmas gifts.

Cool!

Movie Review

Peter Jackson's KING KONG

The timeless tale of the great Beast and his Beauty is as compellingly told as ever under the deft guidance of Oscar-winning director Peter Jackson, who has struck the perfect balance of engaging, character-driven storytelling and bold, over-the-top action. This is a film in which modern visual effects magic is, for once, properly brought to bear in service of the story.

Deviating little from the original script, Jackson respects—enhances, in fact—the classic's character development and narrative structure. His affection for the '33 version is unmistakable and *Kong* fans will enjoy the numerous delightful nods to the original he has included.

Jackson has delivered a visually stunning *Kong* for the 21st century—his beautifully shot, emotional finale is pure cinematic poetry—while paying homage in virtually every frame to the pioneering work of fantasy film that is the Cooper/Schoedsack/O'Brien picture. This glorious remake is entirely deserving of the high praise it has earned from audiences, reviewers, and *Kong* purists, honouring, as it does, the beloved original without supplanting it.—*Keith Braithwaite*



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February / Février 2006 (Vol. 10, No./Nº 2)

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1:00PM-5:00PM

St-François Room, Days Inn
1005 Guy Street, Montreal

SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

1:00PM

THE STATE OF SCI-FI TV: With familiar genre series like *Enterprise* having concluded, and *Stargate SG-1* and *Smallville* nearing an end, we examine the state of televised SF/F as the torch is passed to new shows such as *Invasion*, *Surface*, *Supernatural*, and *Ghost Whisperer*.

3:00PM

STORIES TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE:

We've all heard the tale of the escaped lunatic with a hook in place of his missing hand preying upon young lovers parked in their cars. Or of monster alligators in the New York City sewer system. But are these and other such wild stories really true or just fodder for horror writers? We'll challenge you to tell which are urban legends.

NEXT MONTH'S MonSFFA MEETING:

March 26

Ray Harryhausen Retrospective

Former MonSFFA President Returns as 2006 Vice-President

A former MonSFFA president has returned to the club's executive ranks more than a decade after stepping down as the club's second president. Keith Braithwaite was elected to fill the VP position resigned by Sebastien Mineau last year.

Keith brings to the job a wealth of experience, not only as MonSFFA's president from 1989-1993, but as a once treasurer, *Warp* editor, and co-VP (with Capucine Plourde). He is currently editor of this publication and is expected to continue in that capacity while assuming his new duties as vice-president.

Returned by the electorate as president and treasurer, respectively, are Berny Reischl and Sylvain St-Pierre. Berny is MonSFFA's longest-serving president, having occupied the office since 2001. Sylvain has been our treasurer since practically the dawn of time!

We are pleased to note that our 2006 executive is the most experienced in the history of the club. We congratulate our three successful candidates and place our confidence in them as they undertake to steer the club through another winning year.

Cathy Palmer-Lister oversaw MonSFFA's 2006 elections as chief returning officer.

MonSFFen Visit Mars at January Meeting

We went to Mars on January 22, courtesy guest speakers David Shuman and Paul Simard of

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TOWNSEND, Tamu

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BURAKOFF, Mark
METHE, Ann
MOHAPEL, Charles
PELLEY, Lynda
WADSWORTH, Beulah
WALLING, René

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the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's Montreal chapter. Our group was treated to an incredible 3-D slide show the two had put together detailing the travels of NASA's Mars rovers, *Spirit* and *Opportunity*.

With 3-D glasses firmly affixed, we viewed a series of beautifully austere, rust-tinted Martian landscapes snapped by the rovers' cameras. As the slides came up, a recorded narration explained exactly what it was that we were looking at and the significance of the various finds made in the rock and soil of Earth's planetary neighbour. David and Paul chimed in, as well, with their own observations. The stereoscopic effect was striking, bringing us as close to the surface of the fabled Red Planet as we could be without actually standing there in person.

And the chance of an astronaut actually standing there in person within the next couple decades appears remote, offered our guests. The political will for such a venture seems to be absent amidst more immediate concerns like global warming, let alone the funding that would be required for a manned mission. Robotic exploration will likely remain the focus of NASA's Mars missions for the foreseeable future.

Following the mid-meeting break, MonSFFA's newly minted executive (see lead item) convened a Board of Advisors (BoA) meeting. The objective was to sound out the assembled membership on programming ideas for future meetings and receive constructive feedback regarding the club's activities. The executive plans to touch base with the

membership in this manner every few months.

Among the ideas discussed was that of a fresh group project to engage our interests. Members were asked to think about the proposal and come up with a few suggestions for our next gathering on February 19. Past such projects have included organizing and running conventions (ConCept and TransWarp), the production of a "live" radio drama, and our ongoing fan film productions.

MonSFFA thanks guest speakers David Shuman and Paul Simard for their fantastic 3-D Martian excursion, as well as those members who contributed to the planning and running of this meeting.

Briefly

- ConCept 2006 has received the green light! The con has reserved function space at its familiar Days Inn

location downtown and will unfold as a two-day event the weekend of October 14-15. Mark those dates in your calendar. Details of admission prices, hotel room rates, and guest line-up will follow. Meanwhile, the con is actively recruiting needed volunteers. Qualified individuals are sought for concom positions.

- MonSFFilms is moving to restart production soon on *Timeline*, an ambitious time-travel game-show pastiche the shooting of which was suspended last spring following delays brought about by technical and scheduling problems.

- Among the local film premieres recently co-sponsored by MonSFFA were *Underground: Evolution*, featuring a tightly leather-clad Kate Beckinsale, and the thriller *Firewall*, starring genre favourite Harrison Ford. Several club members won, by random draw, complimentary passes to these screenings.



MonSFFA's 2006 executive don special glasses in preparation for 3-D slide show at January club meeting. Left to right: Sylvain St-Pierre, Berny Reischl, Keith Braithwaite (photo by L. Moir)

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March / Mars 2006 (Vol. 10, No./Nº 3)

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Sunday, March 26

1:00PM-5:00PM

St-François Room, Days Inn
1005 Guy Street, Montreal

SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

1:00PM

ANTICIPATION WORLDCON BID:

Quick update on the latest
regarding Montreal's ongoing
WorldCon bid for 2009

2:15PM

FROM THE LAND BEYOND BEYOND:

Presentation on the stop-motion
animation art of master practitioner
Ray Harryhausen, whose fantastic
film legacy includes such classics
as *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*,
The 7th Voyage of Sinbad, *Jason
and the Argonauts*, and *The
Valley of Gwangi*. See the wonder
of Harryhausen's cinematic magic
and learn how it was done!

NEXT MONTH'S MonSFFA MEETING:

April 23

**Superman Returns:
The Man of Steel in Comics,
Radio, TV, and Film**

Four Win Toronto Trek Passes

We are pleased to officially announce the winners of MonSFFA's four complimentary weekend passes to Toronto Trek 20 this summer: Nick Krimp, Lindsay Brown, Mark Burakoff, and Maery Morrison. Congratulations and enjoy the convention!

MonSFFA received these passes from Toronto Trek last year as our prize for having won the con's video contest with our short film, *The Simpleton's Life*. To arrive at our winners, we selected by random draw two names from a list of all MonSFFA members, and two from a list of the cast and crew of *The Simpleton's Life*.

February MonSFFA Meeting

The club's February 19 meeting drew about 20 folk. Topics: urban legends and sci-fi TV.

Cathy Palmer-Lister was first up with a presentation on urban legends, some of which serve as inspiration to genre writers, forming the basis for ghost stories and tales of horror. Urban legends have circulated throughout society for generations. New tales have been added to old over the years, yarns reworked and disseminated afresh. Invariably, these friend-of-a-friend stories—as in “I heard this from a friend of a friend” (or the modern equivalent, “I got this on the Internet”)—are sufficiently vague on details as to preclude easy verification.

Alligators living in the New York City sewer system and preying upon hapless work crews. The escaped lunatic with a metal hook in place of his missing hand menacing teenagers parked in cars. And the babysitter who calls police to have them trace the origin of the menacing phone calls she's receiving every 15 minutes, only to be told that those calls are being made from the upstairs extension in the very house in which she sits. These are all classic urban legends recognized as such by most people today.

Cathy explored more recent examples, many

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WALLING, René**

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BRODEUR, Chantal
DODDS, Georges
JAMES, David T.
NOVO, Fernando
PETERS, Ernst-Udo

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involving computer viruses or the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

One particularly disgusting report told of a young girl who complained of swelling in her mouth after eating at Taco Bell. A subsequent exam by her family doctor supposedly found that a pregnant cockroach had been imbedded in her soft chicken taco, and had somehow left its eggs to incubate in the girl's mouth. A lawsuit is apparently pending.

Not!

But another case involving the intrusion of a larva into a child's eye proved to be genuine. Cathy drew attention to the Snopes.com Web site, which specializes in debunking urban legends but also, from time to time, confirms the truth of some of the stories it researches.

The Taco Bell tale is a variation on the old pregnant-insect-enters-a-person's-ear-and-bores-through-their-head story, explained Cathy. She added that fast-food and other corporations are often the victim of urban legends, and spend a lot of time denying the purported veracity of such reports. Rumours of mice having been found in beverage bottles and the like pop up regularly.

The thing about urban legends, said Cathy, is that they *seem* plausible. But if it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't. And, be wary of any claim prefaced by "this really happened" or "this is a true story."

Keith Braithwaite moderated a discussion on the state of sci-fi TV during the second half of the meeting, noting that a healthy number of the new programs premiered on the major networks last fall were genre shows, and that most were entertaining, at least, if not future sci-fi television classics. With the conclusion or pending conclusion of many of the prominent SF/F series we've been watching these past several years—*Enterprise*, *Smallville*, *Stargate SG-1*—genre audiences were anxious to see the new crop of sci-fi shows. Of these, two have already gotten the hook, and another is on shaky ground for renewal next season. But three of the fresh series seem

to have found an audience, one—*Ghost Whisperer*—having even been described by critics as a minor hit.

The *Kolchak: The Night Stalker* remake lasted only a handful of episodes before it was pulled from the schedule. While not a bad show, it was very much an *X-Files* clone. *The X-Files*, though, had done it so much better and viewers were reminded of that with every episode of *Night Stalker*.

Threshold was an ambitious stab at science fiction. It boasted an accomplished cast, including former *Star Trek* star Brent Spiner, but, it was opined, the story moved slowly and was often illogical. Too much standing in a room talking and not enough drama and action was another comment proffered.

Threshold was clearly struggling some half-dozen episodes in, as evidenced by the network moving it to another night in an attempt to boost ratings. Eventually, it disappeared altogether.

Invasion may not see a second season. While this tale of a mysterious alien intrusion (or *is it?*) is well written and *truly* creepy, the pace is a little slow for most tastes. And it's a difficult story to follow without having seen all or most of the episodes. *Invasion* thus requires a weekly commitment many viewers are unwilling to make. But it *is* worth that investment in time.

Surface, a sea monster tale, was cited by a couple of audience members as an entertaining ride, despite some rather improbable situations. The show's cunning ploy to draw viewers back each week with exciting episode-ending cliff-hangers, it was observed, was highly effective. Expect the show to surface next season.

Silly title aside, *Ghost Whisperer* has proved to be the most popular of the new genre series. It was suggested that the show's appeal is likely tied to the public's interest in the spirit world as characterized by mediums, channellers, and such. Those looking for a good scare, however, will likely be disappointed as the scenarios are not really all that spooky. *Whisperer* is

basically a feel-good family drama along the lines of *Touched by an Angel*. As such, it works well.

Supernatural is straight-up horror. The show deftly balances the scares with a sense of humour and an intriguing back-story. And the two photogenic, 20-something leads have no doubt helped make the show popular with young viewers. Cool car, too!

Meanwhile, the enigmatic *Lost*—last year's big new show—was universally praised, as were cable series like *Stargate: Atlantis* and the remade *Battlestar Galactica*.

All in all, the group concluded, SF/F on TV seems to have a promising few years ahead.

The usual thanks for this meeting.

Briefly

- Please note the following change to our 2006 MonSFFA meeting schedule: the club's October meeting has been moved from the 22nd to the 29th. Update your calendars accordingly.
- Con•Cept, back this year after last year's absence and set for Saturday and Sunday, October 14 and 15, is now thinking about adding limited programming on Friday evening, the 13th, superstitions notwithstanding. Inquiries have been made re the availability of hotel function space to accommodate this plan. Stay tuned. Meanwhile, actor Steve Bacic (*Andromeda*, *Stargate SG-1*) is Con•Cept 2006's first confirmed guest.
- Local film premieres co-sponsored by MonSFFA this month included a novel Russian-language vampire film—first of a trilogy—entitled *Night Watch*, the horror remake *The Hills Have Eyes*, and the stylish and well-received *V for Vendetta*. Several club members won complimentary passes to these screenings.
- Our best wishes for a full recovery are extended to club member Theresa Penalba, who has found herself beset by serious illness. We also wish club Treasurer Sylvain St-Pierre a speedy recovery from his recent medical procedure.

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SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

1:00PM

THE CASE FOR LIFE ON MARS:

Speculations on life on our planetary neighbour, Mars, and the likelihood of human colonization of the Red Planet.

3:00PM

ONE OF THESE THINGS IS NOT LIKE THE OTHERS:

In place of our postponed Superman panel, originally scheduled in this slot, we offer a game challenging players' general knowledge of SF/F literature, comics, and film and TV. Can you identify which of four selections does not belong with the others?

NEXT MONTH'S MonSFFA MEETING:

May 28

**The "Hot Rods"
of Science Fiction**

Programming Change, April Meeting

The demands of his job having, unfortunately, conspired to prevent scheduled panelist Bernard Reischl from readying his multi-media presentation on Superman in time for our April 23 meeting, said presentation has been postponed until later in the year, specific date still to be determined. In place of Berny's panel, we will host a game that challenges players' general knowledge of SF/F. The club apologizes for this last-minute change in the programming of our April meeting.

We thank Berny for his efforts nonetheless, and look forward to his completed presentation, exploring the Man of Steel in comics, radio, television, and film.

March MonSFFA Meeting

We drew about 20 folk to last month's club meeting, held on the 26th. The group received an update on Anticipation, Montreal's bid to host the World Science Fiction Convention, or WorldCon, in 2009, followed by a comprehensive review of the career of expert stop-motion animator Ray Harryhausen.

Noting that WorldCon bids are often won by narrow vote margins, Anticipation bid chairman René Walling—who happens also to be a member of MonSFFA—stressed to his fellow club members the importance of voting for Montreal as one's preferred 2009 site (Kansas City and Albany are the friendly competition). The vote re 2009 will take place two years prior, at Nippon 2007, the 65th WorldCon, in Yokohama, Japan. Acknowledging that an expensive trip to Japan next year to attend Nippon 2007 is probably not on for many North American fans, René explained

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PELLEY, Lynda
TOWNSEND, Tamu

**Annual membership
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**BRODEUR, Chantal
JAMES, David T.
PETERS, Ernst-Udo**

Annual membership fees will become due next month (May) from the following MonSFFA members:

**DUROCHER, Dominique
GLOVER, Wayne
MORROW, Gordon
SILVERMAN, Barbara
WHITELAW, Maureen**

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Interests / Intérêts: _____

that folk can still participate as *non-attending* members of the Japanese WorldCon and thus vote for Montreal in 2009.

Should Anticipation's bid prove successful, the site of the convention is likely to be the Palais des congrès, which, of the downtown locales currently under consideration, affords the most function space and further, would allow most activities to be centralized in a single building.

René and his team continue to promote the bid both online via Anticipation's Web site (surf to: www.anticipationsf.ca) and at conventions across North America and elsewhere. If reaction to the Montreal bid so far is any indicator, our city is viewed by many fans as a desirable travel destination.

Anticipation's pre-supporting rate stands at \$25.

The next few hours were devoted to Keith Braithwaite's extensive Ray Harryhausen retrospective. The Los Angeles-born Harryhausen, whose films include *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms* (1952), *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958), *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963), *One Million Years B.C.* (1966) and *Clash of the Titans* (1981), is fantasy cinema's consummate craftsman. Adept as a designer, conceptual and storyboard artist, and model-maker, among other of the many disciplines of filmmaking, he is best known as a maestro of stop-motion animation.

A screening of the original *King Kong* (1933) inspired a teenaged Harryhausen to become an animator. He eagerly researched the then nascent stop-motion process—sometimes called 3-D or dimensional animation—and began experimenting with the techniques that had been employed to bring Kong and the dinosaurs of Skull Island to life on screen. In a nutshell, stop-motion works like this: doll-sized

articulated models are moved incrementally and photographed frame by frame, then may be combined with live-action footage of actors to arrive at a convincing shot of prehistoric animals, mythological beasts, or imaginary monsters interacting with human beings.

While crude, Harryhausen's first stop-motion tests revealed a gift for the craft and before long, he was producing professional-quality footage featuring superbly crafted animation models playing out scenes on the wonderfully detailed miniature sets that Harryhausen had constructed in his family's garage. These reels would serve to land Harryhausen work in Hollywood, including a job, early in his career, as assistant to his hero and mentor, Willis O'Brien, the stop-motion pioneer responsible for the special effects in *King Kong*.

The visual design and subject matter of *Kong* appealed to Harryhausen, who was a fantasy fan and dinosaur enthusiast. Many of the elements of *Kong* are echoed in Harryhausen's own films, noted Keith, as he took his audience through a detailed chronology of the master animator's career, culminating in Harryhausen's receiving an Academy Award in 1991 for his "lifetime of technical excellence" in motion pictures.

Keith's presentation was copiously illustrated with slides of Harryhausen's pre-production sketches, behind-the-scenes production photos, and stills from his many films. Film clips of his awe-inspiring creatures in action were screened as well.

Harryhausen's creativity and inventiveness were unparalleled, concluded Keith. His definitive fantasy images, created on limited budgets alone in his studio without benefit of the computer-based methods commonly used in movies today, have inspired many contemporary genre filmmakers,

including leading talents George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, and Peter Jackson.

MonSFFA thanks all who contributed to the planning and running of our April meeting, in particular Wayne Glover and Berny Reischl, who provided A/V support, and last but not least, our two panelists, René Walling and Keith Braithwaite.

Briefly:

- Last issue we reported that Nick Krimp was one of our winners of a weekend pass to Toronto Trek 20 this summer. Turns out that Dominique Beaudoin is the winner of that pass as Nick bowed out just after *Impulse* went to press last month.
- MonSFFA has been approached by members of Vancouver fandom re the screening of our fan films at a meeting of the local SF/F club, and at the local con. We were pleased to forward to our sister club in Vancouver, BCSFA (British Columbia Science Fiction Association), a copy of our *MonSFFilms' Greatest Hits* DVD and have welcomed the inclusion of our films in the video program of their Con•Cept-like convention, VCON. We hope Vancouver fans enjoy *Beavra*, *MooseMan*, etc., and we await feedback.
- We expect to have a few premiere passes to the Robin Williams comedy *RV* in hand for our April 23 meeting. *RV* premieres at the Paramount Cinema, downtown, at 7:30PM on Wednesday, April 26. Passes anticipated for May: *Click* (an Adam Sandler comedy), *The Lakehouse* (a Keanu Reeves/Sandra Bullock vehicle involving time travel), *Superman Returns*, and *The da Vinci Code*. Note that while we are on the list for passes to these premieres, we are not guaranteed the tickets.

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May / Mai 2006 (Vol. 10, No./N° 5)

NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, May 28

1:00PM-5:00PM

St-François Room, Days Inn
1005 Guy Street, Montreal

SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

1:00PM

THE "HOT RODS" OF SCI-FI:

A look at some of screen
science fiction's souped up
vehicles.

2:30PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AND BOA MEETING:

We take 30 minutes for an
update of club news, and to
outline upcoming events and
meeting programming.

3:00PM

FIAWOL:

We offer a primer on SF/F
fandom in the form of a game.

**NEXT MONTH'S
MonSFFA MEETING
(Just Two Weeks
After May Meeting)**

JUNE 11

*Whither Books?
Sequels and Remakes*

MonSFFA Mail Returned in Error

The club has again experienced a problem with mail reception. It seems that at least one letter addressed to us was returned to sender with notice attached of MonSFFA having abandoned its post office box. We can affirm that this is *not* the case! MonSFFA's address remains unchanged. In fact, we recently renewed our lease on the P.O. box for another year.

We have received other pieces of mail without problem and can only assume that this particular letter was returned in error by an inattentive Canada Post employee. We have notified our post office branch of the incident and are assured that all is in order. To make sure, however, we have mailed a few letters to ourselves to test the system. Should the post office fail this test, we just might have to go...well, *postal* on 'em!

MonSFFA may recall this very same problem having occurred about a year ago. We certainly hope this isn't going to become an annual thing.

For the record, our mailing address is:

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April MonSFFA Meeting

25 or more folk attended MonSFFA's April 23 meeting. The originally scheduled presentation on Superman having been postponed at the eleventh hour until a later meeting, a quickly concocted game testing club members' arcane knowledge of SF/F was slotted in as replacement. But opening the meeting were Khoba Sysavane and Christopher Hammock, who offered their "Case for Life on Mars."

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SILVERMAN, Barbara**

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BELLEMARE, Josée
DUROCHER, Marc
MARTEL, Stéphane
NOVO, Alice
PENALBA, Theresa

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Scientific and pseudo-scientific theories of life on our planetary neighbour were discussed, including supposed proof of some Martian civilization once having thrived on the Red Planet. The photographic evidence cited in support of this infamous theory was presented to the group. While the “Face on Mars” appears to be a monumental carving of a humanoid face staring up at the stars from the planet’s surface, subsequent photos of the same area suggest that this “face” was formed by a simple trick of light falling upon a rock formation. Nonetheless, the notion of an ancient alien race having populated Mars cannot but stir the imagination of science fiction aficionados.



Face on Mars: Proof of Martian civilization?

Our imaginations are also stirred by the prospect of a manned space mission to Mars. The details of a few proposed Mars missions were outlined for the group. One bold plan involves unmanned cargo runs and landings in advance of a manned mission. The idea here is that a base would be set up on Mars in anticipation of the arrival of a crewed excursion. Robotic machines would tap the Martian environment to manufacture livable conditions for the coming astronauts and fuel for their return trip. Once established, the base could host numerous manned missions over the years.

Among the items up for grabs during the mid-meeting raffle were

passes to the Montreal premiere of the non-genre Robin Williams comedy *RV*. “Not since *Star Wars* has there been a science fiction film like *RV*,” quipped club VP Keith Braithwaite, his voice irony-tinged as he announced the inclusion of the passes as raffle prizes. Keith was presiding over the meeting in the absence of MonSFFA president Berny Reischl, who was home sick.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to our substitute programming item, a game dubbed “One of These Things is Not Like the Others” and run by Keith with help from Lindsay Brown. Two teams were formed and challenged to identify which of four selections from a series of groups did not belong with the others for obvious—and sometimes not so obvious—reasons. The game drew from SF/F literature, film and television, and comics. A sample question: Which of these four actresses does not belong with the others?—Teri Hatcher, Kristin Kreuk, Noel Neill, Margot Kidder. Answer: Kristin Kreuk, who plays Lana Lang on *Smallville*. The others all played Lois Lane in various screen adaptations of the Superman story. (See sidebar to sample a few more of the game’s questions.)

Thanks to our panelists and game hosts for handling the afternoon’s programming. A nod, as well, to all who helped plan and run this meeting, with a special tip of the hat to Gord Morrow for stocking our snack table with some two dozen tasty hotdogs.

Briefly:

- Keith Braithwaite, accompanied by Charles Mohapel, took his Ray Harryhausen slideshow on the road last month, having accepted an invitation from OSFS, the Ottawa Science Fiction Society, to present his retrospective of the master stop-motion animator’s career. MonSFFen had enjoyed Keith’s presentation at our March club meeting.

One of These Things is Not Like the Others

Can you identify which of the four selections in each of these groups obviously does not belong with the others? Answers below.

- 1: A) The Promise of Space
B) Prelude to Space
C) The Fountains of Paradise
D) Childhood’s End.
- 2: A) The Legion of Super-Heroes
B) The Teen Titans
C) The Lensmen
D) The Avengers
- 3: A) Tales of the Unexpected
B) Tales from the Crypt
C) Weird Science
D) Crime Suspense Stories
- 4: A) Anasazi
B) Opus Dei
C) Excelsis Dei
D) F. Emasculata
- 5: A) Soylent Green
B) Planet of the Apes [original]
C) The Omega Man
D) Logan’s Run
- 6: A) The Whisperer in the Darkness
B) The Dunwich Horror
C) The Mask of Cthulhu
D) The Shadow out of Time

Answers: 1: All four titles are by Arthur C. Clarke but “A” is non-fiction while the others are fiction. / 2: All but “C” are comic book superhero teams; the Lensmen are the literary creation of E. E. “Doc” Smith. / 3: “A” is a DC Comics title while the others were published by EC Comics. / 4: “B” is the name of a Catholic prelatore featured in *The Da Vinci Code* while the others are titles of *X-Files* episodes. / 5: All but “D” are science fiction films starring Charlton Heston. / 6: All but “C” are stories by H.P. Lovecraft, part of his Cthulhu mythos; *The Mask of Cthulhu* was penned by devout Lovecraft admirer August W. Derleth, writing in Lovecraft’s universe.

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June / Juin 2006 (Vol. 10, No./Nº 6)

NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, June 11

11:00AM-5:00PM

St-François Room, Days Inn
1005 Guy Street, Montreal

SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

11:00AM

MONSFFILMS PRODUCTION

MEETING: Planning meeting of the club's film division; all members interested in having fun making fan films welcome.

1:00PM

WHITHER BOOKS?: With fewer folk reading these days, and more watching screen-centered content, are books on their way out as a popular medium?

3:00PM

SEQUELS AND REMAKES: While we often deride Hollywood's unholy penchant for sequels and remakes —and with good reason!—when is it acceptable to rehash a film or TV series?

NEXT MONTH: MonSFFA BBQ 2006

July 30

(Details next page: "MonSFFA's Annual BBQ Set For End of July")

Ottawa Fans Welcomed to May MonSFFA Meeting

About 25 folk were in attendance at the club's May 28 meeting, including a contingent of Ottawa fans—members of OSFS, the Ottawa Science Fiction Society—who had travelled to Montreal to visit MonSFFA.

A few system bugs had to be worked out before the meeting's lead presentation, on sci-fi's coolest "hotrods," could begin, so the afternoon's programme was shuffled. Parking the hotrods while misters Scott and La Forge ran a level-three diagnostic on their software, we opened instead with a screening of recent second-season *Doctor Who* episodes, these in place of the fannish game that was listed as the meeting closer. Said game, however, had been incorrectly slated as part of our May meeting's agenda (it is planned, in fact, for November). Thankfully, the good Doctor was able to step in at the last minute to fill the bill.

Our mid-afternoon BoA (Board of Advisors) meeting was held as scheduled but trimmed from its originally allotted 30 to a quick few minutes. We took this brief time to update our meeting programming for the remainder of the year, rescheduling a few items, dropping a couple, and adding anew.

The meeting recessed for 10 minutes during which our usual raffle was held, various announcements of interest to MonSFFen made, and a gift bestowed upon our own Keith Braithwaite by the OSFS folk as thanks for his having brought his Ray Harryhausen retrospective to their club meeting the previous month.

A workable fix having now been made to his file, Fernando "Fern" Novo was ready to present to the group his slideshow on sci-fi hotrods. Fern had assembled hundreds of design sketches, blueprints, and photos of the science fiction genre's many souped-up vehicles. These included not only speedsters like Mad Max's super-charged *Road Warrior* interceptor and the

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deadly transcontinental racers of *Death Race 2000*, but such all-terrain vehicles as the 6-wheeled mobile laboratory of the post-apocalyptic future depicted in the



1966 Batmobile

short-lived 1970s SF TV series *Ark II*. Certain spacecraft, as well, fit Fern's broader definition of a hotrod, probably the best known of these being Han Solo's swift *Millennium Falcon*.

Fern offered tidbits of behind-the-scenes information on each of the vehicles he showcased. The imposing super-charger on Max's interceptor, for example, was, in fact, non-functional, and *Ark II*'s titular vehicle was made of fiberglass modules affixed to a garbage/dump truck chassis.

An existing car or truck is often modified, explained Fern, to arrive at the fictional vehicle required for a television series or film. *Knight Rider*'s computerized super car, K.I.T.T. (Knight Industries Two Thousand), is a customized 1982 Pontiac Trans-Am. Less recognizable after its conversion into the APC (Armoured Personnel Carrier) used by the Colonial Marines in *Aliens* is a special heavy-duty tractor once employed at Heathrow Airport to tow jumbo jets.

In some cases, vehicles are built from scratch, as was *Damnation Alley*'s Landmaster, an articulated ATV with a unique arrangement of 12 wheels mounted in four triangular assemblies that allowed the 11-ton vehicle to easily maneuver on rough terrain, and in sand, mud, or water. The Landmaster, built by Hollywood car customizer Dean Jeffries, proved rather more interesting to watch than the movie in which it was featured!

Jeffries and the famous "King of Kustomizers," George Barris, were responsible for television's most memorable vehicles of the 1960s, including the Green Hornet's Black Beauty and the most celebrated of Barris' designs, the 1966

Batmobile. A hefty Ford V-8 rocketed Adam West and Burt Ward to the scene of the crime each week in this modified 1955 Lincoln Futura concept car. Barris' Batmobile was equipped with an array of crime-fighting accessories, including a chain/cable cutter, battering ram (Bat-Ram), and a lever with which to release

a pair of drag 'chutes and execute an "Emergency Bat-Turn." Barris' shop also supplied the Munsters with their wheels. The family Koach was made from three Model T Ford bodies and fitted with a 289 Cobra mill lifted from a 1966 Mustang GT. Grandpa Munster's Drag-U-La, meanwhile, was literally a coffin on wheels powered by a 390ci engine. Zoom Zoom!

Scale models are employed, as well, to represent sci-fi vehicles. British television producer Gerry Anderson's many genre series featured a variety of tricked-out cars and trucks like the SPV (Spectrum Pursuit Vehicle) and Joe 90's jet-car (capable of land, sea, and air travel). Time, unfortunately, did not permit Fern to showcase Anderson's numerous hotrods but he promises a future presentation focusing on these alone.

Our usual thanks to all who helped plan and run this meeting, with special nods to club president Berny Reischl, who provided the *Doctor Who* episodes, and featured panelist Fernando Novo.

MonSFFA's Annual BBQ Set For End of July

The club will again host a summer barbecue open to all MonSFFA members and their families and friends. We plan to occupy our usual spot at Parc Angrignon in Lasalle. Look for us on the picnic grounds behind the Angrignon Metro Station a few hundred feet from the parking lot adjacent the park's petting zoo.

The event is scheduled for Sunday, July 30. We expect to set up around 10:30AM and enjoy a relaxing day at the park. Bring your own food and drink; the

club will supply a cooking grill. Should the weather prove inclement, we have selected the following Sunday, August 6, as our rain date.

MonSFFA Members Invited to OSFS BBQ

Speaking of summer barbecues, we pass on to our membership an invitation from the Ottawa Science Fiction Society to attend their annual barbecue in Ottawa on Sunday, July 2, beginning at 2:00PM. Bring your own hamburgers and hotdogs; a cooking grill will be provided.

Location: 3922 Richmond Road, Unit E. Directions: west on Richmond Road to Al's Steak House, at which point Richmond veers left. Continue for approximately one kilometer. Watch for townhouses on left and look for large sign marked "OSFS" positioned near sidewalk. Park on east side of street, enter Unit E through open garage and proceed to backyard.

Note that MonSFFA is not in a position to provide group transportation to Ottawa; MonSFFA members thinking of attending are responsible for arranging their own rides.

Briefly:

- A couple of lucky MonSFFA members won premiere passes, by random draw, to the Montreal premiere of *The Da Vinci Code* last month. Others enjoyed either the English or French premiere of the third X-Men movie, *X-Men: The Last Stand*. MonSFFA is often a co-sponsor of local genre movie premieres and as such receives complimentary passes to distribute to club members.
- MonSFFA has added a fund-raising auction to its 2006 calendar; the club's September 17 meeting will include said auction. Set aside a few extra dollars to bid on items! All funds raised will be directed to defraying the club's operating costs. MonSFFA members wishing to donate to the cause SF/F books, videos and DVDs, collectibles, etc. are asked to bring these in to the club's June 11 or August 20 meetings.

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July / Juillet 2006 (Vol. 10, No./Nº 7)

MonSFFA BBQ IS THIS WEEKEND

SUNDAY, JULY 30

10:30AM-4:00PM

Parc Angrignon, Lasalle



MonSFFA members,
their families and
friends invited!

Bring your own chairs
or picnic blankets, food
and drink—we'll supply
a cooking grill.

If rained out, event
rescheduled for following
Sunday, August 6,
same time, place.

MonSFFA MEETING SCHEDULE
RESUMES AUGUST 20

*HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS: Sci-Fi
Model-Building, Costuming,
Crafting, Computer Graphics*

Annual MonSFFA BBQ Set For Sunday, July 30

The club will again host a summer barbecue open to all MonSFFA members and their families and friends. Said barbecue is scheduled for Sunday, July 30. Should inclement weather prevail on that day, the event will be postponed one week, until the following Sunday, August 6.

We expect to occupy our traditional spot at Parc Angrignon in Lasalle. Look for us on the picnic grounds behind the Angrignon Metro Station a few hundred feet from the parking lot adjacent the park's petting zoo (see map, left).

We plan to commandeer a few picnic tables and set up around 10:30AM. Bring your own food and drink; the club will supply a cooking grill.

Join us for a relaxing day at the park.

June MonSFFA Meeting

25 or so folk were on hand for the club's June 11 meeting, programming for which included our revisiting of a spirited discussion we had held at a previous meeting. We again explored issues regarding the measure of reading in modern society and asked whether on-screen pleasures such as movies and video games have usurped the written word as entertainment.

Panelists Cathy Palmer-Lister, Yolande Rufiange, and Keith Braithwaite moderated the debate, which proved as lively this second time around as it had been the first. With every opinion proffered, hands shot up requesting the floor to either support or, more often, challenge the speaker!

DOES YOUR NAME APPEAR
BELOW? WATCH THIS SPACE
TO KNOW IF YOUR ANNUAL
MonSFFA MEMBERSHIP
FEES ARE DUE.

The annual membership fees of the following MonSFFA members are overdue:

DUROCHER, Marc
MARTEL, Stéphane
NOVO, Alice

Annual membership
fees are due this
month (July) from
the following MonSFFA
members:

Ø

Annual membership fees will become due next month (August) from the following MonSFFA members:

BRAITHWAITE, Keith
KRIMP, Nick
MAGNUSSEN, Colleen
MOIR, Dorothy
MOIR, L. E.

Please renew your MonSFFA membership in timely fashion. Annual dues are \$25. Fill out the membership application form, bottom of page, include cheque or money order, made out to MonSFFA, and mail to:

MonSFFA
P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc
Montreal, Québec
H2X 4A7

If you have already done so, ignore this notice. We thank you for renewing your membership in MonSFFA, Montreal's premiere SF/F fan club.

MonSFFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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While statistics suggest that fewer people are reading these days, it was postulated that readers, perhaps put off by the high price of books, have moved to the Web. Fan fiction was brought up. The many Web sites dedicated to fan fiction are a font of fresh genre material for the reader seeking greater variety than is generally available at a typical bookstore. But fan fiction is merely a niche, came the counter-argument, serving those who yearn for more, *more* of a favourite established character or storyline than is obtainable commercially. And let's not forget that so very much of fan fiction is utter garbage, it was opined. True also of the professionally published stuff was the retort—Sturgeon's Law! This got the group off on a bit of a tangent discussing really bad novels read and actually *enjoyed* for no other reason than their laughable plotting and prose.

It was then put forth that the decline of specialty bookshops, like Montreal's now-defunct SF/F oasis, Nebula Books, has contributed to the decline in reading. Big book retailers like Chapters cater to the mainstream and thus niche interests are ill served, with little diversity and fewer titles stocked than might be found in a smaller specialty shop. And, it was added, staffers at the big bookstores are rarely as knowledgeable about a given genre as are the folk working in a shop devoted to that genre. As well, big retailers provide scant opportunity to discover new writers.

Some audience members cited the failure of our schools to instill in youth a passion for reading. Much of today's entertainment is image-based, added others, delivered to youngsters on a screen of some kind—home computers, video games, DVDs.

Words on a page seem rather quaint by comparison.

Another angle explored was the tempo of modern life, quicker than in decades past, it was noted, thanks in large part to technology. People have become conditioned accordingly. Attention spans are shorter, for instance. We have precious little time to enjoy a good book so instead, we'll catch a quick movie. The idea of leisurely reading a book is alien to many today. And yet, that leisurely read is so very rewarding, avowed several audience members. There is much the written word can convey that a picture cannot. Said picture is often *not* worth the proverbial thousand words. We are definitely missing out when we do not take the time to curl up and enjoy a good book.

The latter part of the meeting was dedicated to a critique of contemporary Hollywood's many sequels and remakes. Keith Braithwaite led the discussion and the group began by speculating on why so many producers choose to rework or serialize existing properties rather than introduce fresh material. Listed were those rare examples of worthy sequels and remakes—*Aliens*, *The Thing*, *King Kong*, to name a few. In the end, the discussion boiled down to those few reasons that justify the production of a sequel or remake. The group concluded that a sequel should only be made if the original tale is furthered by means of exploring a completely different story angle. And a remake is warranted only if an essentially good story that was poorly told the first time is “done right,” or if the “reimagining” of an existing film provides the opportunity to apply the superior production values and convincing visual effects that the original lacked.

The MonSFFilms team gathered about an hour before the meeting to plan for restarting production on their *Timeline* project, begun last spring. The full-scale sets initially conceived and built having proven problematic in early shooting, the crew decided to start from scratch utilizing miniature sets. Actors will be shot against a green-screen and this footage composited with footage of the miniatures.

Our thanks to all who helped plan and run this meeting, with a special nod to our panelists.

Briefly:

- MonSFFA members recently enjoyed the local premieres of *Superman Returns*, *My Super Ex-Girlfriend* and M. Night Shyamalan's latest supernatural thriller, *Lady in the Water*. As a co-sponsor of many local genre movie premieres, MonSFFA often receives a number of complimentary passes to distribute to lucky club members.
- A healthy contingent of MonSFFen enjoyed the 20th anniversary edition of Toronto Trek early in July. We sold off much of our overstock of raffle/auction items at the con and are pleased to report that some \$200 was raised for a special party we are planning in celebration of MonSFFA's own 20th anniversary next year.
- Reminder: MonSFFA has added a fund-raising auction to its 2006 calendar; the club's September 17 meeting will include said auction. Set aside a few extra dollars to bid on items! All funds raised will be directed to defraying the club's operating costs. MonSFFen wishing to donate to the cause SF/F books, videos and DVDs, collectibles, etc. are asked to bring these in to the club's August 20 meeting.

Impulse is put together monthly by Keith Braithwaite on behalf of MonSFFA. An e-version is available on MonSFFA's Web site courtesy Kurt Schmidt. Contact Keith in regards to this publication by any of the following methods:

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MONTRÉLAISE DE
SCIENCE-FICTION ET
DE FANTASTIQUE

August / Août 2006 (Vol. 10, No./Nº 8)

NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, August 20

11:00AM-5:00PM

St-François Room, Days Inn
1005 Guy Street, Montreal

SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

11:00AM

BOA MEETING: A quick Board of Advisors meeting is planned to make adjustments to meeting programming for the remainder of the year.

1:00PM

HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS: We've prepared a number of workshops on various SF/F-themed crafts. After a brief introduction of each, we'll break off into groups to learn the how-to's of costuming, scale model-making, computer graphics, wood burning, beading—pretty much everything but the kitchen sink! The entire afternoon is devoted to these workshops, so there'll plenty of time for members to explore *all* of this SF/F-themed *creative crafting!*

NEXT MONTH'S MONSFFA MEETING:

SEPTEMBER 17

Fund-Raising Auction

Perfect Weather Blesses MonSFFA BBQ

MonSFFA held it's annual summer barbecue this year on Sunday, July 30, at our usual locale, Parc Angrignon in Lasalle. Some two dozen club members and their families and friends enjoyed a warm, sunny day moderated by a gentle, cool breeze. We could not have asked for better weather!

Our group occupied several picnic tables under a copse of shady trees adjacent a wide expanse of meadow. Conversation revolved around some aspect or other of SF/F as we shared a spread of summery salads, snacks, and refreshments while hamburgers and hotdogs sizzled on the grill. A few folk had their young children in tow and the kids pursued each other across the field in an improvised game of tag, or joined the circle of MonSFFen tossing a *U.S.S. Enterprise* Frisbee about. Afternoon wind conditions proved favourable for the launching of a couple of small, battery-powered radio-controlled airplanes supplied by Mark Burakoff. Kids young and old took turns at the stick and piloted these featherweight craft far and high, just missing, on a couple of flights, crashing into nearby trees or splashing down in a small lake. Several of our complement capped the day with a visit to Parc Angrignon's petting zoo, just a stone's throw from the picnic grounds.

MonSFFA's 2006 Summer Barbecue was a wonderfully fun and relaxing day at the park for all in attendance.

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MARTEL, Stéphane

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**BRAITHWAITE, Keith
KRIMP, Nick
MAGNUSSEN, Colleen
MOIR, Dorothy
MOIR, L. E.**

Annual membership fees will become due next month (September) from the following MonSFFA members:

ASPLER, Joseph
NADEAU, Marc

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In thanking everyone who turned out, we offer a special nod of appreciation to club president Berny Reischl for again organizing the event, as well as a nod to those members who pitched in to help.

Hazy, Lazy Days of Summer

We expect that our many members and friends are enjoying these hazy, lazy days of summer. With the warm weather comes Montreal's many festivals, days spent at the pool or beach, evenings quaffing a cold one sitting under the awning of a downtown *terrasse*, and of course, vacation. We at MonSFFA headquarters are no less inclined to take it easy during the summer months and for this reason, we trust you will understand that things move a little less quickly than usual over the July-August period. We do not

anticipate participating in any of our regular movie premieres, for example, until, probably, mid- to late-September. The club's Web page likely will not be routinely updated during the summer, and applications for membership or membership renewals received at our P.O. box *may* take a bit longer than usual to process. Rest assured, however, that our team of volunteer-organizers *will* attend to these and other duties just as quickly as their summer schedules permit.



MonSFFen gathered in Parc Angrignon on July 30 for club's annual barbecue (Photo, Sylvain St-Pierre)

costs. MonSFFen wishing to donate to the auction SF/F booty such as books and comics, videos and DVDs, collectibles, etc. are asked to bring these in to the club's August 20 meeting.

- The weekend following the club's Parc Angrignon barbecue (see lead item), MonSFFAn Wayne Glover hosted what has become an annual pool party for club members wishing to *further* enjoy what summer has to offer. A good time was had by all.

- We've received positive response to the recent interview with MonSFFA president Berny Reischl published in the *Montreal Mirror* and expect to welcome a few new members to our ranks as a result. Berny trumpeted the club to the *Mirror* reporter, offering that one of MonSFFA's strengths is the hands-on creativity of its members and an infectious sense of fun. *Yay us!*

Briefly:

- Reminder: MonSFFA has added a small fund-raising auction to its 2006 calendar. A portion of the club's September 17 meeting has been designated for this purpose. Set aside a few extra dollars to bid on items! All funds raised will be directed to defraying the club's operating



Mark Burakoff preps RC plane for flight as Lindsay Brown, Danny Sichel look on (Photo, Sylvain St-Pierre)

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October / Octobre 2006 (Vol. 10, No./Nº 10)

NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, October 29

1:00PM-5:00PM

St-François Room, Days Hotel
1005 Guy Street, Montreal

SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

1:00PM

FEEDBACK SESSION: We provide for an attendees' feedback session on both RoyalCon and Con•Cept for the benefit of the organizers of each event. Constructive comment is welcomed.

1:45PM

STAR WARS Pictionary: We'll play a *Star Wars*-themed edition of the popular parlour game.

3:00PM

STAR WARS EN DIRECT: Our members are invited to participate in a live broadcast of the fan-produced Internet radio program *Star Wars en Direct*. Discussion topics will include the planned *Star Wars* TV series and fan fears of the cancellation-happy Fox network pulling the plug on the show after only a few episodes.

**NEXT MONTH'S
MONSFFA MEETING:
NOVEMBER 19**

Days Hotel Hosts Two Local Cons Within A Month

The downtown Days Hotel has, for over a decade, served as the locale for many area SF/F events, including MonSFFA's monthly meetings. Most recently, the hotel hosted two local cons within a month of each other, which can only bolster the facility's standing as Montreal's SF/F meeting place.

RoyalCon

On Saturday and Sunday, September 23 and 24, the hotel welcomed a new fan-run gaming convention to the local scene. RoyalCon successfully unfolded that weekend, entertaining by early estimates over 250 gamers. In addition to the wide variety of game play scheduled, the con also featured guest speakers, a dealers' room, and a well-stocked con suite.

MonSFFA was pleased to attend RoyalCon and we thank our promotional booth crew—Keith Braithwaite, Fernando Novo, Barbara Silverman, and Maureen Whitelaw—for helping to advance the club at this new convention.

RoyalCon chair Christopher Hammock, who happens to be a member of MonSFFA, tells us that the con was well received and covered its costs. We congratulate Chris and his concom on the premiere edition of RoyalCon and look forward to a sophomore edition in 2007, which, indeed, we are told is in the works.

Con•Cept

This year's installment of the long-running Con•Cept took place over the weekend of October 13-15 at the familiar Days Hotel, which has been Con•Cept's home for many years. The popular, fan-friendly con, known for interesting and entertaining English- and French-language panel programming among other things, drew folk from as far away as Norway! About 300 people, by some estimates—perhaps a few less—were onsite. (Official attendance numbers and financial information have yet to be released.)

Honoured guests included 2006 Hugo-winning author

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KRIMP, Nick
MAGNUSSEN, Colleen

**Annual membership
fees are due this month
(October) from the
following MonSFFA
members:**

Ø

Annual membership fees will become due next month (November) from the following MonSFFA members:

BLAIS, Annie
PALMER-LISTER, Cathy
REISCHL, Bernard
RUIFIANGE, Yolande
RUIZ-DIAS, Karina

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E-mail / Courriel: _____

Interests / Intérêts: _____

Robert Charles Wilson (*Darwinia*, *Blind Lake*, *Spin*); acclaimed Quebec SF/F writer Élisabeth Vonarburg (*Reine de Mémoire* series); actor Steve Bacic (*Andromeda*, *StarGate SG-1*, *Blade*, *The X-Files*) and director David Winning (*Earth: Final Conflict*, *Andromeda*, *StarGate Atlantis*); Ottawa-based independent filmmaker Brett Kelly (*The Bonesetter*, *The Feral Man*, *My Dead Girlfriend*); and perennial Con•Cept MC Larry Stewart.

Con•Cept again succeeded in packing a whole lot of fun into a full weekend, offering attendees no less than *four* tracks of hourly programming, a dealers' room, collectibles auction, Con•Cept's signature "Sci-Fi Garage Sale" (attendees are given the opportunity to sell a small number of their collectible items through the auspices of the con), an art show, model competition, displays of fancraft, a masquerade, dance, and con suite. The con's "chat room," an innovation this year, provided table space for small groups of fans to launch a fanzine or self-published book, for example, or get together for a discussion, gaming session, or special interest group meeting.

MonSFFA booked a promotional table at Con•Cept, from behind which our crew talked up the club and sold MonSFFA memberships, MonSFFilms DVDs, and back issues of *Warp* to the tune of \$170 worth. The club thanks those MonSFFen who staffed our table: Keith Braithwaite, Fernando Novo, Barbara Silverman, and Josée Bellemare. And, we offer a special nod of thanks to member Alice Novo's young son, Alex, who helped out at the table for a few hours.

Con•Cept attendees are often effusive in their praise of the con's always-fun, packed schedule and friendly atmosphere, and the crowd this year was no different. It is this, probably more than any other factor, that consistently rates Con•Cept a great party for so many con-goers.

The convention, however, has been chronically understaffed for many years and from time to time, *acutely* understaffed. Con•Cept now faces an uncertain future as few local fans have stepped up to replace seasoned concom members who have either scaled back their involvement or gafiated after years of service to the con. Chair Cathy Palmer-Lister, who has helmed

Con•Cept for longer than she considers wise, is the most recent to retreat, indicating that she will not return as chair. We applaud her tireless dedication to Con•Cept while appealing to local fans—particularly those with the necessary skills and experience—to become involved in the planning and running of the con, as did MonSFFA a half-dozen years ago following the cancellation of Con•Cept 2000. The scrubbing of the con in 2000 was but one of several instances over the years that saw the event cancelled as a result of local fandom's apathy. We may well see present circumstances dictate the same again, *and perhaps for good*, which would be an awful shame.

MonSFFA Fund-Raiser Nets Club Over \$450

A MonSFFilms production meeting opened the club's well attended September 17 gathering, which was otherwise entirely devoted to MonSFFA's annual fund-raiser.

Fabrication of scale-models for the film unit's *TimeLine* project was the focus of this production meeting. *TimeLine* writer/director Keith Braithwaite outlined the process by which footage of actors would be laid over background plates of miniature sets to arrive at a convincing composite of the script's characters stepping in and out of a time machine during a futuristic TV game show. Keith produced design sketches of the sets and set pieces required and the club's model-makers were charged with the construction of these. It is expected that filming on the project will begin early in the new year.

Our fund-raiser followed, beginning with a raffle and moving presently to an SF/F collectibles auction. Over 40 lots were on the block. Items included numerous videos and DVDs, T-shirts, toys, games, model kits, posters, and books. Unique SF/F-themed articles hand-crafted by MonSFFA members were offered along with such collectibles as a reproduction of the One Ring and a Ferengi shot glass, the latter procured from Las Vegas' Star Trek Experience.

\$80, paid for a DVD set of the complete original *Battlestar: Galactica* television series, was the afternoon's highest winning bid. Other high bids ranged between \$18

and \$36. The average bid worked out to just over \$8. The auction netted \$362 for the club!

"Bargain Table" sales of paperback books, magazines, movie memorabilia, etc. were ongoing throughout the meeting and increased the afternoon's tally by a few dollars more. In all, our 2006 MonSFFA fund-raiser added over \$450 to the club's coffers.

We thank, first of all, those members and friends of MonSFFA who donated items to the cause, as well as those who bid on these items. Thanks, also, to our auctioneer, Keith Braithwaite, runner Lindsay Brown, and cashier Mark Burakoff.

Beavra Elron Award-Winner

MonSFFan René Walling returned from V-Con, Vancouver's SF/F convention, earlier this month with news of an award for *Beavra*, MonSFFA's 2003 fan film. *Impulse* readers may recall that a copy of *Beavra* was mailed to Vancouver fans this past summer for viewing at a meeting of the local SF/F club and at V-Con.

René, on behalf of the V-Con folk, presented the "Elron Award" to MonSFFA at Con•Cept 2006 in the presence of MonSFFA president and *Beavra* editor Berny Reischl and club vice-president and *Beavra* writer/director Keith Braithwaite. The tongue-in-cheek Elron Award honours annually the "worst" in science fiction and celebrates all that is cheesiest about the genre. The award is, appropriately, a bronzed lemon set atop a paperback edition of one of John Norman's *Gor* novels.

Officially accepting the Elron on behalf of MonSFFA was *Beavra* himself, in the form of a hand puppet scheduled to star in the upcoming *Beavra* sequel, *Beavra Las Vegas*.

Our thanks to the V-Con committee for the "honour." *Beavra* can now be legitimately advertised as a *multiple* award-winning film! We plan to produce an explanatory plaque to accompany the award and proudly display it at club functions.

Condolences

MonSFFA extends sincere sympathies to club member Nick Krimp and his family on the passing in August of Roland Krimp, Nick's beloved father.

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November / Novembre 2006 (Vol. 10, No./Nº 11)

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Sunday, November 19

11:00AM-5:00PM
St-François Room, Days Hotel
1005 Guy Street, Montreal

SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

11:00AM

BOA MEETING: All club members are welcome to participate in this Board of Advisors meeting, at which we'll begin planning next year's MonSFFActivities.

1:00PM

FANDOM: A SUB-CULTURE: We examine the constantly evolving community of science fiction fans commonly known as fandom.

2:30PM

FAN FILMS: We revisit our exploration of the fan film phenomenon, offering various recent and classic examples for your viewing pleasure.

NEXT MONTH:

MonSFFA's
Christmas Celebrations
(Dinner and Party)

DECEMBER 9

(Details Next Issue)

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

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DUROCHER, Marc
KRIMP, Nick
MAGNUSSEN, Colleen

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BLAIS, Annie
PALMER-LISTER, Cathy
REISCHL, Bernard
RUFIANGE, Yolande
RUIZ-DIAZ, Karina

Annual membership fees will become due next month (December) from the following MonSFFA members:

GAUDET, Jacques
LUPIEN, Denise
LUPIEN, Leslie

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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.

Briefly:

● MonSFFA welcomes suggestions from members as to a downtown restaurant at which the club may hold its annual Christmas dinner. 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 (details next issue).

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OF THE MONTREAL
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AND FANTASY
ASSOCIATION

LE BULLETIN
D'INFORMATION
DE L'ASSOCIATION
MONTRÉALAISE DE
SCIENCE-FICTION ET
DE FANTASTIQUE

December / Decembre 2006 (Vol. 10, No./N° 12)

REMINDER TO CLUB MEMBERS AND FRIENDS:

MonSFFA's 2006 Christmas
Celebrations
are this Weekend

**SATURDAY EVENING
DECEMBER 9**

DINNER, 6:00-7:30PM

Guido & Angelina's
AMC Forum
2313 rue Ste-Catherine Ouest
(corner Atwater)
Telephone: 514-228-5225

PARTY, 8:00PM

Park Place Bar
1244 rue Mackay
(downtown, between
Ste-Catherine and
René-Lévesque)

*As is our tradition, we will
be collecting toys and items of
non-perishable food for donation
to Sun Youth's Christmas Basket
Drive. In the spirit of the season,
please give to benefit those less
fortunate in our community.*

**NEXT MONSFFA MEETING:
Sunday, January 21, 2007**

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!

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.

Watch this space for further details.

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

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MINEAU, Sebastien
NOËL, Kim
SMITH, Garry

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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.

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



MonSFFA takes
this opportunity
to wish all of its
members and
friends the very
best of the festive
season, and health
and happiness in
the New Year.

...

Happy Christmas to
all, and to all a
good night



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.

Briefly:

- Local movie premieres co-sponsored by MonSFFA recently include the hit comedy *Borat*, the time-warping *The Fountain*, and the horror thriller *Turistas*.
- MonSFFA's own Charles Mohapel, who has snapped many a WorldCon masquerade, often as official photographer, oversaw 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. Cool! We all look forward to seeing the final result.

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