

## I M P U L S E

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

April / Avril 2026 (Vol. 29, No./N° 4)

**NEXT  
CLUB MEETING:  
SATURDAY,  
APRIL 11****1:00PM-5:00PM****Le Nouvel Hotel**  
1740 Boul. René-Lévesque O.  
(corner St-Mathieu)**Salle Faubourg**  
(South "Condo" Tower)**And Simultaneously on ZOOM  
at: [www.MonSFFA.ca](http://www.MonSFFA.ca)****MEETING THEME:** *Come to the meeting with your comedic sensibilities honed for mockery of the material as we emulate MST3K; on this occasion, it will be perfectly acceptable to call out remarks during a movie screening!***APRIL'S AGENDA INCLUDES:**

- **MONSFFA'S OWN MST3K!**—MST3K (Mystery Science Theatre 3000) was a TV comedy series that featured characters compelled to watch cheesy, really bad, sci-fi B-movies. During the screenings of these films, they would comment aloud with droll, pithy remarks mocking plots, acting, special effects, etc. We'll have some fun doing much the same!
- **THE TITANIC IN SCI-FI**—On this date in 1912, the ocean liner RMS Titanic set out from Ireland on the final leg of her doomed maiden voyage, inspiring many a tale across numerous genres, including science fiction and fantasy. We'll look at SF&F's take on the legendary ship.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**Saturday, May 9:** Club Meeting  
**Saturday, June 6:** Club Field Trip  
**Sunday, July 12:** BBQ-in-the-Park  
*Dates Subject to Change*

**CLUB'S JUNE FIELD  
TRIP: WHERE TO GO?**

Each June, MonSFFA ventures away from our meeting hall on a field trip, visiting museums, exhibitions, and such.

In past years, we have visited Montreal's Biodôme, for example, and several of the city's museums to take in special exhibitions on medieval knights, dinosaurs, ILM, the art of the Disney Animation Studios, and aviation. We've also car-pooled to Ottawa on a few occasions to visit the many national museums in our country's Capitol.

We generally select a destination that offers some element of science, technology, history, or art, especially when some even tangential aspect of SF/F is a part.

The club seeks from MonSFFen suggestions as to a destination for this year's field trip, which is scheduled for Saturday, June 6. Send us an e-mail ([president@monsffa.ca](mailto:president@monsffa.ca)) or tell us of your suggestion in person at an upcoming club event. At our May meeting, the membership will review the suggestions offered and by vote, make their selection.

**CLUB RETURNS TO  
DOWNTOWN LOCALE  
WITH MARCH MEETING!**

With our March club meeting on the 14th, we returned to our downtown function space at the Nouvel Hotel. The worst of winter is over, so regular club meetings will take place at the hotel for the rest of the year. Out-of-towners, of course, can still take part online as we always set up for a ZOOM-chat.

Technical issues with the room's electrical system, which kept our projector from working properly, stymied us initially, but we managed a work-round that got things fixed.

We welcomed a number of first-timers, and were pleased to see again some familiar faces, absent for too long! On our March agenda: *Alien*, architecture, and ESP!

**HAVE  
YOU PAID YOUR  
ANNUAL MonSFFA  
MEMBERSHIP FEES?**

**Check Here to See if Your Annual Membership Fees Are Due, Overdue, or Soon Due (Note: Based on Most Recent Membership List Update; May Not Reflect Very Latest Renewals):**

Fees Due Last Month, March:  
**NONE**

Fees Due This Month, April:  
**NONE**

Fees Due Next Month, May:  
**BROWN, Lindsay**  
**BURAKOFF, Mark**  
**MACE, Isis**  
**MOORE, Moses**

Standard membership is only \$35 annually. We offer a family rate of \$50. Add \$10 to either in order to enjoy our premium "Platinum" membership level. Please complete the form below, include payment (cheque or money order made out to "MonSFFA"), and mail to:

**MonSFFA, c/o**  
**29 Harold**  
**Kirkland, Québec, Canada**  
**H9J 1R7**

**MonSFFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

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

**AMonSFF FORMULAIRE D'INSCRIPTION**

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

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

ADDRESS/ADRESSE: \_\_\_\_\_  
No. & Street/N° et Rue Apt./App. City/Ville

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

Charles El Rahi opened proceedings with his examination of the *Alien* franchise, focusing primarily on the conception of Ridley Scott's seminal 1979 sci-fi/horror film, which introduced one of science fiction's most terrifying space monsters, designed by Swiss surrealist painter and sculptor H. R. Giger. The artist's "biomechanical" style was a unique mix of organic and machine-like elements.

Charles traced the evolution of *Alien*'s screenplay, at one point called *Star Beast*, beginning with the seeds of writer Dan O'Bannon's story idea. With colleague John Carpenter, O'Bannon had made the film *Dark Star* (1974), a sci-fi/comedy featuring an alien taken aboard a spaceship, and played for laughs. O'Bannon had the idea of making a *Dark Star*, but as a horror movie rather than a comedy. He developed his story over time, drawing inspiration from numerous sources across the spectrum of science fiction cinema, literature, and even comics. Hired to work on director Alejandro Jodorowsky's ultimately unrealized *Dune* in Paris, O'Bannon was introduced to Giger, and artists Jean "Moebius" Giraud and Chris Foss, who would all contribute production designs to *Alien*, as would designer Ron Cobb, who had worked with O'Bannon and Carpenter on *Dark Star*.

Charles spotlighted and sourced the ideas, big and small, included in *Alien*'s screenplay. For example, the story's spaceship was named for Joseph Conrad's novel, *Nostramo* (1904). (A setting of that novel was the fictional port city of Sulaco, adopted as the name of the Colonial Marines' ship in sequel *Aliens*.) Crewmembers Dallas, Kane, and Lambert coming upon a giant, fossilized, skeletal alien corpse mirrors a similar scene in acclaimed director Dario Argento's *Planet of the Vampires* (1965). And heroine Ellen Ripley's surname was apparently derived from the *Ripley's Believe It or Not* franchise!

Charles continued with the details of *Alien*'s formation, including director Ridley Scott's joining the production, and concerns, quickly allayed by Giger's design, that the alien would come across as cheesy, having too much the look of a man-in-a-monster-costume, as in *It: The Terror From Beyond Space* (1958), another of *Alien*'s influences.

This was a fascinating and thorough examination of the birth of a legendary sci-fi/horror film and franchise.

Keith Braithwaite followed with his look at real-world architectural marvels and oddities featured on the SF&F screen. Illustrated with an abundance of photographs and video-clips showcasing sleek, ultramodern structures employed by filmmakers as the settings of their sci-fi movies, as well as a few contemporary buildings used in genre films, Keith outlined both the particulars of on-location shooting, and the architectural styles popular with science fiction filmmakers—stylishly utilitarian Modernist, elegant Art Deco, beautiful, intricately detailed Victorian, majestic Neo-Classical, and imposing, dystopia-evoking Brutalism.

For instance, the bleak, angular concrete housing tracts of Thamesmead in London, and the massive Espaces d'Abraxas complex in Noisy-le-Grand, near Paris, were used as backdrops in, respectively, *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and *Hunger Games, Mockingjay, Part II* (2015). Numerous incarnations of

Superman's Daily Planet Building were covered, and the strange, space-age curiosities of Woody Allen's sci-fi/comedy *Sleeper* (1973) highlighted. The famous Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Ennis House, a Los Angeles mansion, has been featured in many productions, including *Blade Runner* (1982), *The Rocketeer* (1991), *Game of Thrones* (2011-2019), and as Vincent Price's scream-inducing *House on Haunted Hill* (1959). Keith offered details of these buildings and projected stills of the edifices as they appeared on genre movie and television screens.

Montreal's Olympic Stadium, former Mount Stephen Club, and dilapidated Mirabel Airport Terminal Building appeared in *Warm Bodies* (2013), a zombie-infused version of Romeo and Juliette, and the old Expo 67 site served as the backdrop for *Quintet* (1979) and an episode of TV's *Battlestar Galactica* (1978).

The venerable Empire State Building's famous role in King Kong's last stand, both in the 1933 original and 2005 Peter Jackson remake, was given the spotlight as Keith concluded his presentation.

The afternoon's programming closed on the topic of telepathy in SF&F. Both Josée Bellemare and Danny Sichel spoke on the subject, a pillar of paranormal belief, as well as a plot device in SF&F fiction. Sci-fi television series such as *Star Trek* and *Babylon 5* were briefly covered, these featuring telepathic characters capable of non-verbally transmitting and receiving thoughts over distances. The idiosyncrasies of that ability were outlined, sometimes depicted, for example, as allowing communication only within close proximity, or within the telepath's line of sight, other times only by means of physical contact. An obscure, mid-1970s fantasy TV show, *The Girl with Something Extra*, starring Sally Field, saw telepathy used for comedic purposes!

Danny noted the decline, in recent years, of telepathy as a story device in SF&F literature in favour of ESP-like abilities more grounded in reality—ultrasonic communication, nanobots, brain implants. Dividing his material into categories, Danny covered in some depth a selection of science fiction and fantasy novels and short fiction featuring telepathy of one kind or another. Exploring the ramifications of telepathy, on an individual, or on the greater society, Danny cited characters like Isaac Asimov's *The Mule*, of his *Foundation* series; James White's empathic physician, Dr. Prilicla, of the *Sector General* stories; and Alfred Bester's telepathic detective, Gretchen Nunn, starring in 1974's "The Four-Hour Fugue." Inter-species communication by means of telepathy, too, was discussed, such as Mr. Spock's mind-meld with the Horta, and the alien children conveying their thoughts to humans in John Wyndam's 1957 classic, *The Midwich Cuckoos*.

We thank Charles, Keith, and Josée and Danny for their most illuminating presentations.

## SENSOR READINGS

- Nathan Fillion and his *Firefly* castmates, who had been teasing some kind of big *Firefly* news on social media last month (see "Sensor Readings," *Impulse*, March 2026) have announced that an animated version of their old, short-lived but fan-favourite sci-fi/Western is currently in development, with the original cast, minus the late Ron Glass, set to voice their animated characters. Fillion's production company, Collision33, is developing the project with 20th Television Animation and award-winning animation house ShadowMachine. Joss Whedon, who created the original series, is not involved, but has given his blessing. Marc Guggenheim (*Arrow*, *Legends of Tomorrow*) and Tara Butters (*Agent Carter*, *Reaper*) are on board as showrunners. A script has been written and character art produced, with potential buyers soon to be pitched.

- *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* fans were disappointed to hear that Disney-owned Hulu has passed on the proposed reboot of that series, which carried the working title *New Sunnydale*. Original *Buffy* actress Sarah Michelle Gellar was set to serve as an executive producer on the series, and appear as her Buffy Summers character, along with a new cast that included Ryan Kiera Armstrong (*Star Wars: Skeleton Crew*, *Firestarter* remake) as the latest slayer. A pilot was produced, directed by passionate *Buffy* fan Chloé Zhao, who has enjoyed recent success with her Oscar-winning film *Hamnet*, but Hulu was apparently less than enthusiastic with her interpretation. A reworking of the pilot was briefly discussed, however, Hulu ultimately bailed. The company remains interested and may well entertain another take on the cherished franchise. Also, news came of original *Buffy* cast member Nicholas "Xander" Brendon's sudden death, reportedly of natural causes. He was only 54!

- Extraordinarily unique vampire film *Sinners* picked up four Oscars last month, including Best Actor and Original Screenplay, awarded to star Michael B. Jordan and director Ryan Coogler, respectively. The film had been nominated in a record 16 categories! *KPop Demon Hunters*, meanwhile, got the nod as Best Animated Feature.

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*Impulse* is put together monthly by Keith Braithwaite of behalf of MonSFFA and is available on MonSFFA's Web site courtesy Cathy Palmer-Lister. Contact Keith in regards to this publication by any of the following means: In person at a MonSFFA meeting • E-mail: [Keith1958@live.ca](mailto:Keith1958@live.ca) • Voice mail: 450-692-8831 • Via the *Impulse* mailing address: 125 Rue Léonard, Châteauguay, Québec, Canada, J6K 1N9

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