

# OPUNTIA

## 256

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**OH GRAVE, WHERE IS THY VICTORY?**

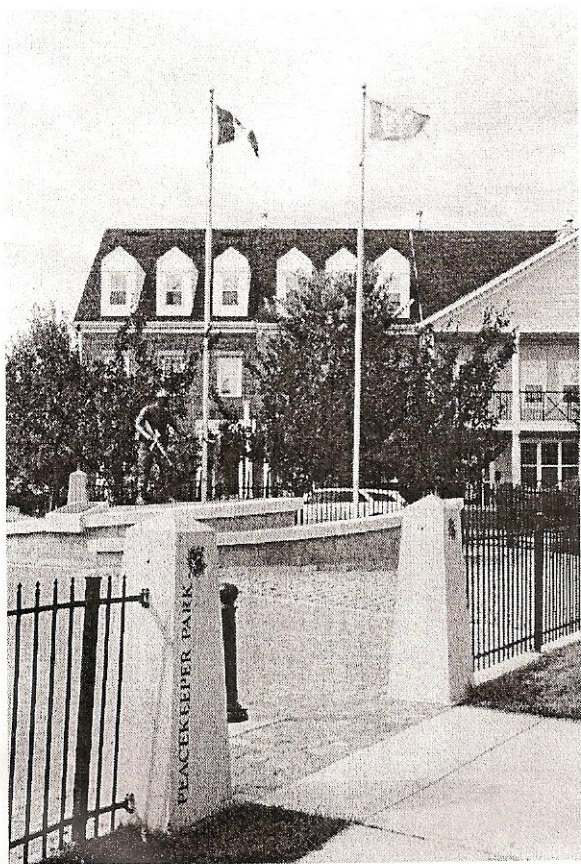
by Dale Speirs

Calgary has many monuments to the fallen soldiers of the two world wars and all the brushfire wars such as South Africa, Korea, and Vietnam. (More Canadians served in Vietnam than there were American draft dodgers in Canada.) In 2004, a new memorial park was dedicated in Calgary to Canadian military personnel who died in peacekeeping missions. It used to be that at Remembrance Day ceremonies only the old geezers mourned their fallen comrades from genuine emotion, while the younger generation paid lip service to be polite to their grandfathers. But over the last fifteen years, the younger folk have come to know of neighbours, friends, or family killed while in peacekeeping duties with the Canadian Forces in the Balkans or Afghanistan.

Peacekeeper Park was built in a suburb near where I live, on the grounds of an old WW2 airbase. Part of CFB Calgary was redeveloped as industrial after the war. The rest was the headquarters of the Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry until the base was closed in 1997 and the regiment moved to northern Alberta. That area has now been developed as residential, and the roads are named after Canadian battles such as Vimy Ridge or fallen Calgary soldiers.

November 11: Lest we forget.

At left is the entrance to Peacekeeper Park, with the Canadian and United Nations flags.



Above is a bronze statue of Cpl. Mark Isfeld, who served in Kuwait and the Balkans. His mother made little crocheted dolls for him to hand out to children in the war zones. The statue shows him handing a doll to a Croatian girl. Isfeld was killed by a land mine in 1994 at Kakma, Croatia. The crocheted dolls are now a

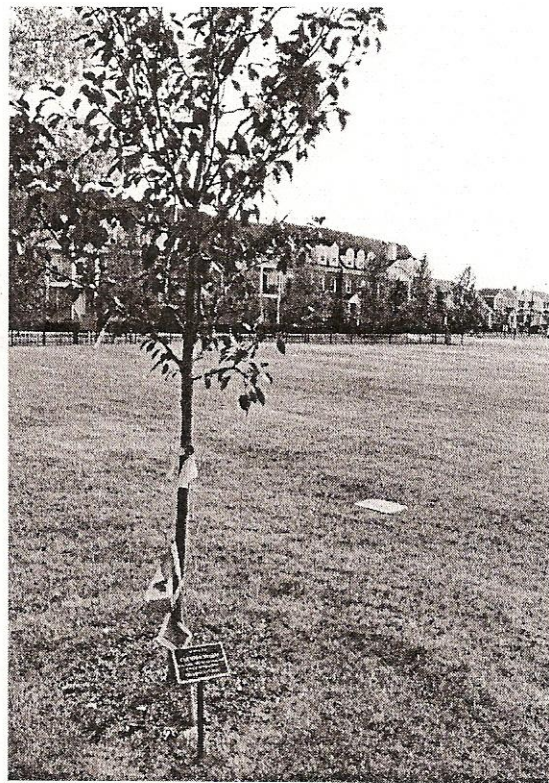


tradition among many Canadian women, who volunteer to make them and send the Izzy dolls to peacekeepers for distribution.



Above is one of the walls with the names of Canadian peacekeepers who died in the line of duty. When the park was first built, there were only two walls. So many squaddies have been killed in Afghanistan that additional walls had to be built. Visitors to the park often place poppies next to the names of those they knew or honour from their home town.

Some families have paid for trees to be planted in the park with a plaque to honour their lost ones.





Spr S. H. Marshall,  
1 CER att 1 PPCLI,  
NATO Kandahar, 30 Oct 2009

Lt A. R. Nutall, 1 PPCLI,  
NATO Kandahar, 23 Dec 2009

Sgt G. R. Miok, 41 CER,  
NATO Kandahar, 30 Dec 2009

Cpl Z. W. McCormack, LER,  
NATO Kandahar, 30 Dec 2009

Pte G. W. Chidley, 2 PPCLI,  
NATO Kandahar, 30 Dec 2009

Cpl C. Bobbitt, 5 RGC att 2 R22eR,  
NATO Kandahar, 01 Aug 2009

Spr J. P. A. M. Allard,  
5 RGC att 2 R22eR,  
NATO Kandahar, 01 Aug 2009

Maj Y. J. E. S. Pepin,  
5 RGC att 2 R22eR,  
NATO Kandahar, 06 Sept 2009

Cpl J. F. J. D. Drouin,  
5 RGC att 2 R22eR,  
NATO Kandahar, 06 Sept 2009

PPCLI =  
Princess  
Patricia  
regiment  
(Alberta)

R22eR =  
Van Doos  
regiment  
(Québec)

CER =  
Calgary  
Engineers  
Reserves

I don't know  
what the other  
regimental  
acronyms are.



## OUT OF WHOSE WOMB CAME THE ICE?

by Dale Speirs

Not too many SF movies have been made about the end of the world by freezing, compared to other types of End Times such as asteroids or earthquakes. Soap flakes, used to simulate snow on Hollywood back lots, are expensive in bulk and messy to clean up.

### The Hoary Frost Of Heaven, Who Has Gendered It?

The biggest flash-freezing movie was *THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW* (2004), released when the climate change debate was getting serious in the USA. It is a polemic, with more messages than a teenager texting on her smartphone, and a supporting actor chosen to play the American Vice-President because he was a doppelganger of Dick Cheney. However the SFX were top quality other than one scene with wolves, which were spray-painted German shepherds.

The movie opens on an ice shelf in Antarctica where researchers, led by the hero Dr. Jack Hall, are drilling ice cores. The shelf suddenly cracks and a 4-metre-wide fissure runs along the edge of the research camp. Hall, in full winter gear, leaps the crevasse to save the core samples. Why? Their half of the ice shelf is still solid, so they could drill out some replacement cores instead of taking their coffee break. Hall then leaps back over the crevasse

not only still in his snowmobile suit but now carrying an armful of metre-long ice cores. This guy shouldn't be wasting his time as a climatologist, he should be on the Olympic team.

Jump cut (pardon the expression) to a scientific conference in New Delhi, where Hall is lecturing. He explains that global warming can cause another ice age by melting the northern ice caps and shutting down the flow of warm water from the equator that keeps North America and Europe temperate. He tells the delegates that it could happen as soon as the next century. Right on cue, a blizzard immediately forms over the Taj Mahal and India plunges into the slush age. (The snow isn't actually freezing on the ground but melts on contact.) The other Ominous Forebodings then shuffle onto the stage. Hailstones the size of baseballs hammer Japan. Category 10 or Category 50 hurricanes hammer tropical islands. Every place is getting hammered except Manhattan but don't worry, its time is coming soon.

Hall has more serious things to worry about. His teenaged son Sam, living with the ex-wife, is off to New York City to compete in a school academic derby. She is a hospital nurse, which will come in handy for a later subplot. Another subplot is a remote Scottish weather station where the lads are monitoring North Atlantic weather buoys. If that's their job, why don't they just do it from Glasgow or London? Telemetry is telemetry. Environment Canada monitors

Alberta weather from their Ottawa headquarters, not a cabin on a remote mountain peak in Banff National Park. Getting back to the buoys, they suddenly indicate that North Atlantic temperatures have dropped 13 degrees in a matter of minutes. The Scots telephone Hall for advice, and while they're chatting, Los Angeles is destroyed by some really good tornado SFX.

When in doubt, have a meeting. If nothing else, it makes you look busy and important. Hall and assorted greybeards hold a conference where they give each other "As you know, Professor" lectures in order to bring the audience up to speed. While they intone the doomsday messages, New York City is deluged with rain, Europe is buried under a metre of snowfall, and rotating low-pressure systems are flash-freezing everything in the eye of the storms. The latter is supposedly because -150° air is descending from the atmosphere into the eyes of the storms. As every Calgarian knows, because we live with chinook winds sliding down the adjacent Rocky Mountains onto our city every winter, descending air heats up because of compression. Chinooks are winter winds that warm up southwestern Alberta in a few hours from -20° to +10°. They come out of the west, dumping their snow in British Columbia, then descend the eastern slopes of the Rockies out onto the prairies, warming everything up as they pass and stripping the snow away to bare ground. In the movie, any -150° air descending would in fact warm up, not flash freeze helicopters in mid-air.

Be that as it may, the -150° hoarfrost penetrates through walls and insulated aircraft fuselages, and then travels linearly along the inside walls toward whichever actor is on screen. If the actor is an extra, he can't outrun the hoarfrost and becomes a corpsicle. If the actor is one of the stars, he is able to outrun the hoarfrost and make it to the end credits.

The streets of Manhattan flood to waist height, and traffic is completely stopped. Okay, the latter probably isn't unusual. Sam and his friends are in a safe place but decide they must go to their families in D.C., Philadelphia, etcetera. This is one of the traditional idiot plots of disaster movies; go traveling through the doomsday scenario instead of sitting tight in shelter. They don't get the chance though. A storm surge comes out of the Atlantic Ocean, passes over the Statue of Liberty at breast height (hers, not humans), and goes roaring down the streets of Manhattan. You saw the video of the dust clouds billowing from the fall of the Twin Towers; it was much like that. Sam and friends run for the New York Public Library and make it to the top floor, while the surge takes out the lower floors but surprisingly few extras and bit players. (Because they're needed for a later scene when they'll get theirs yet.)

Screaming actors splashing about in water can get boring fast, so the movie returns to Hall, who is teleconferencing with his Scottish friends. They determine that three major cyclonic storms

are rotating around the northern hemisphere, and will freeze it up in a couple of days to bring on a new ice age. That fast? Not really, because we Canadians who have endured -30° blizzards in September know that the latent heat of the ground will quickly melt the snow. It isn't until the ground has had time to cool that the snow sticks. A recent study showed that any sudden-onset climate disruption could not be triggered until after the Bering Strait freezes solid, which would only happen well into continental ice sheet formation as an effect, not a cause.\*\* Nonetheless, all that breast-high (Statue of Liberty) water seething up and down the streets of Manhattan freezes solid in minutes.

Another idiot plot kicks in. Sam gets through to his father in D.C. on a land line. Hall tells his son to stay inside where it's safe, and that he will come and get Sam. Hall is in D.C. where the megastorm is just hitting, will travel through the heart of it to New York City, get his son, and travel back through the storm, arriving back there as the megastorm takes full effect and D.C. is evacuated. If any social workers were still around, they'd have Hall up before a judge on charges of reckless endangerment and child abuse.

\*\* Hua, A., et al (2012) Role of the Bering Strait on the hysteresis of the ocean conveyor belt circulation and glacial climate stability. PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES USA 109:6417-6422

Before Hall heads out, he stops by the White House and briefs the President. He shows him a map of how the world will look in ten days when the new ice age begins. Canada and the northern American states are buried under an instant continental ice sheet. Ta! to Calgary. But where did the water come from to create the ice sheets? There isn't enough moisture in the atmosphere at any given time to instantly create continental ice sheets. The ones that formed in past geological eras took centuries to develop from the slow accumulation of each year's snowfall.

Hall's map clearly shows the southern tier of American states free of ice, but because they will get snow, Hall recommends they all be evacuated to Mexico. Say there are 100 million Americans in the southern tier. They will be moved how? Everyone driving their cars? Setting aside the traffic jams, do you think the service station attendants will stay on the job to re-fuel motorists while they watch everyone else fleeing? Louisiana and Florida get some snow but so what? They'll survive. Their climate will become like central Alberta, where a million people have useful and productive lives despite the regular arrival of winter. No electricity? Well, all of my great-grandparents homesteaded in Alberta and Saskatchewan without electricity, and they were more physically fit than we are today. My mother grew up in a rural village during the Great Depression in a house that had no electricity or indoor plumbing until after the war.



The Mexicans, needless to say, aren't happy about the flood of gringos swamping their land. But that's their problem. Turnabout is fair play. Meanwhile, back at the library, Sam and his friends have several plot coupons to deal with. Some of the extras decide to start walking south in the storm. We know what will happen to them. They might as well be wearing red shirts. Sam's girlfriend has an infected wound, so they scrounge some antibiotics from a Russian freighter that conveniently washed ashore next to the library, then froze in place on the street. It's getting cold, so they start burning books to keep warm. Not the Gutenberg Bible fortunately, but things like all 400 volumes of the Federal Tax Code. The library is filled with wooden furniture that no one is going to use anymore, but it never occurs to them that wood burns.

The eye of the storm passes over New York City, bringing with it the -150° hoarfrost. The hoarfrost races down the spires of the skyscrapers, shattering all the windows as it does so. Why would the windows shatter? The city has already been cooled down well below zero, so it can't be differential expansion and contraction of the glass's interior and exterior sides. The hoarfrost reaches the library as Sam and friends return with the antibiotics. They have a footrace with it down the corridor and outrun it since they are the heroes. It never occurs to the hoarfrost that if it took the shortcut instead of following along the corridor, it could cut them off. It can penetrate straight through the outer walls of the

building, but when Sam slams the door shut to their room, the hoarfrost comes to a dead stop. The library room they're in has tall loft-style windows, but they don't shatter.

Hall reaches the library, mashing his way past a Statue of Liberty half buried in ice. Unlike Charlton Heston in PLANET OF THE APES, he doesn't fall on his knees and start screaming oaths at the people responsible for this. Having run out of ideas and SFX, the screenwriters jump to a view of military choppers coming to gather up the few survivors. One irony which I noted is that many of the rescuers were flying Chinook helicopters. Vice-President Cheney is now President Cheney, and from his headquarters in Mexico broadcasts to the world with the usual "Tomorrow will be a brighter day" speech.

### **Knowest Thou The Ordinances Of Heaven?**

"The Blizzard Makers" (1964) is a Season 1 episode of VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA that begins with a series of newspaper headlines flashing word of a strange series of summertime blizzards hitting Florida. Admiral Nelson blames it on a shift in the Gulf Stream, and his Seaview research submarine is on the job. A conspiracy kidnaps Dr. Milton, the only scientist who can foil them, and reprogrammes his brain to turn him into an assassin to kill Nelson. The Admiral is right about the shift but doesn't know it is caused by a conspiracy. In between surviving



several attempts on his life, he takes the Seaview to where the Gulf Stream is diverging from its normal course.

The divergence seems to be located on an apparently uninhabited Caribbean island. An away crew from the Seaview investigates. They are caught by the henchmen working for an unnamed foreign government and taken underground to a secret laboratory. You'd think that villains would know enough not to let the heroes anywhere near their labs, but, as always, they bring the prisoners right into command-and-control so they can gloat. It turns out that the foreign country, never named, is testing atomic bombs in order to join the nuclear club. It is the bombs which are diverting the Gulf Stream. One would suspect that the bomb tests would be quickly noticed by seismologists and easily located by triangulation. One would think that, but one would be disappointed. Not to worry though, as the Seaview away team escapes from the island, pausing only long enough to sabotage the laboratory and blow it sky high. Not stated in the episode but presumed is that Florida returns to normal, and not a moment too soon.

### **The Face Of The Deep Is Frozen.**

ABSOLUTE ZERO (2006) opens with a group of scientists in Antarctica being shaken by tremors in the ice sheet. One of them falls to his death in a giant fissure that opens in front of the

research camp. No Olympians in that bunch. For a moment I thought I had mistakenly put the disk of THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW into the DVD player, but I'm sure any resemblance in the opening sequence was purely coincidental.

Then a detour to Miami, where Dr. David Koch, employed by InterSci, is demonstrating a new discovery. By reversing the polarity of the magnetic field in a test chamber, he can freeze things down to -273° C. This is absolute zero, the point at which molecular motion stops. Granted that reversing the polarity is a time-honoured tradition in SF, but I don't see it causing extreme cold. If you flip a bar magnet over end-to-end you will not notice any cooling, but why let that get in the way of the plot.

Koch gets into an argument with his boss, after which he is re-assigned from Miami to their experimental base in Antarctica. Purely coincidental of course. The team finds another fissure in the ice cap, this one with a frozen caveman. One of the greybeards in the scientific expedition declares that the deceased was suddenly frozen there 10,000 years ago. He's pretty good at dating things. Every other geochronologist in the world has to use radionuclides or stratigraphic dating methods that take days or weeks. Greybeard must have worked for a CSI team. As there isn't much more the screenwriter can do with the corpse (it's not a zombie movie), a megastorm blows up. Various supporting characters, including the greybeard,

are disposed of by wind, cold, and icefalls. Koch, being the star, makes it back to Miami.

No disaster movie is complete without its subplots to pad it out. Koch meets up with his ex-wife. Two of his graduate students have an awkward romance, made more awkward for Canadians who will instantly recognize the young man from his later starring roles in the television comedy shows CORNER GAS and DAN FOR MAYOR. They do some computer calculations for Koch on Hollywood-built computer keyboards that clickety-clack like a manual typewriter. Koch's Boss From Hell provides a bit of shouting now and then to wake up the audience with his noise. Another thing no disaster movie is complete without are the Ominous Forebodings scenes. Florida fishermen haul up frozen crabs, which certainly saves the cannery some work. Birds are migrating north several months ahead of schedule, and an iceberg grounds itself on a Miami beach.

While the news media are chattering on about what appear to be signs of the impending apocalypse, Koch has discovered that the reversal of the magnetic poles isn't going to be a two-century process but is happening circa now, as in four hours. When the magnetic poles begin swapping positions, this somehow causes the middle latitudes to freeze over. A snowstorm comes ashore at Miami and sends the bikini babes scurrying for shelter. Why magnetism, even with reversed polarity, should have more than a

slight effect on the weather is puzzling.

-10-

The geographical poles are cold because of geography, not magnetism. Additionally, the ground, buildings, and bedrock have high latent heat capacity, which would prevent rapid freezing. Turbulent mixing from the rest of the planet would mix in warm air, just as hurricanes serve to transfer warm air to the higher latitudes in the real world.

A frenzied television announcer advises that Miami is being evacuated and traffic is at a standstill. Despite his hyperbole, the stock shots show heavy freeway traffic flowing smoothly in both directions. I wish Calgary rush hour was that easy. First we see vehicles moving in heavy rain, with windshield wipers flapping away. Then a jump cut to another freeway, under grey skies but dry as dust, and just as many vehicles going one way as the other. Okay, localized thunderstorms are not uncommon in a large city, but if they're evacuating aren't half the cars going the wrong way? The shadows are directly underneath the cars, indicating noon, but a jump cut to Koch's next scene a moment later shows long shadows cast on the ground by a bright sun low on the horizon, indicating late evening.

Intercuts back to the beach are blurred with snow and hail, but there are clear skies anywhere Koch happens to be as he drives around the city frantically collecting plot coupons. Stock shots of hurricane footage are mixed in with time-lapse sequences of storm



clouds building up and the occasional Denver blizzard with cars spinning out in the snow. I'm not laughing at the Miami drivers because if I lived there I wouldn't have snow tires on my car either. Koch, family, and friends race on bare roads to the InterSci lab, whose test chamber is the only thing that can resist absolute zero. Others try to flee in a helicopter, but it crashes into a building drawn with 8-bit computer graphics. The SFX budget must have been running low.

The characters, having reached the safety of the lab, immediately spread back outside like spring calves exploring a new pasture. They get in and out of trouble as the temperature goes down to  $-272^{\circ}\text{C}$ , one degree above absolute zero, clearly shown on their computer screen. The air they breathe is only slightly chilly. In actual fact, below  $-200^{\circ}$  the atmosphere's oxygen and nitrogen would have liquified and below  $-220^{\circ}$  the liquified gases would have then solidified. The phrase "I'm walking on air" wouldn't just be figurative, and no one could breathe. As the thermometer readout touches  $-273^{\circ}$ , hoarfrost starts to form, chasing Koch down the hallway as he races back to the lab. Like a certain other movie, the hoarfrost only moves in linear sequence, as opposed to the world outside Hollywood where it forms simultaneously in all locations as the dewpoint is passed.

Never in the Earth's history has any part cooled down to absolute zero because turbulent mixing would bring in warm air and the

molten core of the Earth would keep the bedrock heated. If Florida was the new Winnipeg, the sudden contraction of air into liquified gases would have created a vacuum that sucked warmer air from the rest of the planet. The liquified gases would have reheated, expanded, and the turbulent mixing would have blanketed the middle latitudes in Category 10 hurricanes. Possibly Category 50.

We have no time to contemplate this though, as our attention is distracted by a long slow pan over an establishing shot of frozen Miami, its condo towers draped in ice, the ocean frozen solid, and a large ship frozen in with its bow high in the air. Had this been a quick pan, it would have not been a problem, but the slow pan allows us to see that this is an obvious painting, with soap flakes sprinkled in front of it to simulate falling snow. The flakes don't land on the frozen ocean but flutter straight down out of the camera frame. Various other paintings also appear, with immobile clouds and flakes falling out of the screen, not on the landscape.

The survivors huddled in the lab make it through to the end credits. A television news hen informs us that the zone between  $33^{\circ}\text{N}$  latitude and  $33^{\circ}\text{S}$  is now tundra, while Siberia and northern Canada are now deserts. In four hours, all the vegetation that was flash frozen has been replaced by tundra species?

All the forests have vanished in a few hours, perhaps dissolved into thin air by the reversed polarity. All the water in the Arctic suddenly disappeared? I'm surprised they didn't show a stock shot of a polar bear wandering along a glacier where Shreveport, Louisiana, used to be, or arctic foxes nesting under abandoned transit buses in Orange County, California.

### **Hast Thou Entered Into The Treasures Of The Snow?**

"A Pail Of Air" by Fritz Leiber is a 1951 short story originally published in an SF magazine and later used in the radio anthology series X MINUS ONE. It is the best treatment of supercold tragedy. The story is narrated by a ten-year-old boy whose world is a small room inside a skyscraper, with his parents and a kid sister. When he was much younger, at a time he can barely remember, a dark star came passing through the Solar System at high speed, too fast for humans to do anything. The dead star yanked the Earth, sans Moon, into its orbit and passed on out into deep space. With no Sun, the Earth soon froze as it revolved around the dark star. First all the moisture condensed into a 10-foot layer of snow across the planet. As the planet cooled off, the atmospheric gases condensed into solid layers, one at a time. First the carbon dioxide, then nitrogen, then oxygen, and finally on top, a layer of helium.

The massive earthquakes of the Big Jerk, as the boy's father likes to call it, destroyed most of civilization, and as the atmosphere

froze out, the few remaining survivors dwindled away. **-12-**  
Now as far as the boy knows, his family is all that is left. His father made some jury-rigged spacesuits, and he and the boy take turns venturing out into the vacuum to get pails of frozen oxygen. A fire is kept burning perpetually in their room, layers of blankets insulate them, and the pails of oxygen slowly thawing out gives them breathable air. The contrivances by which they live are ingenious and well thought out.

The story ends with other people arriving, who were near nuclear power plants and thus could survive on the electricity. There is renewed hope for a better tomorrow. A well-done story, not the way Hollywood would have done it, but evidence of a good author.

### **THE EUROCRISIS NOT EXPLAINED**

compiled by John Mauldin

*"Spain is not Greece."*

Elena Salgado, Spanish Finance Minister  
February 2010

*"Portugal is not Greece."*

THE ECONOMIST  
April 2010



*"Greece is not Ireland."*

George Papaconstantinou, Greek Finance Minister  
November 2010

*"Spain is neither Ireland nor Portugal."*

Elena Salgado, Spanish Finance Minister  
November 2010

*"Ireland is not in Greek territory."*

Brian Lenihan, Irish Finance Minister  
November 2010

*"Neither Spain nor Portugal is Ireland."*

Angel Gurría, Secretary-General OECD  
November 2010

*"Italy is not Spain."*

Ed Parker, Fitch MD (investment firm), June 12, 2012

*"Spain is not Uganda."*

Mariano Rajoy, Spanish Prime Minister  
June 2012

*"Uganda does not want to be Spain."*

Sam Kutesa, Ugandan Foreign Minister  
June 13, 2012

## SHERLOCKIANA: PART 11

by Dale Speirs

### Crossover Fiction.

THE ARMY OF DR. MOREAU (2012, trade paperback) by Guy Adams has Holmes and Watson investigating the apparent return of the mad scientist who would turn animals into men. He had been chased out of London but appears to have returned and is continuing his dastardly experiments. Holmes' brother Mycroft, who is something in Whitehall, asks Sherlock to investigate. Mycroft wants the two to concentrate on finding Moreau, but has also hired a group of others to track down the animals/men doing the killing, such as Professor Challenger (of Lost World fame), Professor Lindenbrook (who claims to have been to the centre of the Earth), a man named Cavor (who is obsessed with anti-gravity), and an author named Carruthers (who writes books about his exploring expeditions). Those four then disappear for most of the novel, while Holmes and Watson locate one of Moreau's creations, a gang leader named Kane who is a dog-man. They get Kane to help them locate Moreau, though the dog-man is only half-hearted about it.

The plot finally gets rolling when some animal-men invade Parliament and kidnap the Prime Minister. It turns out that Moreau really is dead but one of his

acolytes is still experimenting. Watson is the next hostage, at which point the narration suddenly switches to Holmes, somewhat jarringly. It then rotates point-of-view from one character to the next as the hunt goes down into the sewers of London. There is no real suspense since it is quite obvious that while there will be a few setbacks along the way, the brothers Holmes will triumph. The Prime Minister dies in a bizarre way, but since he never had a speaking role, no one really cares. The army of animal-men turn out to be a dozen or so hooligans, not a force that would terrorize and conquer a city.

### **Factual.**

SHERLOCK HOLMES ON SCREEN (2011) by Alan Barnes is a 320-page encyclopedia listing hundreds of movies and television shows featuring the great detective. The look of Holmes and Watson that most people have come from the stage, not books. The first Holmes story was published in 1887. As the series grew, it was supported by stage adaptations and films, making it one of the first multimedia sensations. The stories and performances fed on each other and boosted the popularity of the series.

The earliest known film is a 35-second silent peepshow called "Sherlock Holmes Baffled". The first regular theatrical film was "Held For Ransom", produced in 1905 and of which only a fragment remains on deposit at the Library of Congress. The next

was "Sherlock Holmes And The Great Murder Mystery" of 1908. This was, however, actually Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Murders In Rue Morgue" with Holmes and Watson inserted as the investigators. Not for the last time, Hollywood producers didn't hesitate to butcher a story for no apparent reason.

Britain was slow in honouring its own. The first British production was "A Study In Scarlet" in 1914, although a French company had two years earlier filmed "From The Adventures Of Sherlock Holmes" on location in England but using French actors. The first sound picture was the 1929 Paramount production "The Return Of Sherlock Holmes". It was intended as a serious film but was received by the public as a comedy due to inept acting by the silent film star who played Holmes.

By the 1930s, Holmes films appeared regularly, with the lead role played by such actors as Arthur Wontner and Basil Rathbone. The first television show was "The Speckled Band" in the 1949 CBS anthology series "Your Show Time". In that show, Holmes was played by Alan Napier, better remembered as Alfred the butler in the 1960s Batman television series. The first series of Holmes shows were live BBC broadcasts in 1951, under the cumbersome title "We Present Alan Wheatly As Mr. Sherlock Holmes In [*name of story*]". From there on, the floodgates opened. "The Hound Of The Baskervilles" is the most common.



## **TRANSIT FANNING IN CALGARY:**

### **PART 1. THE OLD ORDER CHANGES**

by Dale Speirs

During my working years, I just used Calgary Transit to go downtown or to the university on my days off. Calgary has the second-highest downtown parking fees in North America; only Manhattan is more expensive. Students at the University of Calgary soak up all the available spots before 07h00. After I retired in 2010, I began using Calgary Transit far more often. I still use my car for grocery shopping or errands in the suburbs, but now that I have all the time in the world I use buses and trains as much as possible. Less stressful too, especially in winter.

First, a digression, which I promise to tie into the subject of the title. One of my mother's hobbies was photography. She told me once that she made a mistake in her younger days of not bothering to photograph what seemed to be mundane and perpetual. She grew up in the rural village of Eckville, Alberta, (where I was to be born) when travel between towns was by rail, but she never thought to photograph any of the steam locomotives. She always regretted never having taken a single photograph of them in their glory days before they were replaced by diesels.

The Calgary LRT system began in May 1981 when the first line opened, running due south from the downtown core. A northeast

leg to the blue-collar and immigrant suburbs began operating in 1985, and a northwest leg to the University opened two years later. Over the next decade these lines were extended from time to time. As I type this, a new leg due west into middle-class suburbs has been completed. Simultaneously with the west leg, all the older LRT stations are being upgraded from three-car platforms to four cars. Some of the older stations were demolished completely and new ones built in the adjacent block.

It was when I saw some of the old platforms disappearing that I remembered my mother's story. I did have photos of a few of the vanished stations but many I missed. This prompted me to begin a systematic campaign to photograph all the LRT stations, as well as individual buses and trains. One disappeared station was the Olympic Plaza platform, downtown on 7 Avenue and 1 Street SE, directly across from the park where the medal presentations were made during the 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games. Fortunately I had a photo of this station, taken in 2008. The station was demolished in 2011 and replaced by a new platform one block further up the line by City Hall.

There are two distinctive styles of LRT trains. The original batch were purchased in 1981. Most are still in service but are gradually being replaced by a new style introduced in the early 2000s. The photo on the next page shows the now-gone Olympic Plaza station and an 1980s-style train.

