

JANUARY 1999 (VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1)

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WARP 45

**THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTREAL SCIENCE
FICTION AND FANTASY ASSOCIATION (MonSFFA)**



**Inside This Issue: On the set of *FedEx Files: "Moxie"*,
The Las Vegas *Star Trek* Experience, Movie Reviews,
Model Building, the latest SF Rumours, and More...**

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COVER UP:

The FedEx Files: "Moxie",
MonSFFA's sequel to *Plant 9
From Outer Space*, premiered
recently. Our cover features
"Moxie"'s stars, André
Poliquin and JJ Sobey, in
character as FedEx special
agents Meddler and Scurry.
(Photo by Daniel P. Kenney)

1999 MonSFFA EVENTS SCHEDULE

**ALL MonSFFA MEETINGS HELD SUNDAY
AFTERNOONS, 1:00PM TO 4:00PM (SOME
MEETINGS INCLUDE MORNING ACTIVITIES,
WHICH BEGIN AT 10:30 AM), IN THE
ST-FRANCOIS ROOM OF THE DAYS INN, 1005
GUY STREET (CORNER RENÉ LÉVESQUE),
DOWNTOWN MONTREAL**

1999 EVENT PROGRAMMING*

**January 17 - What's New In the Babylon 5 and Star
Trek Universes**

10:30am: Showing of the B5 movie *A Call To Arms* if available.
1:00pm: The transition from *Babylon 5* to *Crusade* - differences and
similarities.
2:30pm: *Star Trek 9: Insurrection* - The latest odd-numbered *Trek*
movie: Was it a good movie? Was it good *Star Trek*?

February 21 - A Slide Show and a Game

10:30am: Planning meeting for the next MonSFFA video project.
1:00pm: Slide Show: "The Magic of the Myth" - *Star Wars* at the
Smithsonian.
3:00pm: Game: Sci-Fi Win, Lose, or Draw.

March 21 - The Rights of Spring

1:00pm: New Life and Evolution.
2:30pm: Plants, Animals, and other non-sentients. How does SF/F
portray the family pet?

April 18 - Time Travel and Time-Related Fantasy

1:00pm: The time travel theme in SF/F literature and media.
2:30pm: Mythology from the past - updated and revised: a
discussion of *Hercules*, *Xena*, *Stargate SG-1*, etc.

May 16 - The Golden Age of SF

1:00pm: Update and info about the SF Film Festival (June 4-19)
The Golden Age classics in SF film and literature.

June 27 - Star Wars: New Versus Classic

1:00pm: *The Phantom Menace* - Did it live up to expectations after
so many years of anticipation?
2:30pm: Game: *Star Wars* Trivial Pursuit.

*All programming is tentative, and scheduling is subject to change.

JANUARY

17

FEBRUARY

21

MARCH

21

APRIL

18

MAY

16

JUNE

27

AUGUST

15

SEPTEMBER

12

OCTOBER

17

NOVEMBER

21

DECEMBER

11

Warp is published about five times a year by the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA). Address all correspondence to: *Warp*, c/o MonSFFA, P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2W 2P4. A subscription to *Warp* is a benefit of membership in MonSFFA. MonSFFA is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of science fiction and fantasy literature, film and television, comics, fanzines, art, music, costuming, model-making, gaming, etc. The opinions expressed in *Warp* are solely those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *Warp* or MonSFFA. The use of copyrighted material in this newsletter is—yes, we know—verboten, but is not intended to seriously infringe upon any of the rights of the copyright holders. Come on, people... *lighten up!* This is an amateur publication intended for enjoyment only. "Tomorrow is the greatest work saver of today..."

MonSFFA's Address: P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2W 2P4
MonSFFA's Web Site is at: <http://www.odyssee.net/~draken/monsffa/monsffa.html>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From The Editor’s Chair	4
Convention Flyer. (Empirecon I)	5
MonSFFA Mailbag	6
MonSFFAandom	8
In Search of Wonder.....	10
Aurora Award Winners	11
The <i>Star Trek</i> Experience	12
Movie Reviews (<i>X-Files: Fight The Future</i> , <i>Armageddon</i> , <i>Small Soldiers</i> , <i>The Avengers</i>)	15
Cover Story (<i>The FedEx Files: "Moxie"</i> - Action in Three...)	16
It Came From The Sci-Fi Modeler’s Desk (<i>Armageddon</i> models)	19
Convention Flyer (<i>Conjuration 4</i>)	21
Sensors	22
MonSFFA Membership Benefits	24
MonSFFA Discount Program	24
MonSFFA Membership Application Form	26

WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
WARP 45
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WARP 45

Submissions: We will accept submissions on a variety of media, however, please take note that your text or artwork must eventually be processed on a Macintosh computer using QuarkXpress for page layout. For e-mail submissions, send to pellyn@odyssee.net with text in the body of the e-mail or as an attachment in ASCII format, and photos/artwork in jpeg format. For disk submissions, please send your material on diskettes or zip disks with Macintosh formatting—text should be ASCII and images should be jpeg or any format that can be processed by Adobe Photoshop. Please include a print-out of your material with all disks. If you do not own a compatible computer or a modem, you may submit typed or neatly hand-written documents, preferably single column and double-spaced. Please send all photographic material as prints; my flat-bed scanner cannot scan slides. Material (other than e-mail) can be submitted in person at MonSFFA meetings or be sent by mail.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR



So you haven't received an issue of *Warp* for quite a while... Wonder why? It's simple: lack of submissions!

Initially, when I asked for submissions, I received only one. After much complaining on my part at a subsequent MonSFFA meeting a few articles began to trickle in. So I simply waited until I had enough material to make it worthwhile to publish a newsletter.

Even now, as I assemble this issue, some articles remain incomplete. There is text for which I was expecting some illustrations, also I have been given photographs, but the reviews or articles that were supposed to accompany them never arrived. In most cases I have gone ahead and published the material anyways.

Of course, *Warp 45* was supposed to be ready before the holiday season. However, as the assembly of this issue began to run into December, there was shopping to do, Christmas cards to write, parties to attend, numerous family obligations, and the obligatory illness. So here is *Warp 45*, finally, in January.

I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday season!

So, it's January 1999. New this year for Montreal fandom is the introduction of a new SF convention: Empirecon. This is a *Star Wars* event and *Star Wars* is going to be big in 1999.

It's been a while since there was a large-scale media-oriented convention in Montreal. We don't get many of these events because they require a major financial commitment and it seems that Montreal is a rather risky market. However, every once and a while, somebody tries to put Montreal back on the convention map.

The really good news is that this is not a US import. Empirecon is being organized locally by Ace Lopez of Empire Comics, who is a fan himself. From what I have seen of the preparations for this show, it looks like it will be an excellent first attempt. Ace assures me that if Empirecon is successful, he will do additional SF media conventions in Montreal. This, too, is really good news, considering the state of the Canadian dollar and the cost of travelling to the big SF conventions south of the border.

I encourage all MonSFFA members to attend Empirecon. You will be supporting a local convention and you will have fun. The very popular Johnny Z will be the DJ for the Saturday night party/dance. Wear your costume, if you have one.

Ace, a longtime friend of MonSFFA, has generously given us a club table in the dealer area. The two MonSFFA members who look after our club table each day will get in free. If you want to volunteer, see me at the January 17th MonSFFA meeting.

One more piece of advice: buy your tickets in advance at Empire Comics. It will save you from having to stand in what will probably be a long line-up of people buying their tickets at the door.

Have fun, and I hope to see you there!

Lynda Pelley,
Editor

EMPIRECON 1999

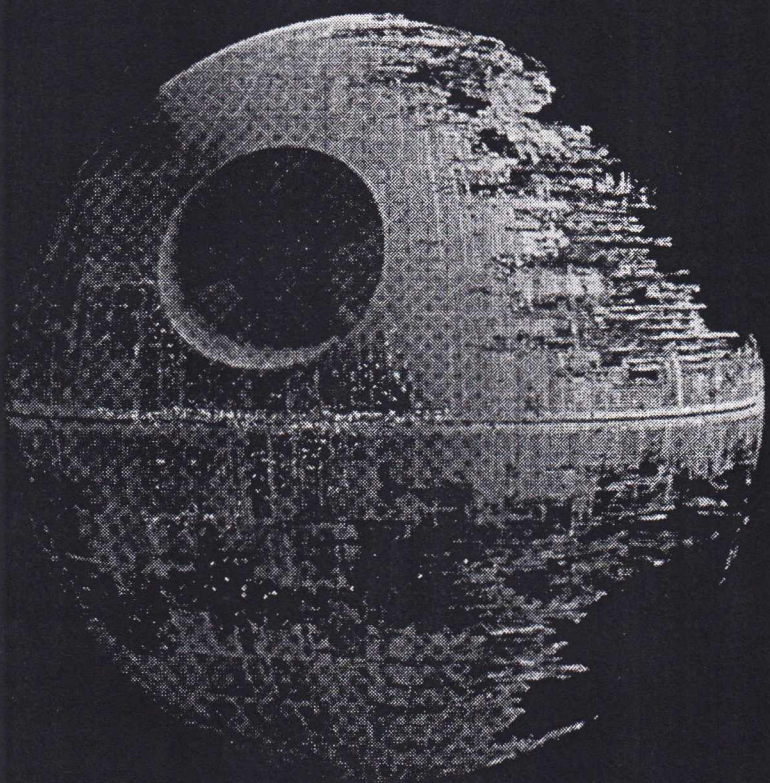
MONTREAL'S FIRST STAR WARS CONVENTION



DAVID PROWSE
(DARTH VADER)



PHIL BROWN
(UNCLE OWEN LARS)



JEREMY BULLOCH
(OBBA WATTS)



CAROLINE BLAKISTON
(QUEEN MOTHMA)

January 23 & 24, 1999
10:00 AM TO 6:00 PM

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STAR WARS TRIVIAL PURSUIT COMPETITION, PHANTOM MENACE PREVIEW,
AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...

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LIMITED V.I.P. TICKETS AVAILABLE (DINNER WITH THE STARS)
FOR TICKET INFO, CALL 514-071-1402

INTERNET: <http://afm.infinet.net/empirecon>



MonSFFA and *Warp* welcome letters of comment and inquiry. Mail letters to:

P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc,
Montreal, Quebec, Canada,
H2W 2P4.

Unless otherwise indicated, we assume all letters are intended for publication. *Warp* reserves the right to edit letters where deemed necessary.

À qui de droit,

La présente est pour vous demander des informations sur votre association. J'aimerais bien être membre et connaître les formalités à remplir.

Merci d'avance,

Marc-André Delalay
Montréal, Québec

Merci de vous intéresser à notre club. L'Association Montréalaise de Science-Fiction et de Fantastique (AMonSFF) sert les intérêts des amateurs de SF/F dans la région de Grand Montréal et au-delà.

Nous nous réunissons environ une fois par mois à l'hôtel Days Inn du Centre-Ville (salon St-François) afin d'explorer les différents aspects de l'imaginaire—littérature, cinéma, télévision, les collections, les mascarades, etc. Nous publions un "fanzine" (Warp) approximativement cinq fois par année. Son abonnement est compris dans les frais de participation au club, qui sont de 20\$ annuellement. Nos membres bénéficient également, sur présentation de la carte du club, d'un programme d'escomptes auprès de plusieurs marchands spécialisés dans le SF/F.

Vous trouverez ci-joint un exemplaire de Warp, de même qu'un feuillet d'information et une formule

d'inscription. Nous espérons que vous trouverez ces documents intéressants, et que nous vous compterons bientôt parmi nos membres.—Sylvain St-Pierre, Responsable des inscriptions, AMonSFF

Dear Lynda,

I have an advance copy of a new science fiction anthology by Canadian writers, *North of Infinity—Futurity Visions*, a handsome trade paperback which retails for \$18 and should be on sale soon. It is published by Mosaic Press in Ontario.

Is there any way to get some exposure of this new release through the club, perhaps a write-up in *Warp*? I have an ulterior motive: a story of mine is included in the anthology.

Best Wishes,

Leslie Lupien
Montreal, Quebec

First of all, Leslie, congratulations on the publication of your story. We all look forward to reading it. We most certainly can and would be pleased to make mention of this upcoming anthology in Warp. In fact, with the publication of your letter and a further note in the "MonSFFAndom" column this issue, we have done just that. We may also be able to prevail upon some of the litfans in the club to give the book a read and offer a review for publication in a subsequent issue of the newsletter.

Let me take this opportunity to say to all MonSFFA members that the club is always thrilled to be able to report that one of our own has had some measure of success in the SF/F genre as a writer, artist, film producer, whatever. We are pleased to share news of the achievements of our members, particularly at the professional level. So you needn't ever be shy about letting us know about these things.—Ed

Attention: MonSFFA members

Last year, Imperial Stardate 9707.19 at Toronto Trek XI, a

challenge was issued between the fleets of KAG/Kanada. The challenge was on who can collect the most can tabs (pop tops) and used stamps. The deadline was Toronto Trek XII (Imperial Stardate 9807.11) where the winning fleet was announced. On said date, during the Grand Assembly, the fleets brought in their cargo and Captain Kalot of the Steel Fist Fleet declared that the Ice Dragon Fleet was the winner of the challenge. (Note; However, I feel that the real winner was the person or persons who will benefit from our collection.) So far the information I have received is that 200lbs of can tabs was collected, enabling us to get a wheelchair for the Toronto Hospital.

This communication is to express my thanks to all the warriors who participated and to advise all that the challenge was reissued by Captain Kalot. Our deadline is Toronto Trek XIII, so start collecting those can tabs and be forewarned that the Steel Fist Fleet will most likely be doubling their effort in order to win the bragging rights. So, for the honour of our fleet and for the bragging rights we must double our efforts as well.

Q'apla!! to all

Commander Maelgwn vestai-Y
Ddraig Goch K.A.D.
Arctic Storm Squadron, Ice Dragon
Fleet, KAG/Kanada

MonSFFA congratulates the warriors of KAG/Kanada on their charitable actions and noble challenge. If MonSFFA members want to help out the Klingons they can bring their pop can tabs and used stamps to our club meetings and give them to Commander Maelgwn, otherwise known as MonSFFA member David James.—Ed

Greetings All;

Just a short note to confirm to all that Concinnity 98 has had to be postponed for this year. The reasons are varied but the major one is that

after believing we had a hotel for close to four months they cancelled on us. This would have required us to change dates and that would have cost us our Guest of Honour. With just over six weeks to go before the convention, we felt this required too many changes to get the word out in time to the attendees.

That being said, things are already in place for next October 28-30, 1999. We have a hotel that has signed on the line for us, this being the Embassy Hotel, 25 Cartier St at Cooper. We have confirmed with our Guest of Honour Robert J. Sawyer, Canada's only full time Science Fiction Author and winner of over a dozen awards for his books, including *Frameshift*, *The Terminal Experiment* and *Factoring Humanity*. Our Science Guest of Honour, David Stephenson has promised some new and exciting talks. Our Fan Guest of Honour, Murray J. Anderson is one of the people that has helped make Ad Astra one of Canada's most successful and long running convention. Our Toastmaster is a man who needs no introduction, Larry Stewart, this Aurora Award winning entertainer will be joining us once again.

So, while we regret our postponement we look forward to returning next year with a bigger and better convention. If you have any questions please feel free to contact the Convention Committee at Concinnity@Geocities.com.

Joseph W. Casey
President
Ottawa Fandom Inc.

We're glad to hear that Concinnity is still alive and well. Those who enjoyed Con•Cept in Montreal will most likely enjoy Concinnity as well and Ottawa is only a short drive away. —Ed

Hi! I am not a member of your club but am a hug sci-fi fan. I would like to try to get Videotron to offer Space: The Imagination Station to all Videotron subscribers, not just those in the West end. do you think you

could mobilize you members to do a write-in/e-mail campaign on our behalf? If there is already something being done by your group, please let me know—I will be very happy to help.

Thank you,

Joanne McNair

We are not doing anything officially, but many of our members have been actively campaigning as individuals. They have written letters and sent e-mail. Some have even cancelled their Videotron service and signed up with Look-TV or bought satellite dishes. Yes, many of us are just as annoyed with Videotron as you are!—Ed

Dear MonSFFen:

Many thanks for issue 44 of Warp. It looks like another interesting issue. Also, it was great to see lots of people at Con*cept this year. More comments on that after I comment on the clubzine...

Lynda's editorial reflects what most clubs go through...apathy on the part of it's members, and lack of submissions to the club fanzine. I'm thinking that a member of the editorial team may also have to act as an assignment editor. I'll bet there's a few people out there who would produce an article or two if they knew what to write about, or what you wanted them to produce. A few ideas given to these people could get the creative ball rolling.

There's an old letter...my urging the members to vote...must have worked, given the results of this year's Auroras.

Much of the Visions review could have been applied to a review of the *Babylon 5* minicon at Toronto Trek this past July. Jeff Conaway managed to keep his pants up, while Jason Carter and Robin Atkin-Downes were great guests. Watch for all three to be sporting tacky shirts some time in the near future.

The *B5* movie *Thirdspace* has already come and gone...interesting ideas, but for me, it didn't advance

the overall plot of the series, so it was more of a throwaway idea developed more than anything else. As I write, TNT in the States will be showing the next *B5* movie (name escapes me) with Martin Sheen as a guest star.

Con*cept this year was a fine time indeed, and having won the Canadian Unity Fan Fund, we decided to fly in and save time. We were surprised to see that the hotel was still on strike. At least this year, we found the big green mall a couple of streets north, and were able to have some good meals. Programming was good, and the opportunity to auction off items for CUFF was much appreciated. \$100 was raised, and we still have items to auction. The con suite in the bar was fun, and the green room came in handy for much of our food that weekend. The art show seemed to be forgotten by many people because they didn't go looking for the room it was in...a few easels with signs could have solved that. The dealer's room was very good, and the button dealer near the end did a terrific business as usual. The Aurora ceremony could have used some rehearsals, but the trophies were given out, and happily, Montreal fandom got its share. I had the chance to talk to Claude Mercier, chairman of BorÉal, and found that with the relative health of French-language science fiction in Quebec, it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract people to BorÉal, which is why it has been good to share facilities and a weekend with Con*cept. Claude says that 35 to 40 people actually attend for BorÉal, so Con*cept's assistance has been invaluable to keep BorÉal going.

Take care, and see you all next issue.

Lloyd Penney

Thanks for your letter. As always, MonSFFA appreciates your comments and insights into fandom.—Ed

MonSFFAAndom

"ALL THE CLUB NEWS THAT FITS, WE'LL PRINT!"

MonSFFA MEETINGS: JUNE-SEPTEMBER

June

Lynda Pelley's slide show of her visit to the Smithsonian's *Star Wars* exhibit, bumped once (it had first been scheduled for the May 24th meeting), had to be bumped again due to Lynda's unavoidably late arrival at our June gathering. She will show her slides at a meeting soon, and we are told, *Star Wars* fans will find it worth the wait!

MonSFFA's June 14th meeting, then, featured a lively discussion of the epic space opera as presented on the small screen. Keith Braithwaite moderated the exchange between an informal panel and the audience on whether or not "big space" worked on the small screen.

Some found that the visual impact of something like the opening minutes of *Star Wars* was lost on the small screen. Others felt that whether in a movie theatre or on TV, a good story is a good story. Certainly, the big screen can enhance the viewing experience but should not be a major factor in assessing a production. But the space opera genre, came the riposte, lives or dies on its sweeping visuals of space fleets, planetscapes and such. Big screen treatment is a big part of what makes these kinds of productions click. *Battlestar: Galactica* was put forth as an example of a space opera that worked just fine on the small screen, although some argued that *Galactica* was not a particularly impressive example of the genre. Also explored was character development. It was argued that television series are a much better vehicle for developing relationships among characters than are movies, simply because TV series

can do so over several seasons, whereas movies are limited to two or three hours. Of course, a movie series offers the opportunity to develop its characters much along the lines of a TV series. Cited here were the *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* films. And with Hollywood's penchant for turning TV shows into movies, characters we've come to know on the small screen continue to develop in big screen outings (think *Star Trek* and *The X-Files*). Conclusions: most agreed that a good story worked whether on the large or small screen, but that visually, the space opera was at its best on the big screen.

Just about everyone in attendance at our June meeting participated in the space-opera discussion and so MonSFFA thanks everyone for taking part. Thanks, as well, to those members who saw to our regular fund-raisers, the raffle and snack table.

August

A full house sat down at MonSFFA's August 16th meeting for a look at the end of the world. The summer's movie doubleheader about comet/asteroid collisions with Earth, *Deep Impact* and *Armageddon*, inspired the topic.

Yolande Rufiange screened a video which dealt with modern science's take on the collision scenario. Our resident astronomy buff, Cathy Palmer-Lister, elaborated on this subject and sketched other potential cosmic threats to the planet, including radiation bombardment should a nearby (in astronomical terms) star go supernova.

Keith Braithwaite and Bryan Ekers were up next with an outline of the various doomsday scenarios presented in SF literature and film. In

addition to the collision scenario, these included nuclear war, alien attack, the killer virus, and eco-disasters. Notable examples of the genre, books and movies: *On The Beach*, *War of The Worlds*, *Earth Abides*, *The Day of The Triffids*, *The Andromeda Strain*, *Lucifer's Hammer*, *The Long Winter*, *The Sheep Look Up*. The best stories, it was agreed, focused not so much on the disaster itself, but on how people deal with the disaster. *Armageddon*, incidentally, was universally panned for its wildly inaccurate science and overblown action.

Joining Keith and Bryan on the dais following the mid-meeting break were Georges Dodds and Yolande. The discussion shifted, now, to the post-apocalyptic scenarios. It was put forth that, in the wake of a global disaster, the surviving remnants of mankind would have an opportunity to rebuild human society and do it right. But what is "right"? It was suggested that technology would be shunned in favour of a return to the land. Would this be the case? Would this be utopia? The counter-argument was that, quite the opposite, technology would surely play a vital role in the rebuilding. Rejecting technology would put us on the fast track to a dystopia. Talk turned to whether a utopia was even possible, then to a practical definition of the term before wandering far afield to touch on everything from Western democracies as the apex of societal development to money as the root of all evil and the millennium computer bug.

The club thanks Yolande, Cathy, Keith, Bryan, and Georges for the meeting's programming. Thanks, also, to Wayne Glover, who supplied us with a TV ad VCR. And thanks to

those MonSFFen who took care of running our raffle and snack table this time out.

September

The September 20th club meeting drew about 30 folk for a review of film/TV SF from the Orient, both live-action and animated. Unfortunately, one of the afternoon's presenters, Jean-Pierre Normand, came down with a bad cold and his segment on the live-action had to be scrubbed. But Dominique Durocher and Robert Copot were in good health and covered the extensive anime portfolio. Clips from such fare as *Gundam*, *Macross*, *Patlabor*, *Albator*, *Akira*, *Sol Bianca*, and *Battleship Yamato* illustrated examples of fantasy, cyberpunk, space opera, and that uniquely Asian form, mecha. Discussion and a Q&A capped the meeting.

We trust Jean-Pierre is feeling better and we thank Dominique and Robert for their presentation. Thanks to Wayne Glover for again supplying us with the A/V equipment, and to our raffle and snack-table people.

WORLD PREMIERE: THE FEDEX FILES: "MOXIE"

The long-awaited sequel to MonSFFA's 1996 hit video-film *Plant 9 From Outer Space* completed post-production September 19th. We thank Con•Sept '98 (October 2-4) at this time for making a two-hour programming block (the Saturday, 10:00AM-noon) available to MonSFFA in which to first offer a rerun of *Plant 9*, then premiere *The FedEx Files: "Moxie"*.

In an hour-long adventure, FedEx special agents Meddler and Scurry, introduced in *Plant 9*, continue their battle against the forces of evil operating within the Federal Express corporation. Meddler is targeted for assimilation into the botanical collective as the sinister Gum-Chewing Man hatches a new plot to help forward the takeover of Earth by the sentient space

cabbages of *Plant 9*. Can Scurry save the day?

Unlike *Plant 9*, which was completed in a single weekend plus a couple of evenings, the ambitious "Moxie" clocks in at almost two years, from first take to final edit. Cast and crew rose to the more challenging demands of this project and have been rewarded with a sequel that we think is worthy of the original.

The club screened "Moxie" at the November meeting and copies of both "Moxie" and *Plant 9* are now on sale.

MEDIEVAL VIDEO-FILM PROJECT

Spurred on by the fun had on *Plant 9 from Outer Space* and its sequel (currently in post-production), several of the alumni of these two club video-film projects have put together plans for a new production that will do to Camelot what the *Plant 9* features do to *The X-Files*. Spearheading this medieval video-film project are Marc Durocher and Josée Bellemare, who are scripting the piece at this very moment.

The club is pitching in with some funding, but additional money will be needed (mostly to create a medieval castle set). Fund-raising efforts are in the works, including Josée's auction (at the club's October 18th "Sci-Fi Garage Sale") of a handsome, polished, foot-high statue of Merlin the Magician. He'll be a fine decorative addition to any bookshelf or tabletop.

MonSFFA MEMBER SEES STORY PUBLISHED IN CANADIAN SF ANTHOLOGY

MonSFFAn Leslie Lupien informs us that the upcoming anthology of Canadian SF, *North of Infinity—Futurity Visions*, a trade paperback published by Mosaic Press (Ontario), includes one of his stories. Bravo, Leslie! We look forward to the book's release.

MonSFFA WELCOMES NEBULA'S NEW OWNER

Last issue we bid a fond farewell to Claude Lalumière, founder of Nebula Books, a long-time participant in the club's discount program. Claude recently sold the shop and has moved on to other endeavours.

With this issue, MonSFFA offers a warm welcome to Nebula's new owner, Debra Aubin, who also owns the esoteric *Mélange Magique* shop just down the street from Nebula. She is no stranger to SF/F fandom, then, and looks forward to a continuing excellent relationship with MonSFFA and Montreal fandom in general. We can think of no better candidate to succeed Claude and we wish her the best of luck with her new venture.

MONTREAL GETS SPACE

Vidéotron has finally added Space: The Imagination Station to its grid at no extra charge. Space, a Canadian version of the American Sci-Fi channel, runs TV SF fare 24 hours a day, including *Babylon 5*, *Star Trek*, *X-Files*, *Outer Limits*, *Twilight Zone*, and *Doctor Who*. Space has been available in most major Canadian cities since it was launched about a year ago. It has proved to be one of the most popular of the recently licensed specialty cable channels. Its arrival in Montreal is long over due and not without a catch. Only Vidéotron West subscribers (the old CF Cable territory) receive the new channel.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

The cost of running MonSFFA rises from year to year and your membership renewals are *vitaly important* in seeing that this club continues to operate; please be sure to renew *on time*. Note: MonSFFA has not raised its yearly membership fees since 1988! We remain one of the *best bargains* in town for the discriminating SF/F fan.

In Search of Wonder...

Extracts from the Reading Diary of John Dupuis

DISTRESS

by Greg Egan

Australian Greg Egan is one of the best kept secrets in modern science fiction. Although he hasn't won any major awards yet, his stories are a fixture in the various year's best anthologies (see below).

He writes the wildest of wild ultra-hard SF, usually revolving around grand metaphysical or scientific speculations, peopled by well-drawn and sympathetic characters engaged in dramatic moral and intellectual struggles. In other words, his novels and stories have something for everyone.

Distress is set about 100 years in the future and follows science journalist Andrew Worth as he covers a conference where a controversial physicist is about to unveil her Theory of Everything, or TOE, which is a theory which seeks to explain all phenomena in the universe. Needless to say, there are terrorist and rival scientific groups which don't like her or her ideas. Worth, of course, gets caught up in all this. As a result, he gets kidnapped and/or threatened a few times and in the process discovers the secrets about the nature of our universe and how human observation affects that universe.

Mind blowing stuff, not for the faint of heart but full of all the things that really puts the *science* into science fiction.

THE YEAR'S BEST SF: 3

edited by David G. Hartwell
and

THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION: FIFTEENTH ANNUAL COLLECTION

edited by Gardner Dozois

If you only read two SF books every year, you usually can't do any

better than the annual installments in Hartwell's and Dozois's ongoing series. This year's volumes are no exception. Except on price (Hartwell: \$8.50, pb, 448 pages, 22 stories; Dozois: \$24.99, trade pb, 616 tightly packed pages, 28 stories), it is really hard to choose between these two.

Both have a number of really terrific selections and both have a few weaker ones that I found disappointing. The standout stories common to both are by Robert Silverberg, Michael Swanwick, Brian Stableford and Greg Egan's "Yeyuka". The best in the Hartwell are by Terry Bisson, Nancy Kress, Kim Newman, Paul Levinson and Michael Moorcock. The best in the Dozois are by Stephen Baxter, Bill Johnson, Peter F. Hamilton, Gregory Benford and Elisabeth Malartre, and yet another Greg Egan.

Some stories, of course, stand out more than others. Robert Silverberg shows his mastery of the genre with a moving tale of what life is like after a rather disastrous alien invasion while Bill Johnson's Hugo-award-winning "We Will Drink a Fish Together" is a bizarrely wry tale of diplomacy and family ties involving rednecks and alien ambassadors. Peter F. Hamilton's prequel to his *Reality Dysfunction* novels is a rollicking example of modern space opera at it's best. Greg Egan's two tales are both wonderful examples of the tendency of more recent hard SF towards far-out extrapolations while also dealing more character-driven moral and ethical issues.

NADYA

by Pat Murphy

Nadya and her parents are immigrants to Missouri in the 1820s. But, they're not just any immigrants—they're werewolves.

Growing up on a farm, Nadya is more tomboy than polite society girl.

This is in stark contrast to the other girls around her, who are more demur and lady-like. Those girls may be daughters of other farmers or shopkeepers, but they have pretensions and aspirations that Nadya just doesn't share. She is much happier out in the woods hunting and shooting. She even beats the local men in a sharp-shooting contest.

Once she enters puberty, however, and starts changing into a werewolf like her parents, things start to fall apart. She falls in love with the wrong man, provoking a crisis which ends with her parents and her lover dead and Nadya fleeing westward towards California. She hooks up with an equally desperate young woman on the wagon trail—her father and the rest of their caravan have all been killed by Indians. Predictably, Nadya and Elisabeth fall in love on their arduous journey across deserts and mountains.

This part of the novel is the best and most dramatic, combining adventure with romance. Once they arrive in California, in the last quarter of the novel, I find the resolution less satisfying. Also, the werewolf elements sometimes seem almost tacked on to a conventional novel about a strong and independent woman in the wild west, as if Nadya had to be a werewolf (and bisexual) to make her believably different from the stereotypical woman of the era. However, when all is said and done, *Nadya* is an enjoyable novel of adventure, discovery, and romance.

THE BOOK OF KNIGHTS

by Yves Meynard

This is the kind of book where, if I didn't know the guy who wrote it, I would never give a thought to picking it up. Sure it's garnered rave reviews in *Quill & Quire*, *The Globe and Mail* and *Locus*, to name but a

few. But, this kind of fantasy has just never appealed to me. You know, young orphan boy grows up always feeling somewhat different than those around him, runs away from home because he knows he's better than the life he's stuck with, finds a wise but crusty mentor, strikes out on a quest, has some rollicking adventures, falls in love and comes of age. The final act involves him returning to his childhood home, showing up all the old crowd, discovering who his true father is and, just for fun, confronting the forces of evil, usually his father. And through this confrontation, he discovers he's endowed with great gifts and an important role in the unfolding of the universe. It's been done.

Well, Yves is a nice guy and I've loved some of the SF short stories he's recently published in English. I figured I'd give the book a try. If I don't like it, the topic need never come up. Well, I need never have worried.

The Book of Knights is the story of Adetrune, a young boy who desperately wants to become a knight. The course of his quest follows the script pretty closely (with some significant deviations) but Yves' gorgeous prose and intense imagination bring an awful lot more to Adetrune's tale than just cliches. It is like a good jazz riff, using the basic melody as a basis to improvise an infinitely more complex and more beautiful variation. *The Book of Knights* is a story filled with compassion and understanding, containing many insights into the human heart, giving a view of both the darkest corners and lightest vistas.

Other books I've read recently and liked:

Reservation Blues by Sherman Alexie
The Reality Dysfunction Parts 1&2 by Peter F. Hamilton

Frameshift by Robert J. Sawyer
The Siege of Eternity by Frederik Pohl

(Note: The title of this column is inspired by the work of Greg Egan and taken from Damon Knight's seminal volume of SF criticism, *In Search of Wonder*.)

The 1998 Aurora Winners

The 1998 Aurora Awards were handed out for the first time in Quebec, at Con•Cept '98/Boréal, which hosted this year's Canadian National SF/F convention, Convention. Here are the winners:

BEST LONG FORM WORK IN ENGLISH

Black Wine, by Candace Jane Dorsey

MEILLEUR LIVRE EN FRANCAIS

L'Odyssée du Pénélope, par Jean-Pierre Guillet

BEST SHORT FORM WORK IN ENGLISH

"Three Hearings On..." by James Alan Gardner

MEILLEUR NOUVELLE EN FRANCAIS

"Une lettre de ma mère," par Yves Meynard

BEST OTHER WORK IN ENGLISH

Northern Frights 4

MEILLEUR OUVRAGE EN FRANCAIS (AUTRE)

Solaris

ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT

Jean-Pierre Normand

FANNISH ACHIEVEMENT (FANZINE)

Warp Factor, edited by Chris Chartier

FANNISH ACHIEVEMENT (ORGANIZATIONAL)

Peter Halasz, National SF Society

FANNISH ACHIEVEMENT (OTHER)

Larry Stewart, Entertainer

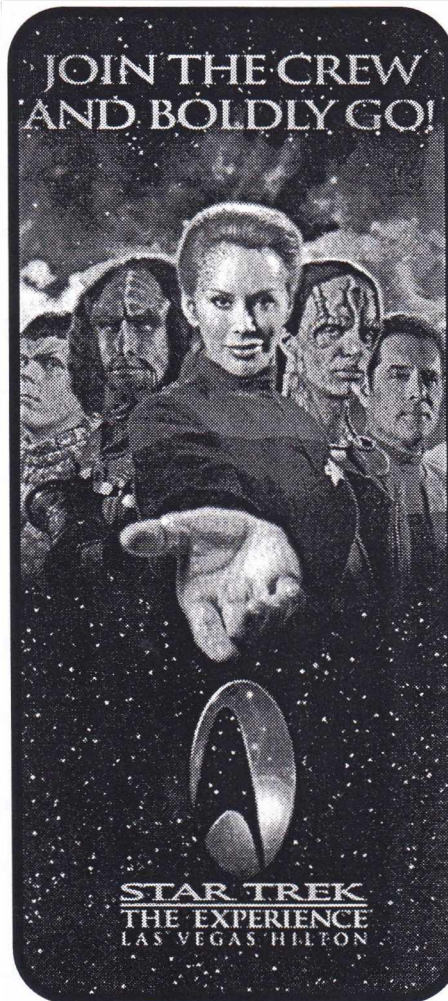
THE STAR TREK EXPERIENCE

by Sylvain St-Pierre

I had been waiting for this ever since I learned that some kind of 70 million dollar *Star Trek* ride was going to be built in Las Vegas. It was initially scheduled to open in the Fall of 1996, but technical difficulties and some mid-course concept changes delayed that by several months. Their catch phrase, "This Time It's Real", is most appropriate. If you know Vegas already, it's hard to think of a better place to put such an attraction; this city is so dazzling as to be already out of this world. I went at the end of September, because the weather is usually at its best at that time, and it was indeed absolutely lovely for the length of my stay. The Experience itself is located within the Las Vegas Hilton, a bit off the Strip. A low-cost shuttle does stop at all major hotels, but it is often crowded and can take a while, so I took a taxi instead. The cost is about \$9.00 US from the centrally located Imperial Palace Hotel, including the tip.

In order to get to the Star Trek Experience proper, you need to go through the SpaceQuest Casino. This is a good way of putting you in the right mood, because this gambling place has been tastefully redone in a very eye-catching sci-fi style. The slot machines fan around lighted columns that look somewhat like the warp core of the latest star cruiser, transparent tubes pump blue lightning everywhere and green laser beams crisscross overhead between hanging models of space ships that would make MonSFFA's modelers drool with envy. You almost feel that if you can only get a one-armed bandit to spit the right combination of symbols, the whole place will take off and head for the nearest nebula...

The entrance to the Experience is hard to miss: an enormous model of the first movie *Enterprise* comes out of an opening in the wall, as if leaving a space dock. Once inside, visitors find themselves in a cavernous star-lit room, with still more large-scale



models of famous *Star Trek* vessels hanging from the ceiling; while a big vidscreen on the wall shows clips from the various *ST* series and movies.

This is the Museum of Future History, where you can roam at will for as long as you want. There is a well done timeline running on one side of the path, and loads of props and costumes on the other. I suspect that many must be re-creations, for they seem to be in a much too fine condition to have been actually used. Everything is as neatly labeled as if these were real historical items and, in a way, they are. Numerous videos illustrate various points, and they have obviously been designed specifically for this purpose rather than just spliced out of old footage.

Pictures are allowed in this section, but as I was taping some of

the very fine exhibits, I heard a gravelly voice behind me ask in a menacing tone: "For what purpose are you making this record? Are you a Dominion spy?" Turning around, I faced a Klingon warrior in full regalia, looking not at all movie-like. "It's for the future", I babbled. That answer must have satisfied him, for he walked away, searching for other victims.

Upon reaching the actual ride, all recording must stop, but there are plenty of opportunities for great shots on the way. Bring a light-sensitive film; I suspect that the abundance of plexiglass and the general darkness of the room must result in unwanted reflections if flashes are used. Gorgeous models, props, costumes; it does not get better than this, or so I thought.

The fun starts innocently enough. You are told that you are going to board a motion simulator and asked to stay in line, in front of ordinary theater doors, in an otherwise unremarkable waiting room. And then everything goes dark, you are surrounded by sparkles and feel a cold blast of air. In the blink of an eye, you find yourself standing on a transporter pad on board the *U.S.S. Enterprise*, NCC 1701-D, without having once felt yourself moving. Either they are using a very smooth elevator platform, or somebody has really perfected a transporter device. Personally, I lean towards the second explanation. "We managed to get them, Sir.", says the operator.

We are then told not to panic, that we are aboard a spaceship from the future and are quickly ushered to the Bridge amidst blaring Red Alert signals. We come out from the forward starboard door, the one which I believe has never been seen to open; so even nitpickers will have a hard time faulting the layout. The Bridge itself is perfect down to the last detail, so much so that, for a moment, I began to wonder if I had not really slipped into an alternate



Some members of the crew pose at the entrance to the Star Trek Experience.

universe. We are made to stand between the railing and the various technical stations at the back, with loads of irresistible Okudagrams within reach of our greedy little fingers. Anybody trying to touch is politely, but sternly, asked by a crew member not to fiddle with the controls, as it could prove disastrous!

After just enough time to let us be stunned by the grandiose setting, the main viewscreen flicks on and we are greeted by Commander Riker, who is standing in a shuttle bay with Geordi LaForge. In a few words, we are told that a renegade Klingon has discovered a time warp to the 20th century and has been using it to kidnap our group, because one of us is an ancestor of Jean-Luc Picard. The Captain disappeared the moment we were beamed out, but the *Enterprise* crew managed to intercept the transporter signal and is now desperately trying to restore the timeline.

A rude interruption by the Klingon villain tell us that everybody else will be let go if Picard's ancestor is handed over, but Riker gallantly refuses (sigh of relief). Of course, the Klingon is royally pissed and launches an attack. Hurry! Hurry! Everybody into the rear turbolift! It is larger than what I remember seeing on TV, but everything is moving so

fast that I could be mistaken. On our way to the escape shuttle, the ship is suddenly under heavy fire and the cab shakes and rattles, but we manage to make it to the evacuation room, where a clever computerized display tell us about safety procedures. Our vehicle is to be remote-controlled by Geordi himself, who will follow in an armed shuttle to protect us!

Out of sheer luck, I ended up having the best seat in the house: smack in the middle of the front row, with an unspoiled view of the action; an arm's length from the control panel. If you ever go, try to be third in line, in the last boarding line to the left. What follows is simply mind boggling. The dock doors are out of order, so we exit by blasting them open. Since the launching bay was not depressurized first, all the content is ejected into space with the shuttle. You feel every jerk as loose cargo pods collide with our craft!

Then comes the thrill of a lifetime. We zoom through space at dizzying speeds, trying to find the time warp that will bring us back home, all the while dodging Klingon fire and coming dangerously close to both friend and foe. The realism of the trip simply cannot be described in words, it has to be experienced. The ending is nothing less than astonishing, and I will not give it away because it would really spoil

your fun if you have the chance to take the ride! Wow! Bravo! Bravo! Encore!

Unboarding the shuttle, passengers find themselves on the *Deep Space 9* Promenade. This particular section seems to be on a slightly smaller scale than the one we are accustomed to seeing in the show, but so well done that it's easy to believe that it is simply an annex located on a part of the station that has not been visited yet. The detailing is quite extraordinary and, I suspect, probably better than that of the actual sets, which are designed to be viewed from specific angles and not made to handle a lot of real traffic. The first establishment to catch the eye is—of course—Quark's.

There are separate sections for the restaurant and bar and, while the former is quite convincing, it is truly the latter that is the masterpiece. I had to resist the impulse to pinch myself to make sure that I was not dreaming. I fully expected to see O'Brien and Bashir engaged in a friendly game of darts, and I think that I would not have raised an eyebrow if one of the chairs had suddenly changed shape and turned out to be Odo. Taking a seat at the bar, I noticed that live lightning disks were built into the counter and that the barmaids were lovely Bajorans. The selection of drinks is as varied and exotic as one would expect. A Warp Core Breach would have been nice, but those are huge affairs built for two; so I settled for an elegant glass of Tranya while reading the menu, which is simply a riot. From various newspaper and magazine reviews I was ready for puns like Deep Space Wines and James Tea Kirk, but it really takes a warped mind to come up with such dishes as Hamburgers, Wrap of Khan and BBQ Continuum Pizza... In true Ferengi style, the menus can be purchased—at a cost higher than many of the items listed therein.



Hearing a commotion outside, I stepped out to investigate and found my friend the Klingon roughing up two hapless Ferengi who had somehow insulted his honour! The pictures posted on the Experience's Web site (<http://www.startrekexp.com>) really do not do justice to their make-up. While it is not quite as precise as the one used on TV, it is nevertheless quite convincing, even from up close. Of course, I could not miss such an opportunity and quickly raised my video camera. Woe to me! Still clutching one of Quark's employees in one hand, he pointed a threatening finger in my direction and warned me of dire consequences if I did not stop recording! Thinking myself clever, I tapped on the soundboard-equipped communicator badge that I had taken the precaution to pin on my shirt. Obviously, I was not the first to try that ploy, for the Klingon only sneered and said something along the lines of: "Calling your Federation will not help you!". In desperation, I brought my fist to my chest, did a fair imitation of a Klingon salute and shouted "Qapla!". "Ah!", beamed the warrior, "Why did you not tell me that you were one of our own in disguise?"...

This is just one hint of the kind of planning that must have gone into the design of this place. Another is the presence of a public replicator casually tucked in a corner. Of obvious Cardassian manufacture, this device actually works: you press a selection, and the desired item materializes inside, be it Glop on a Stick, Stradivarian Sunset, or Grub Worms (live and squirmy, of course). Sadly, Cardassians are known to have a nasty streak in them, and a glass plate prevents you from picking up the items...

Other shops in the Promenade include Garak's Clothiers (jackets, jewelry and accessories), Zek's Grand Emporium (anything with a *Trek* twist), the Molecular Imaging Chamber (have your picture morphed into a *Trek* setting), Moogie's Trading Post (T-Shirts and sweaters) and the Admiral Collection. The



Sylvain tries out the Molecular Imaging Chamber and gets composited with Worf and Sisko.

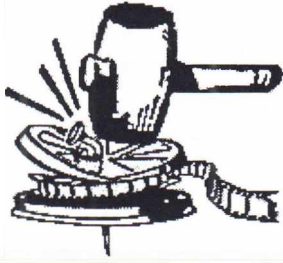
latter has the best selection of merchandise that people like us would like, offering exquisite—and expensive—sculptures and artwork. It is unlikely that anybody—fan or mundane—can walk through without buying something. Only tasteful items are included; so you will not find Star Fleet toilet paper here but, yes, they do have *Star Trek* tapes. The prices are not attractive compared to what you will pay in Montreal, but they have every single episode and movie in existence, for all series. The merchants accept 20th century US currency and gold-pressed latinum, but not quatloozes, cubits or Canadian dollars.

The Promenade can be accessed directly from the main entrance, without having to pay for the ride which, like all such attractions, is not recommended for pregnant women and people with back problems or a delicate constitution. The cost of one entry to the Experience, which includes access to the Museum and the 20-minute ride itself, is \$14.95 US plus a few cents worth of taxes. This is very reasonable, considering the amazing quality of it all.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this review, Vegas has plenty of other attractions and is a vacationer's paradise. If you can keep your

gambling in check, you will find it an inexpensive destination. The food is superb, cheap and plentiful, the choice of hotels can accommodate all purses, and the entertainment is like nowhere else on the planet, at least in this quantum reality. Even if you are so hopelessly in need of a life as to be interested only in science fiction and fantasy, you will find plenty here to keep you awake.

For instance, the pyramid-shaped Luxor Hotel has the In Search of the Obelisk ride. This is a Stargate-flavoured adventure where you explore strange underground ruins on board an ancient anti-gravity vehicle, trying to escape before an evil scientist blows the place up. In addition to a fantastic audio-animatronic show involving Neptune himself, the Caesars Palace also has its own motion simulator, Race for Atlantis, where you are the champion of a god in a flying chariot race that will decide the fate of the ancient city. Yet another such ride can be found in the theme park of the MGM Grand, this time involving a subterranean trip through caverns filled with giant crystals, lava and tentacled monsters. I am definitely going back in a couple of years and, with a bit of luck, maybe by then Quark will have the HoloSuites on line...



MOVIE REVIEWS

The summer's run of movies this year has not produced the usual mega-hit. While directed by one of sci-fi's biggest names, the one truly must-see movie of the summer is not SF/F but an historical drama. Most flicks, including the numerous SF/F entries, are just not performing up to expectations, critically or at the box office. Here's what our movie reviewers have to say about some of this rather lackluster season's genre fare:

X-FILES: FIGHT THE FUTURE reviewed by Keith Braithwaite

I liked it. It didn't blow me away, but I liked it. I'd class it more or less on par with most of the TV series' multi-part "mythology" episodes. My only quibble is that the aliens were nothing like what the series has suggested, but rather just another rip-off of Sigourney Weaver's adversaries.

Now I'm an X-phile. If I was someone to whom *The X-Files* is not a religion, however, I'd probably have a few more quibbles. Producers have touted this movie as one that can be enjoyed by both die-hard fans and the uninitiated. Believe the lie if you will, but there is no way this film makes much sense to someone unfamiliar with the show's complex mythology. It works just fine for us X-Files fans, moving Mulder and Scully's relationship forward just interestingly enough and answering some of the show's big questions (some, but not all, in typical X-Files fashion). But to non-fans, *Fight the Future* must have seemed a mish-mash of story elements, incomplete and confusing. Secondary characters, most notably the Lone Gunmen, are dropped in with little or no means for beginners to decipher who they are and why they're present. Too many pieces of the story are missing,

despite game attempts to condense five seasons of the series into a few explanatory bits of dialogue. Unfortunately, it's not enough to bring the viewer unattuned to Mulder and Scully's weird world up to speed. I suspect that is the principle reason the film's box office dropped off dramatically after only a few weeks in theatres.

But fret not, X-philes. They've still made enough money to insure the production of another *X-Files* flick.

ARMAGEDDON reviewed by Keith Braithwaite

This is a true-blue, right-stuff, American hero movie. As such, it's fun to watch, but *so completely impossible*, even by the loose standards of the summer sci-fi spectacle, that it becomes something of a joke with each passing scene. I simply could not suspend my disbelief as much as the scriptwriters demanded.

SMALL SOLDIERS reviewed by Carl Phillips

Small Soldiers is, basically, a cross between *Gremlins* and *Toy Story*. It's an okay movie that most people will like. What I enjoyed was its steady stream of pop culture references, from George C. Scott's *Patton* to the Spice Girls, most of which were funny. Oh yeah, there are some messages in there, too, about the evils of corporate America and the military, and about fighting for what's right even when you fully expect to get your ass kicked yada yada yada...

THE AVENGERS reviewed by Theresa Penalba

The Avengers is a remake of the classic 60's British TV show, so when

I originally saw the trailer for this movie back in June, it looked like it was going to be a smash hit. I was wrong. The trailer was the best part of the movie! It had the best scenes, best music, and best special effects.

I have only seen one episode of the original TV show and I liked it, so I went to this movie with an open mind. Maybe I should have seen more episodes, but I doubt that would have helped me to enjoy the movie any better.

I have one word for this movie—*boring!* It was *so boring* that I almost fell asleep. There was very little plot. It had something to do with Sean Connery's character trying to hold the world ransom by controlling the weather and that was about it. Throughout the film there were many unanswered questions. It took 90 minutes for anything to happen and by that time, the audience was almost asleep. By the end of the movie, you didn't care whether the characters lived or not. You just couldn't wait for the movie to be over.

Ralph Fiennes and Uma Thurman were convincing as John Steed and Emma Peel and Sean Connery was good as the bad guy, but the whole movie lacked excitement and that British feel that the original TV show had.

The special effects were nothing spectacular either, except for one scene near the end when tornadoes touch down in London.

I should have realized that this movie was poor from the start when I went to see it on the Saturday of its opening weekend and there were only about 15 other people in the cinema. Throughout the movie I kept thinking to myself, "I paid full price for this!" It's not worth it. It's not even worth seeing on cheap Tuesday. For that matter, it's not even worth waiting for the video! This movie is a bomb!

COVER STORY:

THE FEDEX FILES: "MOXIE"

ACTION IN THREE...

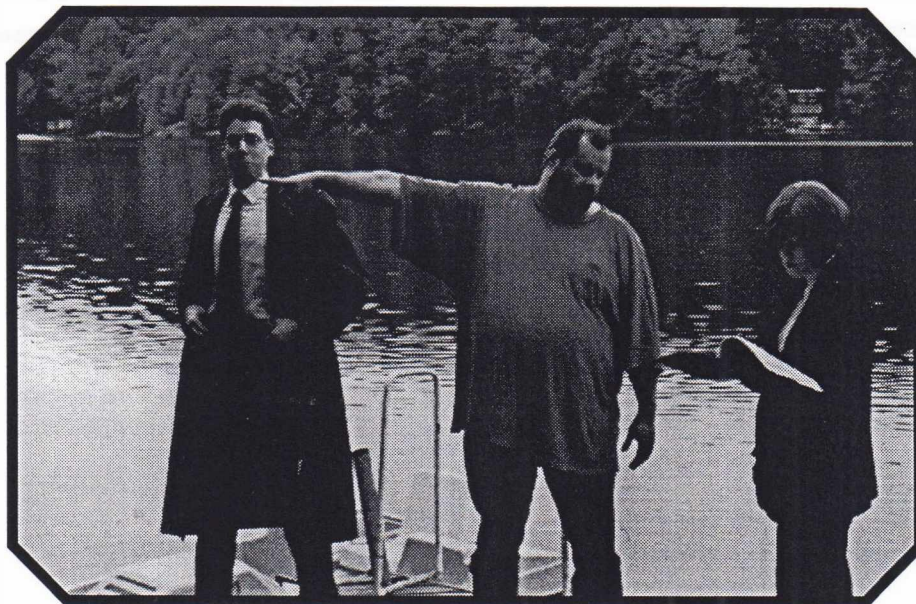
Random Anecdotes on the Production of *The FedEx Files: "Moxie"*

by Keith Braithwaite

I write this in the days immediately following the completion of post-production work on *The FedEx Files: "Moxie"*, the sequel to MonSFFA's 1996 hit comedy *Plant 9 From Outer Space*. Sylvain St-Pierre and I laid the final selection of music over our soundtrack at about three o'clock in the morning, September 19th. It seems that a lot of the work on the club's video-film projects is done in these wee hours. *Plant 9*, I recall, kept us up late, too.

When *Plant 9* was screened to much acclaim at Con•Cept '96, talk of doing a sequel began in earnest. Some two years later that sequel is, finally, in the can. I say finally because when we embarked upon the "Moxie" project, we expected to complete it within seven or eight months, a year tops. We wanted to take our time, do a better job than we had on the Ed-Woodsian *Plant 9* while retaining much of the cheesy, low-budget charm that is *Plant 9*. I think we've been largely successful, but it took us twice as long as we thought it would. Two years is a long time for people to stick with an amateur, for-the-fun-of-it project. Our cast and crew hung in there, however, sometimes returning two and three times to locations in order to complete what we naively figured would require only one visit.

I take this opportunity to thank "Moxie"'s production company for their dedication to the project, their valuable input, good humour, and incredible patience with the time-eating demands of the production.



On location at Lac Craig: I outline a scene for JJ Sobey as André Poliquin mugs for the camera.

Warp editor Lynda Pelley (who appears in "Moxie" as a scientist) asked me if I could write up something on the project for publication in the newsletter, perhaps in time for Con•Cept '98, where the world premiere of *The FedEx Files: "Moxie"* would take

place. In any case, you'll be reading this around about the time the film is released. I hope you have the opportunity to see it, and I hope you like what you see. I think it's a pretty good piece of work, but having been so immersed in the project for two years, in effect too close to it, it's

Ready to shoot a night scene at Area 6/49 with Agent 13.



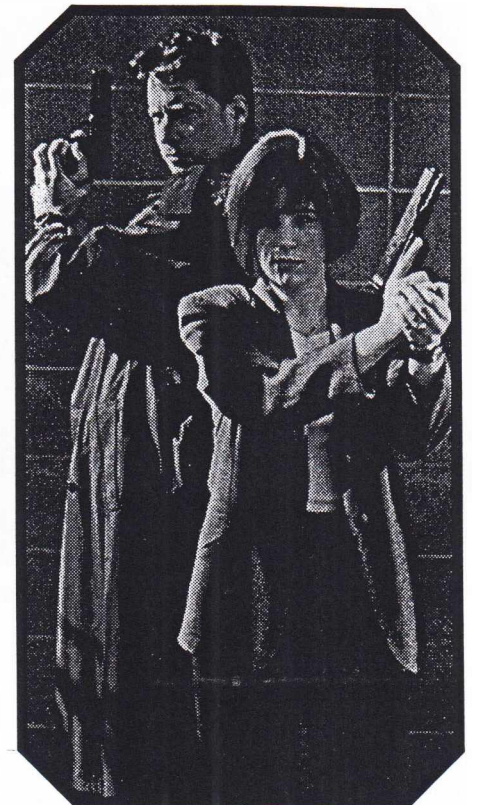
hard for me to be objective in my evaluation.

The title of this article, by the way, refers to the direction I would give our actors when we'd do a take. They were to begin action after a silent three-second pause, which we needed to avoid having to deal with very tight edits in post-production. I don't have the time or space for a detailed chronology of the production so I'll just offer the following few random anecdotes:

- My involvement begins when Dave Legault and Cindy Hodge approach me at a MonSFFA meeting early in '97, explain that they've been putting together plans for a *Plant 9* sequel, and ask if I'd be willing to write them a screenplay. I agree. They want it in six weeks.

- I attend a story meeting to hear what they've come up with in the way of plot. They present a series of unconnected scenes—a high-level informant is murdered at a lake-front cottage; there's a top secret facility nearby called Area 6/49; Moxie, a soft drink imported from Maine that is popular with some of Montreal's Klingon fandom, is to be featured; and a spy who hides in garbage cans and such, like *Get Smart's* Agent 13, is to have a role. Plot? They haven't got one. That's my part.

- When I sat down to write *Plant 9*, I had already worked out the basic story in my head. With "*Moxie*" I'm



Publicity photos of "*Moxie*" heroes: agents Meddler and Scurry (André Poliquin and JJ Sobey)

starting virtually from scratch. The special editions of the *Star Wars* movies are in theatres at the time. Meanwhile, *The X-Files* has been strongly hinting that Cancer Man is Mulder's father. I connect the dots and start writing.

- I'm not planning to direct this one (I directed *Plant 9*). I'll deliver the script and storyboard the thing, then

hand it over to someone else. But I never do find the time to do the storyboards. The entire visual plan for the film is in my head, so I end up directing.

- The shoots at Cindy's summer cottage are particularly taxing. It takes us most of the morning to drive there. By late-afternoon we begin to lose the light and, on one occasion, have to fake daylight as we work into the night. The second time we were up at the cottage we worked around the clock. Shooting night scenes at five o'clock in the morning, as dawn approaches, I begin to worry that we'll lose the dark!

- With parts of the same scene sometimes committed to tape months apart, we notice that the backgrounds don't always match. The leaves have begun to change and something shot in September is in marked contrast to something shot in June. We fix the problem to some degree by reshooting some of our stuff, but you'll still notice background discrepancies in a few spots.

Our lighting crew chief, Stephane Marcotte (r) sets up as Ernst-Udo Peters looks on.





Clowning around on location: Mark Burakoff (left) and André Poliquin.

- Winter is fast approaching and we still have a few outdoor scenes to complete. One in particular vexes us. We need a mere few seconds of our heroine's car zooming along a highway against a sunset. Weather, availability of personnel, and at one point, an accidented car conspire to keep us from getting this scene in the can before the snow falls. We'll shoot it only the following spring.

- Editing goes very well but takes a good deal of time because some of our sequences are quite complex, not to mention that the finished product will run just over an hour, twice as long as *Plant 9*. We have problems,



I do a little make-up work on Ernst-Udo Peters in preparation for a scene.



though, with portions of the sound mix. We can't boost levels on our sound overlay too high, lest we suffer distortion, but in some spots the overlay is almost drowned out by a particularly loud primary soundtrack. Our equipment doesn't allow us to lower levels on the primary so, unfortunately, we're stuck with what we've got.

- I decide, as we're editing a scene, that we need an establishing shot. But since the script had not called for one, we have no such shot. Not a problem. I can return to the location on my lunch hour Monday and shoot what we need, a brief long shot of Area 6/49's central complex. In reality, this is a factory in Ville St-

Above: Photo opportunity on location at Area 6/49.

Laurent and I can't believe my luck when, just as I focus the camera, a FedEx truck pulls out of the loading dock. No way could we have arranged for that in a million years!

Before wrapping up I'd like to take a moment to thank Cindy's dad for putting up with us as we tromped through their cottage with our lights and cables until all hours of the morning. We very much appreciate Mr. Hodge's tolerance of us crazy sci-fi nuts.

Now let me close by repeating what I said after we finished *Plant 9*: while this was all a lot of fun, it was also way too time-consuming and exhausting and I'll never do it again!



It Came From The Sci-Fi Modeler's Desk

ARMAGEDDON: THE MODEL KITS BY DOMINIQUE DUROCHER

An asteroid the size of Texas is heading toward Earth and a crew of misfit deep core oil drillers are sent to destroy it before it hits. This is the simple premise of the summer's biggest action movie, *Armageddon*. From this movie, Revell-Monogram has produced two kits. The first is of the X-71, a military version of the space shuttle, while the second is of an expanded Russian Mir space station. Both come in large flip-top boxes, like that of the *Babylon 5* Starfury, but much deeper.

SPACE SHUTTLE

The X-71 shuttle is basically a modification of Revell's space shuttle kit from the early '80s. It uses the same fuselage, engines and landing gear as the original kit. There are new parts for the very different wings, cargo doors and reaction control system (RCS) pods on either side of the tail as well as the smaller wings and boosters added to the X-71. A 3-part Armadillo is supplied, but it is too small and lacking in detail to really do anything with—as well as about twice the proper scale for the shuttle. The kit also includes the frame of the cargo bay, but none of the Spacelab parts. All the parts from the original shuttle's RCS pods are also included, but not used.

Like the kit this one was based on, the X-71 fits together well and is easy to assemble. The most difficult assembly is the two fuselage halves as they are long and require some

attention to maintain good seam alignment on the fuselage bottom. Even though it will not be seen, I recommend using the cargo bay module, as it gives the fuselage better structural stability.

Unfortunately, the shuttle fuselage is not accurate in shape for the X-71, as the latter has cylindrical bulges on either side of the fuselage blending into the wings. The shape of the wings also seems somewhat off, and they have very thick trailing edges.

Surface detail varies depending on the part. The fuselage has the same few raised lines as it always had, and the recessed hatch window will have to be filled and reproduced on the opposite side to properly represent the hatch, which was moved to the right side on the *Independence*. The added wings have slightly more detail in fine raised lines. The detail of the boosters is rather minimal and soft on the exhausts, which have very thick walls. A cone also needs to be added to the opening in the forward end of the boosters.

Mating the wings to the fuselage leaves large gaps which should be filled before the smaller wings are attached. I would also recommend painting the shuttle before attaching the boosters.

The markings for this kit are interesting. Since the paint scheme is mostly black and dark gray, the decals are the only source of colour on this kit. The tail markings and checkers for the boosters of both of the movie's shuttles are included, but only the name *Independence* appears on the sheet. The markings

of the second shuttle are actually the more colorful of the two. A large "X-71" for the bottom of the shuttle is not included either. It should be similar to the one supplied for the top of the craft, but twice the size.

Overall, the kit builds up to a half decent representation of the movie's spacecraft, if somewhat lacking in detail. It doesn't look quite as sleek as the shots of the ship in flight, but matches the proportions as seen after landing, minus the accumulated damage. Other than the inaccurate fuselage cross-section, this kit builds up into an acceptable-looking shuttle with few assembly snags.

RUSSIAN SPACE CENTER

The Russian Space Center kit is, unlike the other, an all-new kit. It is based on the Mir station, and includes all of the current modules—although in a rearranged configuration—and a couple of new ones.

I find this kit to be the better of the two. There is quite a bit of detail, although it is a little soft in places, and the kit also fits together quite well for a quick and simple build. It can almost be a snap-together, as all the parts except one capsule will hold together without glue.

Unfortunately, it seems to work out to a rather flimsy assembly, and could use some reinforcement. Some of the join lines may be a little difficult to clean up though, as they cross a lot of detail.

The solar arrays and antennae are quite nice and are about as close to the fragile-looking structures they

replicate as can be achieved with injected plastic.

Unfortunately, the solar arrays are somewhat undersized. A little creative painting on these and they should turn out quite nice. They can all be oriented through 360 degrees, except one set on the Spektr module, which are linked at an angle, limiting their movement.

Two capsules are included: the crew's Soyuz TM and an automatic Progress supply ship. Both are not particularly good representations and need some work to turn out good.

The painting instructions make this kit out to be rather monochromatic, where there is quite a bit more color to the real station. The basic color should be a light tan, almost off-white, and many of the flat surfaces should be covered in thermal blankets. The capsules are also covered in thermal blankets, which are a deep apple green, with exposed white radiator panels.

This kit builds up to a very nice model of the station. At a size of 12 inches long by 10 wide and 9 high, it is a kit that will easily be noticed.

The *Armageddon* space station kit includes extra parts that confirmed the rumors which preceded the recently-released kit of the real Mir station were well founded.

Side-by-side with a resin kit of the Mir station, the comparable parts of the *Armageddon* station release seem to have larger dimensions for all of the modules, and possibly more detail than is present in some places on the actual station, while some antennae and other current hardware is missing. Converting the kit to a current Mir would be relatively easy.

MODEL COMPETITION/CONVENTION NOTES

IPMS Ottawa Capcon '99 :

September 18th, 1999.

St-Elias Centre, Ottawa

For more information check their website:

www.igs.ipmsottawa

MODEL NEWS AND UPCOMING RELEASES

Babylon 5:

A "Special Edition" of the *B5 Starfury* is sporadically on hobby store shelves now. If you want it, buy it when you see it. This new release has no new or corrected parts, but supposedly a new and improved decal sheet provides four extra markings, including Sheridan's Flying Tigers scheme. Hopefully these decals are of better quality than the last batch.

There are rumours that the next *Babylon 5* model to be produced by Revell-Monogram will be the Minbari War Cruiser.

Space 1999:

Amazingly, the planned re-releases of the *Space 1999* Eagle and Moon Base Alpha kits appeared in hobby shops in early January of 1999! This is shocking because lately SF model kits are almost never ready for when the companies promise them.

Star Wars:

Amt/Ertl will provide models from *Episode 1: The Phantom Menace*, timed with the release of the film in May, followed by more models sometime in the fall. Details are being kept top secret, however, one of the kits is likely to be the yellow fighter seen in a few publicity photos.

Star Trek:

The *Enterprise-C* and a 3-*Enterprise* set, which includes smaller versions of the B, C, and E to compliment an earlier A, D, and original set, is due for release any time now. Amt/Ertl had originally planned these kits for fall 1998 but rescheduled these models for January. There was concern among *Trek* modelers that the long-awaited *Enterprise-C* had been cancelled amid rumours of an impending collapse of Amt/Ertl or a loss by same of the *Star Trek* license. The production of *Star Trek* models is being significantly reduced this year, however, it is more likely to be necessary to make room on the production line for the anticipated six or seven new *Star Wars* models. Amt/Ertl creates models for both universes!



Conjuration 4

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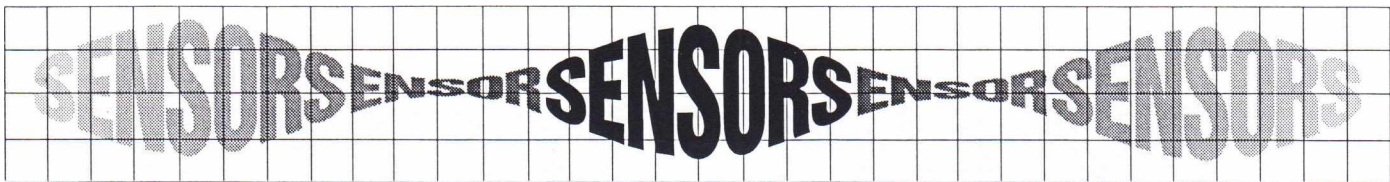
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FACT, RUMOUR AND SPECULATION FROM AROUND SF/F-DOM

Information for this column reaches from the inner mind to the outer limits.

MARS TRILOGY OPTIONED FOR TV

Director James Cameron has, apparently, purchased an option on Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars* trilogy (*Red Mars*, *Green Mars*, *Blue Mars*). Cameron's plans for the property, however, are for either a weekly television series or a TV mini-series, not a feature film.

RENDEZVOUS IN '99

A film adaptation of Arthur C. Clarke's classic *Rendezvous with Rama* is on the slate for a December '99 release. Morgan Freeman will star.

X-FILES STAR COULD BE NEXT BAT-VILLAIN

Should another *Batman* film be made (not at all a sure thing, following the disappointing performance of *Batman and Robin*), rumour has it that *X-Files* star Gillian Anderson is under consideration as the female villain.

X-FILES NEWS

Much to the disappointment of XXX-philes, naked-butt shots of each of the stars were cut from the *X-Files* movie! Mulder's rump was to be seen as he escaped the hospital in a one of those ties-in-the-back gowns, while Scully's assets were to have been glimpsed as Mulder freed her from the alien pod and heaved her naked bod up on his shoulder to carry her to safety.

The series returns for at least one more season, but now filming out of L.A., Vancouver having been abandoned because, it seems, David "Mulder" Duchovny didn't like the weather and wanted to be closer to home. Duchovny, in fact, has made numerous noises about wanting to do less on the show, if not get off altogether. So we may see Mulder's role considerably trimmed this year, or even see him written out of the show. The Agent Spender character, apparently, is poised to take over in this eventuality. Meanwhile, Mimi Rodgers' Agent Diana Fowley character, who was featured in the fifth-season finale, is slated to reappear on a regular basis this season, *The X-Files*' sixth.

CANADIAN SF/F WRITERS INTERVIEWED

Aspiring SF/F writers might be interested in a book entitled *Northern Dreamers*, by Edo van Belkom. The Quarry Press publication is a collection of van Belkom's interviews with notable Canadian SF/F writers, including William Gibson, Spider and Jeanne Robinson, Robert J. Sawyer, Guy Gavriel Kay, Charles de Lint, Tanya Huff, Phyllis Gotlieb, Candas Jane Dorsey, Élisabeth Vonarburg, Dave Duncan, Robert Charles Wilson, Terence M. Green, and W.P. Kinsella, whose novel *Shoeless Joe* was the basis for the Academy Award-winning film *Field of Dreams*. *Northern Dreamers* serves as a valuable reference for anyone who wants to get inside the creative minds of these accomplished writers.

AUSTRALIANS WEIGH EFFECT OF STAR WARS

Although the Australian film industry is anticipating huge gains from the decision by George Lucas to shoot the second and third episodes of his upcoming *Star Wars* prequels at the new Fox studios in Sydney, some members of the local industry are expressing concern about the long-term effect of the productions. Among their worries: will the government now feel that it does not need to fund a film industry now that major U.S. studios are hiring local talent?

STAR WARS TRAILER TO BE 'TRASHED'

In case you missed it, the trailer for the next *Star Wars* movie, *The Phantom Menace*, will be shown from December 18th.

However, LucasFilm has said it will be pulled from cinemas after six weeks—and that's the last you'll see before the feature trailer, which arrives shortly before the film's release on May 21st.

ANNE McCAFFREY AND DRAGONS OF PERN SERIES NEWS

Anne McCaffrey's new novel, *Nimisha's Ship* will be available in hardcover February 1999.

Anne McCaffrey stated the following about her upcoming *Dragons of Pern* television series: "We've had to put the series forward, right into the Year of the Dragon, 2000, to get the scriptwriter we want. Meanwhile, the production crew will be working to get all the picky little

details perfect. There are a lot of very clever scriptwriters out there—especially after *Babylon 5*. No cast list is available now.”

The script writer will be announced soon enough. *Dragonriders of Pern* has already been bought in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and fifteen other regional syndicates.

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA TRAILER COMPLETED

Richard (Apollo) Hatch has just completed directing a five to ten minute trailer for a proposed *Galactica* revival.

Apparently, this project is called *Battlestar Galactica: The Second Coming*. The short-film /trailer will make the convention circuit at some point next year, but its main purpose is to convince The Powers That Be at Universal that *Galactica* is a property which is still viable.

Appearing with Hatch in this maxi-trailer is Jack Stauffer (who played Bojay in the original series), John Colicos (Baltar), Terry Carter (Colonel Tigh), plus a few new faces.

SPIELBERG, CRUISE JOINING FORCES?

Steven Spielberg and Tom Cruise are reportedly considering working together on a science fiction film called *Minority Report*.

Based on a short story by Philip K. Dick, whose stories were also the basis of *Total Recall* and *Blade Runner*, the film concerns a policeman working in the ‘pre-crime division’ of a future police force which can detect the *intent* to commit a crime before the crime happens. The policeman is arrested for considering murder and must prove his innocence.

A script is in existence and Jan de Bont, best known for directing *Speed*, was at one time interested in directing.

GHOSTBUSTERS 3

The Toronto Sun is reporting that an online fan chat with Dan Aykroyd last week yielded some small bits of info on a potential 3rd *Ghostbusters* movie. The paper quotes the actor saying that he and Harold Ramis are nearly finished hammering out the film’s story points “and I expect to have a script to present to Sony in a few months.” *The Sun* also reports that if the film is given the greenlight that there’s a good chance that some of the film will be shot in Toronto.

LUCAS CONFIRMS INDY 4

George Lucas, speaking at the Screen Producers, Association of Australia conference, revealed that the script for *Indiana Jones 4* is finished and waiting for its director and star. “It really is a matter of Steven Spielberg and Harrison Ford’s time frames.” Both men currently have a variety of projects on their slate and, while making public comments that they’d enjoy filming another chapter, a start date has yet to be determined. Spielberg has confirmed that the script also calls for Sean Connery to return as Indy’s father.

SHATNER SINGS AGAIN

Star Trek actor William Shatner has boldly gone back to the music world, despite having his first LP, recorded 30 years ago, panned as one of the worst of all time. The 67-year-old actor, who made his name as Captain James T Kirk, has made a guest appearance on a solo LP released this week by American singer and pianist Ben Folds.

Shatner’s 1968 album *The Transformed Man* is widely regarded as one of the worst LPs ever made, with its spoken-word versions of *Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds* and *Mr Tambourine Man*, although it has achieved cult status.

Folds, leader of the trio Ben Folds Five, recruited the star for his

Fear Of Pop Volume 1 album, on the strength of Shatner’s notorious LP.

CRUSADE EPISODE TITLES

Here are the episode titles for *Crusade*:

War Zone (Pilot)
The Long Road
The Wall of Forever
The Faith of Sorrows
The Rules of the Game
Racing the Night
The Needs of Earth
The Memory of War
Of Late I Dream of Home
Visitors From Down the Street
Patterns of the Soul

CFCF-12 TO GET CRUSADE

Babylon 5: River of Souls will air on CFCF-12 on Saturday, January 23rd/99 2:00 to 4:00PM.

CFCF-12 will also air *Call To Arms*, the introductory film to the new *B5* spin-off series *Crusade*. And, yes, they have picked up the broadcast rights for the series too.

A BUFFY FILM?

Sarah Michelle Gellar, David Boreanaz, Nicholas Brendon, and Alyson Hannigan to storm the big screen? It seems a definite possibility considering just how successful WB’s television series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* has become! Joss Whedon is at present beginning work on a script (for Mutant Enemy Productions) to bring Sunnydale and its denizens to your local cineplex, perhaps as early as late ‘99!

VOYAGER MOVIE ON UPN

Production has begun on a special two-hour episode of *Star Trek: Voyager* that will chronicle the struggle between Captain Janeway and the Borg Queen for control of Seven of Nine.

MonSFFA Membership Benefits

The Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA) is a Montreal-based non-profit organization dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of all activities which engage and support the interests of science fiction and fantasy fans. The benefits of membership in MonSFFA include:

Membership Card

Your MonSFFA membership card identifies you as a MonSFFA member, allows you free admittance to the club's monthly events and entitles you to certain discounts at SF/F-oriented retailers participating in MonSFFA's discount program!

Monthly Events

Attend MonSFFA's regularly scheduled events, held about every month (except during the summer), and meet other SF/F fans! Share interests, exchange ideas, view current and classic SF/F movies and TV shows, enjoy guest speakers and special presentations, participate in workshops and discussion panels, get involved in various club projects, and more!

Discount Program

As a member of MonSFFA, you are in a position to save on your SF/F purchases, and your membership pays for itself within the year! If you buy an average of only \$4.00 worth of SF/F books, comics, collectibles, gaming and hobby items, etc. per week, your yearly MonSFFA membership will pay for itself in discount savings within the year! Full details of the discount program are printed in each issue of MonSFFA's newsletter.

Newsletter

You will receive a one-year subscription (six issues) to MonSFFA's newsletter, *Warp*! Produced by our

members for our members, *Warp* keeps you up to date on club activities and brings you general news from around the greater SF/F community! *Warp* is also a forum for you, the members—we want your book and movie reviews, opinion columns, short fiction and humour, artwork, etc! And, as a MonSFFA member, you are entitled to place (non-commercial) ads in *Warp* at no charge—sell your old SF book collection, announce that you're looking for gaming partners, or whatever!

As a MonSFFA member, you'll enjoy these benefits and more!

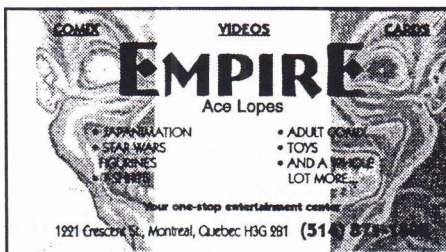
MonSFFA is administered, on behalf of all of its members, by an executive committee, who are empowered to appoint officers and advisors to assist them with the operation of the club. Executive committee members are elected annually by vote of the general membership; any member in good standing may run for office.

The fee for a one-year membership in MonSFFA is currently \$20.00.

Please address all correspondence to: MonSFFA, P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2W 2P4.

MonSFFA Discount Program

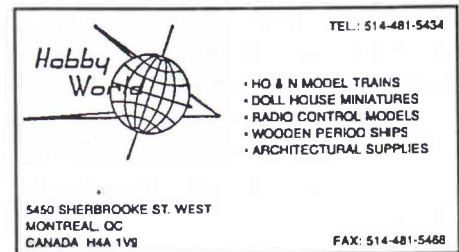
Listed on this and the next page are the SF/F-oriented retailers/dealers participating in the **MonSFFA Discount Program**. *We encourage members to frequent these establishments.* A valid MonSFFA membership card must be presented in order to take advantage of the discounts offered under this program. (Note: Certain exceptions with regard to the MonSFFA Discount Program may exist at some of these establishments. Conditions subject to change.)



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