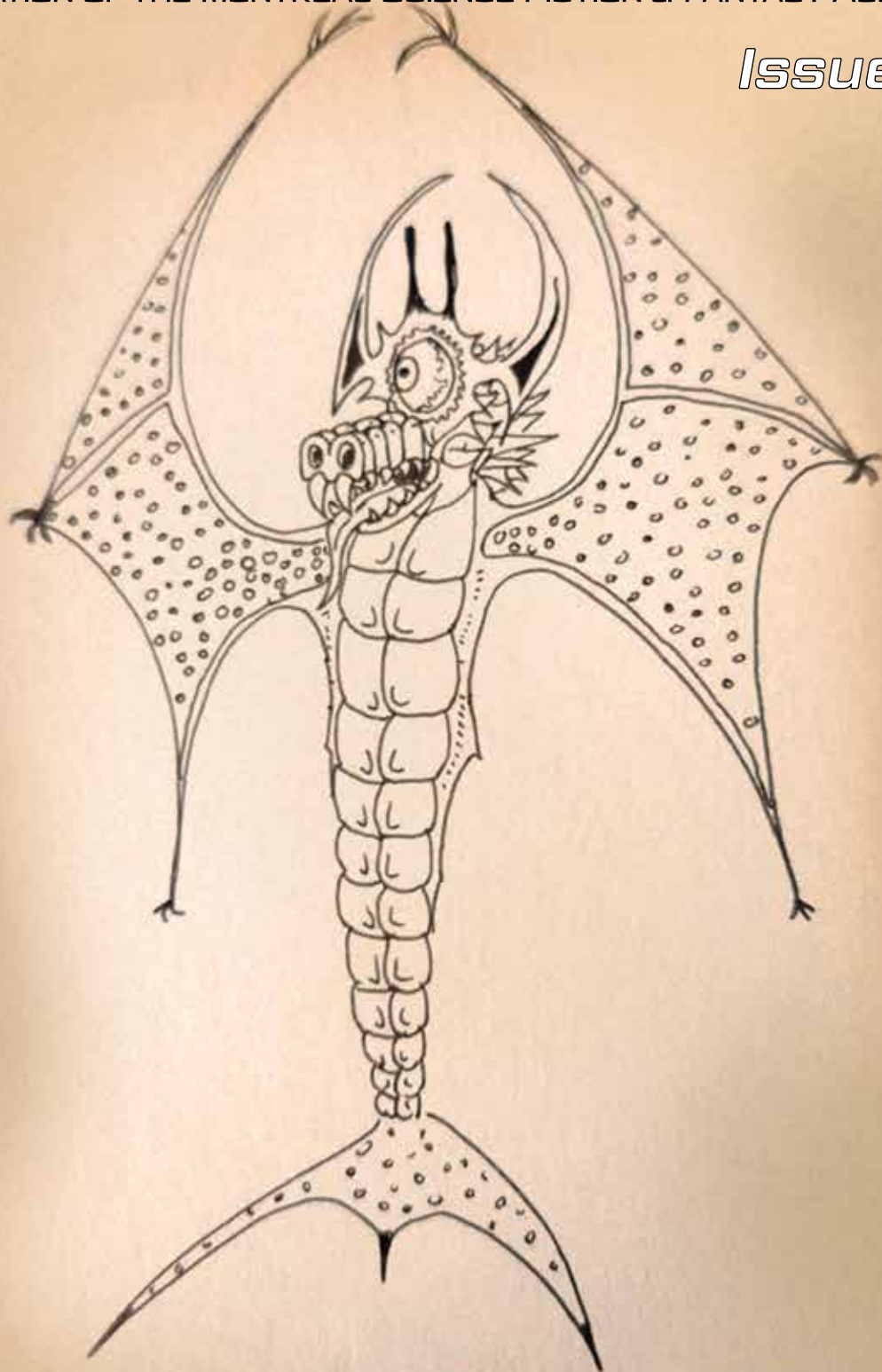


WARP

A PUBLICATION OF THE MONTREAL SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY ASSOCIATION

Issue 114



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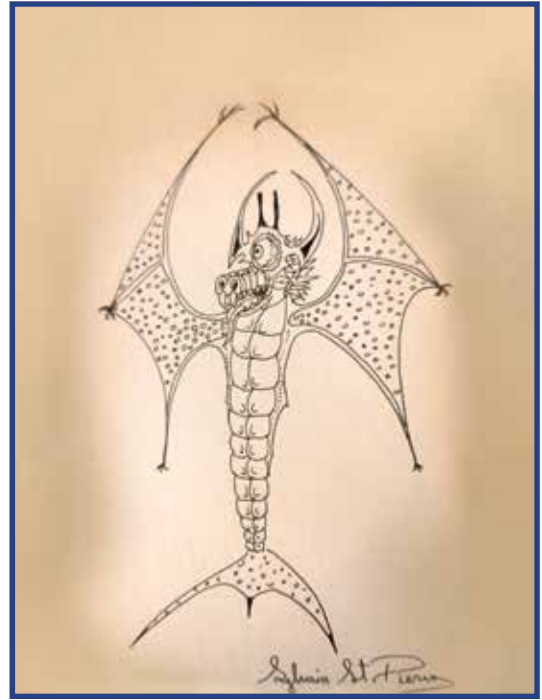
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On the Cover

This issue's cover is original artwork from long-time member Sylvain St. Pierre, who passed away in 2021. The art was discovered in October 2023 by MonSFFan Lindsay Brown in a book from Sylvain's collection, where it was serving as a bookmark. Photo by Keith Braithwaite. Thanks to Lindsay for allowing it to be here, and to all MonSFFen who help keep Sylvain's memory alive.

MonSFFA Calendar of Events

The pandemic has subsided enough that we've switched to a hybrid model: we've resumed our in-person meetings, which will also have a virtual component.

Programming will be posted on our website and Facebook page a week or two in advance. Join us at the Hotel Nouvel (1740 René-Lévesque West), or contact president@monsffa.ca for a Zoom invite.

Meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month, unless we're going on a field trip.

Stay safe and follow us online!

Website: www.monsffa.ca

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MonSFFA

The Fine Print: WARP is a publication of the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSFFA), a nonprofit organization of fans interested in sharing their love of science fiction and fantasy. The opinions expressed in WARP are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of MonSFFA or the editor. To reprint any article, please contact us first. The use of copyrighted material is generally discouraged, but sometimes unavoidable: our apologies to the copyright holders, no serious infringement is intended. This is an amateur production, and your tolerance is appreciated by your fans.

In This Issue

Letters to the Editor	1
Blast From the Past: WARP 26 By Cathy Palmer-Lister.....	2
MonSFFandom: Club News and Notes By Keith Braithwaite	3
A Tribute to Cathy Palmer-Lister By Carl Phillips.....	7
Essay: The Spark That Lit the Fire By Paul Gareau.....	7
Fiction: Starfleet Treachery (Voyager Chapters 60 and 61) By Barbara Silverman.....	8
Feature: A Short History of Canada's Wartime Comic Books and Magazines (Part 2) By Keith Braithwaite.....	11
Special: Tales from the Convention By Lloyd Penney.....	13



Letters to the Editor

Dear MonSFFen:

My apologies for this being so late. I received it on May 29, nearly two months ago. As you might imagine, I am so busy with my work with *Amazing*, plus working with Yvonne on *Anime North*, and a few other projects, too. Finally, time to respond to issue 113 of *WARP*.

My letter here is seriously out of date. We are currently looking for our sixth COVID shot, I am still editing stories for D.J. Holmes, but now, it's five novels, and I am no longer working on *Dreamforge Magazine*, now that I have been appointed editor-in-chief of *Amazing Stories*. Also, I am now 64. How are people enjoying the second season episodes of *Strange New Worlds*?

A recap of the club's activities is always good, especially when it comes to attracting new members. I have been reading stories about the limitations of ChatGPT, and how it might not be powerful as predicted. That meeting in March was a lot of fun.

Great to see my Tales From the Convention...but I didn't think you'd run them all at once! I thought you might have a Tale per issue. No matter, I hope they were enjoyed. All true, too.

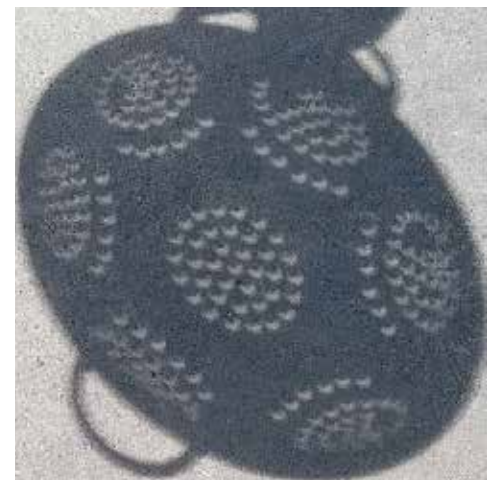
Keith's research is spot on when it comes to *Amazing*. There is already news of a special celebration of the upcoming 100th anniversary of the debut of *Amazing*, which is already being described as the 100th

anniversary of science fiction itself. The celebration will be taking place in Virginia, but there is also hope for something online.

I will try to keep everyone apprised of those 100th celebrations, but in the meantime, I should get this off to you. Many thanks, and I will try to be more timely in the future. No guarantees...

Yours,
Lloyd Penney
Etobicoke, ON

Editor's Reply: "I will try to be more timely in the future. No guarantees..." — believe me, I know what that feels like. — Danny



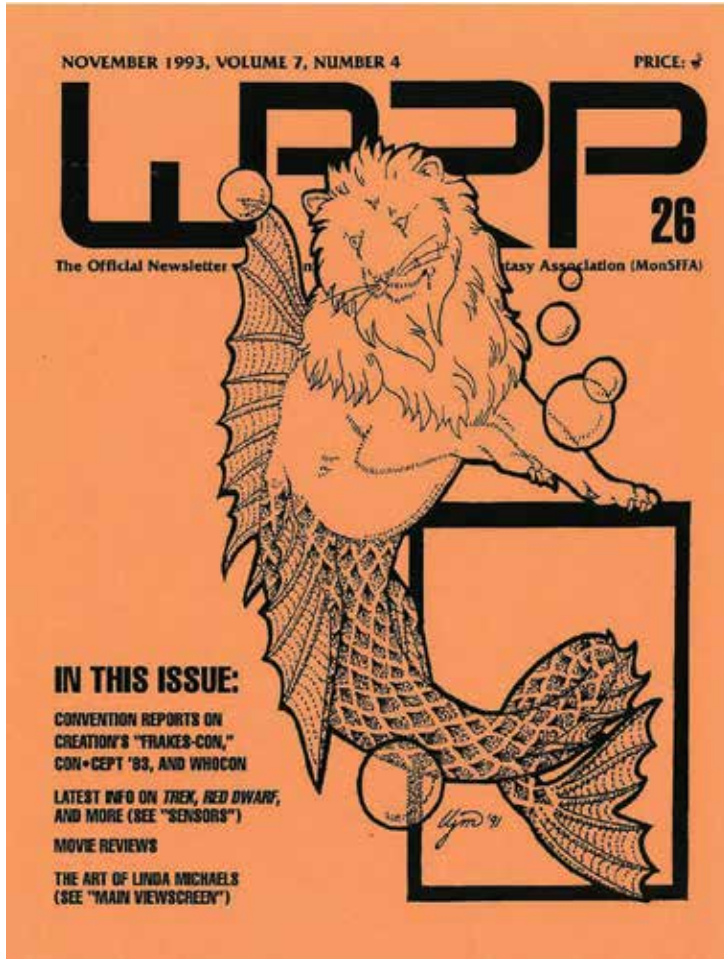
Danny Sichel used a colander to view April's eclipse from Parc Jean-Drapeau.
Photo by Danny Sichel

Issue 114
Spring/Summer 2024

Photo by Valerie Royall

Blast From the Past

By Cathy Palmer-Lister



WARP 26, November 1993

Fan artist Linda Michaels had sent MonSFFA a portfolio of her Hugo-nominated art a couple of years previous. One of those drawings graced the cover of *WARP* 93, and more of her art was featured in the Main Viewscreen. Her *art nouveau*-style line drawings are rightly described as “exquisite”.

Lynda Pelley’s editorial begins by offering congratulations to Keith Braithwaite and Colleen Magnusson, and to Kevin Holden and Trudie Mason, two recently married couples who met through MonSFFA. MonSFFA was present at various events. Lynda mentions the WCFE pledge drive, and there are photos by Dan Kenney of MonSFFen wearing the *Red Dwarf* H on their foreheads. Thirteen volunteers assisted with MonSFFA’s tables at the Hobby Show. There were several conventions: Creation, Capcon, Con*Cept, and WhoCon.

We need to get Keith drawing cartoons again; I still get a laugh from the illos of long ago issues, for instance this one:



There are several LoCs. Martin Last wrote to thank MonSFFA for the donation to the Baird Searles Award. When Baird moved to Montreal from New York, he joined MonSFFA and even wrote some things for *WARP!* His passing in March of '93 hit us hard. Lloyd Penney wrote about Con*Cept 93 and complimented Georges Dodd on his article “SF Before the Double Helix”.

MonSFFA reports on previous meetings and the upcoming Holiday party and elections. I was interested to hear of the first meeting of a writer’s SIG chaired by Keith, as we are currently “re-booting” the SIGs. Joe Aspler and Graham Darling gave a talk on alternate history which seems to have impressed the members. An auction held at the September meeting raised 230\$ for the club. (Maybe we should revisit this idea also!) The November meeting featured a guest speaker, Andrew Gurudata, who was then president of the High Council of Gallifrey, and co-chair of WhoCon, to speak of course about television show *Doctor Who*. (I remember WhoCon, it was a really fun convention.) There followed write-ups on various activities MonSFFen had attended. Apparently, there was a line of 300 fans to meet William Gibson at Nebula Books. It’s worth seeing the photo by Dan Kenney of a very young-looking Gibson signing books.

Lynda wrote a review of Creation Con and Keith reviewed both Con*Cept and WhoCon. That year’s Con*Cept was marred by poor management and ended in the red. In the feature, *It Came from the Video Store*, Bryan Ekers and Kevin Holden reviewed SF available on video. How did *Blood of Heroes* get four stars? Must be a guy thing. Kevin and Keith wrote short reviews of *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Demolition Man*, and *RoboCop3*. This is followed by Kevin’s book review of Douglas Adams’ *Mostly Harmless*, #5 in the HHGtG series.

Sensors began with a review of the 6th season of *Red Dwarf*. It’s on BritBox, I should watch it again and see if it’s still as funny as I thought it was back then. There follows the usual news and rumours of various upcoming and possible reboots, etc. In Trek news, the announcement of a new spin-off to be called *Voyager*. Upcoming conventions include Montreal’s Science Fiction Festival with Majel Barrett as GoH.

The issue ends with an ad for Conv-Iction, a short-lived French SF convention held at the Maritime Hotel that was across the street from the Days Inn (now known as Hotel Espresso) where MonSFFA held its meetings for many years.

MonSFFA andom By Keith Braithwaite

During this 12-month, April-to-April period, the club transitioned from exclusively online to physical, live-and-in-person meetings, or more accurately, a hybrid of the two. We returned to a rented meeting hall, and most recently, to the same downtown Montreal neighbourhood in which we had met for many years, pre-pandemic.

Most of this reporting was culled from the pages of *Impulse*, MonSFFA’s monthly news bulletin. Photos/Montages by Daniel P. Kenney and Keith Braithwaite.

April 13, 2023 e-Meeting

While a planned presentation on mathematical fiction had to be rescheduled at the last minute because of unforeseen circumstances, the assembled MonSFFen were tested by an Easter-themed SF/F quiz of sorts, that of identifying screen aliens and monsters from stills of their eggs. Further, we all had opportunity to



discuss our latest books read or movies and TV series enjoyed.

Led by Josée Bellemare, and with folk contributing to the list, our main topic covered the fictional repositories of SF/F. These are the special warehouses in which are collected and stored, under lock and key, magical, mystical relics of lore, and the gadgets of alien- or super-science. Warehouse 13, Superman's Fortress of Solitude, and the secret government warehouse depicted in the closing scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* were among the examples cited and shown.

We also presented the top-ten SF/F lists of members, including one roll of the genre's leading rabbits—another nod to Easter—like Harvey, Roger Rabbit, Monty Python's Rabbit of Caerbannog, and of course, Bugs Bunny!

May 13, 2023 e-Meeting

Kofi Oduro's treatise on mathematical fiction, originally scheduled for April, then bumped to May, and Danny Sichel's extensive presentation on Sherlock Holmes were our principal presentations on this occasion.

Mathematical fiction was defined as creative fiction in which mathematics and mathematicians play an important role. Edwin A. Abbott's *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884) is, perhaps, the most familiar example. Kofi's mind-bending dissertation explored the relevance of the form in building many SF/F worlds using various online databases to illustrate his thinking, while questioning how "magic" might figure in the mix.

Danny covered the topic of Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle's great detective, who used keen observation and scientific rigour to solve the many mysteries he and Doctor Watson tackled. Danny noted that Holmes was a literary archetype to whom many genre characters owe a debt.

Keith Braithwaite offered a brief historical overview of the famously photographed Cottingley Fairies, which were revealed to have been a hoax, of course! And, we presented a few more top-ten SF/F lists. Time was also reserved, as is our custom, for club members to showcase their latest sci-fi crafting projects, play a visual sci-fi movie quiz, and to discuss SF/F books recently read and films or television series recently viewed.

June 17, 2023 e-Meeting

As giant wildfires raged across the country, we welcomed via ZOOM guest speaker Olivia Atwater, a locally-based author of whimsical historical fantasy, who spoke on the topic of "Fantasy as

Satire." Citing a few well-known examples, Olivia noted that while satire may be written in just about any genre, fantasy lends itself particularly well to the exercise for reasons both structural and psychological, on which she elaborated. A Q&A followed.

Joe Aspler offered a presentation on the many voyages of the *Enterprise*, not the familiar starship commanded by Captain Kirk, but those real ships throughout history that bore the name "Enterprise." Joe covered many *Enterprises*, from the French light frigate *L'Entreprise*, captured by the British in 1705 and converted to service as *HMS Enterprise*, to the training-glider version of the space shuttle, which overflowed Montreal in 1983 atop a 747 transport aircraft.

Keith Braithwaite had prepared both a 24-question sci-fi trivia quiz, and a showcase of world-renowned paleoartist Zdenek Burian's beautiful illustrations for a Czech printing of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.



July 2023 Club Activities

On Saturday, July 8, MonSFFen gathered in Parc Maisonneuve along a central line of tall trees overlooking an open stretch of field just a short walk from the park's chalet. This popular Montreal city park is located in the East End, next door to the Botanical Gardens and across the street from the Olympic Stadium.

For the next few hours, our group enjoyed our Summer BBQ-in-the-Park, a relaxing afternoon of sunny skies, conversation with friends, drinks, snacks, and hotdogs and hamburgers grilled over the club's "Dragon's Breath" gas barbecue. Folk were happy to hear of MonSFFA's anticipated return to a meeting hall the following month; the pandemic had kept us from gathering face-to-face for much too long!

We also hosted an online Relax-a-ZOOM the following Saturday, July 15, during which we chatted on a variety of topics and played a couple of trivia games. We shared news of our upcoming August club meeting, which would take place in a genuine meeting hall, bringing to an end the lengthy series of exclusively online e-meetings that had sustained the club through some three years of pandemic restrictions and lockdowns! Local technology permitting, our plan was to henceforth hold hybrid meetings, incorporating our now familiar online ZOOM-chats into the structure of a good old-fashioned, in-person club meeting. August's gathering would serve as a test of the plan.

August 12, 2023 MonSFFA Meeting

Having secured, at an affordable price, a booking at the suburban Lachine branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, MonSFFA

was finally able to hold a physical club gathering in a meeting room. Not since early 2020 had we hosted such an event!

We opened our ZOOM-chat a little earlier than usual in order to test the wifi before the start of the meeting proper. Attendance was encouragingly healthy and despite a number of technical difficulties related to integrating online participants fully into the live meeting, we were able to carry out a reasonably successful hybrid event. Given that this was our first kick at the can in a long time, by most evaluations it all went somewhat better than anticipated!

MonSFFA's engineering staff noted a few particular issues, mostly associated with sound quality and the connectivity of A/V hardware. Our experiment with a hybrid meeting format would continue over the coming months as we ironed out these technical issues.

Joe Aspler opened the afternoon's programming with his presentation on humour within the scientific community, showcasing numerous examples of science-themed jokes—"We don't serve FTL particles here," replies the bartender. A tachyon walks into a bar and orders a drink.

Joe, too, included newspaper comics in which things scientific provide the punchline, and cited cases of actual scientists inserting a little levity into their lectures or published papers. Several excerpts from the *Journal of Irreproducible Results*—a real magazine dedicated to humour in science—were also featured.

Scientists are not generally associated with humour, Joe commented, but are, in fact, quite a funny lot!

Carly Terreault followed with her thoughtful impressions of Madeleine L'Engle's youth-oriented novel *A Wrinkle in Time*, which she quite enjoyed. Carly pinpointed favourite characters and outlined the themes extant in the book, but noted her disappointment with the film adaptations of the novel.

L. E. Moir, participating online, added her thoughts, and put forth that a further exploration of L'Engle's work at a future meeting might be of interest.

The mid-meeting break, during which we held our first fund-raising raffle in a very long time, led to the closing presentation of the afternoon, Keith Braithwaite's screening of several trailers for upcoming SF/F movies and new television series, prompting a group discussion of recently enjoyed genre screen entertainment.



Yes MAM!

On Saturday morning, September 9, a group of dedicated MonSFFen visited what they found to be an unassuming yet top-flight local museum. The Montreal Aviation Museum (MAM) occupies an old barn on McGill University's Macdonald Campus in furthest West



Keith Braithwaite, Danny Sichel, Hendrik Boom (seated), Cathy Palmer-Lister, Joe Aspler, Mark Burakoff, François Ménard

Photo by a volunteer guide from the Montreal Aviation Museum

Island Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, and manages to pack a whole lot of aviation history into a relatively small space. A keen enthusiasm for Canadian—and particularly Quebec—aviation is a hallmark of this hidden gem of an institution, as are the aircraft restoration projects it undertakes, fueled by a devoted team of member-volunteers.

Of note was one such project: a WWII-era Fairchild Bolingbroke Mk. IV aircraft, which was housed in a dedicated wing of the museum. The cockpit and nose of the light bomber has been restored, along with her gun turret, while the rest of the plane remains a work in progress, with engine parts and sections of the fuselage and wings scattered about the workshop.

Parked outside on the lawn, meanwhile, was the battered fuselage of a Canadair CF-104 Starfighter jet, recently acquired and slated for restoration beginning early in 2024.

On display along with the restored aircraft featured on the museum's second floor were various blueprints, period photographs, historical documents, associated artifacts and equipment, and some of the tools of restoration employed to bring these old birds back to life. Explanatory panels provided information about each plane, and beautifully detailed miniatures of the aircraft, too, were included. Models and dioramas of many Canadian civilian and wartime aircraft, in fact, were showcased throughout the museum. And, an exquisite collection of aviation art was hung in the museum's gallery.

The MAM is well worth a visit, despite the lengthy ride required for those taking public transit.

Fortunately, we were able to arrange carpools so that those without wheels were able to get to the museum in reasonable time.

Technical Difficulties Hamper Club's "Halloween" Meeting

Unfortunately, MonSFFA's October 14 "Halloween" meeting was beset by problems, primarily technical difficulties related to our use, on this occasion, of older, somewhat outdated equipment that seemed hampered by a poor wifi signal. The smooth presentation of our programming, in particular the screening of video components, was thus impeded. Folk joining us online were the most adversely affected.

Local traffic issues, too, delayed the arrival of a couple of our principals, and conflicting outside events scheduled on this same date, perhaps, cut into attendance.

That said, those in attendance did enjoy Keith Braithwaite's treatise on the horror genre, in which he outlined just how writers and filmmakers manufacture the scares. Keith expanded upon

Stephen King's "Three Levels of Horror," and offered the tips of genre scholars and professionals on terror-inducing techniques.

Joe Aspler followed with his presentation on early SF's view of our solar system, and how science, in due course, nullified even those then-learned speculations. Venus, for example, was thought to be a world of steamy jungles and swamps, populated by dinosaurs, much like prehistoric Earth. Mars was imagined as largely an arid world, made habitable due to that famous network of water-conveying canals.

Joe showcased many of science fiction's numerous visions of the various local planets as imagined by the genre's creative minds during the 19th century, the first half of the 20th, and as recently as the 1960s and '70s!

Regrettably, the day's agenda fell behind schedule as we attempted to fix, or at least mitigate our technical difficulties. In the end, we scrubbed our closing group discussion on everyone's scariest moments recalled from horror movies and TV series. Another time, perhaps.

But, online attendees were able to enjoy exclusive bonus content which included a review and photo gallery of September's field trip to the Montreal Aviation Museum, in addition to reruns of presentations featured as part of the club's first Halloween e-meeting back in 2020, when the pandemic was but a few months along and the club had just begun meeting online. Of course, those physically present at *this* Halloween gathering were able to access that same



bonus content at home, post-meeting.

November 2023 Club Meeting

We met rather late in November, on Sunday, the 26th—the meeting hall was unavailable to us on any of our usual Saturdays that month—and opened with Danny Sichel's presentation/discussion on superpowers you *don't* want, from Dishman and Arm-Fall-Off Boy, to Miriam Black and Mother of Champions.

Carly Terreault and L. E. Moir then took a deeper dive into Madelaine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, a topic they'd initially explored in August, focusing on the various adaptations of the book in other media. Disney's movie version, in particular, did not impress our presenters!

Aviation often being a parallel interest of SF fans, Joe Aspler closed proceedings with Part I of his Air Shows and Aviation Museums, a slideshow which he would conclude in January.

Seasonal Celebrations Close 2023

Both live and in person, and online, MonSFFA fêted the

season with two events in December. Saturday, December 9 saw our Christmas Luncheon unfold from 2:00PM-6:00PM at the West-Island locale we have benefitted from these past few years, courtesy L.E. Moir. (Post-Luncheon, those wishing to carry on celebrating relocated a short distance to a local pub.)

The Luncheon offered a bountiful, delectable buffet, and MonSFFA and their families gathered for lively talk, and to toast the season and exchange best wishes.

The club's traditional Christmas Raffle, along with a special premium prize-draw organized by Lindsay Brown and Mark Burakoff, featured a Santa's sack-full of gift-wrapped prizes arranged under the tree, enough for everyone present! Over \$80 was raised to benefit the club.

But this party room would no longer be available to us, we had learned, and so we anticipated getting back to a pre-pandemic normal with a return to our usual downtown restaurant dinner/pub party come the 2024 holiday season.

As our Luncheon locale was not equipped with wifi, a ZOOM hook-up was not possible, so, in order to include our out-of-town members in the club's seasonal festivities, we additionally hosted an Online Get-Together the following weekend, on Sunday, December 17. This casual ZOOM-chat ran from 1:00PM to 4:00PM, allowing everyone taking part the opportunity to exchange best wishes for the Holiday season. A Christmas Quiz, along with a couple of seasonal sci-fi picture galleries, provided unofficial programming throughout the afternoon; extra raffle prizes were awarded.

MonSFFA Website Goes Down!

Just hours before the scheduled launch of MonSFFA's 2024 activities, the club's Website went down! (The site was soon back up and operational, with only minor bugs continuing beyond the initial incident; these were eventually fixed).

Our January 13 meeting was about to open when we discovered that the club's Website had suddenly become inaccessible, preventing the publishing of all but the first of several posts of material related to said meeting. While intermittent, the glitch was terribly disruptive, at times leaving the Website completely dark. Effectively, then, the online portion of January's meeting was, in part, incapacitated. Fortunately, our ZOOM access was unaffected and but for the usual Website-based posts corresponding to the day's programming, online participants were able to enjoy the meeting through the established video-chat.

Subsequent to the meeting, which had welcomed two special guest speakers and included the club's annual election of Executive Committee members, the Website remained functionally impaired for several weeks, inhibiting the club's online presence.

Webmaster Cathy Palmer-Lister toiled mightily to get the site back up and running properly, exhausting hours in communication with technical support services and purging the malware that was finally pinpointed as the cause of the trouble. During this period, we were able to post a few messages notifying club members and site visitors of the on-going problem, while putting up some of the meeting-related content we had intended; better late than never!

January 2024 Club Meeting

Our January 13 meeting, despite the malware-triggered collapse of our Website, saw the successful kick-off of both our live, in-person and our online activities of 2024.

Special guest speakers David Shuman and Paul Simard,

astronomy buffs the two of them, were in attendance to showcase their short documentary film, *Shadowchasers*, and speak on the solar eclipse that would occur on April 8.

Following a screening of *Shadowchasers*, which chronicled their travel adventures and viewing of the 2017 solar eclipse over the south-eastern U.S., David and Paul gave a detailed primer on this periodic, magnificent celestial phenomenon. They detailed the correct methods of safely viewing and photographing an eclipse, and of the emotional impact of the experience. The importance of viewing safely was repeatedly emphasized, and sample viewing glasses were distributed to those MonSFFen present in our meeting hall. David and Paul closed with information on the then-upcoming April 8, 2024 eclipse, which Montrealers were able to view right here in our own back yard!

Following the mid-meeting break, MonSFFA's Annual General Meeting (AGM) saw the president's and treasurer's reports presented. The election of our 2024 Executive Committee immediately followed.

Joe Aspler closed the afternoon with the second part of his slideshow on air shows and aviation museums, aviation often an ancillary interest of science fiction fans, early SF having been influenced by the aviation industry. The first part of his presentation had screened at our November meeting.

Executive Committee Added Members for 2024

As is tradition, the club began the New Year by electing its Executive Committee for the coming 12 months. Chief Returning Officer (CRO) Josée Bellemare oversaw the elections. Both MonSFFen present in the meeting hall and those participating online cast their ballots.

With the retirement of long-serving president Cathy Palmer-Lister, the membership chose to elevate her vice-president, Keith Braithwaite, to the top job. He came to the post with experience, having previously served as the club's president in the late-1980s, early-1990s. First-time candidates Mark Burakoff and Brian Knapp stepped up to share vice-presidential duties, and Joe Aspler and L. E. Moir remained in place for another term as co-treasurers. An expansion of the Executive saw Cathy take on the role of past president; she continues, too, as MonSFFA's Webmaster. Danny Sichel carries on as *WARP* editor, and was invited to sit in on Executive meetings hereafter.

Congratulations were proffered those MonSFFen forming our 2024 Executive Committee, with best wishes as they prepared to tackle the challenges of the coming year.

Club Online-Only for February 2024 Meeting

The club met exclusively online in February. We had been unable to confirm with the Lachine Legion a date in February and so, rather than cancel our meeting outright, opted instead to simply hold an online-only get-together on ZOOM.

In keeping with our designated meeting theme, we began proceedings with an informative primer on New Orleans' Mardi Gras (underway at the time), with presenter Josée Bellemare suggesting that the exquisite, colourful costumes of that annual event might serve as inspiration for fantasy cosplayers in particular.

A discussion/debate followed on the topic of the genre's worst monsters, from the giants of Kaiju and those slimy, slobbering horrors from outer space to the creations of Mad Science and the supernatural demons of the underworld! Folk debated what exactly

constituted a "monster," some arguing that Dr. Frankenstein's creation or King Kong were not monsters, per se, but simply creatures having no particular animosity towards humanity, until provoked. Like that of a cornered housecat that hisses and scratches at what it perceives as a threat, their behaviour was defensive, a reaction to the "real monsters" of those stories, Dr. Frankenstein and Carl Denham's company of adventurers/filmmakers. Others argued that anything posing a threat to man could be considered a monster, certainly from the perspective of man; vampires were cited, as was the acid-for-blood alien that attacked Ripley and her crewmates. Whether a monster saw man as prey was a factor, too, it was noted. But what about a behemoth like Godzilla, or some of Lovecraft's monsters, to which men are merely insignificant insects? Are they *truly* monsters?

The group also got into the worst monsters of sci-fi B-movies, as in the cheesiest, silliest, most laughably ridiculous examples brought to life by poor-quality special effects! Several members presented lists and slideshows highlighting such monsters of the 1950s and '60s as the Giant Claw, the Horror of Party Beach,



Tybo and Doctor Smith

and Tybo the Carrot Man, famously of *Lost in Space*'s "The Great Vegetable Rebellion."

A discussion of sci-fi's lovable rogues followed, with the group attempting to understand the attraction of Han Solo and his like, as well as the allure of the anti-hero—the bad boy, or girl. For most, it came down to these protagonists being flawed, but essentially good, decent, noble individuals, and therefore more realistic characters when set against the often too-perfect, too-righteous square-jawed heroes of a story.

Time was also devoted to taking from MonSFFen topic suggestions for future meeting programming.

Club's Booking of Meetings Frustrated by Legion!

Maddeningly, the Lachine Legion had arbitrarily and dramatically raised its room-rental prices after only a couple of months of our signing on, and the club was finding it increasingly difficult to secure confirmed bookings of function space well enough in advance of meeting dates. At the same time, some club members were complaining that the public-transit ride out to Lachine was, for many, simply too long a trip. Experiencing a drop in meeting attendance, and left unable to properly outline the year's schedule or, for instance, invite guest speakers, not knowing for certain if the hall would be available on a requested date, the Executive began discussing alternatives. Ultimately, the decision would be taken to abandon the Legion in favour of a return to downtown Montreal, where a viable facility had been found just one block west of the club's former, pre-pandemic meeting locale.

Club Returns to Downtown Montreal with March 2024 Meeting

March 9 saw the club hold its first meeting downtown in four years!

Featured was Joe Aspler's presentation on proto-SF, exploring the literature that was, essentially, science fiction before the term even existed, like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Johannes Kepler's *Somnium* (1609, published 1634). Science being a principal element of science fiction, the group debated whether the science in these early works was really closer to fantasy or superstition, and therefore disqualifying. It was noted that by today's standards, perhaps true, but this ancient reasoning was nonetheless the science of its day.

We also enjoyed members' stories of meeting SF/F celebrities, and a game challenging MonSFFen to identify a series of genre movies from their promotional posters, the rub being that each poster had had the film's title and other pertinent information masked off.

April 2024 MonSFFA Meeting

In the wake of the April 8 total solar eclipse, clearly observable in the skies over most of Montreal, MonSFFen shared their experiences viewing the celestial event, along with their photographs of the eclipse, some of which have since been posted to the club's Website.

Cathy Palmer-Lister moderated a discussion asking folk what book or movie or television series first got them interested in science fiction and fantasy, sparking a lifelong interest in the genre. Interestingly, Star Trek figured prominently for most, whether the original 1960s series or subsequent iterations such as *Next Generation*. The real-world space program, and the first moon landing in 1969 were also cited as events that excited imaginations about space exploration and drew us to stories of travelling to other planets, encountering aliens, and such.

Keith Braithwaite gave a presentation on the career of B-movie film producer/director William Castle, known for the marketing and audience-participation gimmicks he employed to promote his collection of horror and sci-fi movies during the late-1950s and 1960s. Castle was something of a carnival barker, a gregarious, old-fashioned showman, but his publicity campaigns were legendary and a lot of fun, enhancing for his audiences the movie-going experience. He certainly had an interesting career in the entertainment business, as Keith outlined, was passionate about the horror genre in particular, and definitely left his mark.

Both Cathy and Keith's segments ran long, so a scheduled game to cap the meeting had to be scratched until a future date.

Before the close of the day's agenda, the group voted on our planned June field trip, electing to visit the Montreal Biodome, a zoological facility adjacent to the Olympic Stadium. The Biodome was completely renovated not that long ago. Details regarding our 2024 field trip are to be posted on the club's Website sufficiently in advance of the Saturday, June 8 date selected for the outing.

We thank very much all of our meeting planners, presenters, discussion moderators, guest speakers, field-trip drivers, barbecue chefs, general helpers, and programme participants for their contributions, whether minor or major, to this full year of meetings and events!

Tribute to Cathy

By Carl Phillips

A Tribute to Cathy Palmer-Lister on Her Retirement as Club President

After countless years of service to MonSFFA, many as club president over two separate administrations, Cathy Palmer-Lister, in November of 2023, officially announced that she was retiring as the club's president!

She cited her belief that a periodic change of leadership benefits any organization simply because fresh personnel, ideas, and enthusiasm are thus brought to the fore. Given her 30-plus years of dedication to MonSFFA, and valuable, across-the-board experience, it is certain that Cathy's shoes will be hard to fill!

Joining MonSFFA in the early 1990s, Cathy has been actively involved in the club ever since—she was and is a regular presenter at club meetings; she served as MonSFFA's vice-president during the latter part of Lynda Pelley's administration; she edited the club's fanzine, *WARP*, and continues to produce the full-colour printed copies of the well-regarded publication; she helped organize and run the club's regular SF/F book sales, and its annual Christmas parties; and she steered the club through the recent, challenging COVID-19 pandemic, spearheading the introduction of our popular e-meetings and ZOOM-chats. But most outstandingly, she led the club as president for a total of 13 years, from 1997 to 2001, and again from 2015 to January of 2024.

Hers equals the presidential tenure of Berny Reischl, both her successor and predecessor in the center seat. Collectively then, these two titans of modern Montreal fandom have guided MonSFFA through more than two-thirds of the club's history!

Cathy, it must also be noted, is lauded for her steering of Con*Cept, the MonSFFA-founded sci-fi convention that was spun off as its own organization in 1993. She began chairing the much-missed annual event as the 21st century dawned.

Cathy wishes to maintain a certain, more measured level of involvement in club activities; the Website, which she has largely developed and maintained over the years, is of particular interest.

MonSFFA extends a sincere, Jovian-sized "Thank You" to Cathy for all her efforts over the decades on behalf of the club, most especially as president. And, we are pleased to see she continues to offer her knowledge, experience, and talents to MonSFFA, now as our Past President, and still as our Webmaster.

Essay: The Spark That Lit the Fire

By Paul Gareau

Editor's Note: At our April 2024 meeting, we had an open discussion about "The Spark that Lit the Fire"—what it was that first drew each of us into fandom. Long-time member Paul Gareau was unable to attend that month, but he chose to write down his answer and submit it for publication in WARP.

Remember: if you're part of MonSFFA, we want to publish your content!

What first accounted for my personal genesis as a fan was theatre and poetry, which, oddly enough, led me into fiction and especially FILMS.

I started with an interest in horror after seeing Bela Lugosi in the original *Dracula* (1931). Pandora's box reopened and the odors of the "fantastique" beckoned me. Shortly after, I saw *The Invisible Man*

(1933), starring Claude Rains, and I think that was about the first sci-fi film I viewed. Unless it is a horror film? To this day, I sometimes wonder that I really don't know what a true tale of science fiction is (or can be!)

Of course, the bogey had been planted way before then, in childhood in fact. I remember seeing a Martian "robot" on TV's *Science Fiction Theatre* (1955–1957) at the tender age of nine. I was scared out of my wits! Two years later, in 1957, came "Sputnik," and later, the Cold War, and I think you'd have to be blind or deaf not to be aware of OUTER SPACE and the perils attached to it. Science fiction as a genre growing out of the Golden Age of the fifties and, much before that, H. G. Wells and the Anglo-Saxons. Let me point this out: I was educated in French, "Collège Classique", and spent my teenage years absorbing the classics of French Literature, which were first and foremost logical, then lyrical, period!

Nevertheless, around the house were a few pocket novels of the genre sci-fi, which I dipped into out of sheer curiosity. Curiosity was the thing, but there was one exception in my readings: Edgar Allan Poe, who, it turns out, was a true pioneer of "science fiction" as it developed here in North America, not in classical, 'Latinized' Western Europe. So you have this paradox of film fans from France crossing the border into Belgium and the 'Anglo-Saxon' countries, to sample the genre known as 'science fiction films.'

Oh, as a teenager, as a somewhat rebellious, image-struck youth, I had my share of viewing "Chiller Theatre" ad nauseam. I relished watching *The Four Skulls of Jonathan Drake* (1959), *Gog* (1954), *Invaders from Mars* (1953), and *The Curse of the Faceless Man* (1958), as well as other 'junk.'

Was this true sci-fi? As I grew shy of books (only to go back to them later on as an adult!), I knew practically nothing about SCIENCE.

However, it came to be that I did not entirely neglect the reading of science fiction literature, while omitting fantasy from my list. Still to this day, I read Asimov (the *Foundation* trilogy, 1951–1953), Robert Silverberg (*The World Inside*, 1971), Margaret Atwood (*The Handmaid's Tale*, 1985), the entirely reliable George Orwell (1984, 1948), and much much more. I enjoyed *Legions in Time* (2003) by Michael Swanwick (he of 1999's *Scherzo with Tyrannosaurus*), which opened my mind and imagination to the possible reality of parallel worlds.

I must conclude this little essay (not the first time that I write about my purpose and techniques of writing my own stories!)—yesterday's total solar eclipse reminds us that there is in fact "a lot out there", and thus we all remain explorers of this, our vast universe, whether or not we consider ourselves to have struck "the mother lode" by adopting science fiction and fantasy as evocations.



April's eclipse at the moment of totality.
Photo by Lynda Pelley

Fiction: Starfleet Treachery

By Barbara Silverman

PREVIOUSLY: When Captain Janeway chased Chakotay and the Maquis into the Delta Quadrant back in the series premiere of *Star Trek: Voyager*, many of her crew were killed in the extremely bumpy transit – including her second officer, Commander Cavit, and her medical officer, Dr. Fitzgerald. What if, instead of the USS Voyager, this took place on the USS Explorer, and neither of those men were killed? There'd be no place in the ship's command hierarchy for Chakotay, and the EMH wouldn't be activated. And what if both those men had a severe, long-standing grudge against Chakotay? And what if Janeway was grievously injured, on the brink of death, and Cavit took command, cancelled Janeway's truce with Chakotay and the Maquis, and ordered them all arrested?

Chapter 60

As he had done earlier that day, Evans materialized on the transporter pad of the Starfleet ship.

This time, though, he was met by an armed security detail led by Tuvok.

The Vulcan nodded in acknowledgment. "Mr. Evans, you are the last."

Exhausted by the strain of the past two days, frustrated and angry at the situation, Evans stepped slowly off the pad.

He looked intently at the Vulcan. "Yes, Tuvok, I am the last one. Now what?"

Tuvok returned the steady stare. "You and your crew are confined to the cargo bay, Mr. Chakotay is in the brig. Captain Cavit has not informed me as to his plans."

Evans found it hard to breathe. "Captain Cavit. Is Janeway... is she dead?"

Tuvok's reply was slow in coming. "Dr. Fitzgerald is of the opinion that her condition will not improve. We are expecting the official announcement at any moment. Under Starfleet regulations, Mr. Cavit assumed full command. He is now our captain."

Something in Tuvok's words caught Evans' attention.

Holding out his arm to indicate direction, Tuvok took a step backwards. "This way, Mr. Evans."

Evans did not move. He studied the strained faces of the four-man security detail, two of whom had served on the away team. The Maquis second-in-command locked eyes with the Vulcan. "Do you agree with Cavit?"

"He is the captain," Tuvok said carefully. "His orders are to be obeyed. Whether or not I agree is irrelevant."

"I see," Evans said, and followed the security detail out of the transporter room.

After all the Maquis were secure and their ship locked down, Tuvok stopped by sickbay. Walking over to the bio-bed he looked down at the unconscious body of Kathryn Janeway. For several minutes he stood quietly, his face unreadable. Looking up he studied the read-outs above the bed. He then went into the doctor's office.

Fitzgerald quickly shut off his monitor. "If you're here about the captain—about Janeway—it's not good. I don't expect her to live for much longer."

"And by that you mean that there is no possibility whatsoever for her to recover?" Tuvok asked.

Fitzgerald looked away so the Vulcan could not see him rolling his eyes in annoyance. He wished Tuvok would leave and stop interfering with his work. "No possibility whatsoever for her to recover," he said, mimicking the security chief. "Look... As I informed Captain Cavit, if we were in the Alpha Quadrant there may

have been some hope. We might have been able to reach a Starfleet base with a proper hospital. Here, though? We're... what, seventy thousand light-years from home?"

This is all the Maquis' fault, Fitzgerald thought to himself. They will all pay.

Tuvok looked at him. "I notice some of the read-outs are not working properly. Could you be in error?"

The doctor wished he could throw this infuriating Vulcan in the brig with Chakotay. "No! I'm not wrong. Those read-outs would have no effect on the Captain's condition!"

In disgust Fitzgerald turned back to his monitor. However, he did not reactivate it until the Vulcan had left.

Outside the office, Tuvok stopped, looked back at Janeway, then walked out of sickbay for the bridge and a meeting with his new captain.

Exiting the turbolift, Tuvok strode across the bridge to the captain's ready room. Deep inside him there stirred something that could be called unease and concern, something he was not accustomed to. Even though Vulcans suppressed their emotions, they did have opinions. In Tuvok's judgment Cavit was wrong, but the captain was acting within the rules and regulations of Starfleet and the Federation. Leaving the Vulcan no choice but to follow orders.

Entering the ready room, Tuvok approached the desk. He noticed how Cavit acted in the same manner as the doctor, immediately shutting off the computer screen.

Looking up, Cavit glared at his security chief. "Have the Maquis been taken care of?"

Tuvok chose his words carefully. "Yes, sir. As per your orders Chakotay is in the brig, and his crew is under guard in the cargo bay." "What about their ship?"

Again Tuvok replied without going into details. "It is secured, and left a security detail onboard."

As Janeway had done so many times before, Cavit leaned back in the chair. "I'm preparing a hearing to decide the fate of our prisoners. It will be held in the conference room at 1700 hours. Chakotay is to be present, keep him in restraints at all times with four guards."

Again, Tuvok attempted to reason with Cavit. "Sir, I agree the Maquis are outlaws. However, Commander Chakotay had a truce with Captain Janeway—"

Cavit's face now a complete contrast to what it had been seconds before, his eyes a boiling volcano of anger and hostility. "With *Janeway*, not with me! Any arrangement between Chakotay and Captain Janeway was nullified the moment I assumed command! *Furthermore*, that agreement applied only to the recovery of Harry Kim, which has been accomplished."

Cavit gazed down at the desk for several seconds. When he looked up again, his face was completely calm. "This is a Starfleet ship, acting under the auspices of the United Federation of Planets. It is up to us to obey and adhere to the laws of that Federation, both in the Alpha Quadrant and here in the Delta Quadrant. You are the security officer. See to the security of this ship. Only in that capacity are you to be concerned about the Maquis. Bring Chakotay to the conference room at 1700 hours. Dismissed."

For a moment Tuvok looked down at his commander, then he turned, starting for the door.

"Tuvok," Cavit said.

The Vulcan paused. "Sir?"

"Under circumstances such as these, when the first officer becomes captain, the next senior officer normally becomes the new first officer. Normally, that would be you. However, I am allowed to

promote someone else. Once the Maquis situation is resolved I will make my choice. Your promotion to first officer will depend on your actions during this time. Dismissed!"

Tuvok nodded, and left.

Seconds later Cavit received a summons over the comm system. "Fitzgerald to Cavit. Come down to sickbay, we have a problem."

Chapter 61

At the appointed hour, Chakotay was led into the conference room where Cavit and Dr. Fitzgerald were waiting. As the Maquis leader entered, the two officers immediately discontinued their conversation.

The captain sat at the head of the rectangular table, with the doctor along the right side. Standing at the opposite end, flanked by Tuvok and the guards, Chakotay could feel the hatred emanating from both men.

Cavit opened the hearing. "Due to the destruction of the Array, immediate return to the Alpha Quadrant is impossible. Therefore, we are unable to hand Commander Chakotay over to Federation officials. I have convened this court acting with Federation authority, as a Starfleet ship under the command of the United Federation of Planets."

He picked up a padd. "Commander Chakotay, I have here the transcript of your trial, where you were tried and convicted by the Federation Tribunal for crimes committed against the laws of said Federation. This same Tribunal declared you a perpetual threat to the safety and welfare of the Federation. The terms of your sentence contained provisions to prevent your release from prison at the completion of the allocated term."

Cavit waited a moment, letting his words hang in the air. "That threat became quite evident when, just four months into your sentence, you escaped and returned, once again, to lead the Maquis. Dr. Fitzgerald, in your expert opinion, do you feel the Commander Chakotay could be safely confined on this ship during the long journey back to the Alpha Quadrant?"

Fitzgerald was relishing every moment. "No! A man of his nature, who has proven to be extremely dangerous and devious, will always search for a way to escape. He would have to be watched and monitored twenty-four hours a day. It would be impossible to let down our guard for even a second. Someone of his disposition could never be rehabilitated. He could never be trusted. Commander Chakotay would always be a threat."

Pretending to think over the words of the doctor, Cavit responded slowly. "I see."

Placing the padd on the table Cavit looked at Fitzgerald. "Again I ask for your expert opinion as a doctor... what if we leave Commander Chakotay on some planet? We are seventy thousand light-years from the Federation."

Doctor Fitzgerald nodded. "That is true."

Though talking to Cavit, the doctor turned his hate-filled eyes onto Chakotay. "Captain Cavit, you must understand... as we will be searching for a way home, so would Commander Chakotay. What is to prevent Chakotay from stealing a ship, finding some technology, which would enable him to return to the Alpha Quadrant? Perhaps more powerful than before. It is my professional opinion that Commander Chakotay is an extremely dangerous man with only one mission in mind... destroying the peace treaty with the Cardassians, and plunging the Federation into another war."

The doctor reveled in letting everyone know exactly what he

thought of the Maquis leader. He had waited two long years, since his brother Peter's death, to strike back at Chakotay.

Now he would have his revenge!

Cavit picked up another padd. As he studied it he slowly repeated the words of Dr. Fitzgerald. "More power than before."

He then focused his attention onto his chief of security. "Lieutenant Tuvok, during a conversation with Captain Janeway, did you not warn the captain of just how powerful a threat Chakotay could be?"

The Vulcan's memory was excellent; however, Cavit was acting against the wishes of someone Tuvok deeply respected. Obeying orders was one thing, volunteering information was quite another! "Sir, I am not certain to what you are referring."

Cavit tapped the padd against the desk. "Allow me to refresh your memory. Computer, play exhibit one."

Tuvok's voice filled the room.

"Not only is he a dedicated Maquis, he is their leader. A skilled, powerful leader who will use any opportunity that comes his way."

During the playing of the log record, Cavit's eyes never left the face of the Vulcan. "Mr. Tuvok, were these not the words spoken by you to Captain Janeway just this morning, here in the Delta Quadrant?"

Tuvok knew his words were taken out of context. "Sir, there was more to the conversation."

Cavit placed his hands, palms down, on the table. He could not allow Tuvok to throw a doubt into the hearing. "*Lieutenant!* Are these, or are these not, the words spoken by you to Captain Janeway?"

Vulcans cannot lie. "Yes Sir, they are."

Captain Cavit then turned to his prisoner. "Well, Commander Chakotay, who should know better than someone who had served in your crew?"

Chakotay remained silent. What could he say? He knew the evidence presented against him had been carefully prepared to prove what Cavit wanted. The new captain was not about to lose this opportunity for revenge. But what exactly did Cavit have in mind?

While Chakotay worried about what Cavit had planned, the captain continued with his meticulously prepared agenda. "It would appear that the opinions of two respected and dedicated Starfleet officers confirm you are an extremely dangerous man. One officer served in your crew. The other, by his medical training, is an expert in human behavior and mentality. Perhaps you would like to hear the official Starfleet orders given to Captain Janeway. Computer, exhibit two."

The voice of Admiral Janeway entered the conference room.

"It is vital you find Chakotay, Starfleet Command gives you authorization to use any means necessary."

Leaning forward, Cavit managed to prevent himself from snarling his next words. "Well, Maquis Commander Chakotay, what do you have to say? How can you be stopped?"

Chakotay noticed Admiral Janeway had used the word '*find*', while Cavit kept using the word '*stop*'. However, the Maquis leader did not have time to dwell on the inconsistency.

To his horror Chakotay understood a moment later exactly what Cavit had so carefully planned.

Dr. Fitzgerald sat back in his seat, a strange smile on his face.

As for Cavit, the loathing he felt radiated from his dark brown eyes. He was indeed enjoying himself, and was almost sorry to bring his little charade of a legitimate hearing to an end. However, he knew the best would follow shortly, down in sickbay. "Commander



Chakotay, you have brought this upon yourself. You have left us no alternative. Your crew will be left on the planet of the Ocampo. They will be given some water, and a couple of phasers to defend themselves. Perhaps they will find their way down to the Ocampo compound."

Cavit's eyes drilled into the Maquis leader.

Placing his arms on the table the captain clasped his hands together. "You, however... you are another question. Your actions clearly indicate that you are too dangerous to be turned loose. That was the opinion of the Federation Justice Tribunal and, though we are in the Delta Quadrant seventy thousand light-years away, their sentiments are supported by Lieutenant Tuvok and Doctor Fitzgerald. Neither can you be imprisoned safely onboard this vessel. You have left us no choice!"

Chakotay noticed how Cavit was carefully hiding behind the protection of the Federation.

Cavit relished every second, every word. "Captain Janeway was given authorization to use any means necessary. That authorization now passes to me."

Hesitating in order to savor his victory, Cavit glared at Chakotay.

He then pronounced sentence. "It is the judgement of this hearing that your sentence of punishment carry the maximum penalty. Death by lethal injection. Upon conclusion of this inquest, you will be escorted to the medical bay, there to be executed for your crimes."

Stunned silence!

The Maquis leader stared across the table at Cavit. His mind in shock as he struggled with the words just spoken.

Tuvok took a step forward. "Sir..."

With blazing eyes Cavit interrupted the Vulcan. "Tuvok, do you wish to argue with a Federation officer? I have warned you twice before. If you defend this convicted traitor, I will be forced to question your loyalties. If you attempt to interfere, I will remove you from duty and you will join the Maquis in the cargo bay!"

Before Tuvok could reply, Harry Kim's voice came over the comm system. "Captain Cavit, the Kazon are approaching. They will be here in twenty minutes."

Damn! Cavit rose to his feet. "Red alert, bring weapons and shields on-line. I will be there momentarily. Tuvok, escort Chakotay to the brig. The security detail is to remain with him. Keep his arm restraints on, and put him in leg irons. He chose to become an outlaw, now he will understand what that means!"

He started in the direction of the door leading onto the bridge.

Coming abreast of Chakotay, Cavit stopped. "It appears you have a reprieve. I assure you... it will only be temporary. Your execution will proceed the moment we have dealt with the Kazon."

Feature: A Short History of Canada's Wartime Comic Books and Magazines

By Keith Braithwaite

Editor's Note: This is Part 2 of a three-part series. Part 1 was featured in our previous issue, WARP 113.

CANADA'S WARTIME COMICS—THE "CANADIAN WHITES"

Birthered during this period were a cavalcade of Canadian comic book crime-fighting adventurers and superheroes like the Iron Man, Freelance, Canada Jack, Johnny Canuck, Nelvana of the Northern Lights, Captain Wonder, Cosmo, Nitro, and many others.

Nelvana of the Northern Lights

Most fondly remembered of these is probably Toronto-based artist Adrian Dingle's distinctly Canadian Nelvana, one of the earliest comic book superheroines, and Canada's first, pre-dating by a couple of months Wonder Woman.

Adopting the identity of secret agent Alana North, Nelvana employed her superpowers to fight agents of the Axis Powers in the North during WWII. An Inuit demigoddess, her father was the mighty Koliak, King of the Northern Lights, and her mother a mortal, inspired by a real-life Inuit woman of whom Dingle heard painter Frank Johnson speak after the former Group of Seven artist had visited what is today Nunavut.

Dressed in her signature furred-trimmed mini-skirt, knee-high boots and matching gloves, winged headband, and magical cape, Nelvana drew upon the power of the Northern Lights, which lent her telepathic powers, allowed her to fly at the speed of light, melt metal, shapeshift, become invisible, and disrupt radio communications.

The Iron Man

The Iron Man holds the honour of being the first Canadian superhero, debuting in March of 1941, more than two decades before the Marvel character of the same name. Created for Vancouver-based Maple Leaf Publishing by Winnipeg-born ex-Walt Disney cartoonist Vernon Miller, Iron Man bore no resemblance to the famous Stan Lee/Larry Lieber/Jack Kirby/Don Heck creation of the early 1960s. Miller's Iron Man was more akin to Marvel predecessor Timely Comics' Namor, the Sub-Mariner, who had debuted in 1939.

A cataclysmic undersea earthquake has wiped out an entire aquatic subspecies of humans, leaving the Iron Man as sole survivor, the last of his people. He mourned alone in his sunken South-Seas palace until called to the surface, where he joined the Allied fight against the Nazis, whom he viewed as no better than hated pirates. Amphibious, he is also invincible and possessed of superhuman strength that allows him to leap considerable distances and punch through steel.

The Iron Man debuted in *Better Comics #1*, Canada's first

comic book. Unlike most wartime Canadian comics, the interior pages of which were printed in black and white, and later dubbed "Canadian Whites," the Iron Man stories were presented in colour.

In contrast to the superhero boom then dominating American comics following the debut of Superman, many Canadian comic book champions were minimally or entirely non-superpowered, depicted instead as athletic, physically fit, expert hand-to-hand combatants having a variety of skills like marksman, outdoorsman, science whiz, or pilot. There were, of course, a few notable exceptions, as mentioned above.

FYI: Superman's Canadian roots, by the way, are well-known. Artist Joe Shuster, who co-created the character with Jerry Siegel, was born and raised in Toronto, his family moving to Cleveland, Ohio, when Shuster was about 10 years old. The Metropolis skyline of the early Superman comics was inspired by that of Toronto, and the iconic Daily Planet by the Toronto Daily Star, now Toronto Star, for which the young Shuster worked as a newspaper boy.



Canada Jack

Freelance

Freelance debuted in July of 1941 as Canada's second comic book hero. Raised by a native tribe in a hidden tropical valley on the frozen continent of Antarctica, Lance Valiant grew to adulthood in peak physical condition and set out as an adventurer. Travelling to the civilized world, he found WWII well underway and became Freelance, an Allied operative, teaming with a Russian secret agent and a peg-legged pirate to oppose the Axis Powers around the globe.

Johnny Canuck

Johnny Canuck was originally a political cartoon character and personification of Canada who first appeared in 1869. He was reinvented in 1942 as a World War II action hero by 16-year-old Leo Bachle! Something of a Captain America-like character, but without the Super-Soldier Serum-enhanced strength and stamina, overtly patriotic costume, and superior metal-alloy shield, Johnny Canuck, too, came face-to-face with Adolf Hitler and almost single-handedly won the war!

Canada Jack

Canada Jack, a popular Canadian comic book hero during the WECA era, was an athlete and adventurer, martial arts expert, skilled horseman, and pilot who devoted himself to fighting crime and foiling the plans of Axis fifth columnists on the home front.

The Penguin

The Penguin, not to be confused with the well-known

Batman villain, was a detective and master spy who protected Canada against Axis agents, saboteurs, and infiltrators. Dapper in coat and tails, and donning a distinctive mask, he was an acrobat, skilled hand-to-hand fighter, and marksman. Socialite Bruce Baron the most likely candidate, The Penguin's secret identity remained a mystery and was much sought after by evil-doers. But any who chanced to see his face did not live to tell!

Night Hawk

Bob Nevan, wealthy owner of a ship-building company, was secretly Night Hawk, a masked crime-fighter who hunted down and apprehended Nazi spies and saboteurs. A skilled close-quarters fighter and crack shot, he was on good terms with the local police. Created by Dan Baldasse, Night Hawk debuted in *Joke Comics* #17.

"Speed" Savage, the White Mask

"Speed" Savage, created by Ted Steele, was an outstanding athlete and brilliant criminologist who devoted his life to smashing crime in Triumph Comics. Only his closest associates knew that he was, secretly, the White Mask, an avenging force feared by law-breakers everywhere!

Kip Keene and Dixon of the Mounted

Kip Keene and Dixon of the Mounted were stalwart, heroic RCMP officers.

"Star Rookie of the Men of the Mounted," Keene was a new character in Ted McCall's long-running *Men of the Mounted* series, which began as a *Toronto Evening Telegram* newspaper strip in 1933.

Corporal Wayne Dixon, created by E. T. Legault and carried forward by Ted Steele, seemingly spent his time engaged in one search-and-rescue mission after another for love interest Ruth Baxter.

Sergeant Canuck

Bing Bang Comics' Sergeant Canuck, meanwhile, often mistaken as a Mountie, was a BCPP officer stationed in British Columbia's High North. He fought such colourful villains as The Skull and Count Zorra.

FYI: The British Columbia Provincial Police, founded in pre-Confederation 1858, were disbanded in 1950, the RCMP thereafter taking on the duties of policing the province.

Nitro

Young police chemist Terry Allen boasted no extraordinary powers or augmented abilities, but nonetheless, applied what skills he had to valiantly taking on the underworld as the costumed hero Nitro.

Cosmo

Cosmo Grant was a scientist whose technological devices included his Power Helmet and an Atom Gun. Grant's technology gave him superhuman abilities and allowed him, as the superhero Cosmo, to fly into battle against Nazis and other threats to peace, order, and good government!

Thunderfist

Similarly, former sideshow strongman Randolph "Randy" Steele utilized his scientific proficiency to develop various devices in order to boost his abilities and avenge his brother, a scientist murdered by Nazi spies. Special plates on his feet allowed him to run at great speed, and fly, riding on electrical currents. His belt lent

him super-strength and his cowl served as a gas mask, as well as an underwater breathing apparatus. As a civilian, he was a reporter for the *Home City Times*. As the superhero Thunderfist, he monitored radio transmissions from his secret underground base and ventured forth to foil spies and criminals.

The character was created by E. T. Legault and Murray Karn for Active Comics.

Some Canadian comic book superheroes came by their special powers by way of mystifyingly inexplicable or paranormal influence.

Captain Wonder

Captain Wonder's superpowers were bestowed upon him by divine providence. Bob Victor's parents were killed by a criminal and subsequently, he was raised by the "Old Yogi" at the Temple of Aidni in the Himalayas. After some 20 years, when Victor expressed his wish to return to Canada and "exterminate all such malignant doers," the Yogi called upon three ancient gods to grant him the powers needed to fulfill his wish. With a flash of lightning, the young Canadian is transformed into Captain Wonder.



Captain Wonder

Ross Saakel created the character for Triumph Comics, borrowing liberally from Superman and Batman, and with tongue often firmly in cheek.

Brok Windsor

Brok Windsor was not so much a superhero as an adventurer in an incredible fantasy world. Created by Jon Stables, Windsor was a Winnipeg-based doctor and explorer who, while canoeing on Lake of the Woods, came upon a weird mist masking an island inhabited by a technologically advanced First Nations tribe of giants, the Blackpaw. Windsor found that he, himself, had grown to over seven feet tall after spending just one night on the beach. He encountered and befriended Torgon, a 12-foot-tall native, and learned that the island mysteriously caused people to grow both in strength and size, but hastened their demise. By drinking from the Blue Spring at the Haunted Rocks of Antigrowth, however, as the Blackpaw people had, death could be averted, and Torgon led Windsor on an arduous trek to the spring across a landscape populated by exotic and dangerous creatures.

The Wing

Writer Trixie Rogers was known for her stories of The Wing, girl-crusader against crime. But with a magical cape that neutralized gravity and allowed her to fly, Trixie was, in fact, the very crime-fighter about whom she wrote, her actual adventures providing the plotlines of her stories!

Mr. Monster

Doctor Jim "Doc" Stearne originally brought his fighting prowess to bear battling crime in Wow Comics, but before too long transformed himself into Triumph Comics' Mr. Monster, hunter of

all creatures abnormal, like werewolves, vampires, and such. The supernatural element, here, came not from him, but from his quarry, and his chain-mail costume, marksmanship, and an extra-bright flashlight equipped him suitably for the task.

These and other colourful characters like The Whistler, The Brain, Red Rover, Dr. Destine, Mono the Air Cobra, The Invisible Commando, and the Polka-Dot Pirate made up the roster of Canadian comic book superheroes, crime-fighters, and adventurers in the early- to mid-1940s. Most of their runs came to an end before or as WWII concluded. A few survived, briefly, post-war, but by about 1947, all had passed into history.

Next Issue: Part 3—Uncanny Tales and Similar “Canpulp”

Special: Tales from the Convention By Lloyd Penney

Lloyd Penney is the Editor-in-Chief of Amazing Stories Magazine. He shares with us here tales of his experiences at conventions past.

The Sudden Masquerade Replacement

Yvonne used to run the masquerade at Ad Astra in the 80s, and when I wasn't running the dealers' room, I was her willing and able assistant, and some years, I was Your Congenial Host, using my best announcer voice.

The masquerades in those years were small, but quite manageable, and they were still a lot of fun, especially for the contestants who produced some great costumes. They were one of the highlights of the convention Saturday night before the big dance late at night.

One year, Yvonne's mother had gone on a vacation to Egypt, and had brought home for me authentic Egyptian clothing, a thobe, igal and ghutra, and made of very comfortable Egyptian cotton. I decided to wear them at the masquerade, (what better place to wear it?), and be Yvonne's Arab assistant.

It's Saturday evening, and the convention is gathering for the masquerade, as Yvonne herds the contestants in the hotel back passage, checking to see who's arrived, and what order in which the present themselves. Meanwhile, I am in my Egyptian finery, checking the lighting and microphone, and receiving a few compliments on the way I'm dressed.

Unbeknownst to us, two contestants are having a crisis of confidence. A boyfriend and girlfriend (she's an old friend, by the way) are dressed as an Arab sheikh and harem belly dancer respectively, and boyfriend is suffering through a serious case of stage fright. She's trying to build him up and he is steadily chickening out, and when they are announced, he bails entirely and disappears. She bravely goes out on stage to perform and show off her gauzy costume and hints of feminine charms.

However, girlfriend has got her wits about her, and as she gyrates on stage, she suddenly spots a replacement sheikh... me. We make eye contact, and gives me the come hither, and I realize what's happened, and what has to happen. I go to the stage and quickly adopt a stereotypical Arab character, dancing clumsily as a favorite member of the harem slinks around me. Oooo, goody, goody, goody...

The music plays (good thing I had started her tape before I was pressed into service), I dance about, enjoying the dancer, she shakes her, um, accoutrements, the audience claps, and some laugh

over the fact I was suddenly not helping but participating, and then we're done. We get applause, the girlfriend gives me a quick hug, and reality returns, and I remember that I have more tapes to play. I become Yvonne's assistant again, and the masquerade continues. At the end, I wonder what happened, and some asked me if I all that had been planned in advance, but I certainly had no plan to play both sides of the event. Besides, no one would think much of suddenly jumping in like that, would they?

The judges were gone to make some decisions, some entertainment has come on stage and is gone again, and the judges return to announce their choices. The girlfriend and I have won a prize, I think it was for Best Non-SF Presentation, or something like that. I'm amazed: I wasn't even entered, and I've got a certificate. Is anyone upset over this fact? Not at all; the girlfriend gets compliments for her costume, what little there is of it, I get them for being pressed into service, and Yvonne gets them for staging a masquerade with lots of laughs, some good costumes and an unexpected event...me dancing with the harem girl. What happened to the boyfriend? He wasn't seen for the rest of the weekend, and I gather they broke up not long after the convention.

Sunday sees lots of smiles, happy participants, the girlfriend thanking me for being sharp and willing, and me? I was happy to help out, and once again, you've got to participate to get the most out of a con.

Look Out Below

1986 saw the last Worldcon in Atlanta before Dragon*Con took over the city for that weekend every year, but it was a great convention in a great place. The main hotel was built as an atrium from main floor to top, more than 40 stories, the vertigo sufferer's nightmare. Yvonne has vertigo, but we seemed to have switched for that weekend; I didn't want to look over the edge, while Yvonne was fascinated being able to look down. On one side of every hallway were the hotel rooms; on the other side was empty space, 40 stories tall.

The hotel kinda put their foot in it...when we checked in, front desk personnel made a point of telling us that hotel management requested that we not throw any paper airplanes of the top floors of the building. Well, thanks for the great idea, folks, we wouldn't have thought of that if you hadn't reminded us...

Yvonne decided to follow the manager's word to the letter in the true tradition of fannish pedantry, and found a nearby department store and purchased a bag of green plastic soldiers with parachutes. We made our way to the top floor of the hotel, and she started tossing the little soldiers off into space to float down to the main floor below. Within minutes, the hotel manager himself is on the floor, demanding to know what's going on.

"I told you people not to throw anything off the side of the hallways!"

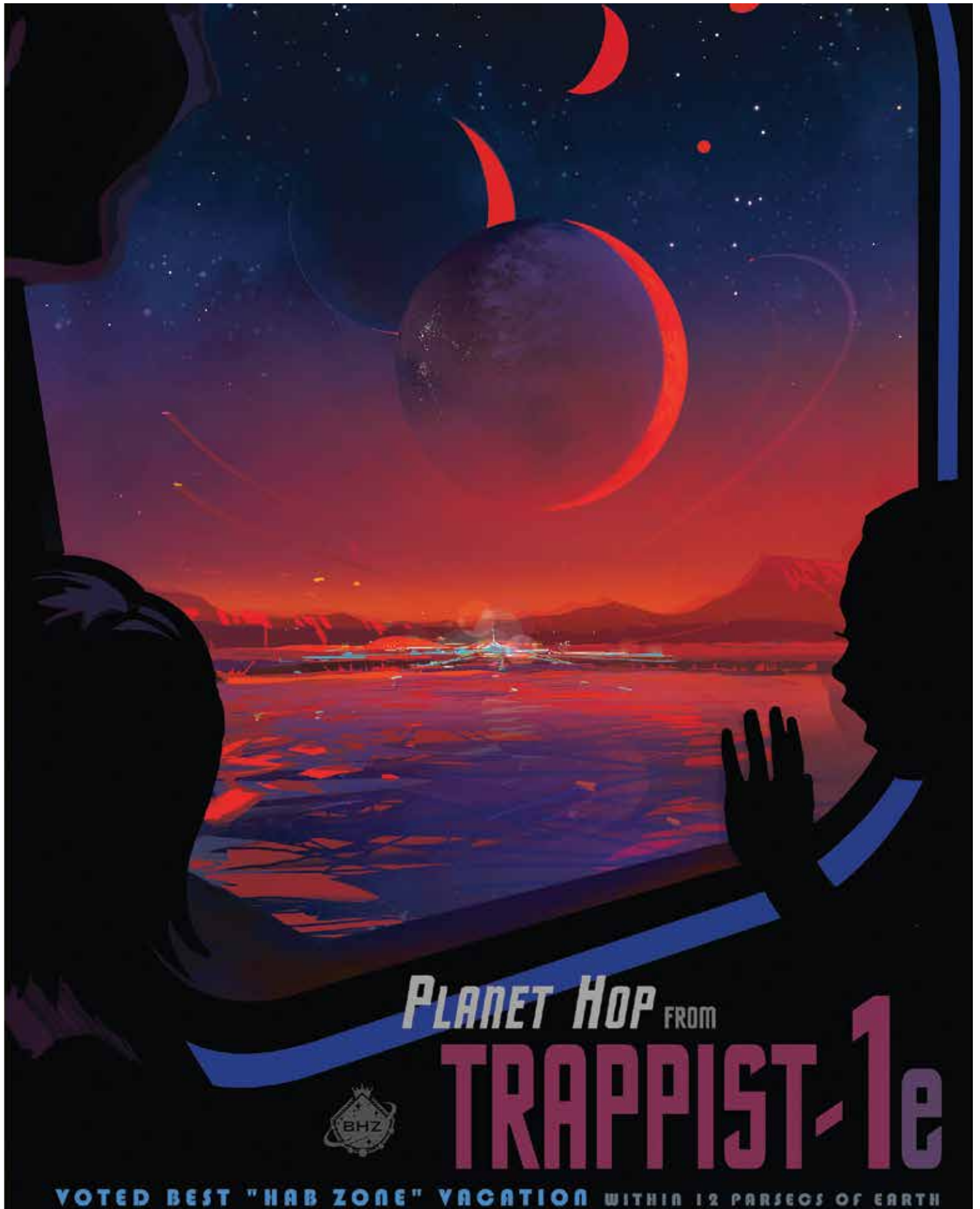
"No, sir," said Yvonne dutifully. "You said not to throw any paper airplanes. These are toy soldiers with parachutes." Well, she had him there...

Yeah, the toy soldiers were talked about for years afterwards, and now you know who's responsible for that. Fast forward to 2002, and Yvonne is telling this story at Eeriecon in Niagara Falls. One of the people listening to her perks up and says, "So that was YOU!"

Yvonne smiles, and says, "Why do you say that?"

Good thing he was smiling, too... "One of those toy soldiers landed in my lunch!"

Just another way fans make our days a little more surreal...



PLANET HOP FROM TRAPPIST-1e



VOTED BEST "HAB ZONE" VACATION WITHIN 12 PARSECS OF EARTH

Some 40 light-years from Earth, a planet called TRAPPIST-1e offers a heart-stopping view: brilliant objects in the sky, looming like larger and smaller versions of our own moon. But these are no moons. They are other Earth-sized planets in a spectacular planetary system outside our own. These seven rocky worlds huddle around their small, dim red star like a family around a campfire. Any of them could harbor liquid water, but the planet shown here, fourth from the TRAPPIST-1 star, is in the habitable zone, the area around the star where liquid water is most likely to be detected. This system was revealed by the TRAnsiting Planets and Planetesimals Small Telescope (TRAPPIST) and NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope. The planets are also excellent targets for NASA's James Webb Telescope. Take a planet-hopping excursion through the TRAPPIST-1 system.

NASA's Exoplanet Exploration Program, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, CA.
exoplanets.nasa.gov