

# MonSFFA • A MonSFF IMPULSE

NEWS BULLETIN  
OF THE MONTREAL  
SCIENCE FICTION  
AND FANTASY  
ASSOCIATION

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

March / Mars 2008 (Vol. 12, No./Nº 3)

## NEXT MonSFFA MEETING IS THIS WEEKEND

Sunday, March 30

1:00PM-5:00PM

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

### SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

1:00PM

**AN ANIMATED ENTERPRISE:** We review the further adventures of Captain Kirk and crew as depicted in the Saturday-morning Star Trek cartoon series.

3:00PM

**CLASSIC TREK REMASTERED:** A sampling of some of the remastered and enhanced footage featured on the new high definition video disc releases of the original Star Trek series.

### UPCOMING MonSFFA MEETINGS:

APRIL 20

- Green Science Fiction
- Sci-Fi Garage Sale (Fund-Raiser)

MAY 25

- Heroes and Villains
- Trivia Game Challenge

JUNE 22

- Field Trip to Montreal Biodome

## Last of the "Big Three"

Multiple Hugo and Nebula award-winning science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke passed away of respiratory illness on March 19 at age 90. He had suffered for decades from post-polio syndrome, the result of having contracted polio in 1962. The British-born Clarke, an enthusiast of undersea exploration who has lived in Sri Lanka for some 50 years, was the last of science fiction's so-called "big three," Isaac Asimov and Robert A. Heinlein being the other two best known and most celebrated SF writers of the post-World War II era.

An avid collector of pulp science fiction magazines in his youth, and a devoted "space cadet," Clarke was the first non-American Guest of Honour at a Worldcon, in 1956. His major science fiction novels include *Childhood's End* (1950; expanded 1953), *The City and the Stars* (1953; expanded 1956), *The Deep Range* (1954; expanded 1957), *A Fall of Moondust* (1961), *Rendezvous With Rama* (1973), and *The Fountains of Paradise* (1979). He is probably most associated, however, with *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), the definitive SF film by Stanley Kubrick, which Clarke co-scripted with Kubrick, and which was based on Clarke's short story "The Sentinel" (1951). Clarke also novelized the film.

In 1945 he published "Extra-Terrestrial Relays," a paper outlining the principles of satellite communication using satellites in geostationary orbits. Some 25 years later his concept became reality. He received numerous honours for his invention and today the 42,000-kilometer geostationary orbit is referred to as the Clarke Orbit, so named by the International Astronomical Union.

Twice chairman of the British Interplanetary Society (BIS), Clarke's work on space flight influenced astronomer Carl Sagan while TV producer Gene Roddenberry took some of his inspiration for *Star Trek* from Clarke. In July of 1969, CBS tapped Clarke to co-anchor news coverage of the *Apollo 11* moon mission with Walter Cronkite and astronaut Wally Schirra. He repeated the assignment for *Apollo 12* and *15*, and the historic *Apollo-Soyuz* link-up.

The visionary Clarke was among the first to predict reusable space vehicles and the proliferation of the mobile phone. He speculated that we'll soon see space tourism, complete with domed hotels on the moon and people riding

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

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

BLOOM, Hendrik  
ETTINGER, Sheila  
KRIMP, Nick  
HUOT, Geneviève  
NADEAU, Marc  
SHAINBLUM, Mark

Annual membership fees are due this month, March, from the following MonSFFA members:

D'ORTUN-BOYER, Lynda  
HAMMOCK, Christopher

Annual membership fees will become due next month, April, from the following MonSFFA members:

DODDS, Georges  
NOVO, Fernando

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

MonSFFA c/o  
4456 Boul. Ste-Rose  
Laval, Québec, Canada  
H7R 1Y6

Thank you for renewing your membership in MonSFFA, Montreal's premiere SF/F fan club.

## MonSFFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

## AMonSFF FORMULAIRE D'INSCRIPTION

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

Name / Nom: \_\_\_\_\_ Age / Âge: \_\_\_\_\_

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# CLARKE'S LAWS

## First

When a distinguished but elderly scientist states that something is possible, he is almost certainly right. When he states that something is impossible, he is very probably wrong.

## Second

The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to venture beyond them into the impossible.

## Third

Any significantly advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

into orbit on the space elevator he envisioned in *The Fountains of Paradise*. He also ventured that the 21st century will see the development of some kind of new energy source, that we'll be able to synthesize all of our food in the not-too-distant future, and that by 2030, we will have made contact with an extraterrestrial civilization.

## February MonSFFA Meeting

Sex and horror were on the agenda at MonSFFA's February 17 gathering.

Sylvain St-Pierre was first up with an extensively researched presentation on reproduction in SF, from strange alien mating rituals to the creation of life via such means as genetic manipulation and cloning. Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World* and the popular *Star Wars* movies, for example, feature cloning. Mary Shelley's classic *Frankenstein* was offered as an example of the creation of life not by God but man, with horrific consequences, while tales of artificial life include the films *Blade Runner* and *A.I.* Vampires, *Star Trek's* Borg, and the pods of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* reproduce by assimilation. Immortality eliminates the need to reproduce and, indeed, the state of imperishability goes hand in hand with impotence in Bob Shaw's *One Million Tomorrows*. And then there's Frank Bellkap Long, who postulates a species in which the females are a thousand times larger than the

males. Larry Niven's female Kzinti, meanwhile, are non-sentient. But it is the male Dextran who is non-sentient in David J. Lake's *The Right Hand of Dextra*. Isaac Asimov creates a scenario involving three sexes in *The Gods Themselves* while Jack Vance's Dirdir features multiple types of males and females. A.E. Van Vogt's Riim and Jack L. Chalker's Czill reproduce by splitting apart, as does the Blob of classic sci-fi movie fame.

Sylvain outlined still more stories in which aliens sported, for instance, removable sex organs, or could switch genders or procreate with other species—*Star Trek* features a lot of this type of hanky panky—or enjoy sex telepathically. When it was all over, everyone lit up and enjoyed a cigarette.

Keith Braithwaite was up after the mid-meeting break with a discussion of the techniques employed by horror writers and filmmakers to scare their readers and viewers. Keith cited comment on the subject by a variety of horror writers, including Stephen King, Dean Koontz, Robert Bloch, Charles L. Grant, and William F. Nolan.

Nothing is so frightening as what's behind the closed door. The anticipation of violence is far more suspenseful than violence itself. The monster glimpsed at in the shadows is much scarier than the one viewed in graphic detail. In other words, allowing the reader or viewer's imagination to do the heavy lifting, rather than laying it all out before an audience, works best. No blood-splattered prose or gut-churning gore splashed on the screen can equal the spine-tingling chills evoked by the imagination of the reader or viewer. A cheap scare can be had by shocking an audience with some sudden, gruesome trick, but *real*, down-deep terror is best achieved by suggestion, by the steady building of suspense, by tapping into the most primal fears of the reader or viewer.

Keith examined this thinking in detail, providing examples from horror literature and film, while outlining some of the stylistic techniques employed by successful horror writers. For example, words and images of death—quiet as graveyard, moonlight as pale as a corpse—subliminally suggest to the reader that a character is in serious danger or is about to die. Also, the use of simpler words and shorter sentences as the narrative approaches a climatic moment of violence increasingly propels the reader forward, headlong, to that moment.

Our thanks to presenters Sylvain St-Pierre and Keith Braithwaite.

## MonSFFA Moment A Moment in the 20-Year History of MonSFFA

**1996** **Plant 9 From Outer Space:** A cast and crew of some two dozen MonSFFen shoot a cheesy Ed Wood-style sci-fi movie over the course of a single weekend in late February. *Plant 9 From Outer Space*, a humourous, low-budget spoof of SF films and TV shows, and of fandom, premieres to a standing-room-only crowd later that year at Con•Cept. MonSFFA's first fan film is an instant hit and will subsequently garner an Aurora Award nomination while sales of VHS copies more than double expectations. *Plant 9* turns a substantial profit for the club, soon spawning a sequel and, in years to come, further successful "MonSFFilms".

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

- In person at a MonSFFA meeting
- Via the club's mailing address, to the attention of "Impulse":  
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- Voice mail: 450-692-8831

Visit MonSFFA on the Web:

Impulse est préparé une fois par mois par Keith Braithwaite au nom de l'AMonSFF. Il est aussi disponible en version électronique sur le site internet du club grâce à Kurt Schmidt. Pour toutes questions concernant cette publication, contactez Keith soit:

- En personne à une réunion du club
- Courriel: [bigewok@total.net](mailto:bigewok@total.net)

Visitez l'AMonSFF sur internet:

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- Par la poste à l'adresse du club, à l'attention de "Impulse":  
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