

SOL RISING

December 2007

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The Newsletter of The Friends of the Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy

Another Electrifying Year of Events at the Merrill



Author Tim Powers delights his fans at the Merrill. Photo by Andrew Specht

Peter Watts was the Guest Speaker at the Academic Conference on Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy in June.

The Friends of the Merrill Collection held a Flea Market in the Toronto Reference Library's Beeton Auditorium. Over 500 people came.

On Saturday, Oct 6, Tim Powers, winner of the 1992 World Fantasy Award for *Last Call* spoke at the Merrill Collection. Mr. Powers spoke for an hour, explaining why he thinks people read fantasy, telling entertaining stories about his life as a writer, and answering questions from the audience.

SOL RISING
Friends of the Merrill Collection
Number 37, December 2007

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Call for Submissions!
Contact Sabrina (sabrinafried@rogers.com)
if you wish to submit articles, essays or art
pieces. Be a part of SOL Rising, speak out!

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Seven Reasons Why The World Fantasy Convention is Totally Cool!

By Lorna Toolis

1. The signal-to-noise ratio is very high - not just programming, but the people you bump into, the casual conversations in the hallway, almost everybody is knowledgeable, interested, enthusiastic and civil.
2. The World Fantasy Convention moves around the continent, and the world, so you are travelling to meet interesting people in interesting places. Over and above the hardcore attendees, different people show up at every World Fantasy Convention.
3. Everything you ever wanted to buy in your life is available in the dealers' room. Not necessarily cheap, but available. Also, many books you didn't know about and will hereafter be unable to live without will be on display.
4. All panelists will be major figures in the sf community, immensely knowledgeable in their subject area. Almost everybody you ever wanted to talk to, or whom you wanted to hear talk, will be speaking on a panel at some World Fantasy Convention. If you want to network, this is the place. If you just want to listen, it doesn't get any better.
5. There will be an interesting art show. Starving artists do not travel a lot, but many of them will make an extra effort to attend the World Fantasy Convention in the hope of attracting the attention of an art director for an sf publishing house.
6. The convention book bags are generous, sometimes extremely so. Also, after three World Fantasy Conventions, you will never have to buy luggage again in your life.
7. 2008's World Fantasy Convention will be in Calgary. It will be a lot of fun. If you are debating whether to go or not to go, live a little, go!

THE
MERRIL COLLECTION OF SCIENCE FICTION
 SPECULATION AND FANTASY 

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The Mighty Merril Flea Market Is No Tiny Event

By Arlene Morlidge

Once upon a time I went to a Flea Market. Not your ordinary flea market, one full of magical things....

The second annual Friends of the Merril Flea Market was held at the Toronto Reference Library on Saturday, Sept. 8, and was a great success. We had over 20 people at the door when we opened and it stayed busy all day. Our vendors, ranging from kids to senior citizens, were selling items ranging from Super Hero Cthulhu (I got that) to books and computer games and anime and skull shot glasses (I got those, too) and *Dr Who* videos and more books and more videos and posters and costumes ...and and ... I haven't seen such a variety of science fiction/fantasy/horror stuff for a very long time.

People kept coming and going and coming. It was fun watching the people come in, go out to find a bank machine and come back. One group started as two girls coming in and looking...then going out and calling some friends, who then came and looked (and bought) who then went out and called more friends who came and bought. I think those two girls brought in 10 people all by their lonesome. If that isn't what makes a flea market successful, I don't know what does.

The people who were selling stuff all seemed to have a wonderful time, and I think they even made money. I hope so, because then they'll come back next year too.

The staff at the TRL were great, particularly the morning security guard who made sure we had an open door (after finding that the main loading door was blocked by someone's parked car), got us book carts to help people bring in their stuff and was generally a very nice guy.

Not only did I get some shopping for presents done, I had a great time helping out at the Merril table. The Friends made out pretty well thanks to a wonderful donation from one of our members, consisting mostly of autographed sf actor photos and *Star Trek* Xmas ornaments, almost all of which sold (Borg Cube anyone?... only \$10).

So to end the story, the second annual Flea Market went wonderfully well. Thanks to Donald Simmons for organizing it and I think (hope) we can do it again. For those who made it, I hope you had fun and for those who didn't, I'm sorry you missed a great time, but come next year. You just might find that missing dragon, or widget, or novel, or odd thingy that you didn't know you needed (or needed to get rid of).

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Friends of the Merril Collection
Number 37, December 2007
Special Notes

MEMBERSHIPS MAKE EXCELLENT GIFTS!

Memberships in the Friends of the Merril Collection now run between January 1 and December 31. This change in the membership year makes a membership in the Friends of the Merril Collection a perfect stocking stuffer! Just copy the form on the back of this newsletter and send it to the address shown with a cheque and your friends and family are ready to start the New Year!

DONATIONS: HOW THEY WORK

Your thirty-five dollar membership generates an income tax deduction certificate for that amount, as do all cash donations over the membership fee. The Toronto Public Library Foundation mails the certificate to you and you deduct it as a charitable donation the next time you do your income tax. The money that you donate is moved into the Merril Collection's book budget and enables the Collection to purchase that many more books. Think of it as a means of directing the use of your tax dollars – what better use could the library make of your money than buying books?

Reanimating the Holidays

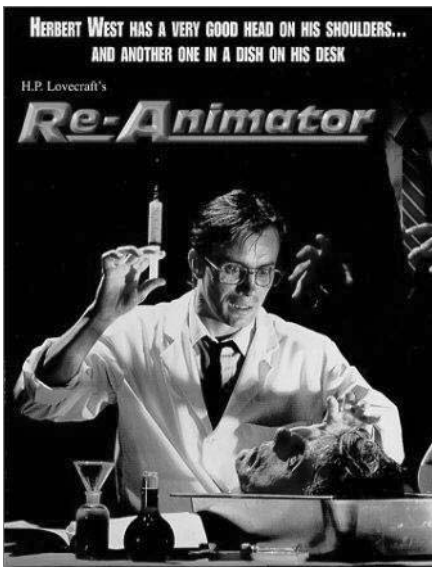
By Andrew Specht (reporting from shadowed West Toronto)

Getting ready for Christmas? Looking forward to all that fun holiday fare, but can't quite bring yourself to watch *It's a Wonderful Life* and *A Christmas Carol* half a dozen times each?

Well, here's a list of movies to get you past those Xmas jollies. These items can either be purchased cheaply from most downtown Toronto video stores, or off Amazon. If you're just looking to rent, Suspect Video might have them at either their Queen Street or Mirvish Village locations.

***Dagon*, directed by Stuart Gordon 2005**

A wonderfully atmospheric adaptation of H. P. Lovecraft's "The Shadow Over Innesmouth," starring Ezra Gooden as the unlikely hero who discovers, much to his horror, that there's somethin' a mite fishy in his family tree. Gooden's performance can best be described as a blend of Woody Allen, Bruce Campbell and Harold Lloyd. Lovecraft's original story was set in a decadent New England town while Gordon's film has it transplanted to coastal Spain (the Spanish government seems almost to be thanked as a whole in the opening credits). One of the benefits of this setting is the presence of the late Francesco Rabbal. Rabbal, who plays the crazy old town drunk, was apparently called the Alec Guinness of Spain, and I can see why as he explains just what has happened (through a series of flashbacks of himself as a young boy) to the now quite gill-ridden town of Imbocca. The pace is wildly frenetic and has downright comically manic bits — chief among these is a nail-biting transfer of a door-lock from one door to another, in order to bar the fishy folk from his room; after doing this very awkwardly, dropping screws etc, there is a brief pause, followed by Gooden asking of the angry thumps at the door, "Can I help you?"



***Reanimator*, directed by Stuart Gordon, 1985**

Gordon's first foray into the Lovecraft universe with the actor who would become one of his most frequent partners in crime, Jeffery Combs. Combs is "Herbert" West, a small frightening little man who just does *not* know when to leave well enough alone. Bruce Abbot is Dan Cain, Herbert's victim/collaborator, and the late David Gale is Dr. Carl Hill. As with most Lovecraft adaptations, the era is transferred to the present day, and the film takes place at "Miskatonic Medical School" (Go Pods!). Dan Kane is feeling frustrated about the futility of death when young West, straight from a fiasco in Switzerland, joins the school only, it seems, to annoy Dr. Carl Hill. West is convinced that Hill's theory of brain death is quite wrong and promptly kills him by chopping off his head, so he can bring it back to life, stick it on his desk and go "See, I told you I was right." Great over-the-top performances all around, especially the extras playing zombies and the worst animatronic cat ever (okay, besides the one on *Sabrina*). Again, easily available as above.

***From Beyond*, directed by (gosh) Stuart Gordon, 1986**

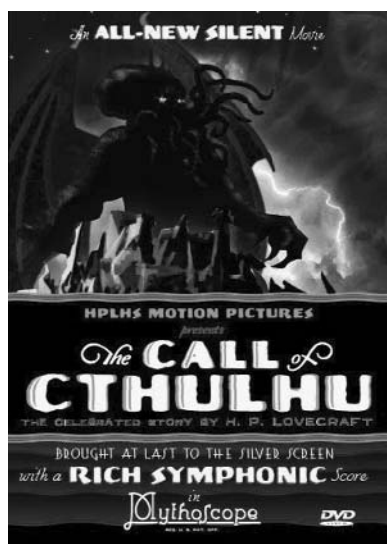
The follow-up film to *Reanimator*, though not a sequel (trust me - avoid *Bride of Reanimator* like the plague); this wonderfully warped outing has Gordon and the usual suspects investigating other-dimensional reality through the use of a bizarre contraption that stimulates the pineal gland, thereby allowing them to see -- well, "Beyond"

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(wherever that is). The main things that appear to result when you stimulate the pineal are psychic powers, the urge to eat brains and a libido the size of Texas. This time out Jeff Combs is an unwilling participant (aside from the fact that he must have answered an ad that read “Wanted: assistant for creepy, horny mad scientist” aside from that, quite unwilling). The icing on the cake is the presence of “Bubba” played by the very funky Ken Forree. Sexual innuendo! Slime! Campy acting! Beef stew and dumplings! This is especially cool as it’s just been restored to DVD and has a hilarious commentary track, as has *Reanimator*, that you will just have to hear.

***The Dunwich Horror*, directed by Daniel Haller, 1970**

Right off the bat, although this is based on the story by H. P. Lovecraft, there are a number of liberties taken. First among these is... Wilbur Whatley, chick magnet! You heard that right -- the overall, lanky, goat-footed spawn of Yogsothoth has been turned into a real lady-killer (sic), played by *Quantum Leap*'s Dean Stockwell. Sandra Dee is Wilbur's sacrificial victim (you cannot make up this stuff, kids) who also happens to be the assistant of the aged professor in charge of, duh duh duh: the Necronomicon. Sandra just can't get enough of Ol' Wilbur and is quickly lured to old Wizard Whatley's (Sam Jaffe, Gunga Din) place where, again not making this up, the car breaks down. Add to that the worst depiction of an Old One this side of a plate of spaghetti and you have one of the all time great shlocky movies.



***The Call of Cthulhu*, directed by Andrew Leeman, 2005**

The H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society (the wonderful bunch responsible for the “Cthulhu Live” LARP) have put all their fiddily prop-making, costuming and general bloody-minded know-how into making the most accurate Lovecraft adaptation ever made (as of this article - I have yet to see *Cthulhu* with Tory Spelling and with any luck there'll be a meteor strike before then). Rather than create a modern-day version of the story, as is almost always the case with Lovecraft films (see above), the HPLHS has wisely chosen to film this as a b/w silent movie, as might have happened had the story been optioned in the late 1920s. It manages excellently at bringing across the spirit of the story, through inter-titles (available in more languages than I can remember at the moment), flashbacks and a blend of both period and modern moviemaking methods they have dubbed

“Mythophonic.” Very little, if anything, is changed from the original story and all the performances are very believable. (Note: watch the “making of” feature so you can actually hear the rant by the actor playing the young, crazed artistic dreamer Henry Wilcox — you will laugh your socks off; to say nothing of the production people talking about the clever shoestring methods used to create this treasure: “These suits were never meant to be seen in colour!”) Definitely worth the effort and love put into it.

***Die Monster, Die!* directed by Dainiel Haller, 1965**

Boris Karloff stars in an adaptation (a really loose adaptation) of “The Colour Out of Space.” Karloff is a crazy scientist who uses fragments of a mysterious meteor to mutate plants and animals (because this could solve the world's hunger problem, by making folks eat giant radioactive food). All goes well, until his daughter who (of course) knows nothing of this invites her nosy boyfriend to stay. What does impress, however, are the images at the start of the film, pulled right from the story, of “The Blasted Heath,” a region laid barren by the meteor's impact. That being said, this is pure magnificent American International cheese with lots of awful makeup, gothic sets, unscary romantic subplots and Karloff's (despite being very long in the tooth) great performance.

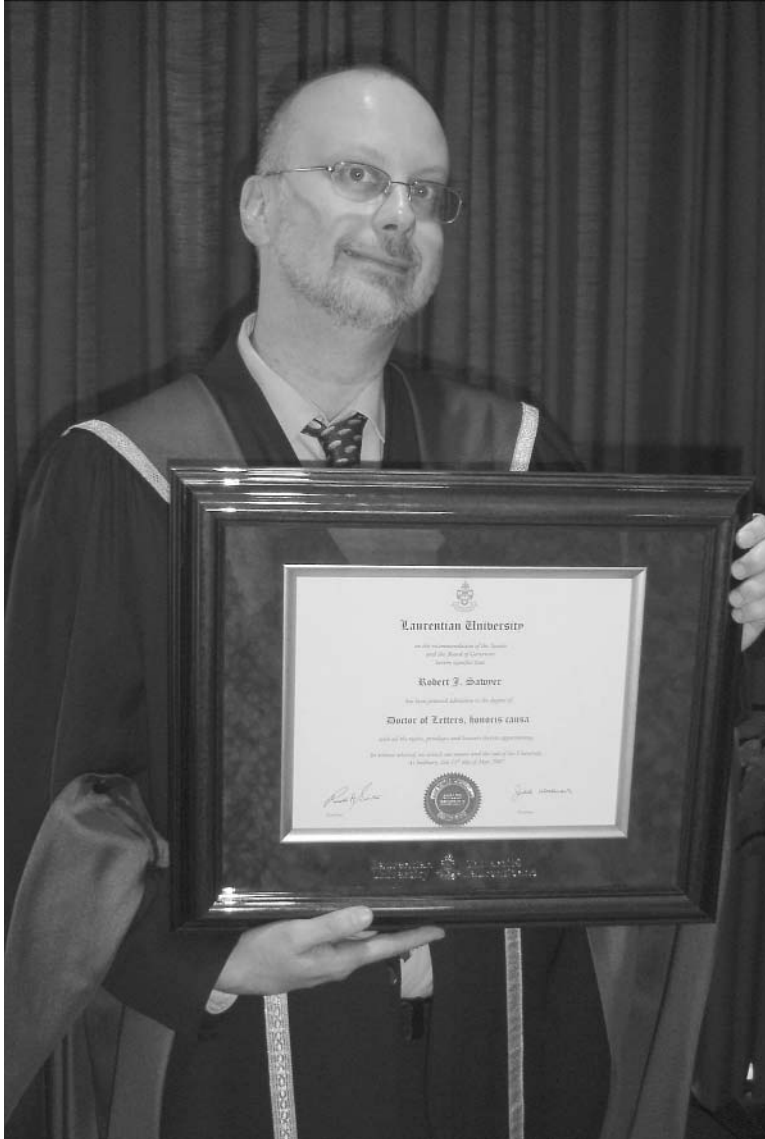
Well, there are a few suggestions to jazz up your holiday viewing; so, happy holiday squidding and have an eldritch new year!

Convocation Address

Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario. Saturday, June 2, 2007

By Robert J. Sawyer

Robert J. Sawyer received an honorary doctorate (Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*) at this convocation; he also gave the convocation address below to graduating Arts students. We are extremely grateful to Rob for granting us permission to republish his speech in *Sol Rising*.



Robert J. Sawyer, who was once *Writer-In-Residence* at the Merril receives his honorary doctorate from Laurentian University. Photo provided by Robert J. Sawyer.

As a science-fiction writer, my job is thinking about the future. But I want to start off by talking a bit about the past—the ancient past. Legend has it that the Emperor of China many years ago was a huge fan of a brand-new game, a little something called “chess.” In fact, he liked chess so much, he summoned the game’s inventor to the imperial court, and told the man he could have any reward he wished as a thank-you for creating chess.

Well, of course, the inventor of chess was a clever man, and he was always thinking several moves ahead. But he also knew that the emperor valued humility, and so he said to him, “Your excellency, perhaps my reward might take the form of a special game of chess. I will be content if we simply get a chess board, and have your treasurer put one grain of rice on the first square. For each turn, the treasurer will move the rice grain to the next square, but double it as he does so. In the first move, I’ll have one grain; in the second, two; in the third, four; and so on till we’ve moved through all sixty-four squares.”

The emperor was delighted, and agreed at once. Soon, of course, the inventor of chess was receiving spoonfuls of rice, then bowlfuls, then bucketfuls. Still, the Emperor was busy with other things, and paid little attention until they’d made their way halfway through the board, on the thirty-second square. At that point, the inventor owned two billion grains of rice, about as much as one might find in a single field. But, of course, the doubling wasn’t done yet

...

The end of this story comes down to us in two different forms, and I credit computer-scientist Ray Kurzweil for making me aware of both versions. In one version, the wily inventor ended up bankrupting the emperor, for by the time the sixty-fourth square was reached, the inventor was owed nine million trillion grains of rice.

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In the other version—the more likely one, it seems to me—the emperor made the ultimate checkmate move: he lopped off the head of the inventor of chess.

Now, what's all this got to do with the future? Well, in 1965, Gordon Moore, the founder of Intel — the company that makes the microprocessors inside many computers — noted a fascinating fact: going right back to the dawn of computing in World War II, computing power has doubled about every eighteen months.

This came to be known as Moore's Law, and it means that in the short time it took most of you to complete your degrees, computers have become eight times more powerful. But, more than that, it means that computers have become sixteen thousand times more powerful in the twenty-odd years most of you have been alive, because of the fifteen or so doublings that have occurred. And, just like the chessboard at the time in which the single grain of rice had grown to a full field, we're not done yet ...

My own favorite science-fiction writer is Arthur C. Clarke, who lives in Sri Lanka. And like Gordon Moore, he has a law of his own, coined, as it happens, about the same time as Moore's Law. Clarke's Law says, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." Now when Clarke first said that, he meant that the technology of civilizations thousands, if not millions, of years ahead of our own would seem magical. But if you put Moore's Law together with Clarke's Law you find out what the Chinese emperor learned all those centuries ago: it doesn't take long with constant doubling to end up with gigantic numbers.

We tend to think of what happened in the past as a good guide for what will happen in the future. That's the mistake the Chinese emperor made when he checked in at the half-way point — after they were on the thirty-second square of the chess board — and saw that the inventor had earned a field's worth of rice; the emperor went away thinking everything was going to stay at a reasonably small scale.

Well, as it happens I'm about double the age of most of you — I just turned 47. And by the time you guys are my age, computers will be another 16,000 times more powerful than they are today.

In fact, long before then, computers will be more powerful than our brains are. There's no firm measure of just how much computing our brains actually do, so the date is a bit fuzzy, but many scientists think we'll reach the point where computers are as powerful as our brains around 2020 — thirteen years from now. And if we do indeed hit that by, say, New Year's Day 2020, then by Canada Day 2021, we'll have computers twice as powerful as us — and I, for one, welcome our new robot masters!

Seriously, though, I don't think they'll enslave us — or that we'll enslave them; rather, we'll find a new synergy, a new symbiosis — and you will all be part of that. Of course, not just computing technology but all technology is galloping ahead. Arthur C. Clarke's era of advanced technology being indistinguishable from magic will happen in your lifetimes; as the old Paul Simon song has it, you'll soon be living in the age of miracle and wonder: wonders of nanotechnology, miracles of artificial intelligence, the power to modify and even create life: anything that can be done — anything that's possible in this universe — we'll be able to do.

And we'll do it all sooner than most people think. We'll do as much in the first twenty years of this century as we did in all of the last century. We'll make another full 20th-century's worth of progress in the next fourteen years after that — in the years from 2020 to 2034. And we'll do another 20th-century's worth of progress in the seven years after that, by 2041, before most of you will be ready to retire.

Centuries of progress in mere decades! That means that in this century, we will cure cancer and all other diseases ... including even the one that, so far, has always ultimately gotten everyone: old age. I'm confident that most

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of you, in your twenties now, will live to see the 22nd century, and I'd bet even money that many of you will live to see the 23rd, as well. Scientifically, all of this is within our grasp.

Now, yes, I am an optimist about the future; I think most science-fiction writers are. But the most successful science-fiction writer in the world — the one who sells the most copies — isn't. Michael Crichton is, by far, the world's top selling science-fiction writer, and yet he's fundamentally an anti-science guy. Think about it: When Michael Crichton wrote about sending probes out into space to find life, as he did in his first novel, *The Andromeda Strain*, everything goes wrong, and people die.

When he wrote about artificial intelligence, as he did in the first movie he ever wrote, *Westworld*, everything goes wrong, and people die.

When he wrote about genetic engineering and cloning, as he did in *Jurassic Park*, everything goes wrong, and people die.

When he wrote about nanotechnology — the science of the very small — as he did in *Prey*, everything goes wrong, and people die.

It's a wonder that someone with so little faith in technology can function at all in today's world. I mean, every time Crichton gets on an airplane, he's putting his fate in the hands of all the scientists and engineers who make flight possible, and ...

Oh, wait. He wrote about that, too, in his novel *Airframe*. Everything goes wrong aboard a plane, and people die.

Now, as it happens, a few years ago the *Montreal Gazette* called me "Canada's answer to Michael Crichton." And I thought, hey, if that's true, how come I don't have as much money as Michael Crichton? And so I called up my literary agent. He happens to also be Stephen King's agent, so he's certainly capable of pulling off Crichton-sized deals, and I said to him, "Ralph, they say I'm Canada's answer to Michael Crichton — so how come you're not getting me the sort of money Crichton gets?"

And my agent said, "Rob, baby" — that's how agents talk, isn't it? — "Rob, baby, I can get you Crichton-sized money, but you have to be willing to spread the same message Crichton does. There are a lot more people who want to hear that technology is evil than want to hear that it's good. But if you're willing to say what Crichton says, sure, I can get you that kind of money."

"But I can't say that," I said. "It's not true."

"Well, then, Rob, baby, there's nothing I can do."

To which I said, as they do on *Battlestar Galactica*, "Frak."

But a convocation address is supposed to be upbeat and positive, and I am indeed optimistic about the future. But that doesn't mean I have blinders on. Our world is a turbulent place, full of war and hate, and we've poisoned our planet through environmental neglect.

Yes, the future can be rosy — if we don't blow it all up. And so, as you embark on your careers, I urge you to recognize that not just your future, but the future of our species, and the future of this planet, is literally in your hands.

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But I know you're up to the task. You live in the greatest country in the world, and you're graduating today from one of its finest universities. Your personal future is indeed bright.

But we need to make sure that the future is bright for everyone on this planet; after all, it's not the happy and prosperous who lash out with acts of terrorism or try to take their neighbour's land.

No, those things are done by the forgotten, the disenfranchised, and the envious. Throughout the careers you're about to embark on, work as much as you can to help make the world a better place for everyone. We don't need to just put an end to global warming and pollution, but also to poverty and hate. We're going to have miraculous powers in the decades to come, but it's up to your generation to use them wisely, and for everyone's benefit.

And that's where you people, in particular, come in. This isn't a convocation for technologists or scientists, after all. Rather, it's the graduation of those receiving arts degrees — indeed, some of you are getting arts degrees in communication studies, which is what I myself have.

And, well, Percy Shelley once said that poets are “the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” That is, through their words, they serve as the conscience of the people, and set the social agenda. But Shelley was biased — he was a poet himself. For “poets,” I think we can substitute artists of all types: the arts aren't just the signature of civilization; they are the moral conscience of humanity.

Those of you who are studying languages — English, French, Spanish, Modern Languages: use your deep understanding of literature to become the legislators of the 21st century, helping us steer a path to a future that's got a place for everyone.

Those of you receiving baccalaureates in Theatre Arts: remember that all the world truly is a stage — and that we are actors in a play that never ends. Don't just entertain — go out into the lights to inform and inspire.

Those of you graduating in Communications Studies: use your special insights and abilities to get messages of peace and progress, of inclusiveness and prosperity, out to the world; help set an agenda of hope.

Those of you receiving a bachelor's in Music: remember that there's nothing more joyous than song, nothing more universal than music; use your art to uplift, and your passion to help us all live in harmony.

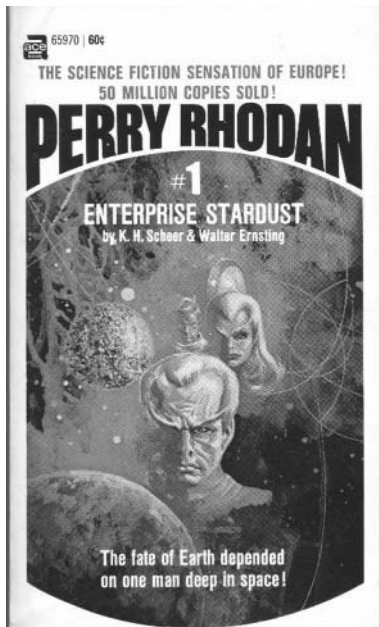
And, finally, for those of you taking home a degree in Religious Studies: you already know the power of faith; make sure that the world continues to have faith in its future, that we all continue to have faith in humanity.

The future is in all of your hands — every single one of you — and I have faith that those are good hands. I know you'll make this fragile planet into the best of all possible worlds; I know you'll make the future so bright it positively glows. And I look forward to hearing about all your successes at our hundredth-anniversary reunion, in 2107. Thank you all very much — and see you all then!

Robert J. Sawyer has won the Hugo, Nebula, Aurora, and John W. Campbell Memorial Awards, all for best novel of the year; his latest novel is Rollback, published by Tor.

Perry Rhodan: Space Opera done up German Style

By Jamie Fraser



The first Ace edition of Enterprise Stardust

I was a young lad in 1969 and my passion for reading was split between the genres of mystery and science fiction. I was already working in a used book store (for store credit) and steadily reading through the works of such masters as, E.E. “Doc” Smith, Edmond Hamilton, Kenneth Robeson and Edgar Rice Burroughs. Aside from school taking so much time away from my reading I was as happy as a pig in a poke.

One winter’s day a book came in that immediately caught my attention. It was the first book in a new sf series published by Ace called *Perry Rhodan*. The cover proclaimed it was “The Science Fiction Sensation of Europe!” with “50 Million Copies Sold”. It had stunning cover art and a great blurb. “The fate of Earth depended on one man deep in space!”

I was already drooling (minor ptyalism, it went away in a few years) and such a find only made it worse. A new author and very successful space opera stories, how could it not be a great read? I just had to have this book. It was close, as a fellow was eying the book, but once again my great snatch saved the day, and the book.

A product of the early pulp magazines, Space Opera is a sub-genre of sf that typically emphasizes adventure, larger-than-life characters, vast exotic futuristic settings, remotely plausible technology such as time travel and interstellar travel, complex alien civilizations and fictional depictions of mankind’s future

The best proponents of space opera were “Doc” Smith, Edmond Hamilton and Jack Williamson. The “Skylark” and “Lensman” series by Smith, and the “Captain Future” and “Morgan Chane” stories by Hamilton are personal favorites. Mr. Williamson created innumerable characters between 1928 and 2006. That’s nine decades of published sf.

Being used to the quality of writing by these authors I was somewhat taken aback by this new series of novels. As expected, the book was pure space opera and I read it straight through. It was enjoyable enough, with a good if not great story, but there was something off about it. It was like opening a bulging can of tuna when you have a cold; you’re not sure if it’s ok or if it’s just you.

The first five Perry Rhodan double novels set up the storyline nicely and were a good size. But starting with #6 the books reverted to novellas, and book and movie reviews were added as filler. Later books would include short stories and reprints of classic serialized novels. One famous example was the lost chapter from H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine*. This made the books more enjoyable, plus they added little teaser blurbs for stories set hundreds of books ahead.

I kept reading the series and finally determined that it was just too European compared to what I was used to reading. And the translation from German into English could have been better. The books had long running story cycles; between 25-100 books could be devoted to one story line. This was a new concept to me and I didn’t really

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like it. Of course it didn't help that the stories were becoming formulaic and slow moving. So after 40-odd books I gave up reading the series. Ace ended up publishing 123 Perry Rhodan books: 102 singles and 19 doubles. 19 more were printed by other publishers, for a total of 159. Now that's a considerable number of books to be published, especially stories translated from another language. It is, in fact, the highest number of any sf series published in North America.



One of the German Perry Rhodan covers

But even more astounding is that over 2,400 Perry Rhodan stories have been published since its inception in 1961. Creators K.H. Scheer and Clark Darlton had initially planned for thirty weekly novellas in traditional German pulp booklet format. However, it was such a success that new stories have been coming out each week for the last 46 years.

Producing a new book each week is extremely arduous and the original authors found that they needed a team of writers to keep up with the demand for their creation. The ever-changing cadre of new writers brought fresh blood, which has allowed the series to thrive over the decades.

The popularity of the books was such that it expanded into comic strips, audio plays, bibliographic works and a much-reviled film adaptation, *Mission Stardust!* It also saw translations into many languages and has been quite successful. The renowned science fiction fan Forrest J. Ackerman was instrumental in arranging the English translation that Ace Books published. After Ace ceased publishing the series he and his wife created their own company, which published 17 more stories.

Although my fond memories of discovering and reading the Ace series will remain, I can now better understand the vicious attacks made against the books. The Perry Rhodan books are one of those cultural phenomena that cannot be easily explained. But there is no denying its amazing commercial success over the decades.

Volunteers Needed!

If you would like to help with any of the following, contact Lorna Toolis at ltoolis@torontopubliclibrary.ca

- * **Event Set-Up:** In the hour or two before every Friends of the Merril event (readings, Xmas Tea, etc), there are a number of small jobs which need to be done (rearrange chairs, pick up catered snacks, etc.)
- * **Event Notification:** Before Merril events, send out email notifications to members, contact local weeklies (*Eye*, *NOW*) and local event websites (The Torontoist, etc.)
- * **Man the Tables!:** Help staff the Merril promotional table at events such as local sf / fantasy conventions.
- * **Merril Mailings:** Help organize and carry out occasional mass mailings to members of the Friends (generally two-three a year).
- * **Sol Rising:** Write articles for our twice-yearly newsletter, help with proofreading, ad sales, graphic design.
- * **Marketing/Promotions Committee:** Looks at ways to increase the profile of the Friends and the Collection (among both individuals and corporations), and promote Merril Events. It will involve occasional meetings (decided upon by its members), and follow-up work investigating its ideas.
- * **Fundraising Committee:** The Fundraising Committee looks at ideas to raise money to support the Friends and the Collection, through merchandise sales, fundraising events, encouraging individual and corporate donations, etc. It will involve occasional meetings (decided upon by its members), and follow-up work investigating its ideas.

All Great Houses Begin With A Strong Foundation



The Friends of the Merrill Collection is a volunteer organization that provides support and assistance to the Collection, which houses the largest public collection of science fiction and fantasy books in North America.

The Friends support the collection through the publication of *Sol Rising*, providing the Collection with volun-

teers and sponsoring events held at the library, including readings and appearances by prominent members of the science fiction and fantasy community.

The Friends is an entirely self-funded organization, existing through the generosity of its donors.

By completing the donation/member-

ship form below and sending it in, you are helping to promote the genres of science fiction, fantasy and speculation to new readers and future generations. The Friends of the Merrill Collection would like to thank all the generous supporters and volunteers, without whom this would not be possible.

I wish to become a member of **The Friends of the Merrill Collection**. I have enclosed a cheque or money order (payable to "The Friends of the Merrill Collection") for my 2008 membership fee as indicated (memberships run from January to December):

- Individual** \$35.⁰⁰ per year
- Student** (under 18) \$20.⁰⁰ per year
- Institution** \$42.⁵⁰ per year

This is a:

- Membership renewal
- New membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Please mail to: **The Friends of the Merrill Collection, c/o Lillian H. Smith Branch,
Toronto Public Library, 239 College St., 3rd Floor, Toronto,
Ontario M5T 1R5**

In addition to my membership fee, I would like to make a contribution to the Friends. I understand that tax receipts will be issued for both my membership and additional contribution, and that my contribution will go towards funding the Friends' activities.

\$ _____