

SOL RISING

Summer 2008

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

The Merrill Gets Boinged!



Author extraordinaire Cory Doctorow pays the Merrill a visit. For a full rundown, see page 9

SOL RISING
Friends of the Merrill Collection
Number 38, Summer 2008

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Cha, Cha, Cha, Changes: Or, How to Improve Upon What's Already a Success

By Jamie Fraser

The Fantastic Pulp Show & Sale was held on May 10th and was an even greater success than usual. Both the public and the dealers thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Sales were brisk as attendees perused the amazing pulps and pulp fiction material available for sale. There were more dealers and more tables this year resulting in a greater, and more varied selection than in previous years.

As always there was an excellent selection of pulp magazines. From the Hero pulps to sf, Mystery, or Spicy; all were present in varying states of condition and priced accordingly. Titles such as *Amazing*, *Astounding*, *Planet Stories*, *Black Mask*, *Dime Detective*, *Doc Savage*, *The Shadow*, *The Spider* and *Weird Tales* were all available.

Early sf was known as Speculative Fiction and some of the pulps even used the term Scientification. They had lovely hand painted covers but were not as detailed or lurid as the later pulps. To some this made their art look muted or dull but over the past few years there's been a resurgence of interest in their artwork. So much so that I sold 75% of the issues I brought to the show.

Also for sale were pulp reprints of all genres, paperbacks, digests, hard covers and new pulp facsimile editions. Used, rare and out-of-print books of all types were available throughout the room. Paperback offerings included mysteries, sf, horror, older novels, and an assortment of series. The large and varied selection of 1960s paperback erotica included such titles as *Sin Gym*, *Twilight Lovers*, and *Student in Lesbos*.

There were reference books on pulp magazines and pulp art, films and movie serials, and comic books and art. The hardcover first editions were mostly science fiction and mysteries including some signed, limited, slipcased editions. Collectors of specialty presses were delighted to find so many rare titles from Arkham House, Gnome, Prime, Shasta, and Ashtree Press.

Changing the layout and switching to slightly smaller tables freed up space for two new dealers. Even though our previous shows were quite successful and had

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Orbital 2008 Convention Report

By Donald Simmons

I've never been to a British sf con before, so when I was making plans to visit my friends in London, and I found that this year's Eastercon (the British national sf con, called this year Orbital 2008) was being held outside of Heathrow, I decided to kill two birds with one stone.

British sf cons are expensive compared to North American ones, which is not surprising as everything is expensive there, but I really got value for my money at Orbital. The con runs a full four days (the Brits getting both Easter Monday and Good Friday off) and the Guest of Honor line-up was Neil Gaiman, Charlie Stross, China Mieville, and Tanith Lee, making this the first sf con ever where I attended the GoH talks of all the major guests. Talking to Judith, the con chair, one evening, I learned that they had invited all four, only expecting to get one, maybe two, and just lucked out.

As a result, this was apparently the biggest Eastercon since the mid 80s, with attendance in the 1300-1400 range (not counting stuffed animals, for whom you could get a full membership and badge for only a pound). It was good that they had this number of people, as it was the end of March, the weather was gloomy, and the hotel didn't seem able to heat up the function rooms properly; it was only when rooms were full (a common occurrence) that they got comfortably warm (the worst thing about the hotel).

All the panels tended to be quite high quality, stuffed with authors, editors, critics, and whoever, maybe because people don't have as far to go to get there as in North America. The Arthur C. Clarke Memorial panel had not only the editor of *Foundation*, but a man who had been Clarke's personal secretary for a few years.

There was very little costuming compared to cons here (and they allowed over-long skits in the Masquerade, if you ask me); there was no con suite or room parties, but they did have three convention bars set up, on top of the two hotel bars, so it was no problem finding places to hang out in the evening (although people did seem to think there weren't enough varieties of beer available). Oh, and Saturday night convention dances are the same everywhere it seems.

Personal Highlights include:

China Meiville's anger with the ongoing "war on children" in the UK, from the wide-spread use of "Anti-Social Behaviour Orders" to restrict the freedoms of minors for crimes as small as playing music too loud, to the re-writing of Enid Blyton books to remove any of the cheeky bits and the "rude" names of the major characters (Fanny is now Franny).

I got a heck of a scare during the opening ceremonies when they were listing

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SOL RISING
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Special Notes

MEMBERSHIPS MAKE EXCELLENT GIFTS!

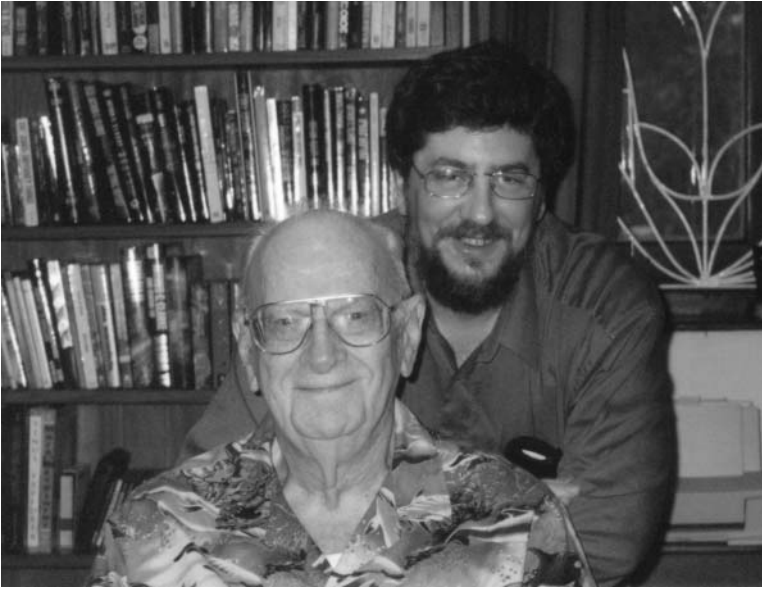
Memberships in the Friends of the Merrill Collection now run between January 1 and December 31. This change in the membership year makes a membership in the Friends of the Merrill Collection a perfect stocking stuffer! Just copy the form on the back of this newsletter and send it to the address shown 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 Merrill 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?

Rendezvous with Arthur

By Michael Lennick



Michael Lennick (background) poses with Arthur C. Clarke. Photograph courtesy of Mr. Lennick.

For those of us lucky enough to be kids or young adults in the middle years of the 20th Century, the future was bright and well-defined. As American astronauts and their Soviet counterparts blazed trails towards the moon and beyond, iconic years like 2000 and 2001 flared on the horizon in a compelling mirage - the shiny spot down the road where the future we'd been reading about all our lives would truly kick in. Clues to this exciting new era came from scientist/writers like Wernher von Braun and Willy Ley, but my favorite speculations could be found in the works of Arthur C. Clarke, a brilliant storyteller who wrote like a journalist — as though the utterly-plausible yarns he was spinning had already taken place, and he'd been there to bear witness. Every tale seemed to take you on your own personal tour of the future via that rare emissary who was actually in the know

— a guide who not only let you share in the possibilities, but in his spare time was helping to bring them about. (Which was not far from the truth, given his lifelong membership in the British Interplanetary Society and important wartime role in the early deployment of Radar, not to mention a certain 1945 paper describing the geosynchronous communication satellites underpinning so much of today's technology, culture and civilization.) Arthur was first and foremost a wonderful entertainer, but his stories, even the most lighthearted ones, had genuine mass, impacting with the force of a Chesley Bonestell painting (for those of a certain generation) or the first images from an interplanetary probe (for those of another.) His writings filled our heads, dreams and aspirations from childhood on. They're in there still.

Meeting so influential a hero can be more than a little intimidating, but when the opportunity presents itself, you jump. And so it was in the fall of the year 2000, that my wife (and co-producer) Shirley and I journeyed to Sri Lanka in order to interview Arthur C. Clarke for a Discovery Channel documentary on the making of his and Stanley Kubrick's masterpiece, *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

It was a project I'd been dreaming about, one way or another, since the spring of 1968 when our neighborhood grindhouse, the Glendale Theater, finally justified its recent conversion to Cinerama by locking in *2001: A Space Odyssey* for what would be its longest first-release continuous run in the world; nearly three years. I was there for at least 50 Saturday matinees and even the odd evening show — whenever I could goad a friend outfitted with wallet-bearing parents — eighth row back dead center. Thus it felt a bit like a jump-cut thirty-plus years into the future when I found myself convincing the program director of the Canadian Discovery Channel that he should invest in a far costlier ticket — a one-hour special exploring the creation of (and the ideas underlying) Kubrick and Clarke's extraordinary film. Network heads agreed, conditional on an unusually tight deadline. Our next Discovery Channel special, *2001 and Beyond*, would premiere on the fifth of January, 2001 — less than three months away.

So Shirley and I were headed for Sri Lanka — or, with luck, soon would be. There was one other issue to resolve: Stanley Kubrick had died unexpectedly only a few months earlier, making a proper retrospective that

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much more elusive, while transforming our deal with Discovery into one also conditional on an interview with Arthur C. Clarke, a man I had never met nor corresponded with. Knowing how often those of us who dance in the documentary minefields have to advance reality ever so slightly (some might say lie) in order to get a tricky project rolling, I assured my good friends at Discovery that Sir Arthur was already in the bag.

The great Canadian science-fiction writer (and longtime friend) Robert J. Sawyer was kind enough to provide Arthur's fax number in Sri Lanka. That evening I nervously transmitted one of the most important letters of my career. Arthur responded quickly, providing a mailing address so he could view some of our previous work. A few weeks later we were chatting by email as though we'd known each other for years. (I've since been told by those far closer to Arthur than I that this was a common sensation — if you had his attention he would treat you as the most important person on the planet.) Arthur pointed out what we already knew, that he hadn't left his adopted home of Sri Lanka for well over a decade, and had no further plans to do so. If we wanted to interview him on camera we could either do so via satellite, or meet him at his home. Shirley and I immediately opted for the latter, despite Arthur's warnings that this was an election year on his troubled island, and perhaps not the safest time to travel.



2001 remains one of Arthur C. Clarke's best known works

Two weeks and thirty-three in-transit hours later we found ourselves in the rear of an ancient, incredibly vulnerable taxicab, hurtling through the teeming cacophony that is downtown Colombo. The single front seat was the purview of our warm and friendly doctor/cabbie Sanjeewa (though he insisted we call him Sammy), who spent most of his time with head twisted towards the rear, filling us in on the local customs, even as several of them flew past us in a 60 mph blur.

Arthur C. Clarke was a huge cultural and scientific presence in the capital of his adopted island home — a fact repeatedly verified as Sammy drove us past some of the buildings and institutes named for him. (It was near his statue in the lobby of our hotel, the venerable old Galle Face, that the concierge advised us there'd be no need to tell our cabbie the address — everyone knew where Mr. Arthur lived.)

That first journey to Arthur's mid-city compound took less than twenty minutes, regularly punctuated by soldiers pulling us over to check our ID (their M-16 rifles poking through the rear windows), or the occasional burst of AK-47 fire a block or two over. The first time that happened we asked Sammy what was going on. He leaned back, smiled conspiratorially and whispered, "Campaigning."

Colombo is one of those cities that can rapidly overwhelm you with your own sense of unworldliness, as your tiny, hollow projectile careens past cars, trucks, oxen, those ubiquitous Southern Asian scooter/van combinations called tuk-tuks, and even the occasional elephant carrying a huge teak log in his trunk. Between answering our questions and peppering us with hundreds of his own about life in North America, Sammy would frequently determine that we could be going faster, yanking the wheel hard-left to slam us out into the minimally-defined opposing lanes of traffic. We soon recognized a sort of telepathy in play, as Sammy and the driver of whatever vehicle we were now hurtling towards would calculate the precise moment their game of chicken would turn deadly, deeking back into their proper lanes just before impact. We quickly surrendered to the reality that there was nothing Shirley and I could do from the rear seat to ensure our survival, so our best and only option was to sit back and enjoy the movie unspooling through the windshield, complacent in the surety that neither we nor anyone we knew could drive this course without years of training.

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The Clarke estate was a modest yet very beautiful compound whose car park separated two near-identical white houses — one residential, the other containing facilities for a small staff, as well as Arthur’s work environment. The walk down the length of his office was one of the longest of my life, past rows upon rows of floor-to-ceiling bookshelves filled with editions of his works in all the many languages they’d appeared. Arthur extended his hand as I approach his desk, and though I struggled to cough up the cleverest remark I or anyone else had ever uttered, I’m afraid what emerged was closer to “I’ve traveled a very long way for this moment”. Arthur immediately tried to put me at ease. “Yes, it’s lovely to finally meet you too. I do hope you haven’t come all this way to ask me about 2001”. As I stood there, trying in vain to draft a response to this unexpected (and unnerving) introduction, he smiled his twinkly smile, adding, “I’m pretty sure it’s the only year I’m fated to have to live through twice.”

And that was that. We were off on one of the most delightful and awe-inspiring conversations of my life — an experience not unlike finding an unread Arthur C. Clarke novel, only in real time. Arthur suffered from Post-Polio Syndrome and was largely confined to a wheelchair (though he played a truly intimidating game of Ping Pong when braced against the table), so he could only speak on camera for brief intervals. Of necessity our interview stretched out over the better part of a week — which was certainly fine with me. Our topics ranged from technology to spirituality (both of which he supported in their appropriate roles, though he had scant patience for religion), along with a heavy dose of social commentary, all delivered with his trademark wit. I soon learned that he hadn’t been kidding at our first meeting. As much as Arthur admired Kubrick and his work, he still held a few reservations about the final version of the film they’d crafted together, (most of which can be found in his book *The Last Worlds of 2001*, as well as his subsequent novels *2010: The Second Odyssey*, *2061: The Third Odyssey*, *3001: The Final Odyssey*, and, of course, his original 1968 novel *2001: A Space Odyssey* — the book we all rushed home to read way back when, if only to discover what the movie was about.) Ever the gentleman, Arthur didn’t want to denigrate Kubrick or the film in any way — in fact he strove to avoid the topic. Still, mandates are mandates, especially at the network level, which meant I often found myself asking a related question about a design or description in Arthur’s screenplay, whenever the conversation veered in close enough. (“So am I correct in assuming that the nuclear pulse rocket the British Interplanetary Society had contemplated would have come in very handy years later while you and Stanley were evaluating propulsion solutions for your interplanetary spacecraft *Discovery*....?”) Arthur always knew exactly where I was going. He would smile, roll his eyes, and then provide the wisest, most thorough answer imaginable. Every one of those comments made it into our film *2001 and Beyond*. All we had to do was cut in right after he finished rolling those sharp, twinkling, incredibly thoughtful eyes.

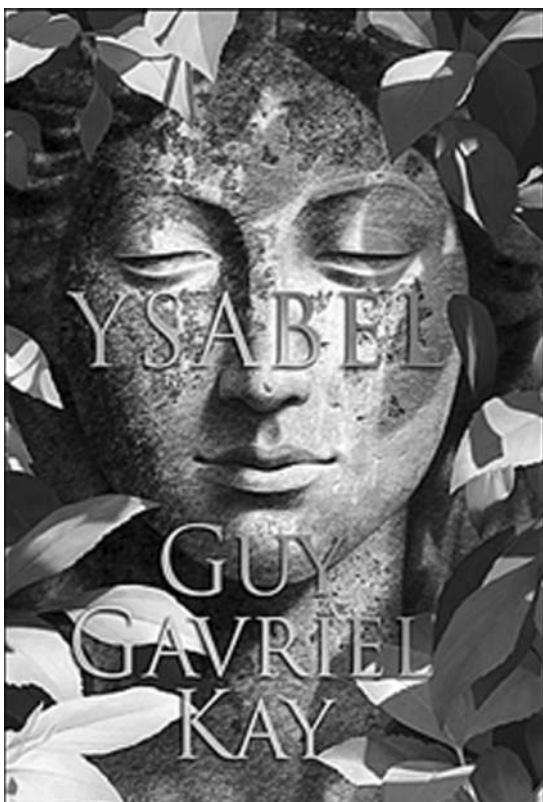
Arthur and I corresponded for many years thereafter — a distant relationship with a much-beloved acquaintance whose recent passing has left a hole in my life I could not have anticipated. Our libraries may hold his stories, his ideas, but there will be no more forthcoming. And dammit, there was still so much to talk about. As I write this it’s mid-April, 2008, and we’ve just learned from the director of Spaceport America that the good citizens of New Mexico, against all expectations, have overwhelmingly approved a new tax bill that will allow the world’s first commercial/civilian spaceport to be born — not too far down the road from the parched desert sands where Robert Goddard launched America, and the world, into the Space Age. The classic dreams Arthur first wrote about in the 1940s are finally coming to pass, just as he always knew they would. What a shame he’s not here to see it, let alone take that first ride.

MICHAEL LENNICK has written and directed documentary series and specials for the Discovery Channel, PBS and others. His films, articles and books on the on-going story of humanity’s adventures in space can be found at www.foolishearthling.com.

Guy Gavriel Kay at the Beaches

By Joseph Halpern

At the Beaches branch (one of the Toronto Public Library's historical sites) one of Canada's top fantasy authors, Guy Gavriel Kay was there to speak and read from his novel *Ysabel*, as well to read from and promote his first poetry collection, *Beyond This Dark House*. Upon entering the room the first thing you saw was a man sitting in a lone chair, quiet and unassuming with a short beard sitting and waiting patiently. He was informative, funny at times, as well as occasionally telling an intriguing anecdote. His readings were quiet and well rehearsed without being over dramatic and were usually preceded with a joke about google or the irony behind the poetry editor of his new book.



Ysabel by Guy Gavriel Kay. Cover by Greg Banning & Lisa Jager

drawings on the walls. After a warm talk and two fantastic readings he did a Q & A and talked about his research, spending time in the south of France; and a woman said some heartwarming words about how his books changed her life which quite overwhelmed him. And last but not least was the signing; Bakka-Phoenix was there to sell books and Guy signed everyone's new or old (in some cases very old) books and even signed a copy of *Ysabel* for my school's library.

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received only positive feedback we thought we'd try something new. The response from those attending was extremely positive as was that from the dealers themselves. The tours of The Merrill Collection are always a popular attraction and this year was no different. Some have a genuine curiosity about what the collection actually contains; others are hoping to view something especially rare and/or valuable. They're the ones most likely to ignore, or somehow fail to hear, the "look but don't touch" warning.

Looking after my tables each year keeps me so busy that I've yet to be able to attend the slide show on the pulps put on by Neil Mechem. I'm always being told what a great show it is, and how much fun it is for the audience. Oh well, maybe next year. Finally I must give thanks to Lorna and the entire Merrill staff, the Friends Executive, John Anderson, Jim Pattison and everyone else who helps make this show possible.

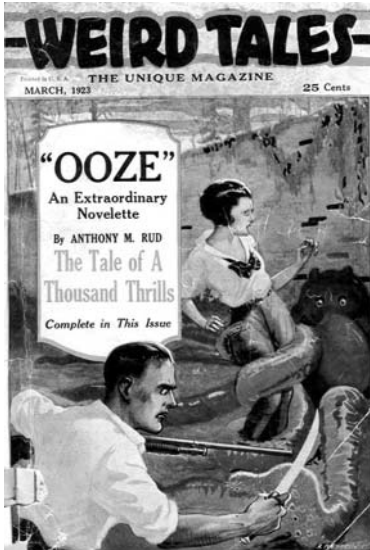
Before reading from his latest novel, *Ysabel*, he joked about how writing it was just an excuse to visit the South of France, as well as about wanting to always use the line 'google is my midnight lover' in a book. His reading was extremely impressive, as well as the telling of how he does his research.

He read a poem from his first and latest poetry collection *Beyond This Dark House* inspired by works of myth and fantasy. The poem he read was about heroes and how their lives changed after their epic battles. A wonderful poem that showed his versatility as an author, he also talked about writing dozens of poems as a teen and passing them around to friends and reading theirs. And before he read his poem he talked about one of his favourite professors who taught him a great deal about poetry and how disappointed he was that he hadn't seen him in a while and eventually lost contact with him. When Guy eventually decided to write a poetry collection there were no editors at the publishing house except for one freelance poetry editor who had recently started and was getting good reviews; it turned out that editor was Guy Gavriel Kay's long, lost professor. Needless to say, they had a lot of fun catching up.

The event was a complete success, held in the first floor of the Beaches branch library where one can't help noticing the children's

Why The Heck *Weird Tales*?

By Andrew Specht



The cover to the first *Weird Tales* issue. Cover by R.R. Epperly

Back in 1924, an uncredited author (most likely Otis Adelbert Kline) wrote a now legendary article, ‘Why *Weird Tales*?’ It was an attempt to boil down to so many words why the fledgling magazine was so important to the type of reader they were catering to, the early fan of ‘weird fiction,’ i.e. dark fantasy and horror and that ilk. Those words were far more important than anyone may have suspected, for though the magazine went into hiatus at that point it was still (barely) able to come back almost a half year later. Remember, *Weird Tales* was it; *Amazing* was still around the corner, as was every other magazine that would give *WT* a run for its money.

Over the years I’ve managed to acquire a reasonably good-sized collection of *Weird Tales* in — above average shape — average shape being anything from ‘so-so’ to ‘the dust of ages.’ There’s an incident that was related to me by a fellow *Weird Tales* fan, of a dealer jokingly selling a bag of slow fire (pulp paper badly decayed from the acid content) as a rare *Weird Tales* #1. Recently I got into a rather nasty profanity-provoking eBay auction to acquire a particularly hard-to-get issue. As always, when attempting to convey one’s enthusiasm for such things to the uninitiated (of whom I do know a few) it’s a bit hard to get past the looks of “so?”. This

article is for them.

Weird Tales started in early 1923 as an attempt to gather together in one place for the first time a monthly sampling of what the publishers would call “weird fiction” (fiction of the unusual and occult usually of a supernatural, sometimes a scientific nature, best exemplified to that time by the works of Edgar Allen Poe). The magazine was created by publisher J.C. Henneberger (most likely with the assistance of the above-mentioned Mr. Kline — there shall be more of him later.) The first editor was Edwin Baird, whose issues introduced both H.P. Lovecraft and Seabury Quinn. Unfortunately, though he certainly had an eye for talent, he knew precious little about actually running a magazine. Thus after a scant 13 issues (the last being an enormous number combining the May, June and July issues), *Weird Tales* seemed doomed to go down before making its mark on genre fiction history.

Henneberger, however, by selling a couple of his more lucrative titles, was able to rescue the magazine and months later, under the guidance of new editor Farnsworth Wright, *Weird Tales* was set to enter its golden age. At first things were a bit slow going and Wright would often resort to reprints of classic material (works by Wells, Verne, LeFanu etc... he once got into huge #%^ with the fans over running *Frankenstein* in serial form over more than a half dozen issues). Still, Wright was a much cannier business-person than Baird had been: he was pickier about who got in the magazine, thereby weeding out authors whose work might seem too similar, and as the 1920s drew to a close he had brought on board two more of the magazine’s legendary writers: Robert E. Howard and Clark Ashton Smith (to say nothing of Frank Belknap Long, August Derleth, Jack Williamson, and Edmund Hamilton, amongst others).

The early 1930s saw a number of pulps fold, yet *Weird Tales* seemed to continue to chug along like the lil’ engine that could. Part of what saved *WT* were the stories of Otis Kline, who was the premier Edgar Rice Burroughs imitator. Wright knew that along with stories by Quinn, Howard and Smith*, if he placed an Otis Kline serial over three or so issues they were sure to sell (Kline was the only *WT* writer at the time getting his fiction published in hardcover). Another marketing coup of Wright’s was the discovery of a young Chicago fashion illustrator named

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*and occasionally Lovecraft — Wright seemed to be particularly picky about what he’d accept from him, to the point that in later years HPL would refer in letters to “that bozo Wright.”

Cory Doctorow at the Merrill

By Joseph Halpern



Cory poses with Collection Head Lorna Toolis (right) and Dot Lin. Photo by Andrew Specht

Recently Cory Doctorow was at the Toronto Public Library's grand science fiction and fantasy collection, the Merrill Collection which is ironic because Mr. Doctorow is quite the fan of Judith Merrill and mentioned her at the reading and in the acknowledgements for his latest novel *Little Brother*. Cory is probably one of the most interesting authors not just for his books but for his views and his interesting yet seemingly random blog. He talked about the paranoia of the Department of Homeland Security, and other insanities including Canadians being fingerprinted at the airport, and Scotland Yard detectives profiling five year olds. He was an energetic and charismatic speaker, talking about the sci-fi community, the cyberpunk movement including hackers (which are the subject of his latest book), as well as his greatest influence, his parents. Cory entertained us

with stories of insane drivers in England, and life with his family. The place was packed with tech bloggers and people who called themselves cypherpunks, comic book artists, a couple of teens, and even the founder of Anime North. It was filled ceiling to floor with hackers, sci-fi nerds, and geeks (I'm not being mean - there was a guy with the word geek on the back of his shirt); for any fan of Cory and his works, this place was home.

Thanks to his publicist, Dot Lin, I was able to get a short interview with the man before his reading and unfortunately for yours truly I didn't have a tape recorder so it was good old pen and paper for me, so this interview isn't exactly to quote but he did have some great lines that I asked him to repeat and he was kind enough to do it. Also he had the coolest silver rings including one that looked like a beetle. So here it is:

Joseph: Do you think there is a community within the sci-fi genre?

Cory: Yeah. Fandom goes back to the 1930s with fanzines. Some of the new aspects of fandom in the sci-fi community are things like San Diego Comic Con, larping, cosplay, and dojinshi.

Joseph: How do you balance writing novels with your highly successful blog boingboing.net?

Cory: Novels are synthesis of shorter pieces that were featured in the blogs. Blogs let you remember them. Blogs are pieces of a puzzle that don't quite fit. Writers have all kept commonplace books where they keep notes and blogs are an updated version.

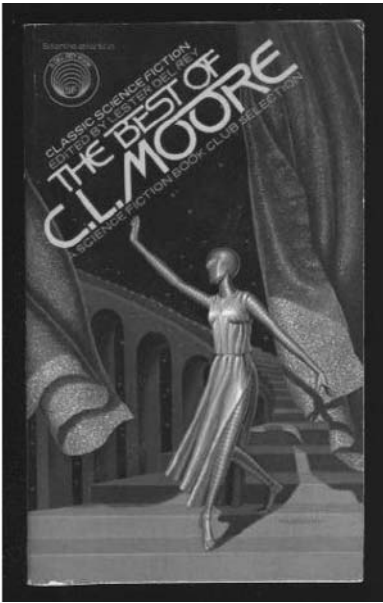
Joseph: Which authors inspired you and why?

Cory: Daniel Pinkwater and his book *Alan Mendelsohn, the Boy from Mars*. Bruce Sterling and the way he synthesizes technology and information. Rudy Ruckers, Kathe Koja who started out writing these vividly written horror novels in a horror genre known as splatter punk and later she started writing novels for teens and that was one of the things that inspired me to write a YA book. Scott Westerfeld and his wife Australian fantasy author Justine

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Margaret Brundage (known to some fans as Margaret Bondage) whose regular markets had dried up and who was trying to get work just about anywhere. Brundage's covers are, along with those of J. Allen St. John and Virgil Finlay, some of the most beautiful fantasy art ever created, for pulp magazines or otherwise. Usually depicting beautiful women in conflict, jeopardy, restraint, you name it, they were done with delicate pastels on ridiculously thin paper. Brundage had to design an elaborate box in order to protect her fragile masterpieces on the arduous trip across town, and once there no one dared sneeze while appraising them before they were sent to be photographed. At this time I'd be surprised if more than half a dozen originals are still in existence.



The Best of C. L. Moore collects many of her best known stories from *Weird Tales*.

The '30s would produce the issues from which the bulk of reprint material is still being taken today (mostly works by Smith, Lovecraft, and Howard) and would also unleash future titans in the field like Robert Bloch, Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore ("Shamblau") as well as more stories by Edmund Hamilton and Jack Williamson. However, by the end of the decade Robert Howard had committed suicide, Lovecraft was dead of intestinal cancer and Clark Ashton Smith had all but given up fiction writing. There was still Seabury Quinn's supernatural detective Jules De Grandin, as well as a strong selection of the magazine's second-tier writers. Hamilton and Williamson had been lured by bigger pay to other magazines, and Wright had gotten a reputation for not paying writers on time (at the time of his death, R. E. Howard was owed close to \$1,500). Wright's tenure on the magazine would end early in the 1940s (he'd suffered from Parkinson's the whole time he worked for *WT*) and he'd be replaced by Dorothy McIlwraith. Head offices would move to New York from Chicago — this would also end Margaret Brundage's hold on the cover spot; when it rains, it pours.

In 1939, a movement to preserve the works of various weird writers (starting with H. P. Lovecraft) would launch the legendary Arkham House publishers, the first imprint dedicated to fantastic fiction. Over time this would open up markets to other publishers of science fiction and fantasy. A slowly growing paperback market would undermine the pulps as a source of cheap reading material. By 1941, *Weird Tales* had dropped its price from a quarter to fifteen cents, and had gone from monthly to bi-monthly. Despite its first-time printing of Lovecraft's 'The Case of Charles Dexter Ward,' *Weird Tales'* golden age was well over. Still, one pivotal moment in the magazine's history was yet to come.

In 1943 a young Wisconsin author named Ray Bradbury started submitting a number of very atypical (for *Weird Tales* and just about any other magazine of the period) stories with titles like 'The Lake,' 'The Skeleton,' 'The Wind,' 'The Crowd,' and so on... Although these were far from conventional *WT* fare (and the contents had gotten a fair bit stale and conventional by this time) the magazine published them to rave reviews. After about four years, Bradbury would walk away from the weird tale to focus more on his allegorical space operas such as *The Martian Chronicles*. *WT* sales would continue to decline in the late '40s and by 1953 the magazine went to digest size. Along the way there had been stories by Richard Matheson, Fritz Lieber, even Isaac Asimov. Edmund Hamilton had even come back briefly to pen a few stories. But for all intents and purposes, by 1954 the magazine was gone, though several attempts have been made over the years to revive it. The current run does no justice to the original — recently they even replaced the classic J. Allen St. John-designed logo with a disaster that looks like it was done by a kindergartener.

For those of you wishing to learn more about *Weird Tales* (and I hope with this article I've piqued your interest): the Merrill Collection has an extensive collection (putting it mildly) of pulp magazines, amongst which is an amaz-

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the people the sf community had lost in the preceding year, and they mentioned Ray Bradbury, but it was a British sf fan of the same name.

I got into the Coffee Talk session with Charlie Stross (along with seven other lucky guys) and got to really chat with him. He was warned that his sf cop novel *Halting States* would be of interest only to people obsessed with Slashdot, but fortunately his publishers underestimated how many people that was. His next book concerns a sex robot created six months after the human race has gone extinct, so she having a bit of a crisis concerning her role in the world.

The “Mysterious London” panel with Neil Gaiman was great. While he has mixed feelings about the *Neverwhere* TV mini, he loved the making of it. Apparently saying you’re with the BBC gets you in anywhere in London.

Unfortunately, while he likes Toronto “lovely city, good restaurants and bookshops,” it lacks the magic of cities like New York and London where anything can be imagined to happen. “No one ever thought ‘Let’s see the dark side of human nature — Toronto!’”

At Neil’s GoH talk he read (eventually - there was a initial problem with the printouts in his hand containing gibberish) from his new novel, *The Cemetery Book*, which is *The Jungle Book* only the hero is raised in a cemetery by ghosts. He first got the idea for it in his twenties, started writing it, and decided he wasn’t good enough yet. Did *Sandman*, decided to try again, decided he wasn’t good enough yet. Did *American Gods*, decided to try again, decided he wasn’t good enough yet. He’s writing it now, but not because he thinks he’s good enough, but because he knows he’s not getting any better.

I had never read any Tanith Lee, but after her GoH speech I got several of her books from the Dealers Room. A very intelligent woman, passionate in her beliefs and interests (and she wrote two *Blake’s 7* scripts!).

Hey, video room guy? If you bring to the con a VHS tape you haven’t played in *sixteen years*, maybe you shouldn’t be surprised when it gums up the heads.

I took the Monday of the con off to do some sightseeing, although I am sorry now that I missed the Closing Ceremonies, which apparently featured a gigantic stuffed pig that everyone had to pledge fealty to.

It was a lot of fun, and if I happen to be in Britain at the right time again, I’m certainly going.

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 Merrill event (readings, Xmas Tea, etc), there are a number of small jobs which need to be done (rearrange chairs, pick up catered snacks, etc.)

* **Man the Tables!:** Help staff the Merrill 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 Merrill 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.

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ing selection of *Weird Tales*, and if you're very nice they will let you look at some. Once that's happened and you get the bug, the next step is to get some *Weird Tales* for your very own: for those on a budget I recommend the fine folks at Girasol Collectables, who have an assortment of facsimile editions of *WT* (as well as its short-lived sister magazine *Oriental Stories/The Magic Carpet*). Just look up their site, it's quite cool; they may even get you hooked enough to sell you some originals. The Merril Collection hosts an annual pulp show and sale every spring, where you can find a number of dealers selling *Weird Tales* from various years as well as a whole lot more neat stuff! Here as well is a short list of books that have *WT* stories in them:

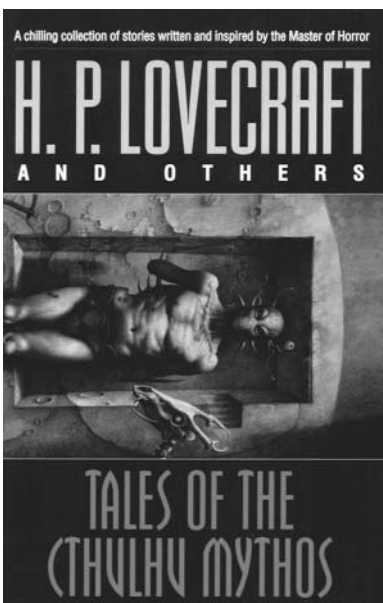
Weird Tales: 32 Unearthed Horrors

Contains one story from each year that the magazine was published; the best overview of the magazine's authors and styles.

Weird Tales. edited by Peter Hainning.

A collection in facsimile of stories from the magazine including some ads and miscellany.

Weird Tales: The Magazine That Will Not Die . Edited by Marvin Kaye



Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos contains many famous Lovecraft stories from *Weird Tales*

Arkham House's Masters of Horror. Edited by Peter Rubber

A great collection with a number of *WT* authors, as well as short essays accompanying their stories.

Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Either in the deluxe illustrated edition from Arkham House or in trade from Del Rey, this has Robert E. Howard, H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith as well as Frank Belknap Long, August Derleth, Robert Bloch, Henry Kuttner and others

The Best of C. L. Moore

Contains a number of her best stories from *WT*.

The Best of Edmund Hamilton.

More Hamilton can be found in *The Vampire Master and Others* from Haffner press. Haffner also offers *The Collected Jack Williamson* - includes a number of his *WT* contributions

For those wanting stories by the three musketeers of *Weird Tales* (Robert E. Howard, H.P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith) here is a short list of suggestions:

Robert E. Howard

The Weird Writings of Robert E. Howard, Vols 1 & 2 - Girasol Collectables

The Robert E. Howard Library of Illustrated Classics from Del Rey - a number of these can be gotten from the fine folks at Bakka Books at 697 Queen St W Tel :416-963-9993

H.P. Lovecraft

The Arkham house editions of *Lovecraft: The Dunwich Horror and Others; Dagon and Other Macabre Tales; At the*

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Mountains of Madness and Other Novels. The Penguin editions of: *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*; *The Thing On the Doorstep and Other Weird Stories*; *The Dream in the Witch House and Other Weird Stories*.

Clark Ashton Smith

A Rendezvous in Averroigne, Arkham House.

Out of Time and Space; *Lost Worlds* - both from Bison Books.

The Emperor of Dreams

For an extensive history of *Weird Tales*, there's *The Weird Tales Story*, by Robert Weinberg, available from Wildside Press. Happy Weiriding!

Andrew Specht, reporting from eldritch West Toronto

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Larbalestier (Cory especially liked the fact that her last name that meant the one who holds the crossbow or something like, that, but this fact seemed to really amuse him). Another reason Cory wanted to write a YA book is because when adults are reading a book they just read a book but when teens read a book they take it more seriously - it's how they come to understand the world.

Canada Council Grant Funds Science Fiction reading series

By Lorna Toolis

The Toronto Public Library kicked off the Canada Council Reading Series on Monday, April 21 in the lower level of the Lillian H. Smith branch at 239 College Street. *Foresight: Speculative Fiction in Canada* introduced Canadian science fiction writers who talked about how they try to extrapolate the future and incorporate it into their fiction. The panel was introduced by Lorna Toolis, as Collection Head of the Merril Collection and moderated by Michael Skeet. It included James Alan Gardner, Peter Watts, and Karl Schroeder.

Insane Rantings from the Editor

By: Sabrina Fried

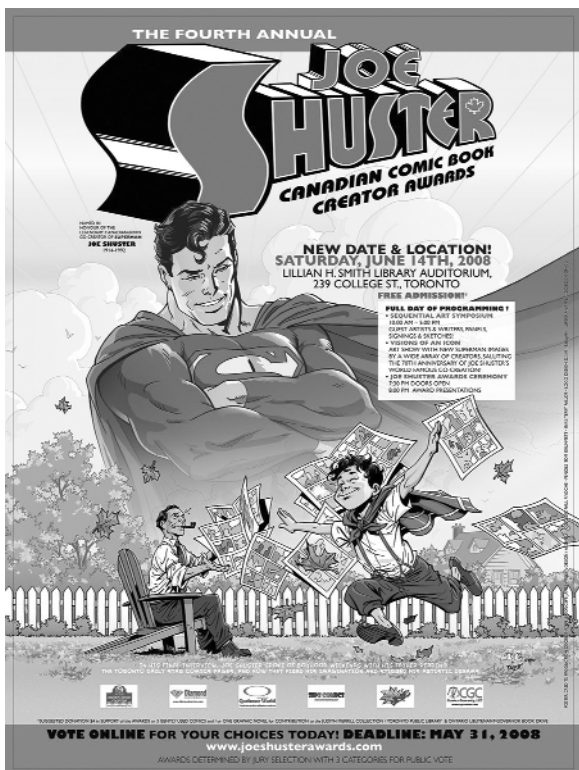
Hello folks! I hope you are enjoying this special, 16-page issue of *Sol Rising*. To coincide with the recent changes to the Friends' membership year, *Sol Rising* will now be published in July and December. This publication is entirely submission-driven, so if future submissions warrant, the increased page-count will become a permanent fixture. Which is a very polite way of saying get writing and send me stuff!

I am pleased to announce that *Sol Rising* now has its very own email address. All queries, articles, photographs, illustrations and anything else related to *Sol Rising* can now be sent to solrising.editor@gmail.com.

By popular demand, we will be formalizing our submission policy in the near future and posting it to the Friends of the Merril website. Until then, just drop me a note if you have any questions about submitting anything to *Sol Rising*. On that note, our next issue will arrive in time for the Christmas Cream Tea in December. The absolute latest you can submit anything for that issue is October 31. Space for the December issue is already filling up, so the sooner you submit, the more likely it is that your item will be published.

The Joe Shuster Awards Awarded at the Lillian Smith

Editor's Note: The following article is press copy provided to Sol Rising by the Canadian Comic Book Creator Awards Association and has been reprinted in its original form.



The 2008 Joe Schuster awards were held at the Lillian Smith on June 14 shortly before Sol Rising went to press.

The **JOE SHUSTER CANADIAN COMIC BOOK CREATOR AWARDS** are proud to be holding their event this year at the **Lillian Smith Library Auditorium** on **Saturday, June 14th** with the generous support and advice of **Lorna Toolis** and her associates in the **Judith Merrill Collection** along with the rest of dedicated library staff.

Canada's first national award recognizing outstanding achievements by Canadian creators in the creation and publication of comic books and graphic novels returns in 2008 for its fourth year: the Joe Shuster Canadian Comic Book Creator Awards, named after pioneering Toronto-born artist Joe Shuster who, along with writer Jerry Siegel, created the iconic super-powered hero, Superman.

From coast to coast, Canada is home to many of the comic book industry's top talents. The Joe Shuster Awards are a way of recognizing and celebrating the achievements of Canadian creators - past, present and future.

The Joe Shuster Award presentations will kick off in the evening at 8PM and will be preceded by a day long **SEQUENTIAL ART SYMPOSIUM** which, along with the awards, are free

to the public. The symposium will run from 10AM to 5PM and include participants such as Darwyn Cooke, Tom Grummett, Cecil Castellucci; Francis Manapul and John Bell (Invaders from the North) and will feature panel discussions, signings and sketches. The symposium will be accompanied by an exhibit of artwork by Canadian comic book artists to salute the historic 70th anniversary of the publication of Joe Shuster's renowned co-creation, Superman, in June 1938's Action Comics # 1. The exhibit, entitled **VISIONS OF AN ICON**, will include original images of the Man of Steel by Canadian artists, including Darwyn Cooke, Dave Sim, Ty Templeton, Todd McFarlane and a vast array of additional creators. The awards ceremony will be co-hosted by our returning master-of-ceremonies dynamic duo, Rick Green (the Frantics; the Red Green Show & History Bites) and Rob Salem (Toronto Star & Drive-In TV) and, as always, will be an evening to remember.

The first and most widely recognized national achievement award for Canadians working on comic books, graphic novels and webcomics, the Joe Shuster Awards were established in 2004 and first presented in April 2005. The awards are named after Joe Shuster, the Canadian-born co-creator of Superman, and are named as such with permission of his estate. The Joe Shuster Awards honour the people who create comics, publish comics and sell comics.

Creator nominees are nominated for their body of work during the previous calendar year, not just for one specific work. Winners are selected by jury vote to ensure that works are given adequate consideration. There are

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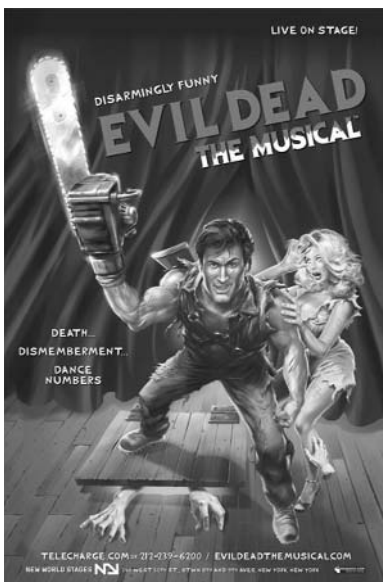
three additional popular vote awards: Favourite English Canadian comic book creator, Favourite French Canadian comic book creator and Favourite International (non-Canadian) comic book creator and voting in these categories is done on-line.

Hall of Fame and Retailer Awards are selected by individual committees after a review and discussion of eligible candidates.

The Joe Shuster Awards are run by the Canadian Comic Book Creator Awards Association, a not-for-profit organization, and for more updates on our event please visit our website at www.joeshusterawards.com.

Fantastic Music Comes To Toronto

By: Sabrina Fried



The Evil Dead musical has had two engagements in Toronto so far.

In February, I attended the first orchestral performance I have been to since I was dragged to a TSO performance with my music class in my first year of high school. A lonely looking electric guitar sat at one end of the stage, as though the stage crew had left it there because they weren't entirely sure if it was going to be used during the night's performance. As the house lights dimmed, the musicians filed in, resplendent in tuxes and formalwear that made me feel hopelessly underdressed even though I was wearing my job-interview best.

With great reverence, the conductor guided the musicians through time-honoured arrangements from world-renowned composers such as Koji Kondo and Nobuo Uematsu. And then, just as curiosity was getting the better of me, a musician in faded jeans and a tour shirt finally picked up the guitar and joined in to the performance of the most famous song to come out of the *Final Fantasy* series of video games, "One Winged Angel."

Yes, that's right. This concert was by Video Games Live, a touring performance devoted to the best music the gaming world has to offer.

Orchestral music is no longer the sole domain of the Classical greats like Mozart or Beethoven, or new age composers. The Toronto Symphony Orchestra performed a concert of music from *Star Trek* in June, hosted by John de Lancie (Q) and Robert Picardo (The Doctor). The *Trek* concert is modeled after one the TSO did in 2005 to perform music from the *Star Wars* movies. Video Games Live's sold-out show was so well received that they returned to the city this year to perform a free show at Yonge-Dundas Square on the same night as the TSO's performance. Many modern classics from the soundtracks of movies, television shows and video games are heavily influenced by the music of the classical greats, and the musicians of the city hope that by embracing such unusual arrangements, they can introduce fans of the new media to the classical arts.

Toronto is quickly becoming one of the premiere destinations for such performances. *Evil Dead: The Musical* began a return engagement at the Diesel Playhouse in June, and *Play!* another concert devoted to video game music was most recently in the city in 2006. That same year, Toronto hosted a musical based on the *Lord of the Rings*. Sadly this musical was not well received and closed early. What is important to note about these musicals and the orchestral concerts springing up all around town is that although they are well attended by longtime fans, great effort is made to make them appealing to the newcomer as well. Good music is still good music, regardless of whether it was penned by a composer who has been dead for 500 years, or one writing lyrics for a 500-year old demon.

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 and related materials in North America.

The Friends support the collection through the publication of *Sol Rising*,

providing the Collection with volunteers, 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/membership 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.

\$ _____