

# SOL RISING

Summer 2009

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

**SOL RISING**  
Friends of the Merrill Collection  
Number 40, Summer 2009

## Inside

### Articles

- 2 13 Not Unlucky for the Fantastic Pulp Show & Sale
- 5 Meet a Merrill Staffer: Kim Hull
- 5 A New Gadget for the Friends
- 6 Starlog Stops the Presses
- 7 J.G. Ballard: Writer whose dystopian visions helped shape our view of the modern world
- 10 The Genre Films of Stanley Kubrick
- 14 Chester Cuthbert Remembered
- 15 Toronto's Tomorrows

### Info Bits

- 3 Donations and Special Thanks
- 3 A Call for Book Donations
- 3 Reach Us
- 13 Volunteers Needed
- 15 Things To Come
- 16 Membership and Renewal



Merril Collection cataloguer Kim Hull poses with the title poster for her latest curated display "Biblio Baubles: Rare Book Treasures of the Merrill Collection." Meet Kim in our Meet a Merrill Staffer feature on page 5. And for a quick taste of the display she is working on right now, turn to page 15. Photo by Andrew Specht.

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ISSN: 1199-2123

# 13 Not Unlucky for the Fantastic Pulp Show & Sale

By Jamie Fraser

Although the number 13 is usually associated with bad luck it certainly hasn't had any such effect on the longest running and most successful event the Friends of The Merrill Collection have presented. I speak of course of The Fantastic Pulp Show & Sale, held this year on May 9th. After each increasingly successful show I write a piece for *SOL Rising*. This year I thought it would be nice to also have others give their opinions and experiences of the pulp show, starting with Canada's dean of pulp fandom, Don Hutchison:

"When we originated the Toronto pulp show back in 1997 it was something of a shot in the dark. We advertised it as the First Annual Fantastic Pulp & Paper Show in the hope that it would be popular enough to stage a second one. Obviously it was a concept with appeal because here we are in year 13 with the show firmly established as an eagerly-awaited event for fans and collectors of the good old stuff."

As Don says, we were unsure of how the first show would go over, but it turned out to be a complete success. All those who attended were thrilled with the variety of material for sale and the dealers were pleased with their sales. This encouraged us to plan the next show, which was also a big success. And it's been that way ever since, with an exception being the year SARS impacted Toronto.

One of my good friends, and a huge fan of the pulp show, was the late CBC journalist Peter Gallacher. An avid collector of both pulps and pulp reprints, he was able to thoroughly enjoy ten shows before passing away. A frequent visitor to my shop, his usual comments on the shows were:

"I love everything about the pulp show, the dealer room of course, and the slide show is always fun. And I enjoy the auction. It's amazing how exciting it can be to bid on some great pulp. Or watching others go crazy, like that time those rare pulps were being auctioned off. But my favourite part is being able to meet and talk with other people who love the same material that I read and collect."

Although the dealers have changed over the years, they have always been positive

- continued on page 4

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For inquiries please contact above address c/o The Friends of the Merrill Collection

# A Call for Book Donations

The Friends of the Merril are making their triumphant return to Word on the Street this year after a two year absence. By popular demand, the Friends will also be selling bagged and loose books at our table to raise funds for the collection.

We are accepting donations of the following types of used paperback and trade paperback books to sell at Word on the Street. Can't get rid of your old books? We'll do it for you!

- Novels from the science fiction, fantasy, speculation, horror or mystery genres
- Manga or TPB collections of other comics
- Other related books (example: Role playing guides, reference books about science fiction, etc.).

Regrettably we cannot accept donations of any of the following items:

- Hardcover novels
- Textbooks
- Calendar books or other time-sensitive publications
- Children's picture books
- Comic books
- Magazines, newspapers, zines or other periodicals
- Review copies
- "Stripped" books

Donations can be dropped off at the Merril Collection during regular operating hours. Books must be dropped off before September 1st in order to be received in time to be included in the WOTS book sale. For more information please contact Lorna Toolis at [ltoolis@torontopubliclibrary.ca](mailto:ltoolis@torontopubliclibrary.ca).

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## Special Thanks

For gifts in kind the Merril Collection is indebted to Mr. Jim Munroe, Professor Elizabeth Miller, Mr. Don Hutchison, and Mr. Albert Gregory.

The Friends of the Merril Collection wish to thank Mr. Aurel Gillmette for his generous donation.

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## Reach Us

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### Call for Submissions!

Contact Sabrina ([solrising.editor@gmail.com](mailto:solrising.editor@gmail.com)) if you wish to submit articles, essays or art pieces. Be a part of *SOL Rising*, speak out!

**SOL RISING**  
**Friends of the Merril Collection**  
Number 40 Summer 2009

## Special Notes

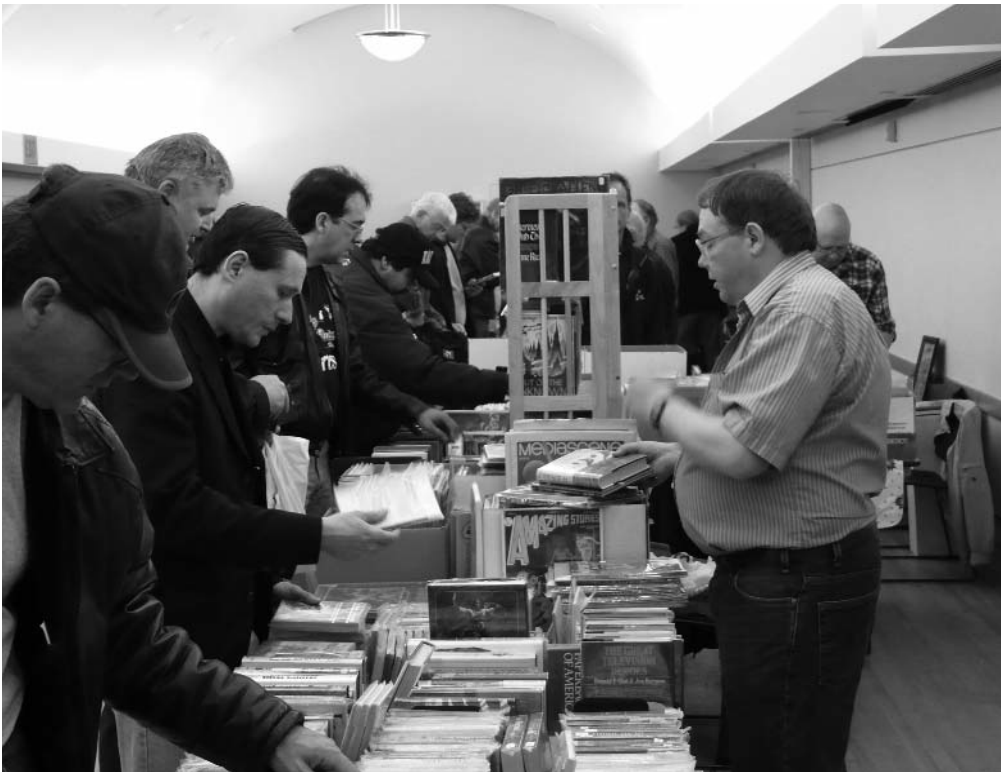
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### MEMBERSHIPS MAKE EXCELLENT GIFTS!

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 receipt for that amount, as do all cash donations over the membership fee. The Toronto Public Library Foundation mails the receipt to you and you claim 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?



Vendor tables at the Pulp show were busy all day and showcased a wide variety of pulps. Photo by Andrew Specht.

in their comments on the show. As an example, Robert Graber always comments: “Of all the shows I do this is by far the most enjoyable. There’s always someone there to help me unload and take the boxes down. You even supply catered food for us, I love doing this show.”

John McCormick says: “This is the most relaxing show; it’s so nice to have someone help you when you arrive. The pulp material is wonderful, the food is great and the dealers are always happy to fill in any holes in my paperback collection.”

Tony Davis remarked that one of his fond memories is when we brought in renowned pulp art collector Robert Lesser: “Bob put on an amazing slide show

and talked about his incredible collection of original pulp art.”

One of my favorite memories is from one of our very first shows. Andrew Specht, a long time “Shadow” and Arthur Conan Doyle fan, came out to the show dressed as The Shadow. Resplendent in a long black cloak, slouch hat and fire-opal ring, he exuded the fierce menace of the most famous of all the pulp heroes.

As the show has evolved over the years so have our efforts to promote it. We still blanket the comic shops, the U of T, and other book shows. The Library now sends out flyers to all of its branches for display, and also to Toronto and Ontario tourism offices. I started contacting genre shops or groups interested in particular collectables unavailable elsewhere. The last two years we had posters displayed at some major malls. This brought in a lot of new people, many of whom have become good customers.

A large number of the show’s attendees are regulars, and while some buy only at the show others are repeat customers who collect year round. I’ve made notes of their comments over the years - a few make me cringe:

“What a great idea for a show, you should have it every year.” (2007!)

“I’ve never seen material like this at any of the other Toronto book shows.”

“We didn’t know the Merrill Collection existed until we came to the pulp show. It’s a wonderful resource for SF fans like us. The pulps and books at the show are fascinating, we’ll be sure to bring more money next year.”

“I loved reading the “Shadow” and “Doc Savage” paperbacks and now I can look at and even buy the original “Shadow” pulps that didn’t get reprinted. I’ll really enjoy reading them, but will have to hide them from my wife.”

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## A New Gadget for the Friends

The intriguing photo to the left depicts Kelly Armstrong standing next to the new Friends of the Merrill standing poster. The poster was designed to increase the visibility of the Friends and the Collection at events such as book launches and conventions. When stored, the poster rolls into a small case approximately the size and weight of a laptop.

*Photo by Andrew Specht*

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“I don’t actually read the pulps. I only buy them to frame the covers.”

“My grandfather loved the pulps, he’d read one then pass it on to his workers. They’d all read them and then the pulps became fire starter or went to the outhouse.”

I’m writing this three weeks before this year’s show, which I’m sure will be as enjoyable, successful and popular as all our other pulp shows. Luck be damned. It’s the rare and unique material unavailable elsewhere, plus a very entertaining slide show held in the Merrill Collection, that has made the show such an eagerly awaited annual event.

## Meet a Merrill Staffer: Kim Hull

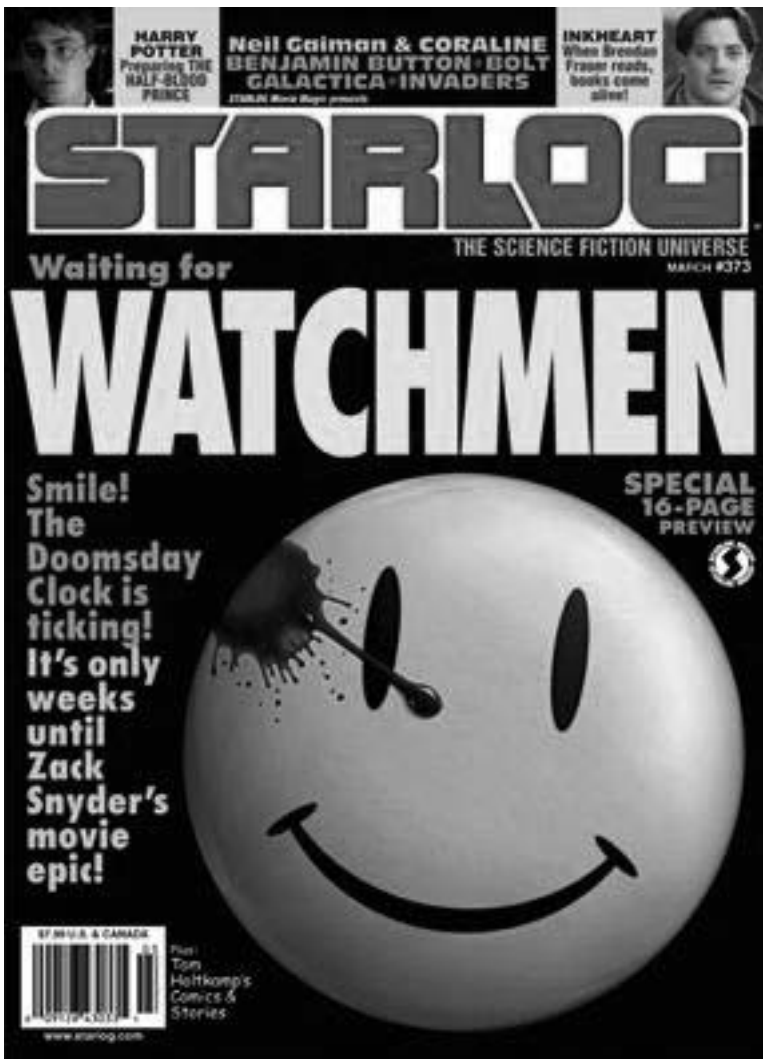
*By Kim Hull*

**H**i, I’m Kim Hull, cataloguer and reference librarian at the Merrill Collection. In addition to cataloguing and reference, I also index incoming periodicals, do reader’s advisory, conduct most of the class visits, oversee the art collection, and assist in setting up in-house displays with Annette Mocek. I also oversee the circulating SF ResourceCollection in the Lillian Smith Branch.

My route to the Merrill Collection was a circuitous one: I began my library career as a page at Cedarbrae Library in Scarborough, and worked there for several years. I left to pursue a career in archaeology. Alas, I found no lost arks, or temples of doom. An MLS followed, and I began working on the relief staff at TPL. I have worked at most of the old Scarborough, and Toronto branches over the years, and after a career that has included everything from page to branch head, and everything in between, a lifelong interest in science fiction led me here.

# Starlog Stops the Presses

By Chris Cunningham



Issue #373 is the second-last print issue of Starlog planned for the time being. Bucking the trend in the publishing industry, the owners of the magazine have vowed to return to the print world...someday.

the first New York *Star Trek* convention. Bedlam.

It's in this context Kerry O'Quinn decided to create a one-off magazine about *Star Trek*. Please remember television had thirteen channels, three of those channels ruled (NBC, ABC, CBS), AM radio was at its peak, hacking was done with resistors and circuit boards, HiFi was the pre-eminent form of consumer electronics (as seen in *Playboy*), a newspaper was deposing a president, and magazines mattered. Media was monolithic.

Snap. The one-off magazine sold out.

*Hmm... maybe there's a market here for more of the same*, thought O'Quinn.

Success fed success and other magazines were launched. There was the short lived magazine on movie special effects.

Ayn Rand created a philosophy for realizing one's personal potential. The obstacle to personal realization was other people. If a person could remove all feelings of guilt and social obligation, then there was nothing they could not accomplish. This view was very appealing to Gene Roddenberry, the creator of *Star Trek*, and Kerry O'Quinn, one of the two founding publishers of *Starlog* magazine. When he was invited to Rand's apartment in New York from his office in the same city, Kerry O'Quinn said it was one of the most important events of his life.

At the end of the 60s science fiction had been rejected as a mass market commodity. *Star Trek* had been canceled. That seemed to be the answer to the question of whether science fiction could break out of its subculture of odd books and campy, alien-monster movies. By 1980 that determination had radically, almost violently, been revised. *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* was released and science fiction was now big business. New York Times best sellers were in the offing. A movie about dew farmer had something to do with it.

*Star Trek* didn't start to live until it was canceled. The early 70s saw people finding each other at cons. The pure thrill of science fiction was taking place: it was acting as a balm and a bond to people who felt like outsiders. Their fervor for it and each other was as intense as its rejection by wider society. The temper of the times is described in *Star Trek Lives!* by Jacqueline Lichtenberg. In that book she describes

- continued on page 13

# J.G. Ballard: Writer whose dystopian visions helped shape our view of the modern world

By John Clute

Editor's Note: This obituary was first printed in *The Independent* on April 21, 2009 and is reprinted here by permission of the author and copyright holder.



J. G. Ballard: 1930-2009.

For 30 years J.G. Ballard had many readers in many lands. For them, everything he published was news. But after Steven Spielberg based a good though not incandescent film on his autobiographical novel, *Empire of the Sun* (1984), Ballard became publicly newsworthy over large parts of the world that his words had never reached directly.

He became a sage and prophet, whose visions of the cost of living in the modern world were an integral part of our understanding of the shape of things to come. At least one English dictionary has accepted “Ballardian” as a term descriptive of the landscape of the late 20th century: bleak, rusted out, choked with Ozymandian relics of the space age now past, dystopian – a landscape which surreally embodies the psychopathologies of modern humanity.

That none of this was new in Ballard’s understanding of the world, his readers already understood. With an unwavering intensity of gaze, he had been reworking and refining the same fixed array of intuitions and insights from as early as the publication of his first science-fiction story, *Prima Belladonna*, in 1956. That story, like much of his early work, did not find easy entry into the British literary world. Almost every tale he wrote for more than a decade first appeared in a small British science-fiction magazine called *New Worlds*, at a time when British sf was formally and culturally very conservative. Only 10 years later, under the mid-1960s editorship of Michael Moorcock, would *New Worlds* become the natural home of the kind of transgressive, experimental, intensely written “New Wave” fiction that Ballard had been producing for years.

His instinct from the first had been to apply the inward visions of surrealism and psychiatry to the outer worlds of science fiction and, by 1960 or so, he was already beginning to describe the Space Age as a last, doomed, phallocratic attempt, on the part of the Hollow Men of the West, to gain immortality. Ballard may not have coined the term “inner space”, which became a *New Worlds* catchphrase – J.B. Priestley, in *They Came from Inner Space* (New Statesman, 1953) was the first to use the term conspicuously – but he seemed to have taken to heart Priestley’s description of the science-fiction invasion of outer space as a series of moves, “undertaken in secret despair, in the wrong direction.” His genius was, devastatingly and unrelentingly, to take J.B. Priestley at his word.

For Ballard, to gaze into inner space – the world within the skull – was to gaze upon the antic face of the world, upon a landscape governed by Thanatos and Eros, the two great world-shaping principles common to Freud and the Surrealists. His genius was in his ability to “actualise” these principles in his fiction, and to choose protagonists who might plausibly embody his convictions about our state. Ballard’s lead characters are almost invariably middle-class professionals: affectless physicians, benumbed apparatchiks, deracinated engineers, the swelling mob of rootless death-fixed suburbanites who are (his recent novels claim) the real terrorists to come. Ballard’s 21st century is a vision of gated communities occupied by potential suicides and real killers, glassy with disinterest but deadly: Thanatos Unbound.

James Graham Ballard was born of English parents in Shanghai, 10 years before the outbreak of the Second World

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The cover to the first edition of the novel *Crash* (1973).

War. He was raised in a surreal suburb, transferred to downtown Shanghai as war began, and interned in the Lunghua concentration camp by the Japanese occupiers from 1943 to 1945. It is these experiences which are transmuted into *Empire of the Sun* and which, that novel makes pretty clear, were fundamental to his understanding that the world could only be survived if one knew its nature. In one of the many interviews he gave after Spielberg made him world famous, he said of this time that: “The reassuring stage set that everyday reality in the suburban west presents to us is torn down; you see the ragged scaffolding, and then you see the truth beyond that...”

Ballard was a born exile. England, which would be his home for life, and where he was to set most of his fiction, came as a privileged refugee in 1946. Almost immediately he made the intoxicating discovery of Surrealism, paintings and writings which seemed to authenticate his own experiences (at one point he hoped to become a painter). From 1946 to 1949, he attended The Leys School in Cambridge, which reminded him of Lunghua Camp and, in 1949, he began to study psychiatric medicine at King’s College, Cambridge. He left after two years without graduating, spending the next year at London University. In 1953 he joined the RAF, ending up in a base in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan: flat country, torn by bad weather.

By 1954 he was back in England, and married to Helen Matthews. Between 1957 and 1962, when he became a full-time writer, he was an assistant editor for a scientific journal, *Chemistry and Industry*. In 1960, the Ballard family moved into a semi-detached home in Shepperton, Surrey, a suburban enclave gradually to become surrounded by motorways and battered by the continual growth of Heathrow Airport. In 1964, during a family vacation in Spain, his wife died suddenly of pneumonia, and he raised their three children himself. He became very well off after the Spielberg film, but never moved. Perhaps there was no need to. If he had consciously wished to combine internal-exile status, along with intimate contact with a great megalopolis of the Western world whose heat death he was predicting, he could not have chosen a better coign of vantage than Shepperton.

In 1962 he published the first of four science-fiction novels – *The Wind From Nowhere*, *The Drowned World* (1962), *The Burning World* (1964; published in the UK as *The Drought*) and *The Crystal World* (1966) – which transfigure in turn each of the four classic humours (Air, Water, Fire, Earth) into science-fiction landscapes for the enacting of holocaust. The last three of these novels have become classics of the genre because of the mesmeric grip of their portrayals of terminal catastrophe, but also notorious for seeming almost supernaturally flattened of any normal emotion about the desecration of the planet. But the passion, and the shockingly deadpan hilarity, were there to be discovered; a powerful sense that to gaze unblinkingly at the world is an act of rage.

This soon became clearer. Some of the stories written in the highly transgressive decade after 1965, particularly those assembled in *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970), are full-frontal assaults on the psychopathological roots of the fall of the West. The book was pulped before release by its first American publisher, though it was released in Britain without problems, and filmed in 2000 by Jonathan Weiss. One reason for the pulping was certainly the inclusion of Ballard’s most notorious single story, *Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan* (1968), a perfect marriage of rage and hilarity. In 1970, he put together, for the Arts Lab in North London, an exhibition he called “Crashed Cars”, based on a story called *Crash!* from *Atrocity*, and an obvious teaser for his next novel, *Crash* (1973), perhaps his most radical assertion of the intimate exchanges in our psyches between Thanatos and Eros. David Cronenberg’s 1997 film, *Crash*, comes close to capturing the novel’s dangerous, dream-like allure.

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By 1970, Jimmy Ballard had developed into a remarkably attractive figure. He was of medium stature, with swept-back receding hair, and a gaze that seemed both bland and impatient. He was bonhomous in a fashion that somehow suggested to his companions that he might not, in truth, be that easy to please. Without seeming to notice his effect on others, without ever claiming to do much other than work hard in Shepperton, he gave an impression of almost dangerous worldliness, as though he understood too much. Perhaps because he seemed physically denser than other people, they orbited him. He was charismatic. He gave audience. He loved in particular women – his second autobiographical novel, *The Kindness of Women* (1991), makes this abundantly and attractively clear – and for years after 1965, he was intensely involved with more than one partner. In the late 1960s, he met Claire Walsh, whom he refers to as his “partner for 40 years” in his last book, *Miracles of Life* (2008), a memoir composed, as he makes clear in its pages, during a remission from the prostate cancer that killed him.

After works such as *Concrete Island* (1974) and *High Rise* (1975), each as intense in its way as *Crash*, his next few titles gave the impression that he was beginning to exhaust the central innovative fire of rage and insight that made his first six or seven novels, and his 120 or so stories, a central achievement of English writing in his time. Most of his great stories are early, assembled in volumes such as *The Four-Dimensional Nightmare* (1963) or *Vermilion Sands* (New York, 1971), which is set in a melting-watch *Dying Earth*; and inserted into later retrospects such as *Memories of the Space Age* (US, 1988), which gathers stories about the death of Space that date back as far as 1962 (no wonder so many American sf readers distrusted him), or *The Complete Short Stories* (2001), which, though seriously incomplete, runs to more than 1,100 pages. At the end of this long run of unremitting work, the retroactive orienteering of *Empire of the Sun* only intensified a sense that his career had climaxed, that all his cards were now on the table.

It was remarkable, therefore, how long Ballard sustained a high level of creative endeavour in later decades. No one has seriously claimed that novels such as *Cocaine Nights* (1996), *Super-Cannes* (2000) or *Kingdom Come* (2006) achieve anything like the unstoppable horrific presence of the earlier masterpieces, but they convey an undiminished wisdom about the nature of our world.

The most complete unfolding of his later sense of things can probably be found in a quite astonishing book-length interview published by the magazine *Research* as the self-standing *Research* No 8/9 (1984) but he remained unfailingly eloquent until the end of his life, as the interviews assembled in *Conversations* (2005) attest. “At times,” he said in 2004, “I look around the executive housing estates of the Thames Valley and feel that [a vicious and genuinely mindless neo-fascism] is already here, quietly waiting its day, and largely unknown to itself ... What is so disturbing about the 9/11 hijackers is that they had not spent the previous years squatting in the dust on some Afghan hillside ... These were highly educated engineers and architects who had spent years sitting around in shopping malls in Hamburg and London, drinking coffee and listening to the muzak.”

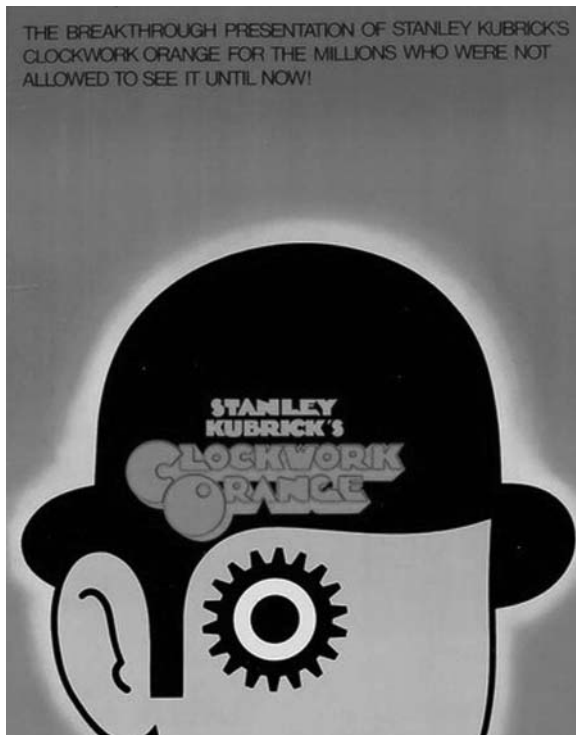
He continued to live in Shepperton. In 1985, he had a copy made of a lost Paul Delvaux painting – in truth, not a very good one – and kept it propped against the same wall in his work-room for the rest of his life. He refused an OBE in 2003, as the whole rackets world of gong-bestowing seemed to him a “Ruritanian charade” designed to “prop up” the Royals. He continued to act with dignity and insight the role of a public man of letters, publishing reviews and comments frequently – *A User’s Guide to the Millennium: Essays and Reviews* (1996) assembles some of this work. *Miracles of Life* is a memoir of piercing clarity; a projected posthumous volume, *Conversations with My Physician*, may continue Ballard’s engagement with the facts of his mortality.

His late novels never flinch from addressing the “elective psychopathy” that increasingly riddles the anaesthetised world we are now beginning to inhabit. It is a fate Ballard had been predicting for half a century. His fiction was perhaps too invariant for him to rank as the greatest literary figure of his generation but of all the writers of significance in the last decades of the 20th century, he was maybe the widest awake.

**James Graham Ballard, novelist and short story writer: born Shanghai 15 November 1930; married 1955 Helen Mary Matthews (died 1964, one son, two daughters); died London 19 April 2009.**

# The Genre Films of Stanley Kubrick

By Jim Pattison



An early teaser poster for *A Clockwork Orange*, possibly Kubrick's second-most famous film after *2001*.

Stanley Kubrick (1928-1999) directed 13 feature films in a career that spanned almost half a century. Many of those films are universally regarded as some of the best ever made. And some of those films fall squarely within the genres of science fiction, fantasy and horror.

The first of these was 1968's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. When Kubrick decided that he wanted to make a good, serious science fiction film – at a time when most science fiction films were little more than B-movies – he had the good sense to enlist the services of Arthur C. Clarke, a writer of good, serious science fiction novels. The result was one of the landmark films of the 1960s, and a real high point in Kubrick's career.

Kubrick relies on images and music to tell the story in *2001*. There's little dialog in the film, and none at all in the extended opening and closing sequences. What little dialog the film does contain is extremely banal. Much of it makes the conversations I overhear every day sound profound and articulate in comparison. The exception to this is HAL. Surely, it's no coincidence that the computer has more personality than any of the people in the film, and gets all the good lines?

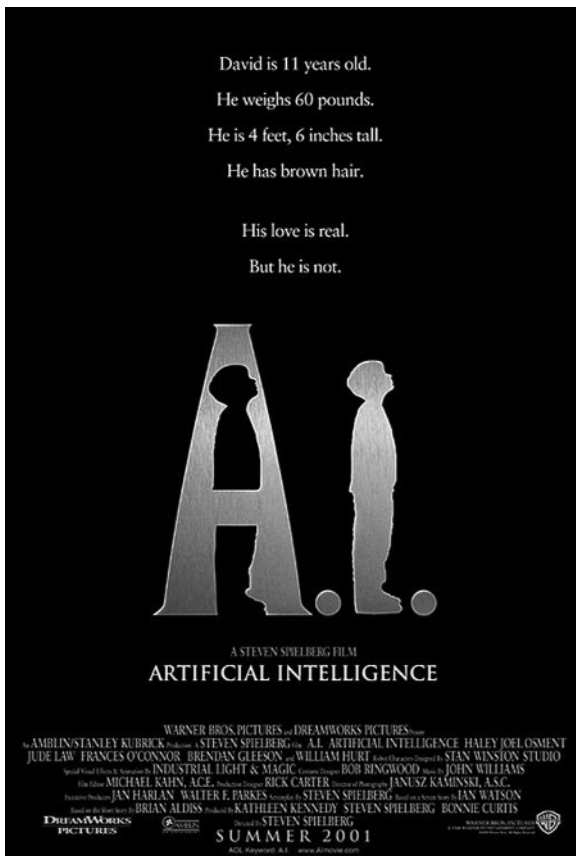
Much has been written about the ground-breaking visual effects. Almost four decades later, most of them still look good, although all those endless shots of spaceships look a little passé compared to the CGI effects we see week after week on TV series like *Battlestar Galactica*. They also serve to date the picture. Today, such sequences would be more seamlessly integrated into the story. Here, they call just a little too much attention to themselves. The same can be said of the 'psychedelic trip' sequence, which goes on just a bit longer than it needs to. As always, the best special effects don't even look like special effects. In the 'Dawn of Man' sequence, the ape costumes and makeup still look convincing. Only the glowing eyes of the leopard provide a clue to the fact that these scenes were filmed in a studio before a front-projection screen, rather than on a real location.

Kubrick's use of music was equally innovative. It's impossible to hear Richard Strauss' 'Also Sprach Zarathustra' without thinking of this film, just as it's now impossible to hear Wagner's 'Ride of the Valkyries' without thinking of *Apocalypse Now*. And what better music to accompany a ballet between a spaceship and a space station than Johann Strauss' 'Blue Danube'?

As much as I like *2001* – it was the first of the director's films I saw, at the impressionable age of 12, and it turned me into a Kubrick fan for life — I now find the film to be less engaging than many of his other movies. The human element is missing. With the exception of HAL, there's no one to care about, and no one to identify with. The picture is pretty to look at, but it lacks the emotional depth of many of his other films.

Kubrick's next film was *A Clockwork Orange* (1972), adapted from the dystopian novel by Anthony Burgess. Set in the 'near future', this movie full of bad haircuts and horrible interior decorating, is Kubrick's least subtle film since 1957's *Paths of Glory*. It deals with important issues relating to personal choice and freedom of will, but it's so full of

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A.I. was Kubrick's last film and was completed after his death by esteemed director Steven Spielberg.

is a thief, a rapist and, ultimately, a murderer. Yet he's a very likable thief, rapist and murderer, thanks to Malcolm McDowell's engaging performance. It's interesting to speculate on how the audience perception of Alex would have changed if Kubrick had included the novel's final chapter in his screenplay, which otherwise follows the book quite closely. In that final chapter, which was also omitted from some editions of the book, an older Alex looks back on his ultra-violent ways as a phase that he was passing through, and looks forward to getting married, settling down and starting a family. If nothing else, including that coda would have undone the impact of the movie's triumphant ending, which sees Alex recovering from his 'treatment' and announcing, "I was cured, alright!" (Apparently, Kubrick was not aware in the missing chapter until after he had begun work on the movie.)

In the end, *A Clockwork Orange* is a good film, but one in which I have difficulty caring about what happens. Its central theme – that it's better to choose evil through free will than to have good behaviour forced upon you – is one worthy of further debate, but Alex's abrupt 'cure' quickly renders the issue irrelevant. Ultimately, Kubrick's inconsistent treatment of the material – brutally realistic in some scenes; cartoon-like in others – serves to undermine the result. It seems the director can't seem to decide whether or not to take it seriously, and neither can I.

Following 1975's *Barry Lyndon* – adapted from an 1844 novel by William Thackeray – Kubrick returned to genre filmmaking with *The Shining*, released in 1980. Kubrick attempted to do for horror with *The Shining* what he did for science fiction with *2001*: make a good, serious film in a genre not noted for its good, serious films. Warner Brothers acquired the rights to *The Shining* – horror writer Stephen King's third novel – prior to its publication, at a time when King's name was not yet a household word. By the time the movie finally appeared, King had published *The Stand*, and was well on his way to literary superstardom.

Jack Nicholson's performance as Jack Torrance is one of the most famous in all of Kubrick's films (not to mention

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broadly-drawn characters and contrived dialog that I can't help but wonder: did Kubrick expect anyone to take this seriously? It's also supposedly full of sex and violence, but most of that occurs in the first third of the film, and probably isn't nearly as excessive as the picture's reputation would suggest.

Unlike *2001*, virtually all of *A Clockwork Orange* was filmed on locations, with little work done in studio. The one scene that obviously was filmed in a studio is the shot of Alex (Malcolm McDowell) and his droogs in the stolen car. It's such an obvious 'process' (rear projection) shot that it has to be deliberate. "Don't worry," Kubrick seems to be saying. "It's only a movie."

On the other hand, one shot looks terrifyingly real. In the scene where Alex tries to commit suicide by jumping out of the window to escape the sounds of Beethoven blasting up from the room below, we're treated to a brief shot from Alex's point of view as he plummets to the ground. Kubrick achieved the shot in a very simple manner: he threw a heavily padded camera off the roof. Reportedly, he did this a number of times — until he got a take where the camera fell with the lens pointing down all the way to the ground.

As he did with his 1962 adaptation of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, Kubrick has made a movie in which the audience is meant to empathize with a central character who does very bad things to other people. *Lolita's* Humbert was a pedophile; *A Clockwork Orange's* Alex



DVD cover for the original release of *The Shining*.

Nicholson's own career). A common complaint about Nicholson in this film is that he isn't playing Jack Torrance, he's playing 'Jack Nicholson'. Torrance is supposed to be a family man, an aspiring writer recovering from the demons of his past while being slowly driven mad by the ghosts who inhabit the Overlook Hotel. Yet right from the start, Nicholson seems to be playing a variation on the character he'd played many times before. On the drive up to the hotel with his family, he looks like he's already half-crazy. When he starts to see people who aren't there, your reaction isn't, 'What's happening?', it's 'What took so long?'

Shelley Duvall plays Wendy Torrance as a woman perpetually on the edge of hysterics. With parents like these, it's no wonder that Danny (Danny Lloyd) is so screwed up and spends all his time talking to his imaginary friend Tony. It's clear from the first time we see him that there's something not quite right with Danny: he possesses a form of ESP that the Overlook's cook Halloran (Scatman Crothers) immediately recognizes and calls 'the shining'. And that, in a nutshell, is my problem with this movie. For the longest time, the audience is supposed to be figuring out if Jack's demons are supernatural or psychological. Is the hotel really haunted, or are the ghosts all in Jack's mind? But we already know about Danny's powers from his conversation with Halloran, so we already know that, in the world of this movie, the supernatural is real.

Once again, Kubrick has crafted a film that looks incredible. Abandoning the location shooting of his most recent films, he returned to the confines of the studio and constructed massive sets to represent the interior of the Overlook. He then proceeded to show off those sets with some amazing continuous tracking shots – many of which feature Danny riding his Big Wheel through the hotel's lobby and corridors. *The Shining* was one of the first films to make extensive use of the then-recently invented Steadicam, allowing the camera to swoop and glide in a way not previously possible.

For a horror film, *The Shining* has relatively few 'shocks' – the kind of scene that makes you jump in your seat – or place your hands over your eyes. One of these takes place when Jack sees what the woman in the bathtub in room 237 really looks like; another occurs near the end of the movie, when Jack brings Halloran's rescue attempt to a premature end with one well-placed blow of his axe. For me, the most chilling moment in the movie occurs when Wendy looks through the typed manuscript on Jack's desk and finally realizes what her husband has been doing all this time: filling hundreds of pages with endless repetitions of the same sentence: 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.'

Ultimately, there's a lot to like in *The Shining*, even if I have reservations about some aspects of it. As I've already mentioned, the question about whether this is a supernatural or psychological horror story is answered way too soon. Be that as it may, once Wendy realizes what's really going on, the movie just doesn't stop. Kubrick created several indelible cinematic images during his career: the scene where Jack Nicholson chops a hole in the bathroom door and shouts "Here's Johnny!" while Shelley Duvall cowers in terror is one of the most iconic of all.

Finally, no discussion of Kubrick's genre films would be complete without at least a mention of *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*. Kubrick had wanted for years to make a film based on Brian Aldiss's 1969 story 'Super-Toys Last All Summer Long'. After his death, Kubrick's widow gave the project to her husband's long-time friend Stephen Spielberg. The movie that was eventually released in (appropriately enough) 2001 can be considered a posthumous collaboration between the two directors. Unfortunately, it's mostly an awkward marriage between Kubrick's somewhat distanced storytelling and Spielberg's mawkish sentimentality. It's much more satisfying to think of Kubrick's career as a genre filmmaker ending with *The Shining*.

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Longer lived but discontinued was *Future Life* magazine, which talked to scientists and science fiction authors to speculate with great paintings about the kind of world we'd arrive at in the future. A magazine about horror movies, *Fangoria*, was launched and is going strong today with no end in sight.

*Starlog* recently announced that after 33 years of print publication, for the time being they will be online only. The publishers say that this is a temporary measure in a down market, but it's hard not to see this as the end.

For most science fiction fans there was a time when the magazine played an important role in their lives. That role is being replaced by faster, computer-based media. It's hard to forget the satisfying feeling of having purchased the latest issue of *Starlog*, feeling it in your hands, having the strong visuals explode at your eyes. Later you'd settle down and actually read it. For some people it was a lifeline to a better world that they looked forward to when they got older and left the place they grew up. Powerful covers of coming movies such as *Tron*, *Moonraker*, *The Black Hole*, *Flash Gordon*, *Buck Rogers*, or *Battlestar Galactica* drew you to it in the store.

And *Starlog* was where you could get the dirt. It could be a very gossipy magazine. The publishers were privy to a great deal of insider talk in the worlds of print, television, and feature length movie production. A twenty-two year old Mark Hamill could be found calling a special effects guru a traitor for leaving the *Star Wars* ken to work on *Battlestar Galactica*. Debates raged about a show that had been off the air for a decade. *Star Trek* teleplay author and *Starlog* columnist David Gerrold would discuss the disaster that was his script for *The Cloud Minders*. DC Fontana, another teleplay author, would slam the producer, Fred Freiberger, who ran the show after Gene Roddenberry walked off. (Perhaps he was inspired by Ayn Rand's character Howard Roark, an architect, who preferred to burn his building to the ground, because his design was compromised.) Freiberger would then respond with his side of the story. (Freiberger went on to produce *Space 1999* in England. It went off the air shortly afterward.) Another columnist, Harlan Ellison, used an interview in *Starlog* as testimony in court to sue *The Terminator* director James Cameron for stealing a plot from his *The Outer Limits* story *Demon With A Glass Hand*. Reading *Starlog* you were at the centre of what was going on.

"We cannot often be credited with saving lives, but I have so many first-hand examples of ways in which our *Starlog* publications reach out and touch people's lives – helping them in profound ways – that I know our publishing business does much more than entertain and inform readers. It does the most important thing a magazine can do – it inspires!" Kerry O'Quinn. *Starlog*, February, 1980.

*Starlog* felt like more than a magazine, because Kerry O'Quinn saw it as an instrument of a revolution that would, ultimately, make us all live in a *Star Trek* world. He believed. Gene believed. And for as long as you read the magazine, you did too.

## Volunteers Needed!

If you would like to help with any of the following, contact Lorna Toolis at [ltoolis@torontopubliclibrary.ca](mailto: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 and Word on the Street.

\* **Merril Mailings:** Help organize and carry out occasional mass mailings to members of the Friends (generally two-three a year).

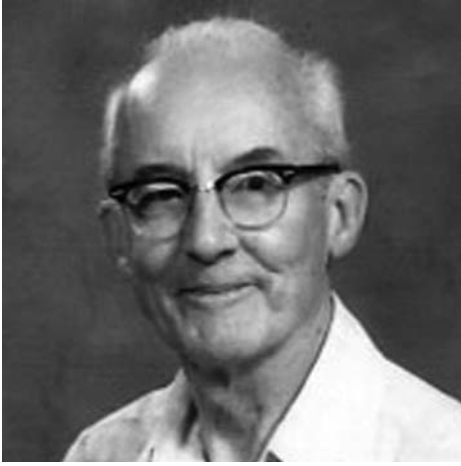
\* **Sol Rising:** Write articles for our twice-yearly newsletter, help with proofreading, ad sales, graphic design.

\* **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.

# Chester Cuthbert Remembered

By Raymond A. Cuthbert



Chester Cuthbert passed away in March. Photo courtesy of Raymond A. Cuthbert

Born Manchester Dudley Cuthbert, on 16 October 1912, Chester dropped the “Man” from Manchester as soon as he was an adult.

Chester’s life was forever marked by five events – his hapless childhood as the son of an itinerant labourer; his becoming the chief breadwinner for his mother and siblings after his father left the family; the Great Depression; his marriage to Muriel Winnifred Chapman on 29 April 1944; and his fathering five children with Muriel – Ellen, Gordon, Raymond, Donald and Marion.

If there could have been a sixth event, it just might have been when he was nine years old and read his first fantastic novel, Edgar Rice Burroughs’ *Tarzan the Terrible*, which was printed as a serial in the *Argosy All-Story* magazine, a weekly magazine his father subscribed to. It was first published as a serial in the *Argosy All-Story Weekly* in the issues for February 12 to March 26, 1921.

Burroughs was his favourite author until he read A Merritt’s *The Ship of Ishtar* in 1924 when he was twelve years old. Chester said, “Merritt overwhelmed me.”

The first of the Science Fiction pulp magazines was *Amazing Stories*, published by Hugo Gernsback, often referred to as the “Father of Science Fiction,” and later to be the first publisher of Chester’s fiction. Gernsback published two of Chester’s stories in the February and July 1934 issues of *Wonder Stories*, when Chester was 21 years of age and single.

Despite Chester’s modest professionally-published output, both of his stories were later republished. The Sublime Vigil was originally published in the February, 1934 issue of *Wonder Stories*, and later republished in *Editors’ Choice in Science Fiction* (Sam Moskowitz, Editor, McBride, 1954). The Last Shrine, was originally published in the July 1934 issue of *Wonder Stories*, and later republished in the magazine *Famous Science Fiction*, Fall 1967.

Chester’s working career was primarily for the St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company. He worked extremely hard and diligently at this for over thirty years, during which time he eventually became a claims manager. Chester retired in 1967 at age 55 from the insurance business.

Chester’s book collecting was his primary avocation. Although he would watch a few television shows with his mother and his own family on Sunday evenings, aside from his work, he preferred to spend his time reading, talking with fellow fans, and maintaining correspondence with others.

Chester remarked to Curt Petrovich, “When I realized that really good books very seldom show up in bookshops I decided that I was going to hang onto any good books that I get, because I may never get another chance to find them.” (CBC Radio Interview of Chester D. Cuthbert by Curt Petrovich, August 1994).

Chester was a meticulous person, known to sort his duplicates of pulp magazines in order of condition, and was very fervent about making sure that the best copies of the magazines made their way into the collections of whoever was interested in purchasing them for their own collections. He was totally un-self-assuming about his own accomplishments in the field.

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Chester became somewhat of a known personality in the science fiction and fantasy fields. His collection was frequently mentioned in the few scholarly journals that have studied these fields.

Among the notable people who stopped to find books in Chester's home included Bob Hunter, Jim Steranko, Judith Merrill, Forrest Ackerman and Sam Moskowitz. Hunter was a Canadian newspaper columnist turned social activist who helped spur a global ecological movement as one of the founders and inaugural president of Greenpeace. Steranko is a noted comic book artist, publisher, illustrator, author and former escape artist, illusionist and stage magician. Judith Merrill was a noted science fiction author who founded the Spaced Out Library, now known as The Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy, in Toronto. Forrest Ackerman and Sam Moskowitz were fellow members of First Fandom, noted for their own science fiction collections and accomplishments in the field.

Chester was a gracious host to his book friends for about 50 years. He offered hospitality and personal warmth to everyone who came into his home. He was aided and abetted in this by his loving wife, Muriel, throughout this time until her death in January 2007.

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## Toronto's Tomorrows

By Lorna Toolis

The summer exhibit at the Merrill Collection, "Toronto's Tomorrows," will feature science fiction, fantasy and horror stories set in Toronto. It will highlight the science fiction community in Toronto, featuring the three Writer in Residence programs at the Merrill Collection, as well as local luminaries. Memorabilia from the three Torcons will be on display, as will materials from Judith Merrill's career in science fiction.

"Toronto's Tomorrows was curated by Merrill staff member Kim Hull, It will be on exhibit from May 15 – August 15, 2009.

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## Things to Come

### July

Friday, July 17: The Chandra Observatory presents a series of events, including presentations, workshops, talks, and the launch of Julie Czerneda's new book, *Rift in the Sky*.

Saturday, July 18: The Chandra Observatory presents a full-day of presentations and workshops. Pre-registration is required. Please call 416-393-7749 to register.

### August

Anticipation: The Friends of the Merrill Collection, together with SF Canada, will host a party on Saturday, August 8, at the World Science Fiction Convention in Montreal.

### September

The 4th Annual Science Fiction and Anime Flea Market will be held at the Toronto Reference Library, in the Beeton Auditorium September 12, from 10:00 AM -4:00 PM. For table space contact Donald Simmons: [dfs.engineer@gmail.com](mailto:dfs.engineer@gmail.com).

Word on the Street: The Friends of the Merrill Collection will sell bags of paperback books on September 27.

### December

Friends of the Merrill Collection Annual Christmas Cream Tea: This event will take place in the lower level of 239 College on Saturday, December 5, between 1:30 and 4:00 PM

# 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 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/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 **2009** membership fee as indicated (memberships run from January to December):

**Individual** \$35.<sup>00</sup> per year

**Student** (under 18) \$20.<sup>00</sup> per year

**Institution** \$42.<sup>50</sup> 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

All information you provide on this membership form is strictly confidential. The FOMC does not share or trade membership lists or email addresses.