

Due to the success of our last guinea pig experiment — with The Royal Winnipeg Ballet — our research grant was renewed. This time we have gone lowbrow and sent two new guinea pigs to a Star Trek Convention. Guinea pig A, referred to as Alan, was taught to loathe Star Trek, while Dan (guinea pig B) was raised to associate Star Trek with warm and fuzzy thoughts. Here are the final results:

Dan does Trek Kon IV Going where nobody wanted to go

BY DANIEL CLARK

They are the few, the proud, the Klingon. Them, their Vulcan friends, and a Terran or two beamed into the Dalhousie Student Union Building (SUB) last Saturday to participate in Halifax's most staid Star Trek ritual.

Star Trek conventions basically come in four sizes: Super (like last month's mega-convention in Pasadena, California), Large (like the annual "Toronto Trek", Medium (like last April's Maritime Science Fiction Festival), and Small (like...well like this one).

The main factors in determining size are the length of the convention and the guests it features. The super in Pasadena, for instance, attracted almost every major Star Trek name over a period of five days. The main attractions of Trek Kon IV were Lex Gigeroff and Jeffrey Hirschfield, the head writers for *LEXX: The Dark Zone Stories*, and the convention was just one day.

Trek Kon has taken the position that large is not necessarily better, and that quality and energy are more important. This may be true, but you would not know it from attending Saturday's convention.

The convention is best summed up by the attendance; only 150 people showed up. Several of the dealers were complaining that they might not make back their table fees. In the words of one conference organizer, "We had hoped for more."

Guests are always a draw and, as interesting as she is, Bev Richardson the vampire expert does not quite 'bring in the kiddies' like it used to. The other problem were the panels. They were boring, unimaginative, and uninspiring.

Dealers are so important to Star Trek conventions and I was dismayed in the dealer room at Trek Kon. The main lobby of the SUB was basically turned into a Trek baseball card sell-off. One of the attractions of conventions is the ability to peruse and possibly purchase merchandise you might otherwise never encounter.

With the exception of one table (Wilkie's Wonderful World), which offered some pretty cool collectibles, the conference was no better than your local comic book store.

The conference was not terrible by any means. The highlights for me were getting to see the uncut version of *The Abyss* which was ab-

solutely incredible.

Another plus was the SUB. This is the ultimate conference building. Unlike the Ramada Renaissance (where the Maritime Science Fiction Festival is held) where you are constantly tripping over tables and other convention-goers, the SUB is spaciouly laid out.

I was pleasantly surprised by one panel: *The great debate — Old Trek vs. New Trek*. This has been a conference mainstay for years, but of late conventions have been steering away from it. I have not seen this panel in about three years, and I was amazed to see it here. Better yet was the debate: it was lively, interesting, and even controversial.

If the whole convention had been like that, then it would have been an unqualified success.

In the end this conference had more problems than normal. Despite this I had a fun time, because it is people that make up a convention, and Star Trek fans are good people. Whether you like Kirk and Spock, Picard and Data, Sisko and Odo, or Janeway and Tuvok, if you get their fans together, then a good time is bound to be had. With any luck, come Trek Kon V maybe something will have been learned.

BY ALAN LEBLANC

As more of a fan of science fact than science fiction, I saw a great challenge in attending the fourth annual Star Trek convention in our own SUB. Perfect fun for the avid science fiction buff, but if you're an inexperienced fool such as myself, stay away. You're playing with fire.

Many different games were on display, including a model landscape with miniature "mech warriors" about one inch high. Like any fun war, the objective is to blow your opponent away.

The same type of game could be played on a CD-ROM computer system right behind the models. Although the people were friendly, the younger children were fairly disrespectful of their parents. One young boy, he must have been ten, was using profanity in front of his mother. Was it a result of all this high-tech fantasy? Damn it

Jim, I'm a geologist, not a social worker!

Other exhibits intrigued me, such as the model exhibit and the screenwriter workshop. I also talked to the head of a role-playing group that had mock battles in alien costumes out in the woods. I assured her that she could play her little dress-up game, just so long as no barnyard animals went missing — needless to say, she was not amused.

Card playing was also going on, including one devoted entirely to *Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail*. I rolled my eyes so hard I think I saw my brain.

Oh sure, it's tempting to just write that this is a nerd herd and trash them in a cheap attempt to make me look like a talented writer. I can't and I won't. These were nice people having a good time and nothing bad happened. Who would honestly prefer that they spend their Saturday night getting stoned, drunk, or having sex? (*Arts editors' note: We would.*) Can't we give them some peace?

Make it so.

Wierdos from another planet.

But which one is the wierdo?

