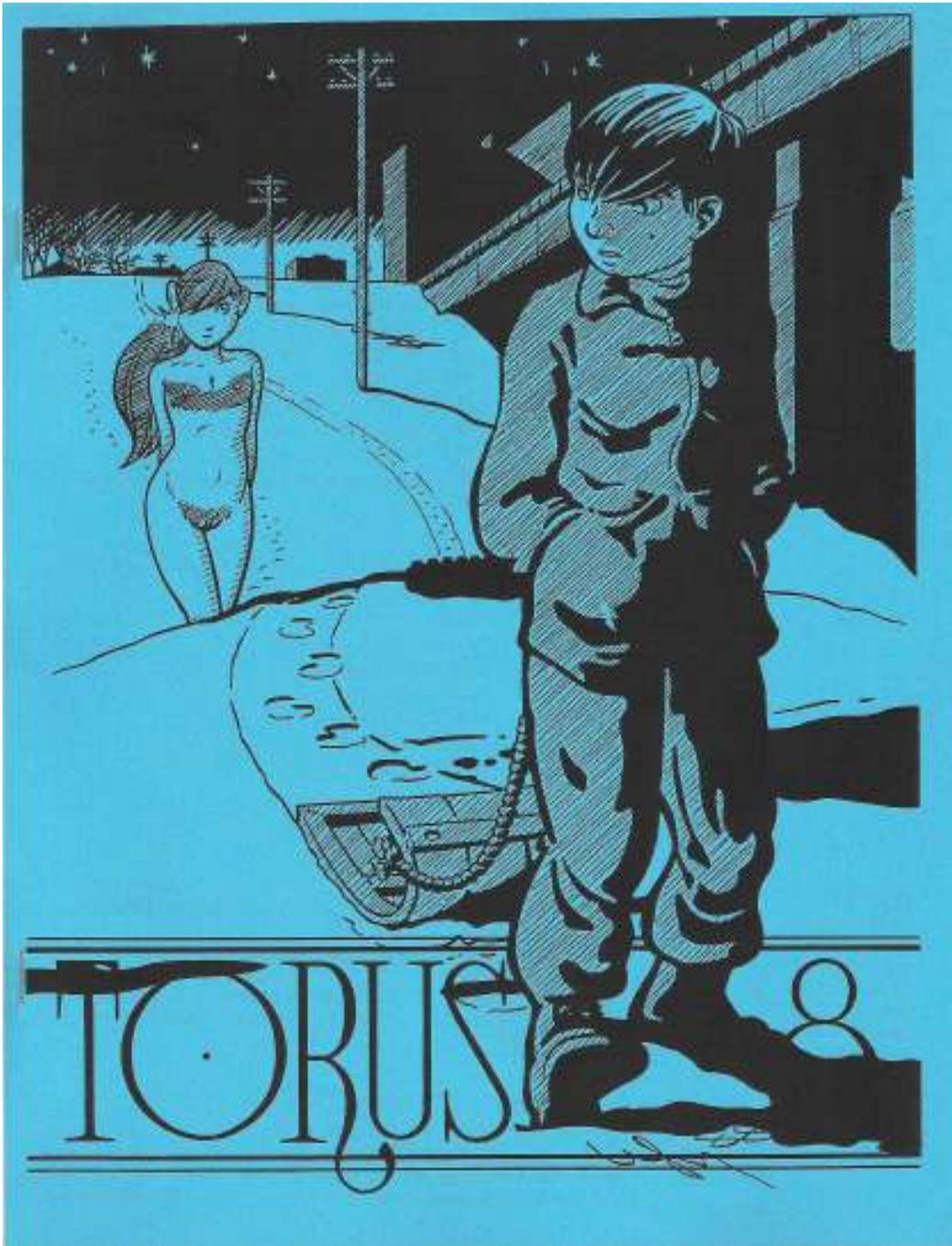


WCSFAzine

The Fannish E-zine of the West Coast Science Fiction Association
Dedicated to Promoting the West Coast Science Fiction Community

#16

December 2008



TORUS #8, DECEMBER 1990, COVER ARTIST: TARAL
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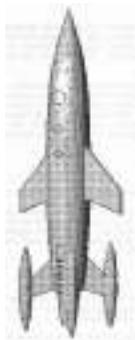
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None this issue.

EDITORIAL



Here is the revamped WCSFAzine, with topics rearranged and contents list more explanatory in an effort to tempt casual browsers to explore further and perhaps become repeat viewers. Up till now I've treated WCSFAzine as a paperzine which happens to be published online. But readers can't quickly flip the pages to see if there's anything that catches their interest, and no one scrolls through an entire zine for that purpose alone. Consequently I've added enough detail on the contents page to allow the viewer to easily grasp the nature of every article and so decide whether or not to proceed further.

Meanwhile, at my request, Bill Burns has added a counter so that I can gain some idea of how many readers WCSFAzine has and where they live. I was beginning to believe virtually no one read this zine. Fortunately this has proven not to be the case, though there is plenty of room for improvement. The numbers are modest, but indicate potential.

First off, between Nov 16th and Nov 29th, WCSFAzine had 42 hits. Okay, good start. However, when you subtract the number of times I excitedly 'hit' in myself to check the ongoing stats, there were actually only 32 hits by other fans. And when one assumes several hits from the same city are probably the same individual repeating, I'm left with a figure of 25 people reading -- or at least glancing at -- WCSFAzine during that 14 day period. The true figure is a little better, in that I also email the zine directly to a few fans, so that the confirmed total of readers stands at 30.

Thus I am able to come up with the following statistics re WCSFAzine readership:

- **57% (17) USA:** Anchorage, Philadelphia, New York, Pittsburg, Falls Church, Pasadena, etc.
- **27% (8) Canadian:** Gibsons, Toronto, Don Mills, Burnaby, & Surrey.
- **10% (3) UK:** London, Cheshunt, & Tamworth.
- **03% (1) Italian:** Treviso.
- **03% (1) Malaysian:** Kuala Lumpur.

I hope to do better. Next issue should be ready by January 1st. Many thanks to Bill Burns at < <http://www.efanzines.com> > for hosting. Please send me feedback! < rgraeme@shaw.ca >

Cheers! The Graeme

FAN NEWS & NOTES

TAFF RACE TO CANADA IS ON!

Quoting from Critical Wave #1 by Steve Green & Martin Tudor:

“Despite initial concerns that the TransAtlantic Fan Fund might have to cancel its 2009 race due to the lack of a second candidate (as last occurred in 1997), UK fans Steve Green and Tom Womack have stepped forward as contenders for the westward voyage to Anticipation, the Montreal world science fiction convention.”

“Ballot forms were due to be distributed at Novacon 38; copies are now available to download from the fund’s website, < <http://taff.org.uk/> > which includes a history of previous races and an archive of past newsletters and trip reports. The winner will be announced in mid-April.”

FOWL PROGRESS! ANTICIPATION GOES AVIAN!

From the urban jungles back East, Murray Moore reveals:

“I am pleased to announce that Fran Skene is attending Anticipation, during which Fran will conduct one of her Turkey Reading fund-raisers for the benefit of CUFF (the Canadian Unity Fan Fund).”

And fresh from the literary turkey slaughter at VCON 33, Fran Skene reports:

“This year's Turkey Readings took in \$150 which I'm sending to the CUFF administrator. Congrats go to all who participated, including talented artist Felicity!”

CUFF RACE GEARING UP!

Lance Sibley, the current Canadian Unity Fan Fund Administrator is seeking nominations for the 2009 CUFF race to be awarded at Anticipation Worldcon. He is contacting as many Canadian SF organizations as possible, as well as posting online everywhere, in the hope this will trigger nominations and produce candidates.

He is also dreaming of ways to raise funds, including the possibility of giving turkey readings at various cons he will be attending, asking authors to donate ‘Tuckerisms’ (name a character after the fan who ‘buys’ the privilege), and is thinking of holding one or more silent auctions. As a former CUFF winner/administrator I advise him to try everything everywhere as often as possible. It’s a real struggle to pull in funds. I don’t know what to say works best, because in my experience everything worked equally poorly, but collectively everything adds up.

One thing I didn't try is an online auction. Might work. Another idea might be to post vastly entertaining CUFF bulletins on Efanazines.com, complete with items for auction and/or sale (fixed selling price to first interested fan works best methinks, since often there isn't enough time to get competitive bidding going). The bulletins should be more than a mere listing, should include articles, preferably humorous ones. The items for sale should be the kind of thing fans faunch for excessively, rare fanzines, unusual souvenirs, etc. And of course, not just Canadian fans should be targeted. Fannish collectors exist everywhere.

Meanwhile, here is a complete (?) list of CUFF winners over the years:

- 1981** - **Michael Hall** of Edmonton - attended **Torque 2** in Toronto.
- 1988** - **Taral Wayne** of Toronto - attended **Keycon 5 / Convention 8** in Winnipeg.
- 1989** - **Robert Runte** of Edmonton - attended **Pinekone 2 / Convention 9** in Ottawa.
- 1990** - **Paul Valcour** of Nepean - attended **Conversion 7 / Convention 10** in Calgary.
- 1992** - **Linda Ross-Mansfield** of Winnipeg - attended **Wilfcon / Convention 12** in Kitchener.
- 1996** - **Rene Walling** of Montreal - attended **Conversion 13 / Convention 16** in Calgary.
- 1997** - **R. Graeme Cameron** of Vancouver - attended **Primedia / Convention 17** in Toronto.
- 1998** - **Lloyd & Yvonne Penney** of Toronto - attended **Con*cept98 / Convention 18** in Montreal.
- 1999** - **Garth Spencer** of Vancouver - attended **InCONsequential II / Convention 19** in Fredericton.
- 2000** - **Sherry Neufeld** of somewhere in Saskatchewan - attended **Toronto Trek 2000 / Convention 20** in Toronto.
- 2001** - **Murray Moore** of Mississauga - attended **VCON 26 / Convention 21** in Vancouver.
- 2002** - **Colin Hinz** of Toronto - attended **Con-version 19 / Convention 22** in Calgary.
- 2003** - **Lyndie S. Bright** of Winnipeg - attended **Torcon 3 / Convention 23** in Toronto.
- 2005** - **Brian Davis** of Fredericton - attended **Animethon 2005** in Edmonton.
- 2007** - **Peter Jarvis** of Toronto - attended **VCON 32 / Convention 27** in Richmond.
- 2008** - **Lance Sibley** of Toronto – attended **Keycon 25 / Convention 28** in Winnipeg.

GUFF WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

GUFF stands for 'Get Under Fan Fund' (sending UK fans to Australian Conventions), or in alternating years, such is this one, 'Get Up Fan Fund' (sending Aussie fans to UK conventions).

The 2008 winners, who will attend the UK Eastercon this coming April, are Aussie fans Sue Ann Barber and Trevor Clark. Here is how they described themselves on the Guff Ballot:

Sue Ann Barber and Trevor Clark can't wait to meet lots of fans at Eastercon LX. They love conventions and fandom and all of the opportunities they present. Between them they have: run conventions; edited fanzines; programmed conventions; run awesome panels; created a Fan Fund; started an SF history project; been SF club and convention committee members; and have just been there to make sure events come together. They are passionate about Lego, SF TV, graphic novels, stereo photography and flying cars. They really want to experience UK fandom first hand and are looking forward to seeing you all in the bar.

Sue Ann and Trevor's nominators were Bruce Gillespie, Danny (Heap) Oz, Grant Watson, James Bacon, and Claire Brialey. Of the 118 votes cast in the race, they received 88, consisting of 64 from Australia and 24 from Europe. Congratulations!

UPCOMING AURORA NOMINATIONS VOTE!

Apparently nominations ballots for the Auroras will be mailed with the 3rd Progress Report for Anticipation Worldcon some time in Late December or Early January. The online nomination ballot will appear at the Aurora website at the same time. Actual Awards ballots will appear online and with the 4th Progress Report some time in Spring.

Technically, nominations for 2009 will open January 1st and close February 28th. Ideally, fans pick and choose from an eligibility list, but no list covering every category exists as far as I know. However, a good site covering the pro categories is Robert J. Sawyer & Marcel Gagne's CANADIAN SF WORKS DATABASE which is described as "a collaborative (wiki) website providing information about works of professional Canadian science fiction and fantasy writing, publishing, and art. The Aurora Awards Committee uses this site as a source for eligibility for Aurora Awards."

One evolving aspect of the fan categories bothers me. There were 98 nominations received for the 'Fan publication' (ie fanzine) category in 2006, only 14 in 2007, and a mere 7 in 2008? Even worse, only one zine was successfully nominated in 2008 (need at least 2 votes), and that zine lost to No Award! What the hell happened? What made Canadian fanzines plummet off the fan radar in two short years? Has it anything to do with the fact that clubzines (like WCSFAzine) are no longer eligible for the publication category? And the fact that there are damn few perzines left? I'm starting up SPACE CADET again, there's Dale Spiers' OPUNTIA, Felicity's ISH, Garth Spencer's ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE, and ? And? Is the fan publication (fanzine) category dead because Canadian perzinedom (personal fanzine fandom) is near-dead?

Which reminds me, I assume clubzines like WCSFAzine, BCSFAzine, VOYAGEUR, WARP, and THE OTTAWA SF STATEMENT are eligible under the Fandom (Organizational) category? Albeit in competition with everything else organizations do?

At any rate, the nominations ballots allow you to nominate five "equally weighted" nominees in each category. Please start thinking now about whom you'd like to nominate. Check out the Cdn SF Database for potential professional candidates, and search fannish sources and your own experience of fandom for potential fannish candidates. Please!

AURORA AWARDS (ANNUAL PRO/FAN AWARDS): < <http://www.prix-aurora-awards.ca/> >

AURORA AWARDS (NOMINATION DATA BASE WIKI): < <http://www.canadiansf.com/> >

FANDOM HISTORICAL STUDIES

CLIPPINGS FROM CANADA

By Leslie A. Croutch

In several issues of Rosenblum's FUTURIAN WAR DIGEST from the 1940s posted online by UK fan Rob Hansen, Canada's own Leslie A. Croutch (Publisher and editor of LIGHT) contributes a column of which I quote the following sample:

Futurian War Digest #6, June 1941

'Tis said Ziff-Davies dropped some \$10,000 on its PETS magazine. To help make up this loss, SOUTH SEA STORIES and FANTASTIC were dropped. Now I see FANTASTIC ADVENTURES is back, in all its blood and gore and rapacious thunder.

America's new magazine is UNCANNY STORIES, not to be confused with UNCANNY TALES, which is a different magazine.

Hank Kuttner and his wife, Kat, are still in NYC at last time of writing to me. 'Tis said that Kat supplies Hank with his ideas and he writes them up. Hank told me in his last letter that he is producing 65,000 words a month!

In Hollywood, we find even the movie people busting their intestines going science-fiction in a big way. Universal has "The Invisible Woman" with John Barrymore coming up; also a Lionel Atwill "Mysterious Dr.R"... Hal Roach studios is hard at work on another Thorne Smith "Topper" picture "Topper Returns" featuring Roland Young, Joan Blondell, and Rochester...Two on the boards at Paramount Pictures have Basil Rathbone as the star "The Mad Doctor" and "The Monster and the Girl".

Arthur Widner Jr., editor of the Strangers Club's FANFARE, is plugging the word "fanzines" to take the place of the Philadelphian's "fanag" and the usual "fanmag". Incidentally, FANFARE is the neatest, most legible, and cleanest of any hectographed fanzine I have yet seen. In two colors too, into the bargain.

If the readers of FIDO, wherever they may be, like this column, have suggestions, or perhaps brick-bats to throw, write me: Leslie A. Croutch, Box 121, Parry Sound, Ont. Canada. I'm always glad to get letters and promise to answer all, especially from fair young things.

I am hoping that Croutch covers Canadian fannish news in future issues, perhaps revealing info new to me. Of Croutch Rosenblum writes:

Contributor Leslie Croutch is too modest to mention it himself, but he has just managed to break into print professionally with two acceptances and possibly more to come.

Rosenblum is probably referring to the stories 'The Phantom Train' and 'Tim's Tree' published in the Canadian pulp magazine UNCANNY TALES #3 in January of 1941. Croutch sold at least three more stories professionally later that year: 'Dancing Partner' to UNCANNY TALES #6 June 1941, 'A Dictator Dies' to another CanPulp EERIE TALES #1 July 1941, and 'Salvage Job' to the American prozine FUTURE FICTION #? in December 1941. Sadly, Croutch thereafter didn't have much luck selling his fiction, even though Forrest J. Ackerman was his agent for a number of years. Most of it wound up being published in fanzines, including his own LIGHT. But at least he was read and appreciated by his peers.



ORIGINS: THE UBC SFFEN

PART THREE

(History of the University of British Columbia Science Fiction club)

1970/1971 ACADEMIC YEAR

NOTE: No material exists in the WCSFA archives to indicate that UBC SFFEN was active during the Summer of 1970, despite plans laid in early 1970.

OCTOBER 1970:

Not much information is available for the beginning of the 1970/1971 Academic Year, but at least we know both clubs were functioning, for as Pat Burrows and David George noted in BCSFAzine #100:

The UBC Science Fiction Newsletter dated 7th October, 1970 stated "There will be a meeting of the UBC SFFEN and the B.C. Club on Thursday, October 15th in Sub 297 at 12:30.... The meeting is to pass a general constitution for the B.C. Club, and to elect five offices of SFFEN."

UBC SFFEN EXECUTIVE -- 1970/1971 ACADEMIC YEAR

Chairman -- Robert Bells
Vice Chairman -- Robert Scott (?)
Treasurer -- (?)
Secretary -- Joy Van Eikenharst
Information Officer -- (?)
Librarian -- Heather Loughery
Publications Officer -- Brian Greiner

That a constitution was prepared for BCSFA (or BCSFS, to be more accurate) back in 1970 is intriguing. To my knowledge the BCSFA constitution in use till the creation of WCSFA was based on one first created in 1974. This earlier document, if it still exists, would be MOST interesting to read for comparison's sake.....

Pat and David added that membership in UBC SFFEN stood at 90 at this time. A membership list preserved in the BCSFA archive lists 108 members, including David George, Pat Burrows, Maynard Hogg, Brent Maclean, Melez Massey, John Park, Frank Skinner, Mike Bailey, & Daniel Say (to name a few possibly still familiar to the memory of contemporary fans).

In October 1970 one of the legendary BNFs (Big Name Fan) of fandom, John Mansfield (who later chaired Conadian, the Winnipeg Worldcon in 1994, for instance) visited Vancouver. Daniel Say and Vice-Chairman Robert Scott were treated to a slide show depicting several SF conventions. Inspired by this, within two months, or before the end of 1970, Daniel Say announced the club would put on their own SF convention early in the coming year.

NOVEMBER 1970:

Meanwhile, another try was made at getting Isaac Asimov to come out. His response, dated 2 November 1970, was written to Mr. John Thomson of the Science Undergraduate Society, UBC:

"Dear Mr. Thomson, I'm afraid it's worse than not taking planes. To go to B.C. and back by train would cost me ten days away from my typewriter which I cannot afford and would inflict on me a long boring train ride each way (I'm afraid I hate travelling) which I could not endure. I'm afraid I shall never see the Pacific Ocean. Please forgive me. Yours, Isaac Asimov."

Somewhat odd, in that, while in the army, he sailed to Hawaii by troop ship and, upon discharge, was flown back to the US mainland. So unless he kept his eyes closed, he must have already seen the Pacific!

JANUARY 1971:

The following document was delivered to the UBC Special Events Committee on 5 January, 1971:

PLANS FOR A SCIENCE FICTION FESTIVAL:

NOTE: This was previously quoted in full in WCSFAzine #1 as an example of an aborted attempt at what later became VCON 1. Here I just quote excerpts to capture the 'essence'.

"TALKS BY AUTHORS:"

"Topic: Science Fiction; what was it, what is it, and what will it be. Speakers to be experts in the history of SF as well as being authors. Suggested speakers are Judith Merril and Harlan Ellison."

"Round table discussion on the present state of Science Fiction and what the trends in it are. Suggested participants; Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, and Poul Anderson as well as any others willing to participate."

"Fritz Leiber and Jack Vance talk on the Sword and Sorcery side of modern Fantasy. Poul Anderson stages one of his world famous jousts."

"John W. Campbell Jr. talks on the History of Astounding and its effect on the market."

"Robert A. Heinlein and Harlan Ellison give illustrated talks on prediction and the future of SF."

"Keynote address by Ursula K. LeGuin and Frank Herbert on SF and today's society."

"OTHER FEATURES:"

"Special showing of 2001 with a discussion with Stanley Kubrick following."

"Displays from NASA on the main mall."

And who was to fund this gathering of giants? The university of course. In terms of fees and plane fares whoever drew up this document figured the above guests could be brought in for about \$3,400. In 1971 dollars. That's a lot of money.

Since this magnificent convention never took place, I can only conclude that the University of B.C. Special Events Committee turned down the proposal. Pity.

On January 19th, 1971, Maynard Hogg was awarded a certificate granting him permanent status as an Honorary Member of UBC SFFEN in recognition of his being a founding member of the UBC SFFEN in 1968, the club's first and second General Chairman, and also a founding member of the

British Columbia Science Fiction Association in 1970. (This is the earliest surviving reference to BCSFA -- as opposed to BCSFS.)

MARCH 1971:

The very first off-campus meeting of BCSFA was held on Sunday, March 7th, 1971 at 2:00 PM in the auditorium of the downtown branch of the Vancouver Public Library. The UBC SFFEN Newsletter postmarked 18th of March states: *"The meeting was held to organize a provincial club and to promote our convention. About 20-30 non-UBC people attended (in addition to club members) including Chuck Davis, the TV commentator...."*

To "organize a provincial club"? I take it that BCSFA, having lain dormant, was reactivated at this meeting. I also assume that by this time the off-campus club was generally called BCSFA. Certainly it is referred to as such in the March/April newsletter commenting on subsequent meetings.

The next meeting took place in the same venue on 21st March, 1971. Having spotted a notice on the bulletin board in a bookstore previously, I showed up as the classic Neo, eager to be overwhelmed. I was very firmly informed that the name of the club was The BRITISH COLUMBIA SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION, that it was the organization behind the upcoming convention in April, and that it generally functioned as the co-ordinator for all B.C. SF clubs. Whoever told me this evidently couldn't resist exaggerating a little. I promptly took out a membership (note that my receipt reads "BCSFA membership," not "BCSFS" or "UBC SFFEN"). Oh yes, and the cost to join? \$3.00 per year.

About twenty people were present. Vice-Chairman Robert Scott (also referred to as President) gave a little talk and then held what I termed (in my diary notes of the time) an *'unusually undemocratic election'*. In other words, the following were elected by acclamation:

FIRST BCSFA (?) EXECUTIVE -1971

President/Vice-Chairman -- Robert Scott
Publications Officer -- John Park
Librarian -- Bob Marshall
Literary Advisor -- Lin Carter (?)

Although this was a BCSFA meeting, I'm not entirely certain these were BCSFA executive positions, as they sound more like UBC SFFEN Exec positions. Yet the University Club Executive had already been chosen for the Academic Year. Perhaps Robert Scott's role as UBC SFFEN Vice-Chairman was to be President of BCSFA (as a kind of sub-committee of UBC SFFEN), and Park and Marshall were elected to assist the off-campus club in the coming summer session? Or maybe these were to be UBC SFFEN executives during the summer? Then again, maybe some people had stepped down from the UBC SFFEN Exec and these were replacements? On the other hand, this WAS supposed to be a BCSFA meeting. So the answer is.... -- only further research will tell.

At the meeting the film 'STAR TREK BLOOPERS' was run, which I enjoyed immensely. This was followed by the National Filmboard production of 'UNIVERSE', from which, it was explained, Stanley Kubrick derived many of his ideas for '2001'.

At this point a young woman reporter from the Sun newspaper dropped by, joined later by a Sun photographer, who found nothing worth photographing. We offered to form a human pyramid, but no dice, not good enough. They left, followed by about half the group who had only been interested in seeing the films. The rest of us stayed to enjoy a slide show of local fans at distant conventions. According to my diary notes, the slides depicted fans *"stoned out of their minds, or stretched out on a couch in a good imitation of a dead whale."* About par for most fans at conventions, I reckon.

The meeting wound up with a rap session on SF in general. I was so excited about my first exposure to organized fandom that I offered my apartment for a writer's workshop the following Friday.

BCSFA WRITERS WORKSHOP - 26TH MARCH, 1971:

In the March/April UBC SFFEN newsletter it was reported: *"At Sunday's meeting we made arrangements to meet at the secret apartment of the world's greatest psuedo-intellectual, Ronald Graeme Cameron, ostensibly to criticize each other's works."*

Arrgh! Double arrgh! My first mention in BCSFA literature and they get my name wrong! It's Richard, not Ronald! ARRGH!...

About 15 people showed up at my apartment, many bringing manuscripts with them and most bringing beer. I though things were going well until Melaz Massey, who'd spent more than an hour perusing my SF novel 'AGAINST THE MALUII' (unpublished, and with a title like that, no wonder), looked me in the eye and pronounced it 'turgid'. John Park then asked if he could borrow the manuscript. At a later date he returned it, commenting that the monotony of my writing could put people to sleep. He described my style as placid, as deliberately or self-consciously vague, lacking in concrete description. Sigh....

As we seemed about talked out re: each other's writings, I brought out my collection of 'FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND' magazines and was surprised no one seemed interested. So then I hauled out my 8mm film projector and ran my amateur animation experiments, which included Godzilloids (G.I. Joes covered in green plasticine) stomping about H.O. scale train sets, and tentacled plasticine Martians writhing out of spaceships. I was asked if I wouldn't mind showing some of these at the convention. You betcha! The March/April newsletter commented:

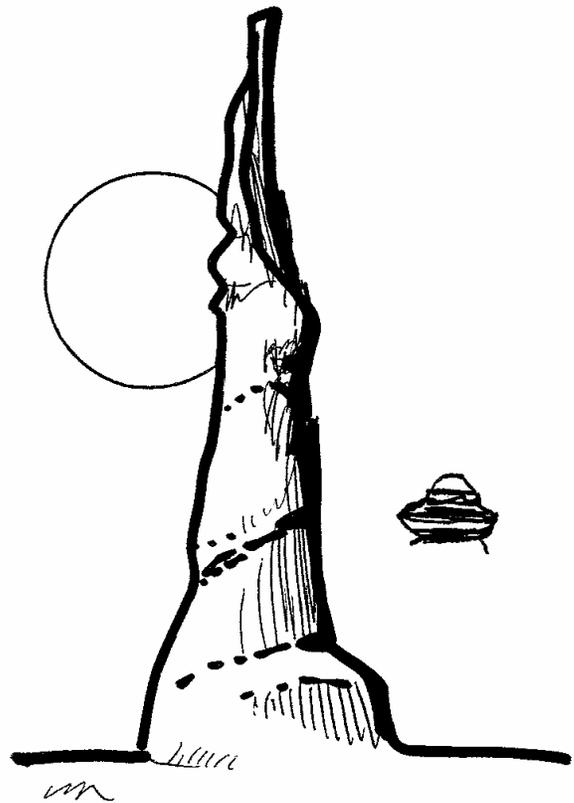
"The highlight of the evening was the showing of some green movies. Some highly unusual positions and actions were shown. Free booze was also in attendance, although he denied it...."

MARCH/APRIL 1971 UBC SFFEN NEWSLETTER:

(Edited by Mike Bailey and John Park, assisted by Brian Greiner. A three page letter-sized zine described as *"the first newsletter to be done on Gestetner"* and none too well, black ink blots abound.)

In addition to reporting on the two March meetings, the editors urged readers *"to join the BCSFA convention"*, adding that preregistration included people from as far away as California.

Elsewhere club members are reminded: *"Remember, all you UBCers, you are also BCSFAers!"* I much prefer our current term 'BCSFAner'... Also, this intriguing comment is made: *"If you weren't one of those invited to Harlan Ellison's Special Soiree at The Cave on Thursday, show up at the office and you may be lucky next time..."* Hmmm, so Harlan was in town....



APRIL 1971:

NOTE: As described in WCSFAzines #2-5 the UBC SFFEN successfully carried out (along with the BCSFA and the Simon Fraser University club SF3) VCON 1 April 9-10 with Ursula K. LeGuin as Guest of Honour. See the above issues for details.

JUNE 1971:

Mike Bailey put out a newsletter (another Gestetner effort, 3 pages of faint lettering) in which he mused:

"We went to a Con, April 9 & 10. Do you remember it?... We were troubled by feelings of doubt. Did we have as good a con as we could have and on such short notice? Did we blow it?... I think we did okay, and best of all, the experience was priceless...."

He then went on to comment on the possibility of doing another convention sometime, and bemoaned the fact that at least 100 members of UBC SFFEN failed to show up for the first one (Gads! UBC SFFEN must have had a HUGE membership roll for 1970/1971!). He then suggested a possible guest for next year's convention: *"Does Philip K. Dick sound like a good Guest of Honour? Sigh...if only...."*

Mike also asked: *"Did you read that review of our convention printed in LOCUS by Charles Brown? He had some not-too-nice things to say...Locus probably goes to about 1500 fans all over the world, so it's fame of sorts."* Does this mean Locus Editor Charles Brown actually attended our first convention?

Amid book reviews and the fact that Mike Bailey, Brent Maclean, John Park and Daniel Say were planning to attend Westercon 24 in Frisco (GoH Avram Davidson), there was the stunning announcement by Ballantine books that they were planning to raise the price of their top-of-the-line titles to \$1.25 in July (Sigh. Those were the days.), and other info, Mike comments:

"Although there aren't many people around, our office [UBC SFFEN] is still open all the time. Noon is the best time to show up if you wish to gab."

Being the end of the academic year, club activities were winding down.

Still, the newsletter contained the following announcement: *"THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY MEETS: (Dang! Seems 'BCSFS' & 'BCSFA' were still interchangeable at this period.) 26 June, 1971 at the Main Library. We meet in the auditorium at 3:00 to discuss the convention, plan the club's future....bring your plans for what the club should do this summer, as this may be our last full meeting for a while."*

FANATICAL FANZINE FABLES

RETRO CANADIAN FANZINES: TORUS #8

By Lloyd Penney & R. Graeme Cameron

Faned: Lloyd Penney, Keith Soltys, Nancy Soltys

TORUS #8, December 1990 was the last issue of a genzine produced in Toronto by the Kamikaze Editorial Collective which, in addition to the faneds mentioned above, included Michael Skeet and Michael Wallis. Here is a brief description (provided by Lloyd Penney) of the first seven issues:

1986 - (#1 - ?) - Articles by Mike Glicksohn on attending 200 conventions, Garth Spencer on the state of Canadian fandom, Heather Ashby on a design for the Casper Award (one that was definitely NOT used), Christopher Coggon on how the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus landing on North American shores should be celebrated - with spaceflight, Michael Skeet and Lorna Toolis on the traumatic move to Toronto, Paul Stockton on Strawberry Jam Comics, Karen Wehrstein on the creation of the Bunch of Seven writers' group, and Keith Soltys interviewing Judith Merril.

1987 - (#2 - Oct) - Michael Skeet joins the Kollektive. An interview with C.J. Cherryh is followed by articles on how to really make tea, hunting the wildwoods lobster, Canadian SF and locs.

1988 - (#3 - Apr) - Interviews with Elisabeth Vonarburg and Donald Kingsbury, articles on shooting pool instead of publishing fanzines, short fiction from Phyllis Gotlieb, some fanhistory from Taral, plus the local.

1988 - (#4 - Oct) - The KEC now listed as back to Penney, Soltys and Wallis. Articles by Robin Rowland about the rise of censorship in Canada, Terri Neal on living with a pager, fine art from Taral, an interview with Orson Scott Card, Karen Wehrstein on living in a writers' group, and the usual locs.

1989 - (#5 - Mar) - KEC now adds Nancy Soltys. An interview with Ben Bova, article by Terri Neal on how to write when the Torus editors threaten, poetry by Shirley Meier, art by Juanne Michaud, article by Allan Burrows on how not to trust your senses, fufutre fanhistory from Taral, and locs.

1989 - (#6 - Oct) - Wallis departs KEC. Articles by Derek McCulloch on a dangerous childhood friend, Tony Davis on science fiction in South Africa, Sam Moskowitz on researching SF history (including Canadian history), Canadian SF and locs.

1990 - (#7 - Apr) - A review of the National Art Gallery by Robert Runte, article by Bev Richardson on tropical fish conventions, essay by Lloyd Penney on holographic cats, art by Taral on house gamins, article by Paul Stockton on the perfect pizza (not in Toronto), and by Michael Skeet on where to find good food, Tony Davis on an SFnal South Africa, Canadian SF and locs.

As you can see from the above, TORUS was indeed a genzine, one with a most eclectic taste in topics, and frequent contributions by pros.

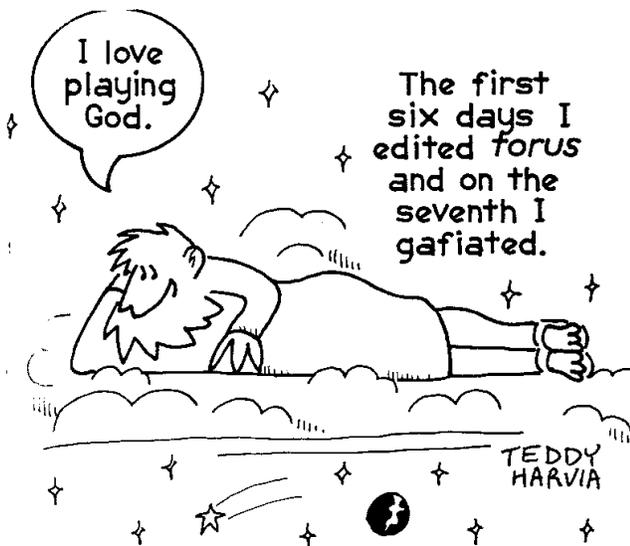
I chose to review #8 mainly because of the cover which is so redolent of both my childhood and Taral's. Granted, I was never followed home by a lovely, naked apparition (at least, not that I can recall), but the experience of trudging through snow gleaming in the moonlight, hauling a sleigh on which I had just spent several hours sliding down a steep slope two or three blocks from my house, bundled up warm but beginning to freeze, seems to be captured almost perfectly in this cover. Remove the 'ghost', throw



n.

on a toque, convert the coat into a knitted-wool 'Hudson's Bay' frost-covered jacket, add 'pearls' of ice to my eyelashes, nostrils & lips, and that's **me** 45 years ago! Plus I've always been a sucker for the lonely quietude of winter scenes (certain Giles cartoons spring to mind). I love this cover. It's a wonderful cover. It's a very Canadian cover.

In the editorial **Keith Soltys** explains why this will be the last issue. Seems that the birth of Edward Robert Soltys the previous May has resulted in a slight reduction in time available for fanac. "A reasonable estimate would be that it takes least 100 hours to put out an issue of TORUS. It used to be that I could put in that much extra time over a couple of months..." but no longer. Overall though, issue #8 "is close to what Lloyd and I had in mind when we started this a few years ago."



Ben Bova permits TORUS to reprint an article of his titled 'Science Fiction and Faith', in which he declares "There are two kinds of people in the world: Luddites and Prometheans – those who fear science and its offspring technologies, and those who embrace them." Eighteen years later it's beginning to look like the Luddites were right, alas. He goes on to imply that the decline of traditional religion and the upsurge in mysticism is nothing less than a search for "a new mythology, a set of beliefs that can explain the modern world on the emotional, intuitive level to people who are frightened that they are too small and too weak to cope with society." Rather a large assumption on his part methinks, and somewhat belittling. He concludes, pleasantly but probably unrealistically,

"science fiction writers have been slowly building up a mythology suitable for our modern scientific age. Like the scientists themselves, the writers share the rock-bottom faith in the power and beauty of rational human thought.".... right....sure, pal.... Whatever you say.... Have you seen the news lately? Maybe SF writers and scientists worship rational thought, but damn few others....

Terri Neal contributes a four page poem titled 'The Footprint of a Whale'. It's a very good poem, quite beautiful in fact, as per the following quote:

*We meet a mother alone
 (for the basin is nursery, big enough for whales)
 she roars deep and low, deep as bone-marrow, low as sea-bottom
 like an elephant, their kin in the morning of the world
 she caresses our boat, blows spray at us and bellows again
 low and deep*

Candas Jane Dorsey asks the amusing question: "Can you catch locs from dancing with fans? All that rubbing against them in the corridors of SF conventions. Now I get zines in the mail the little check marks in boxes: 'We would like you to contribute'. What for?"

And her answer is: "Asking a writer to write is dangerous. There is the drivel, the spume we produce to convince our friends we still know how to write a good letter.... Then, there is something else, analogous to unexploded dynamite, leaking nitro and damned dangerous... there are times when a writer, forced to contribute, explodes. I keep questioning that. Am I going to survive the next time? Even if I do, how long will it take for me to grow back all those body parts? For the vat, unlike the

William Gibson seamless imagining, leaves scars and causes dreams... You ask me to contribute? Are you sure you know what you are doing? Are you sure you want to face the consequences?"

Next a reprint of an interview with SF author **Andrew Weiner** by Japanese fan Yoshiyuki Tanaka. Weiner grew up in England, then moved to Canada. He has some interesting things to say:

On the meaning of the alien in his work – *"My interest in the alien is as a metaphor. I have absolutely no interest in attempting to imagine the actual physiology of actual alien species..."*

On the influence of Freud – *"There is a Freudian analyst in 'Klein's Machine' who thinks that SF is an Oedipal literature... Freud himself makes an appearance in another story, 'Comedians', (about an alternate universe in which Freud is a foul-mouthed comedian). But this story is a joke... I'm by no means a pure Freudian. But I do enjoy playing around with his ideas."*

On writers he admires – *"I admire William Gibson both as a stylist and as an astute interpreter of the evolving information economy. I think he is by a long way the best we have."*

On Canadian SF – *"It's hard to define a separate identity for Canadian SF when most of the writers come from elsewhere (Gibson and Spider Robinson from the US, Michael Coney and myself from England, etc.) and when most of the work is first published elsewhere... That said, I can see a Canadian influence on my own work, to the extent that it sometimes deals with issues of survival in a hostile environment (e.g. 'Station Gehenna') and of cultural marginality (e.g. 'Distant Signals')."*

Tony Davis throws in a convention report on PULPCON 19 held in New Jersey. He has a very interesting opening: *"I'm sure that it's some kind of alien plot," mused one pulpster to his small audience. "The aliens must have blanked out people's minds across the world, except for a few of us.".... That possibility, loony or not, is a reasonable explanation for the disappearance of pulp magazines from the collective minds of Americans."*

On the nature of the 'pulpsters' he writes: *"...rarely more than 200 die-hard pulp fans gather to honour their favourite literature...the average age is over 40, so 'new blood' is usually welcomed... there is very little of the frenetic pace...as often is the case at SF or comic cons... the four-day format of the pulpcon takes away much pressure to buy; that and the maturity of the pulpsters themselves."*

And what about the pulp writers themselves? *"One recurrent story, from both pulp writers and artists alike, is that in spite of the rates of pay at the time (1 cent to 1.5 cents a word or \$8 to \$10 an illo) the volume of work during the Depression era in the United States gave them reasonably comfortable lifestyles."*

The 'Lamont' Award, named after Lamont Cranston (legendary crime fighter The Shadow), is chosen by the Concom and previous winners to *"honour the individual who has done his/her utmost to popularize pulps... The Lamont was presented at Pulpcon 19 to Toronto's own Don Hutchison. Don has been associated with sf fandom for decades and has made numerous contributions to Canadian sf fan literature. Don has compiled two pulp-related anthologies – 'The Super Feds' and more recently 'It's Raining Corpses in Chinatown', the latter being a collection of 'Yellow Peril' stories."*

[Editor's note: Don Hutchison's fannish credentials stretch back to 1948, if not earlier, with his promoting his fanzine MACABRE -- which he co-edited with Jack Doherty – at Torcon, the first Worldcon held in Canada (in Toronto). See WCSFAzine 11 for the full story of the Torcon.]

Phyllis Gotlieb provides a striking SF/fantasy poem titled 'JEFFEN AND RAVNA: FOUR SESTINAS' which runs for five pages. The poem is illustrated by five dark-riden scenes by Taral,

apparently unrelated to the poem's subject matter, but quite appropriate in tone. I reproduce a couple in this issue. Here is a brief sample of the poem's style:

*And anyway, she was a Farroes woman,
Alien, spined like a lizard, home in the cold levels
and angled cells of a striated station,
who looked across at Terra onyx-eyed, spying
and skirmish her iron lovers.*



Peter Roberts throws in several zine reviews, including an assault on SPINTRIAN #2&3, published by the Speculative Fiction Society of Regina. He writes: “*SPINTRIAN is the kind of zine I dread receiving, a zine put out by a university group that takes the zine seriously....I mention this zine because it is here in all its pretentious glory. Come on guys, lighten up, have some fun. You don't have to save the world through speculative fiction. It's a shame when our educational system fails us...*”

There follows a number of book reviews, including one by **Keith Soltys** of Robert J. Sawyer's GOLDEN FLEECE which is positively ecstatic: “*SF mysteries are particularly difficult to write but Sawyer pulls this one off with élan. The novel works well on a number of levels, as a murder mystery, a hard sf novel and a novel of character. JASON, in particular, is believable and well thought out. There are obvious parallels to Arthur C. Clarke's HAL, but Sawyer goes well beyond Clarke in his portrayal of the tragically flawed computer. The other major characters are as believably rendered.. It's a solid, intelligent and entertaining novel – one that many more experienced authors would be proud to have written.*”

Last of all, a loc column including such well known fans as Buck Coulson, Michael Hall, Harry Warner Jr. (of course!), Mike Glicksohn and Robert Runte. Also **Garth Spencer** (current editor of BCSFAzine), who responds to a previous issue's review of Steve Stirling's 'DRAKA' novels by commenting: “*...his Draka are not Afrikaners...I think Stirling means that a group that lost everything and was run out of their homeland, that only became an identifiable group in opposition to liberal ideology, would go further than the Boers ever did. He does say explicitly that the Draka repudiated Christianity; the Afrikaners still stick to DRC Calvinism.*”

And finally, and mainly because I'm the editor, I quote from a Loc of my own (back when I was editor of BCSFAzine) which I had completely forgotten about: “*Robert Runte's review of the National Art Gallery reminded me why I prefer 'illustrators' to 'artists'. To me, modern art is conceptual only in the sense the intended concept remains locked in the brain of the artists due to their inability to visually express themselves, yet these non-talents masquerade as 'genius', which I find very boring. I recall an anecdote about an ancient artist (I think in the reign of the Emperor Augustus) who produced a white canvas bisected by a blue line in turn bisected by a red line containing within it the thinnest of white lines. It caused quite a stir 2000 years ago. But at least*

this ancient artist was trying to make a point, namely that he could paint a thinner straight line than any of his contemporaries. Somehow, this seems a lot more honest than anything passing for 'modern art' nowadays. Modern art is like modern architecture, both are designed to make people feel insignificant. That is why I delight in taking refuge within SF illustrations; they tend to excite my imagination, whereas most modern art puts me to sleep."

My loc apart, I think you'll agree that TORUS was an outstanding genzine, and it's a damned shame #8 was the last issue.

BOYD RAEURN: GOH DITTO #1

(From the Ditto 1 Program Book, September 1988)

By Taral

For a Canadian fan, Boyd Raeburn is oddly enough not a Canadian. He was born in Dunedin, New Zealand, in 1927, and didn't swap poles until he was twenty-five. In spite of the rusticated charm of small-town life down-under, Boyd discovered science fiction as early as 1935. He published his first fanzine in 1943. In later years, of course, Boyd became the archetype of the fan who hated to talk SF, who professed a need to vomit when the subject came up in his presence. It was Boyd, in fact, who coined that eminently useful particle of fanspeak, "sercon". One suspects it was less the SF than the fan that turned Boyd's stomach. He never suffered fools gladly.

In 1952, fed up with sheep, mutton, and lanolin, he left New Zealand. Little did he guess he'd end up in the streets of Toronto, a derelict. After the Worldcon in '48, the old CanFan crowd was burned out. Little happened for the next few years, but gradually new faces arrived in local fandom. They appropriated the Torcon committee nickname and called themselves the Derelicts. Among the new faces were Gerald A. Steward, Bill Grant, P. Howard Lyons, Pat Patterson, Ron Kidder, Al Lastovica, Ken Hall, Norman G. Browne, and of course Boyd Raeburn. Browne, from western Canada, who considered himself rather a BNF, was rather more of a fugghead, and was the ostensible reason for a friendly division among the Derelicts. Raeburn, Kidder, and Steward formed an inner circle jokingly called the Derelict Insurgents.



The Derelicts were never a club, but they'd been called worse things. They never had a clubzine either. But they did have *A Bas*. The zine began with a hoax number, with fake names. The second issue was volume one, number one. The third issue was volume two, number two. You get the idea... In volume three, number three Boyd published an index to the missing issues, but thereafter *A Bas* kept faith with the archivist.

By this time all pretense that *A Bas* was the Derelict clubzine had ended. It was clearly Boyd's. His interests and favourite writers quickly eclipsed the in-jokes, parodies, and local contributions of early issues. The mature *A Bas* contained jazz reviews, Midwestcon reports, and Ellison-baiting. Articles were written by Harry Warner Jr., Bob Tucker, and Dick Geis. One peculiar institution remained, however. The Derelict Derogations were comedies of quotes and quasi-quotes. Boyd wrote these dialogues using as much as possible the real words of real people, often putting them in the worst possible light. The effect could be hilarious, if devastating to the victim. Much of the humour of the Derogations has been lost along with their timelines. But even thirty years later certain passages still cut to the quick.

A Bas lasted eleven issues, ending in 1959. By then Boyd had become enmeshed in the fanaticism of the Duchess of Canadian Fandom, Gina Ellis, and her consort Norm Clarke. The most visible product of this triune partnership were the *Queebshots*. *Queebshots* resembled an ordinary one-shot the way SCTV resembles network television. (There's a nut or three loose...) Boyd had also joined *FAPA*, producing a minimum of eight pages of *Le Moindre* a year up until the present, (as far as the author knows).

In a word, Boyd has always kept his private life private. Certain things, however, were public knowledge. His love of fast cars for instance. The time he fell out of the faulty door of Gerald Steward's MG, for another. Somewhere along the line fast cars gave way to expensive cars, so that today Boyd drives a classic Mercedes Benz. (1) In Gina Clare's imagination, Toronto fans had a penchant for black leather jackets that was much exploited in the Duchess's fanzines. No doubt this is myth, as are other, less admissible vices ascribed to the Insurgents.

Jazz, however, was one of Boyd's public vices. Not only did he collect "sides," Boyd was a member of a prominent Toronto jazz club. Said club organized the legendary Massey Hall performance, which brought together several of the greatest jazz musicians for the first, and only, time. Boyd admitted in private, many years later, that for all that the concert was legendary, at the time it was a bust. Not enough tickets had been sold at the door to cover the musicians' fees. One of the jazzmen – an extremely famous one, and a notoriously mean bastard, whose name I've unforgotten – suspected as much, and cornered Boyd in a stairwell shortly after his performance. Boyd therefore had the privilege of personally paying one of the all-time jazz greats.

Boyd lives a quiet respectable life in 1988, in quiet respectable Willowdale, maintaining his strict privacy. (2) Due to circumstances beyond our control, he is not available this weekend to attend Ditto. Since he is only a twenty-minute walk away from the not-so-respectable author's Dalmirin Embassy, we have verified the absence of the tell-tale dark grey Mercedes. Therefore, it gives us great pleasure to have the honour of declaring Boyd Raeburn our official Guest-of-Honour-*in-Absentia*. (3)

1) I once rode in it, in fact. It was at a Disclave – late 70's, early 80's -- , and somehow I became attached to a dinner party that included Boyd. He drove us in his Mercedes – a very elegant set of wheels. We dined Ethiopian. At that time a very esoteric cuisine available in few cities.

2) He lived on Maxome Ave. in the basement of the Kidder home. Evidently they were still close.

3) Boyd Raeburn died in **August 2001**, after several days in a coma.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

- Norman Browne was the founder of the Vancouver Science Fiction Society (the 'Hibited Men) in December 1951, and fanned of 6 issues of VANATIONS circa 1952/1953.
- The cover of A BAS #8 was by Pat Patterson, married name Lyons. I believe she did most of the covers.

ZINEDOM STRONGER THAN WE THINK?

Our host Efanazines.com carries 124 zines, and has links to many more. Perusing other sources, and taking into account the paper zines one hears of from time to time, there are easily 200+ fanzines being published worldwide these days. That's a very healthy zinedom!

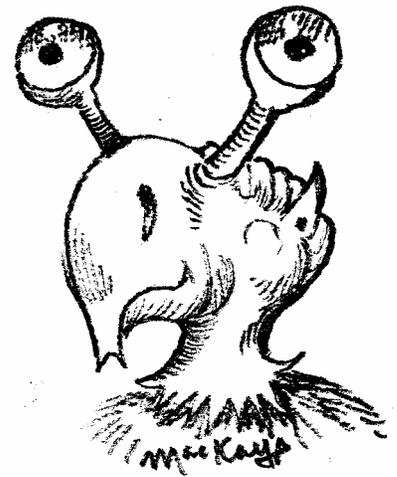
And considering that our host has experienced more than half a million visits since Bill Burns began the site in 2000, and is currently averaging more than 300 'hits' a day, that's another healthy symptom!

Granted, Canada seems rather moribund, with only about a dozen zines (perzines & clubzines lumped together) and yet I suspect interest in zinedom is still alive in the semi-frozen north (the muskeg is starting to melt for the first time in recorded history by the way...).

You see, the efanazines.com site meter churns out statistics on a daily basis. The majority of visits are by American fans, around 55% on average, with the UK a not-too-distant second at a respectable average of around 15%. But Canada's interest is surprisingly robust, bouncing around between 3rd place and 5th place, between 11% & 3%.

Does this not indicate a large number of Canadian fans are checking out our zines? Around, mayhaps, 15-20 a day on average? Granted, myself, Murray Moore, Taral Wayne, Garth Spencer & Lloyd Penney might account for many of the hits, and other oldtimers for some of the rest... there could be a silent majority of fans out there... if any of you mystery guys are reading this, I'd like to hear from you! Find out what intrigues you. Find out what draws you here...

At any rate, I think zinedom is far from dead. In fact, I think there's a kind of renaissance going on... now if it would just spread into Canada...



FUTURIAN WAR DIGEST A BLAST FROM THE PAST!

On first of November UK fan Rob Hansen stated:

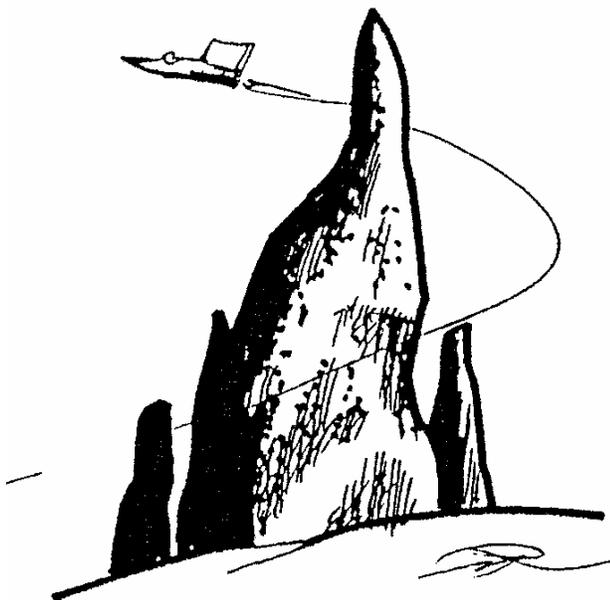
“There's been an uncoordinated but gradual effort, moving back through time, to get Britain's major newszines OCR'd and online. Having recently become re-enthused by fannish projects, I decided to tackle our wartime newszine, Futurian War Digest. So as not to get overwhelmed by the work involved and so run out of steam and abandon it, I'm pacing myself and only committing to

getting one issue up per week. I've just launched with the first two issues, so those of you interested in this sort of thing might like to check it out at: < <http://www.fiawol.demon.co.uk/rob/> >”

Since then more have been added on a weekly basis. FUTURIAN WAR really is a ‘blast from the past’, with devastating consequences! You think YOU have problems storing your collection, consider the following:

From Issue #5 – February 1941:

The sympathy of all fans in this country and abroad will go out to Sidney L. Birchby, whose home was destroyed and his mother killed, when a direct hit was sustained during a recent day raid. The house itself was reduced to a heap of rubble, and Sid himself comments re his collection ...



"Imagine my horror! The land's premier collection of "Weird Tales" scattered over the entire neighbourhood! A Brundage cover in every back garden! Can you wonder that I was forced to flee the vicinity when my dreadful secret became known?"

“Three days, of frantic grubbing under the ruins led to the salvage of about 30% of the collection. Much of it was the worst 30%; stuff by the cheapjacks of s-f; while "lo!" and the best Astoundings went to feed the earthworms."

Moreover considerable SFA matter has been lost, including the notes for Sid's projected history of the Association; and will correspondents note that all Sid's letter files have disappeared.

From Issue #6 – March 1941, further details:

The Story of a Bomb!! moaned by Sidney L. Birchby

It was only a little one. Just about the smallest H.E. that is made, no doubt. But of its efficacy one could not doubt.

It arrived at a most inopportune time, at 12 a.m. on a Monday morning before I had completed my ARP for stf.

The plan was grand. Everything in one room and in that room, everything into drawers and trunks with the most valued possessions in the safest containers.

Unfortunately, I had only got as far as having everything in one room, and the bomb had to choose that room to fall in. Result: some valuables survived but much more basically useful stuff perished-- instead of lots of relative rubbish that remained intact.

How I can write a philosophic discussion on the destruction of my collection is beyond me. I feel more like howling. To think of all my SFA meeting notes and my fan mags and half the choicest collectors items - not to mention irreplaceable books and magazines is to start weeping, and gnashing my teeth.

The above reportage is distinctly odd, in that it gives the impression Birchby was far more concerned about the damage to his collection than the death of his mother. But perhaps it's an example of the proverbial 'stiff upper lip'. Then again, maybe Rosenblum was misinformed and Birchby did not lose his mother, only his house? All the same, leaves an odd impression.

Issue #5 also noted an aspect of 'The Blitz' I had never considered before:

BAD NEWS ON THE BOOK FRONT

During the City of London "Fire- blitz" last month, British publishers suffered badly. About half of London's famous book publishers had their premises or warehouses destroyed, so that repercussions on the fantasy book field will no doubt be great. One estimate says that about 6,000,000 books total went up in flames. The immediate result, as it hits us, is that apart from such stocks as remain in bookshops, perhaps the majority of fantasy books are now "out of print", and a good number will be absolutely unobtainable. When those worthy of it will be reprinted is very doubtful indeed, under war conditions.

I find 'Futurian War Digest' absolutely fascinating and highly recommend it as an amazing glimpse of a strife-torn period in fannish history. I intend to glean every issue for details & references to Canadian fans such as Bill Gibson who, while serving in Britain, contacted many local fans and apparently contributed art, which I hope will appear in future issues of FWD (or FIDO as it was nicknamed) as revealed by Rob Hansen on a weekly basis. I am an avid reader of FUTURIAN WAR DIGEST!

ZINE REVIEW

(of a zine hosted by < <http://efanzines.com> >)

THE DRINK TANK #188 -- Faned: Christopher Garcia.

Christopher has hit upon a really great idea, an issue devoted entirely to the current Rotsler Award winner, Taral Wayne. Even better, he plans to devote future issues to future Rotsler winners, and when possible, to past Rotsler winners. Eventually an incredible selection of fanartist folios will be available. Wonderful!

For this issue Taral titles his folio THINK TANK, and reproduces 15 examples of his art well illustrating both his technical expertise and the variety of subjects and styles he employs. Most satisfying of all, much of it is rather rare and thus a treat to see. He describes the salient points of each piece and the background story behind their creation, enabling the reader to experience each art piece twice, first through the initial visual impression and then again via a more thoughtful evaluation in light of what Taral says about it.

Taral begins with his famous Rotsler Letraset (for transfer to masters for inking on the rolling drum of the now extinct Gestetner gizmos) of multiple copies of various Rotsler characters you'd swear were drawn by Rotsler himself. And indeed Taral tells an amusing story about nearly fooling Rotsler himself into thinking a Taral imitation was genuine Rotsler!

Other art pieces I really like are CREW MATE, depicting a furry lighting up a joint atop the turret of a tank, not least because the shading technique really aids the 3d effect of the work, plus it's a good example of his excellent use of perspective; a fun version of DATING GAME where the three suitors are renowned cartoon mice, namely Brain, Fievel & the Space Mouse; DECOMPRESSION in which a damaged spaceship is leaking fanzines (this is Christopher's favourite of the lot); and EQUINOCTURNE, a 'fake' Kelly Freas Analog magazine cover presented to Robert Wilson on the occasion of his first sale to Analog (the actual 1975 issue cover depicted a different story within). If you are a cognoscente of fanart, you've GOT to read this issue!

SUPER SCIENCE STUFF



ASK MR. SCIENCE!

(As submitted by Al Betz, Corresponding Secretary for Mr. Science.)

Mr. RWS, of Coquitlam, B.C., asks:

WHY DO THE BUBBLES IN MY BEER ALWAYS START AT THE SAME HEIGHT IN THE GLASS, AND WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH QUARK QUANTUM CHROMODYNAMICS?

Mr. SCIENCE: This unique property of beer, called the Plimsoll Effect, is caused by the presence, in all beers, of strongly radioactive heavy isotopes, which quickly settles to the bottom of the glass. The alpha particles emitted by these isotopes are, of course, the nuclei of helium atoms. These helium nuclei capture electrons when they slow down, and form minute bubbles of helium gas, which rise through the beer, coalescing into ever larger bubbles until they finally become visible at the Plimsoll line. The connection with Quark Quantum Chromodynamics is perfectly obvious, and will not be disclosed here.

Ms. MM, formally of Bellingham, WA, asks:

WHY DOES MY TV SET BRIEFLY DISPLAY A WHITE DOT IN THE CENTER OF THE SCREEN WHEN I TURN IT OFF?

MR. SCIENCE – Your set was designed by an electronics engineer who, in his spare time, was a fervent student of English grammar. The white spot is the equivalent of the period at the end of a sentence.

MEDIA MADNESS

RETRO FILM REVIEW: AELITA (1924)

By The Graeme

Or '*Aelita: Revolt of the Robots*', a remarkable Russian Science Fiction film which was made in 1924, 3 years BEFORE *Metropolis*. Like the latter, *Aelita* is a political allegory, but a more successful one, in that at least a portion of the plot (those elements which take place in Moscow) is more credible and realistic than anything in *Metropolis*. For sheer spectacle, *Metropolis* can't be beat, yet the Science Fiction aspects of *Aelita* are so stylistic as to appear genuinely alien. I prefer *metropolis* as entertainment, but *Aelita* is the better film.

And then there are the weird parallels with *Total Recall*....

Aelita begins with the receipt of the mysterious radio signal 'ANTA ODELI UTA" in Communications stations throughout the world on December 4th, 1921. Bearded scientist Spiridinov brings it to the attention of Chief Engineer Loss, saying "You don't suppose this signal came from Mars do you?"

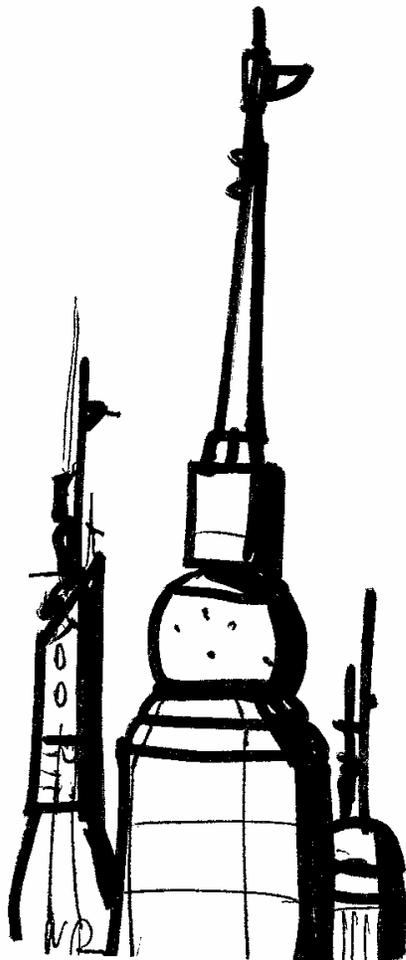
Loss' eyes light up. "You may think I'm crazy," he replies, "but maybe somebody on Mars is wondering about us."

Meanwhile Loss' wife Natasha is busy at the Kursk Train Station checkpoint in Moscow, examining the papers of the torrent of refugees fleeing the ongoing civil war between the Reds and the Whites. It's not clear what happens to those whose papers aren't in order, so her job strikes me as a little ominous. The fledgling Soviet state must be protected from traitors and backsliders! To render the paranoia a little more cheerful, goodhearted Masha also works at the checkpoint. She's a nurse, and will soon fall in love with Gussev, one of those annoying hearty peasant/soldier comic relief characters that show up in Russian films, usually much addicted to playing the accordion.

Back at the station, Loss is shown goofing off from his work, preferring instead to daydream about his plans for flying to Mars, wondering what it would be like....

We're on Mars. We see weirdly effective futurist/cubist sets designed by Isaak Rabinovich of the Kamerny theatre. Everything is angles or overlapping scales, towering shafts with dramatic interplay of light and shadow. The costumes, by Aleksandra Ekster, emphasize the same sort of angular construction, made of a shiny black plastic-like material with highly reflective clear vinyl overlapping, or draped in folds of glittering white cloth. Great efforts are made by the actors to ensure that every motion they make is somehow unnatural, either too quick or just plain peculiar. In other words, an honest attempt to appear truly alien.

Aelita, the Queen of Mars, wearing a spiked headdress and what appears to be a dress designed for triple breasts, waits while her maid, Ihoska spies on Gor, the Chief Scientist on Mars and the keeper of the Radiant Energy, as he explains his latest invention to Tuskub, King of Mars. A model of a marvellous prismatic telescope is shown to the king, who commands that it remain a secret. As Gor leaves, Tuskob raises his arm to smash the model, then thinks better of it. A big mistake. Ihoska tells Aelita, who promptly seduces Gor into demonstrating the telescope for her while Ihoska distracts the guards by smiling at them. (The guards wear nifty Roman/medieval/robot armour.) Aelita is fascinated as scenes of earthly life appear, busy streets, battleships, Loss kissing his wife on a bridge.... Aelita turns to Gor and commands "Touch my lips with your lips as the Earth people did" which he does, awkwardly. Dissatisfied, she goes back to her role as interplanetary voyeur.



Back on Earth, Gussev arrives, falls in love with Masha, and plays the accordion. Erlich and Elena also show up at the checkpoint, a husband and wife team filled with con artist backsliding capitalist fervour. Erlich tries to bribe Natasha, slipping her a little package (food? Money?) which she rejects.

He hands it back with a note reading "You're so charming. How can you be so cruel?" Offended by this plutocratic behaviour, she ignores him. Erlich and Elena leave, deciding to shack up with Spiridinov, Elena's old flame, and to ensure they are welcome, Erlich pretends to be his wife's brother. Meanwhile Natasha packs her bag to go home, and, horrors of horrors, gives in to temptation and slips the bribe into her bag.

Loss discovers the note and is instantly jealous. "What stranger is writing you?" Natasha tries to laugh it off, but the seed of suspicion is planted.

Erlich has lost no time in contacting like-minded swindling former capitalists and throws a party where everyone reminisces about the good old days when manners were refined and delicate and you were allowed to beat your servants.

On Mars Tuskub catches Aelita mooning over Loss at the telescope and has Gor shut it down. He's jealous too, but then, he has cause to be.

Back on Earth, there is no more private property in Russia. All housing belongs to the Soviet, and Erlich (moving out of Spiridinov's place to give Elena a chance to fleece him out of his family heirlooms) is imposed on Natasha and Loss. An annoyed Loss is shown bundling his blueprints and a model of his spaceship out of his Den to make room for Erlich. Natasha is upset by Loss' attitude.

While merrily painting propaganda posters with Erlich for an upcoming Agitprop play at the checkpoint, Natasha invites Loss to join the fun, but he's moody and petulant, what with Erlich continually kissing his wife's fingers and all, and angrily slams the table. He takes refuge in his Spaceship designing while Erlich tries to seduce Natasha with real chocolate and other goodies. Seems she got him a job at the checkpoint giving out the rations, and by cooking the books, he appears to have adopted yee old "One for you, two for me" approach. What with the jewels Elena has been getting from Spiridinov, and his stolen goodies, he's becoming quite wealthy on the black market scene.

However, at the distribution centre suspicions are aroused. The Chief of Police is called in, a hulking fellow in a black leather jacket. (Which police? The infamous Cheka, precursor to the KGB? The G.P.U.?) Weasely Kravtsov (delightfully played by Igor Illinski) wants to become a police spy but they don't want him. The police visit Erlich, who hides jewels in Natasha's coat, where they are found by Loss. This leads to another argument. Just as they are about to make up, he overhears Erlich inviting her to a dance, and so it goes, various bits of business relating their growing estrangement.

Once again on Mars, we see Aelita painting a picture of Loss with an instrument remarkably like a bundle of light filaments. When told by Ihoska that the Elders are busy meeting, she tries to get to the tower of Radiant Energy where the telescope is kept, but Tuskub has locked her out. Furious, she interrupts the state meeting. "How dare you hide Gor's apparatus from me!"

Patently Tuskub states "You may reign but we rule. The tower will remain closed." Aelita, very angry, leaves.

"So," says Gor, "by decree of the elders, one third of the life force will be stored in refrigerators." He's referring to the worker population. We see guards dressed in costumes striped like bees ordering ill-clad workers to slide down chutes into the vast underground storage complex. Both workers and guards wear square helmets hiding their faces, the effect is inhuman, almost insect-like. Workers are piled like cordwood in a scene eerily prescient, evoking images of both the Holocaust and the Gulag, before being stored in stacked cells.

While this is going on, Aelita plays the Martian harp for Tuskub till he falls asleep (from sheer boredom?). She steals his key to the tower and heads off to the tower. But "Jealousy is no stranger to

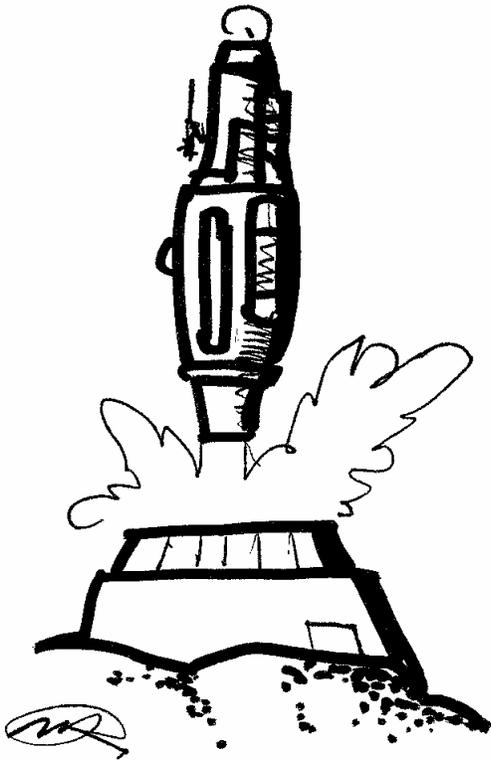
Martians." Gor follows her and smashes his invention, saying "I know you're in love with the Earth man, but you'll never see him."

Back on Earth, Loss entrusts his spacecraft plans to Spiridinov. Erlich takes Natasha to a black market ball, criminals only. Natasha looks at the well-shod women around her and thinks back to the straw boots the refugees wore. Nevertheless she stays. A drunken Spiridinov (present because of Elena) mentions Loss is leaving town. Natasha flees on foot into the Moscow winter, trying to reach home, but Erlich catches up and kisses her just as Loss happens along. They don't call Loss 'Loss' for nothing. A born loser!

Loss leaves town and works on a jolly hydro-electric plant project for six months. He gets a letter from Spiridinov, who's left Russia for good because of Elena, but has hidden the plans in loss's home. Loss returns home, sees the shadows of a man and woman kissing at the top of the stairs, so that when his wife descends the stairs, he shoots her dead.

Bit of a surprise, that. Renders the possibility of a reconciliation somewhat difficult.

Our 'hero' (kind of hard to identify with a murderer) disguises himself as Spiridinov and somehow gets the money to build himself a riveted metal pear-shaped spaceship in a wooden warehouse.



In the meantime Accordion-playing Gussev has married Masha, and now feels bored. The civil war has died down.

"I need something to do," he says. "I helped establish four Soviet Socialist republics, and now I'm rotting away here."

Which four? The Ukraine? Georgia? Tajikstan? Kyrgyzstan? Any of the happy republics currently so happy to have left the great motherland? Gussev is somewhat dated as a heroic soldier. Would possibly be considered something of a villain now. Maybe even a war criminal.

While out walking with his wife he sees a poster referring to the spaceship project, rushes in to volunteer, is accepted, then rushes back to his wife shouting, "Can you believe this? I'm flying to Mars tomorrow!" His wife disapproves and hides his clothes while he sleeps. Resourceful, he puts on HER clothes and rushes through the Moscow streets, barely making it in time for liftoff.

The launch sequence is adequate. Within the warehouse we see rocket exhaust pouring from the base of the craft as the building disintegrates around it. Then we see a model shot of the craft ripping through the roof. Then footage of the ground rippling past at a furious rate (shot from a low-flying airplane). Weasely police spy Kravtsov has hidden aboard to arrest Spiridinov for murdering Natasha, and is somewhat taken back to find out that Spiridinov is Loss ("Some detective you are. Can't you even recognize a false beard and wig?") and that they are on their way to Mars.

On Mars, beside a giant screen depicting the clouds in Earth's atmosphere, Tuskub has observed the launch through another telescope. He gives orders that the probable landing spot be calculated and

the aliens terminated. When Aelita tries to dissuade him, he comments "We can't allow rebels on Mars." So she has Ihoshka murder the scientist who brings her the information on the projected landing spot, then orders her to meet the aliens and bring them to her.

We see a poorly detailed but evocative model of a Martian city with tall towers linked by wires. The spaceship lands nearby, Ihoska guides the intrepid explores past the palace guards. Well, Kravtsov isn't quite so intrepid. He breaks away and walks up to the guards saying, "Comrades, you wouldn't happen to be police officers, would you?" They're startled, but lead him before the King.

"Comrade Tuskub", says Kravtsov, patting the king on the knee, "Detective Kravtsov requests permission to arrest Loss." Instead, weasely Kravtsov is arrested. Never, ever pat a Martian king on the knee!

Meanwhile, Loss is smitten by Aelita, and Gussev by Ihoshka (Hey Gussev, what about Masha?) Aelita commands "Touch my lips with your lips as they do on Earth."

Delighted, Loss picks her up and carries her to her bed. Aelita is equally delighted, she hadn't anticipated matters progressing beyond her lips I guess.

At court, the slain scientist is brought in, still clutching the necklace he'd torn from Ihoshka as she killed him. Tuskub recognizes it. Then the court starts with astonishment as they hear something alien. It's that idiot Gussev playing the accordion for Ihoshka, who appears entranced. God knows what Martian women see in accordion players. She's arrested, and led to the slave chambers, along with Kratsov. Gussev follows and picks a fight with the guards. The workers claw their way up from their cells and join in.

Back at the Queen's bedroom, Loss thinks he's with his wife. Tuskub and guards burst in. Loss goes to shoot him, but Aelita wrestles the gun out of his hands. Loss, Aelita, Gussev, Kratsov and Ihoshka wind up in prison along with thousands of workers. This is a mistake on the part of Tuskub, for Gussev whips up the Martian workers with a little oratory.

"Comrades, you can help yourselves. It all began in our land when...." We see various symbolic shots, a man breaking chains, a man beating a lump of clay into a sickle (through the miracle of reverse photography) and then laying his hammer across it, and other such subtle stuff. "Comrades, follow our example! Unite in a family of workers into the Martian Union of Soviet Republics!"



The workers are suitably inflamed. Aelita jumps up and shouts "I'm with you! I'll lead you myself!"

Gussev is worried. "I don't buy that! Queens setting up revolutions?"

Nevertheless, the workers drive the guards from the prison gates, break out and attack the palace. The soldiers fight with strobing light weapons attached to their elbows. Very peculiar.

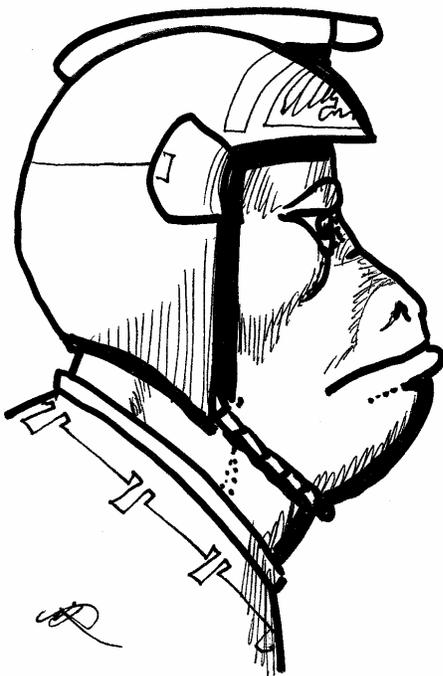
Gussev bonks both guards and workers on the head with a club. Rather indiscriminate of him. Tuskub is slain, and Loss kills Gor with his own hands.

Aelita shouts to the crowd, "Put down your weapons, they'll no longer be needed on Mars!" The workers drop their weapons.

Aelita orders the palace guard to open fire and drive the workers back to their caves. As she explains to Loss, "From now on, I alone will reign and rule."

He doesn't see her, he sees his wife. Infuriated at being betrayed twice, he pushes her off a ledge to her death.

Then he snaps out of his daydreaming back at the Moscow train station. He sees a poster being put up: "The only tires worth your money are: Anta Odeli Uta. The mysterious signal is our trademark."



(You say you don't understand this? Capitalist advertising in revolutionary Russia? By 1924 the Russian economy had crumbled so badly that Lenin permitted the few surviving capitalists to renew limited activity, including advertising. Once the economy revived somewhat he nationalized everything – including personal bank accounts – and sent the capitalists packing to the pre-Stalin Gulag where most of them died. The inclusion of the short-lived phenomenon of advertising is one of the reasons why Stalin later disliked the film.)

Gussev and Masha happen along. With a bemused expression, Loss tells them "I started daydreaming again, I killed my wife half an hour ago, but I won't run away, no, I'll go back to her."

He returns home, followed by Gussev and Masha. They peek in and discover Loss in his wife's arms. Loss tells her "I was out of my mind when I shot at you. I'm so happy I missed." I bet she is too. Missed her from three feet away? Let's hope Loss is a better engineer than

marksman.

"Are you still worried about something?" He shows her the stairwell where he saw the shadows of a man and woman kissing. Conveniently, a door opens and we see the shadows of a man and woman standing together. Such a relief! It hadn't been her after all.

No, you dolt! Doesn't prove a thing. It COULD have been her kissing somebody. But hey, if she forgives him for trying to kill her, the least he can do is forgive her for kissing Erlich.

Ah, yes, Erlich. Good old Erlich is arrested for the murder of Spiridinov. Oh really? Are we simply to assume that after Spiridinov wrote to Loss saying he had left the country, and after Loss awakened from his daydream, that somewhen and where Spiridinov's body was found with evidence pointing to Erlich? Not an entirely satisfactory tying up of loose ends.

But that doesn't really spoil the ending. Loss takes his spaceship plans and hurls them into the fireplace. Natasha tries to stop him. He explains "Enough daydreaming. We have different work to

worry about." Fade on a cheery scene of the happy couple warmed by the glow of burning scientific documents.

Well, the film was not appreciated by official Soviet critics, perhaps because the rogue Erlich was a charming rogue, the glorious scientist a wife-murdering wimp, and the would-be police detective such a weasely idiot. Not quite the perfect socialist state. But as a vision of contemporary hardships livened by spoof elements, not to mention the pure escapism of the Martian scenes, the film was wildly popular with the Soviet public. Half the females born in Russia that year were named "Aelita."

Overall, the film offers a fascinating glimpse of a civil war-weary Russian nation. The film was obviously designed to bolster their morale by making light of current hardships, remind them these problems were shared by all, and above all, remind them of the previous regime and the struggle to overcome it. It is probable that the contemporary public completely ignored the propaganda elements and were instead caught up by the startling vision of an alien world, and in particular, by the personality of that world's queen. That is not likely to have pleased Soviet officialdom, and no similar film was ever made.

The acting was of a high standard, the sets superb. Overall, *Aelita* is a hell of a good film, a landmark film, a classic. And you have no idea how much pain I experienced reviewing a GOOD film. Next issue I'll retreat to my usual standards. Hmmm, I've already reviewed *Mars Needs Women*. What's next? Hmmm.....

UPCOMING NIFTY FILM PROJECTS:

War Monkeys by Dark Horse Films is a horror comedy about a lab full of weapons-trained Rhesus monkeys in combat with a pair of janitors. Based on a popular Dark Horse graphic novel. Could be fun.

Battle: Los Angeles will star Aaron Eckhart playing a Marine Platoon commander battling aliens in the streets of Los Angeles. Insert jokes on contemporary LA gang problems here. Hopefully a few landmarks will be destroyed. No doubt depends on the budget.

Arog is a Turkish Sci-Fi comedy about a time-travelling carpet salesman, sequel to **Gora**. Both films star Turkish comedian Cem Yilmaz. I've seen a clip where he is teaching cavemen to play soccer. Looks hilarious!

Deadgirl is a Swedish film about typical teenage coming-of-age angst, namely two teenage boys who have sex with an undead girl they find in the basement of an abandoned hospital. I imagine all does not go well.

Rat Scratch Fever "From Deep Space – An Army of Man-Eating Terror!" features giant rats from another planet attacking Los Angeles. Inspired by Bert I. Gordon's **Food of the Gods** film, Director/writer Jeff Leroy claims "My film has the same energy and better effects. No rats were hurt, but humans get gnawed..."

Die Schneider Krankheit is a Spanish short film masquerading as a B&W 1950s German documentary about a plague virus brought back from space by one of the early chimp astronauts. Looks like great fun!

First Squad is Japanese anime about school girls in Soviet Russia in combat against Nazi panzers. At the very least should be interesting. Studio 4c was hired by some Russian entity to make this. Hmm, anime to order.....

The Clone Returns to the Homeland is a Japanese film about the clone of a dead astronaut 'returning' to his hometown with body of the deceased, thinking it his dead twin brother. Said to be a slow but beautiful film.

CONVENTION STUFF

(BECAUSE WCSFA IS ALL ABOUT CONVENTIONS)

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF VCON 4 PART TWO

THE 4th VANCOUVER SF CONVENTION – FEBRUARY 21-23, 1975:

by *The Graeme*

Last issue covered Friday, 21st February, 1975.

Saturday, 22nd February, 1975:

Saturday proved to be a far more smooth-running convention day.

At 10:00 am Gregory Fahlman of the Astronomy Institute at UBC delivered a talk on SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE LARGE SCALE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE.

This heavy science programming was followed by TRIUMF: SOME FACTS AND FANTASIES by Jesse Brewer and Tom Masterson of the UBC Dept. of Physics. (TRIUMF stands for Tri-University Meson Facility.) These two science lectures proved very popular.

The next lecture was supposed to be NON-HUMAN INTELLIGENCE, a panel on humans, dolphins and aliens, but "medical emergencies" took away the panelists (presumably doctors) so John Stroud of SFU was a last minute substitute (accepted in part because he claimed to have known John W. Campbell) to speak on THE COLONIZATION OF SPACE. Whether because of inadequate preparation, or simple ignorance, it became obvious that he didn't know what he was talking about, excruciatingly obvious. As Ed Beauregard put it, "*He knew nothing. Nothing!*" Think of it as a Turkey Science Lecture. Ed found it embarrassing.

This was followed by a talk on STYLE AND THEME IN THE FIRST TWO NOVELS OF JOANNA RUSS by Doug Barbour of the University of Alberta. About as sercon a subject as you could possibly hope for...

And then Crawford Kilian spoke about PROPAGANDA IN SCIENCE FICTION. I assume he was his usual opinionated, hard-hitting, controversial and above all, highly entertaining self.

The soon-to-be ubiquitous Steve Forty attended for the first time ever, bringing along his brother. As BCSFA had a table by registration, he joined the club (mainly because he wanted to meet BCSFAn Chuck Davis, a local journalist with a great sense of humour), then set out to explore the convention. He left after two hours! Seems he found the panel topics boring. "*If someone had only told me about the partying that goes on in the evenings at cons, I would have stayed,*" he commented recently. Ah well, he learned the truth at Westercon 30 in 1977 and has been hooked ever since.

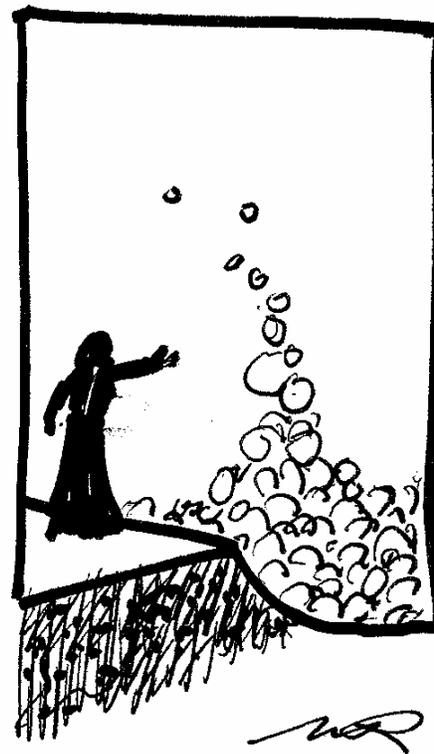
That S.40 stayed as long as he did at V-Con IV was because Robert Silverberg spotted his name badge and thought 'Forty' an unusual surname. They talked together for half an hour, during which

Silverberg revealed the substance of his keynote address to be delivered the next day. Before leaving, Steve mentioned this to Ken Wong, who reacted strongly. "You're not supposed to know that!" "Can't help it. He told me." "Don't tell anyone!" The ConCom was undoubtedly worried that word of Silverberg's intentions might cast a downer on the convention.

Another quick visitor was the famous 'underground' comic artist Vaughn Bode, who made a brief appearance. (Undoubtedly he was the "*censored*" referred to at the January 27th Executive meeting as a possible attendee.) He was present to promote his hardcover book "DEADBONE, THE FIRST TESTAMENT OF CHEECH WIZARD THE CARTOON MESSIAH" which was being released by Charles Law of Northern Comfort Communications, Smithers, B.C., Canada. (I own a copy and it's weird and wonderful, like all Bode's work.)

Mike Bailey wrote about meeting Bode at V-Con IV in #23 of his perzine, circa September '75: "*My initial impression was that he appeared effeminate. Yet he was accompanied by a spiffy-looking girl. I spoke briefly with him and left him with confreres such as George Metzger and Bob Inwood. Bill Gibson, who did speak with him more fully, later recounted to me Bode's amazement and pleasure at being treated like an important artist and celebrity during a recent trip to Europe.*" (He'd won a Hugo for BEST FAN ARTIST in 1969.)

Mike's impressions were correct. In a subsequent book CHEECH WIZARD, THE COLLECTED ADVENTURES OF THE CARTOON MESSIAH, published posthumously in 1976, Bode described himself as a "*Pop-mystic transvestite*" with "*a rainbow of fetishes from Rubber to Boots.*" Perhaps because of this, because of the fact he struggled for years to accept himself "*as what I is*", his cartoon art was outrageously off-the-wall and quite, quite funny. As creator of 'Cheech The Wizard' (I own a ceramic "Cheech") and assorted nubile young female lizards, Vaughn Bode is one of my favourite comic artists. And I didn't attend V-Con IV! Arrgh! Alas, I will never meet him. He died of accidental strangulation six months after his visit to Vancouver.



At 6:00 pm a BUFFET BANQUET began in the ballroom featuring such yummy dishes as Swedish Meat Balls and Chicken Livers Hawaiian for a mere \$9.75. (And beer at the cash bar cost only 85 cents per glass!) Ed Beauregard makes a very odd comment about the banquet in the final report: "*The banquet generated a few more complaints, mostly in regards to the duration of the meal. One hour looked like long enough, but wasn't. On the other hand, we were pretty squeezed to fit everything in Saturday and it just didn't look like we could spare any longer. Besides, with half an hour longer wait, Terry Terhune (the one who burst in during the banquet) might have done incalculable damage to the hotel.*" (?)

The principal activity at the banquet was the awarding of the ELRONS, which Michael Walsh described in the Province Newspaper on Monday, February 24th, 1975: "*Three little-known authors and a television show were the victims Saturday night as V-Con IV, the fourth Vancouver SF convention, presented its 1975 Elron Awards. Sometimes referred to as SF fandom's 'lowest dishonour,' the Elrons are given annually for 'outstanding disservice' in the field of Science Fiction*

Approximately 250 of the convention's nearly 600 registered members gathered in the ballroom of the Sheraton Landmark Hotel to hear Brent MacLean, spokesman for Vancouver's Secret Masters of Fandom, make the following presentations:

- Cited as *LEAST PROMISING NEW AUTHOR* was Jerry Pournelle, whose novels, including 'SPACESHIP FOR THE KING', were described as the worst kind of "sword and spaceship SF." (He won the same award at V-Con III.)

- Recognized as the *MOST APPALLING DRAMATIC PRESENTATION* was 'PLANET OF THE APES', a television series that distinguished itself by "totally ignoring all of the possibilities" inherent in its basic premise.



- Welcomed into the *ELRON HALL OF SHAME* was John Norman, whose sado-masochistic Gore stories are credited with "introducing bondage into SF" (creating a new genre: "Bondage Sword and Sorcery". This was his second Elron. By now he's won more than 25 Elrons! Including an Elron for having received the most Elrons!).

- Named the year's *WORST NOVEL* was 'POPULATION DOOMSDAY' by Don Pendleton (remember him?), a writer best known for his Executioner stories, a series of violent contemporary thrillers featuring as hero a Vietnam veteran who wages a guerrilla war on the Mafia.

First presented at the 1971 convention, the Elron trophies consist of a bronzed lemon mounted on an appropriate base.

Commenting on the concept of "dishonour awards", the convention's guest of honour, author and anthologist Robert Silverberg, came down on "both sides of the issue." As someone with "a vested interest in keeping the literary standards of SF as high as possible," he had to enjoy them, he said. "But I couldn't help squirming a bit," he added, "feeling a professional solidarity with the victims."

Though the awards have been the subject of some controversy in the international fan press, their continuation is one indication of Vancouver's growing prominence as a fan centre.

Ah, the joys of having an empathetic reviewer!

Afterwards Robert Silverberg read selections of his published works for nearly an hour, and then the ballroom was converted into a film theatre for a screening of 'NO BLADE OF GRASS' and 'ZARDOZ', followed by several shorts, including the infamous 'BAMBI MEETS GODZILLA'.

Meanwhile Congoers partied into the night.

TO BE CONTINUED:

VCON 33

THE 33rd VANCOUVER SF CONVENTION – OCTOBER 3-5, 2008

by *The Graeme*

Author Guest of Honour: Kelly Armstrong
Author Guest of Honour: Patrick Rothfuss.
Artist Guest of Honour: Lisa Snellings.
Gaming Guest of Honour: James Ernest
Science Guest of Honour: Dr. Jaymie Matthews

Last issue covered Friday, October 3rd, 2008.

I'm past my deadline for this issue. So I'm putting off Part Two till next issue #17.

PREREG FOR VCON 34!

VCON 34 -- (Oct 2-4, 2009) at the Compass Point Inn, Surrey, next to the King George Skytrain Station.

AUTHOR GUEST OF HONOUR: Tanya Huff (Wizard Crystal, Blood Books, Smoke Books, other series.)

ARTIST GUEST OF HONOUR: Miles Teves (a concept/character artist/illustrator/sculptor for films as diverse as *Ironman*, *Chronicles of Riddick*, *Van Helsing*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *King Kong*, *Galaxy Quest* & numerous others – a fantastic Artist Goh!)

CONVENTION RATE: \$45 adult, \$34 student, \$23 kids. This will stay the same until just before the con, when it jumps to the at-door price. Benefits to registering now include entry in members-only contests and that warm fuzzy feeling you get from being a part of something. Make cheques payable to "VCON" and send to:

VCON 34 Registrar
Box 78069 Grandview RPO
Vancouver, B.C., Canada
V5N 5W1

Check out the VCON 34 website at < <http://www.vcon.ca/index.htm> > for updated info.

MY ADVENTURE IN SEARCH OF DITTO 8 PART THREE

THIS BEING A TYPICAL CON REPORT:

by *R. Graeme Cameron*

Last issue covered events on Saturday, November 4th, 1995

MORNING, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH, 1995:

Woke up quite late in the morning. Just enough time to grab a breakfast before checking out and hotfooting it to the Greyhound bus depot for my return trip to Vancouver. By breakfast I mean yet another attempt to raid THE HOSPITALITY SUITE. There I spent a happy hour gobbling down free food while debating the Quebec Referendum with Joyce Scrivner, Doug Faunt and Alan Rosenthal.

For those of you who have forgotten, the ruling party of Quebec (which is called the "Quebec Separatist Party" -- a name containing a subtle reminder of their number one priority) put the following question to the people of Quebec on October 30th, 1995 (Just a few days before Ditto 8):

"Do you agree that Quebec should become sovereign, after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new economic and political partnership, within the scope of the bill respecting the future of Quebec and of the agreement signed on June 12, 1995?"

In other words, let's vote to go our own way, offer a new deal to Canada on our own terms, and when they refuse, kiss them goodbye and form our own country.

The voting result, while technically adequate from a Federalist point of view, was horrifying. Only 50.6% voted to stay in Canada. 49.4% voted to leave. A total of 4,669,554 votes were cast, yet the Federalist margin of victory was only 53,498 votes! A bitter Quebec Premier Parizeau blamed the defeat on "money and the ethnic vote," ie: big business and non-white immigrants. He went on to say:

"Don't forget that three-fifths of us voted Yes. It wasn't quite enough, but soon it will be enough. Our country is within our grasp. We are going to demonstrate that we are able, even if we don't have a country as yet, that we will raise a French society that has its heart in the right place, and in the long run, finally, we will have our revenge and we will have our own country."

'Revenge' is always an interesting word to hear from the mouth of a politician.... And when he said "us", he was referring to Francophones. Apparently the other citizens of Quebec don't count....

As someone who still applauds Prime Minister Trudeau for evoking the War Measures Act back in the late '60s to bring in the army during the FLQ crisis (thus making it clear Canada would not tolerate armed rebellion on the part of Separatists), this narrow victory over the Separatist movement is worrisome. Frustrated extremists may decide to take up terrorism again.

On the other hand, if at some future time Quebec does vote to secede, active opposition and bitter, punitive economic action will only make matters worse for everyone. Quebec isn't going to disappear from the face of the continent, after all; it will still sit astride the St. Lawrence Seaway and command huge mineral and hydroelectric resources. If Quebec chooses to become independent, we might as well accept and support our 'new' neighbour and negotiate a relationship that will be to our MUTUAL advantage. Anything less would be a catastrophe.

In short, my opinion is that the Federalists should do everything possible to prevent Quebec from seceding, but should Quebec choose to leave anyway, than we should do everything we can to support



the people of Quebec and smooth the transition process. This is the gist of what I said in the course of the discussion.

Alan Rosenthal (whom, I believe, is originally from Canada, tho again, this may be a delusion on the part of my faulty memory) astonished one and all with his account of the longstanding tradition of Canadian Premiers who function as virtual dictators, the outstanding example being Maurice Duplessis whose Union Nationale party ran Quebec from 1944 to 1960. Alan mentioned Duplessis' notorious Padlock Laws which empowered the police to change the locks on the homes and business's of people the Premier didn't like, thus denying them access to their own property.

"Why, that's Communist!" declared an outraged Doug Faunt.

And I threw in the story of the American political expert who'd been studying the government of William 'Whacky' Bennett here in B.C circa late '60s, who fled the province after a hasty news conference in which he'd denounced Premier Bennett as "the worst dictator in North America since Huey Long of Louisiana." Bennett had been visibly pleased by this flattering remark....

But enough of politics. Time to return home.

Crossing the border back into Canada was more interesting than I had anticipated. A drunken chap in a rumpled suit whom I had noticed becoming more and more agitated as we approached the Customs building suddenly leaped from his seat and demanded that the bus drive right through Canada customs without stopping. On being told this was impossible he insisted the bus stop immediately and let him out. To avoid a fight, the driver obliged. The twit of a drunk then removed several bottles of presumably expensive booze from his luggage and dropped them in a garbage bin in full view of the Customs officers. Needless to say, we spent a very long time in customs while the inspectors went through this idiot's luggage searching for the slightest possible excuse to slap him with a fine, or maybe even detain him. He got back on the bus with a smug smile on his face.

"If I had my way, I'd leave you behind," muttered the bus driver.

"Oh yeah? You wouldn't dare," declared the moron. "I'm a lawyer!"

This revelation surprised no one.

As I was seated in the front right-hand seat with a superb view out the windscreen, I decided to study the approaching Canadian scenery from the perspective on someone who has never seen it before, as if I were a first time visitor from the United States.

Initially one passes through a series of 'hobby' farms culminating in the small farming community of Cloverdale (with a couple of artillery piece monuments in its fair grounds) and then joins the Trans Canada Highway to pass over the Port Mann bridge high above the Fraser River & assorted train yards, then swings left past Fraser Mills (where Nils Helmer Frome produced Canada's SF fanzine SUPRAMUNDANE STORIES back in the late 1930s) and penetrates the closely packed houses of Burnaby. Up to this point there's nothing particularly interesting. But when the bus emerges from the tangle of housing to travel along the Grandview viaduct, racing over train tracks and wrecking yards, with the huge cluster of downtown Vancouver office towers rising in the distance and looking very impressive against the North Shore Mountains (which being much closer to the city than the mountains surrounding Seattle are to that city, loom rather well), one has a sense of arriving -- not exactly at the Emerald City, or at the end of the rainbow, mind you -- but somewhere different and unique. That the bus depot is located in the Via Rail - Amtrak train station, one of the old 'imperial' style basilicas of commerce built decades ago, beats the dinky Seattle bus depot all to heck (though the surrounding area, on the edge of China Town, is a bit seedy). Still, all in all, not a bad intro to

Canada. (However, I should note that tourists travelling by automobile usually cross at the more Westerly Blaine border post and arrive in Vancouver via a totally different route.)

I took my one piece of luggage, boarded the Vancouver Skytrain at the nearby Main St. station, got off on Granville Street, caught a bus that dropped me off two blocks from my Apt. in Kitsilano and immediately proceeded to not write up my report of the convention. A mere nine months later, I finally get this written. Huzzah! Hope you enjoyed it.

FILTHY PRO NEWS

2008 WORLD FANTASY AWARDS

Awarded at the World Fantasy Convention in Calgary this November:

LIFE ACHIEVEMENT -- **Patricia McKillip, Leo & Diane Dillon**

NOVEL -- **Ysabel, Guy Gavriel Kay** (Viking Canada; Roc)

NOVELLA -- **Illyria, Elizabeth Hand** (PS Publishing)

SHORT STORY -- "Singing of Mount Abora", **Theodora Goss** (Logorrhea)

ANTHOLOGY -- **Inferno, Ellen Datlow**, ed. (Tor)

COLLECTION -- **Tiny Deaths, Robert Shearman** (Comma Press)

ARTIST -- **Edward Miller**

SPECIAL AWARD, PROFESSIONAL -- **Peter Crowther** (PS Publishing)

SPECIAL AWARD, NON-PROFESSIONAL -- **Midori Snyder & Terri Windling** (Endicott Studios Website)

THE ONGOING SAGA OF PROMOTING ALYXANDRA J. SHAW'S FANTASY TRILOGY 'A STRANGE PLACE IN TIME'

By The Graeme -- her husband

(The idea is that any beginning author, or readers interested in how authors get started, will find this blow by blow on-going account of her evolution from a fan fiction author to a professional author informative and possibly even inspiring. Just be aware it didn't happen over night. Alyx has put years of hard work into this.)

Alyx now has six reviews at Amazon Books for the Kindle E-version of her first novel; five of them 5-star & one 4-star. In terms of intriguing potential buyers these reviews can hardly be bettered.

In the latest review M. Nix writes on the Amazon site:

*“When I started reading **A Strange Place in Time: The Recalling of John Arrowsmith** I was a little intimidated by the whole biker aspect, as it's not really a topic that usually draws my attention, but I have to say that I was completely fascinated by this book and its cast of characters from start to finish.... The entire fantasy angle of the story certainly caught me by surprise and kept me glued to my seat and desperately wanting more once the last page was turned. Alyx Shaw did a masterful job of building a world that is not only intriguing in and of itself, but that also has a significant amount of lore to go along with it, making this perplexing world John falls into tangibly real and uniquely compelling.... Ms. Shaw does an amazing job drawing the reader in and making John's experiences so vivid that you will forget that you are reading a book and not living someone else's life.... I can't wait for the next installment in this series...”*

And on a book review website called ‘Fallen Angels’ we discover a review (by Hayley) of said next installment:

“John Arrowsmith and the Two-Fifty-Mile-House gang are back. The White Palace has risen and that means that trouble is on the way. The gang must discover where the threat is coming from and find a way to defeat it. Arrowsmith is still learning to use his powers but will he discover the answers he seeks before it is too late? Will the gang be able to defend against this latest attack or will they be overcome?”

*“I can't tell you how eagerly I have been awaiting the release of **The White Palace Awakens** and now that it's here I can't wait to tell you how it lived up to my expectations. As much as I loved the first story in the **A Strange Place in Time**, I think I loved this one even more. All our old favorites are back and even more delightful than ever. Alyx J. Shaw has such a unique voice that I am transported into this fascinating world of Dargoth and don't want to leave. Her characters are so vibrant and rich that they feel real. Theirs is not a lovey dovey fairy tale world and that makes them even more intriguing. Arrowsmith and Infamous are probably my two favorite characters but I love them all and I'm becoming more and more intrigued by Monshikka and was glad to gain a bit more insight into his current and past lives. Filled with humor and a good dollop of suspense **The White Palace Awakens** has just whetted my appetite for more of this series. I am anxiously counting down the days until I can get my hands on the third book in this truly outstanding series. 5 Angels and a Recommend Read go to the inhabitants of the Two-Fifty-Mile-House!”*

These two reviews highlight one of the advantages of online publishing, namely instant response by readers eager to convince others to buy your book. How cool is that?

The web is a great promotional tool, not just for the authors themselves – see Robert J. Sawyer's site for a superb example of how it should be done – but as a means for word of mouth to spread like wildfire fueled by the enthusiasm of readers. Something for aspiring novelists to bear in mind.

Robert J. Sawyer: < <http://www.sfwriter.com/> >

Alyx J. Shaw: < <http://alyx.wozupdoc.net/> >

< http://torquerebooks.com/zencart/index.php?main_page=index >

< <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B0019VTTFG/shelfari-20> >

AUTHOR HAPPENINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST

(Ran past my deadline, so no new info highlighted in violet.)

DON DEBRANDT < <http://www.sfw.org/members/DeBrandt/index.html> >

Don's 'Cyberjunk' website has recently begun renovation. See his other website under the name 'Donn Cortez' < <http://www.donnkortez.com> > for a complete listing of books, stories, articles & comics under both names, including the mystery *'The Man Burns Tonight'*, the thriller *'The Closer'*, four volumes of the CSI MIAMI series, and his classic SF novels: *The Quicksilver Screen*, *Steeldriver*, *Timberjak*, & *V.I.*

Currently Don is returning to his roots by working on a Sci-Fi trilogy, starting with his upcoming hardcover mystery/sci-fi novel *'Lucidity'*, which is about two 'Ectives' (emotive detectives) in the near future where emotions can be read, implanted, bought, sold, and stolen.

DAVE DUNCAN < <http://www.daveduncan.com> >

Dave lives in Victoria, B.C. His latest books: *'The Alchemist's Apprentice'*, *'Children of Chaos'* & *'Ill Met in the Arena'*.

Dave has sold *'Speak to the Devil'*, the first book in his new swordsmen & sorcerers series *'The Brothers Magnus'*, to Liz Gorinsky at Tor Books. It will be published in 2009.

Many of Dave's books, including long out of print volumes, are available for e-download at < <http://www.ereads.com> > .

WILLIAM GIBSON < <http://www.williamgibsonbooks.com> >

Bill lives in Vancouver. Check out his web site for his Q&A interview 'Across the Border to Spook Country'. His latest book: *'Spook Country'*.

MATT HUGHES < <http://www.archonate.com/> >

Matt lives on Vancouver Island. His first Henghis Hapthorn novel 'Majestrum' is now out in trade paperback from Nightshade Books. The second novel in the series, *'The Spiral Labyrinth'* is available from Nightshade Books in hardcover.

The complete Guth Bandar saga is now published as a novel titled *'The Commons'* from Robert J. Sawyer Books.

EILEEN KERNAGHAN < <http://www.lonelycry.ca/ek/> >

Eileen lives in the Lower Mainland area and attended VCON 32. Check out her latest books: *'Winter on the Plain of Ghosts: a Novel of Mohenjo-daro'*, *'The Alchemist's Daughter'*, & *'The Sarsen Witch'*.

CRAWFORD KILIAN < <http://crofsblogs.typepad.com/> >

Continues to teach at Capilano College in North Vancouver. His latest books: *'Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy'* (1998), & *'Writing for the Web'* (1999). See E-address above for his blog. He is currently working on another novel, plus "a couple of nonfiction books and articles for online journals." Both of the books mentioned above are available from Self Counsel Press;

< <http://www.self-counsel.com/ca/> >

DONNA MCMAHON < <http://www.donna-mcmahon.com/> >

Lives in Gibsons on the Sunshine Coast. She won a 2001 Aurora Award for her book reviews published in Tomorrow SF, BCSFAzine & other publications. Check out her novel *'Dance of Knives'* which is set in Vancouver in the year 2108. The sequel *'Second Childhood'* is pending publication.

"I'm Canadian. I write a kinder, gentler future urban hell." – Donna.

NINA MUNTEANU < <http://sfgirl-thealiennextdoor.blogspot.com> >

Lives and teaches in Victoria, B.C. You can order her Sci-Fi novel *'Darwin's Paradox'* by Dragon Moon Press from Amazon.ca. Nina contributes frequently to the blog site. Recent articles include: "The Novelist: Common Pitfalls of the Beginning Writer – Part One", and "Aeon Flux: Motion Picture & Animation."

SPIDER ROBINSON < <http://www.spiderrobinson.com/index2.html> >

Spider & Jeanne live in the Lower Mainland area. See the above website for info on *'Variable Star'*, *'The Crazy Years'*, *'The Lifehouse Trilogy'* (a reissue of *'Mindkiller'*, *'Time Pressure'* and *'Lifehouse'*), *'Very Hard Choices'*, audio versions of their books, the exciting Stardance movie project, and Spider's latest podcasts.

ROBERT J. SAWYER < <http://www.sfwriter.com/> >

Robert lives in Mississauga, Ontario (but who is out here on the West Coast so often we view him as one of our own).

Rob is currently in the middle of writing a new trilogy about the World Wide Web gaining consciousness, working titles of *Wake*, *Watch*, and *Wonder*. ABC has definitely committed to film a TV series pilot based on his novel *Flashforward*.

'Identity Theft' is his second & final collection of short fiction, with an overall introduction by Robert Charles Wilson and RJS's own notes on each story.

ALYX J. SHAW < <http://alyx.wozupdoc.net/> >

(See also her live journal at < <http://alyx-j-shaw.livejournal.com/> >)

Lives in Surrey. Her novels *The Recalling of John Arrowsmith* & *The White Palace Awakens* (Books One and Two of her trilogy *'A Strange Place in Time'*), are available from online publisher Torquere Press: < http://torquerebooks.com/zencart/index.php?main_page=index > in electronic download PDF format for **only \$5.95 US**. Book one is also available in Kindle electronic book download at Amazon Books for \$4.99, for which see:

< <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B0019VTTFG/shelfari-20> >

'The Recalling of John Arrowsmith' (Book One of her trilogy) is available in hard cover for \$150 US (red Japanese book silk cover, French-style sewn on cord binding) by mail order from Doppelganger Press: < <http://doppelgangerpress.com/> > and also book two, *'The White Palace Awakens'* for \$260 US (illustrations in the second volume are by Eveline Koeppen of Leipzig, Germany, with front piece by S. H. Desjardins. quarter bound in Asahi crimson Japanese silk book cloth and handmade pastepaper using a French groove style binding structure).

LISA SMEDMAN < <http://www.lisamedman.topcities.com/> >

Lisa lives in Richmond, B.C. with her wife, their son, four cats, and two pugs. Her latest novels (on the 'Lady Penitent Trilogy'): Book 1 'Sacrifice of the Widow', Book 2 'Storm of the Dead', and Book 3 'Ascendancy of the Last'.

Lisa has also had a number of short science fiction and fantasy stories published in various magazines and anthologies, had three of her one-plays produced by a Vancouver theatre group, was one of the founders of *Adventures Unlimited* magazine, has designed a number of adventures and written short fiction for the Advanced Dungeons & Dragon roleplaying game's Ravenloft and Dark Sun lines, and has designed gaming products for Star Wars, Indiana Jones, Cyberpunk, Immortal, Shatterzone, Millennium's End, and Deadlands.

After working for more than 20 years as a journalist, Lisa now splits her week between her job as an editor at the [Vancouver Courier](#), a weekly newspaper (for which she writes the column *History's Lens*) and writing fiction.

NOTE: Most of the novels mentioned above are available at **White Dwarf Books**, 3715 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V6R 2G5. Phone (604) 228 – 8223.
E-address: < whitedwarf@deadwrite.com > Web site < <http://www.deadwrite.com> >

LETTERS OF COMMENT

From: Garth Spencer, Faned of BCSFAzine, November 13th 2008

Dear Guys,

Just scanned the latest WCSFAzine and read the letter column. Despite something Graeme said the night he was sending it out, I didn't perceive it as coming out late. (Well, I admit I have yet to pay attention to its official frequency.) And if Graeme has been feeling really exhausted, he still has produced a zine with somewhat more content and sophisticated layout than I do.

Well, being the Archivist for both WCSFA & BCSFA I have access to a lot of material, including articles re local history I wrote up years ago and now have a venue to plug them into. As for layout, I work from a template I established (revamped this issue to improve its attraction for online readers) in order to make it as easy as possible for myself to prepare each issue.

A few people have complained about my single column format, but I find it the simplest format that allows me to concentrate on writing without wasting time fiddling around with non-essential tasks. Besides, while a double column makes for easy reading on paper, for online browsing it's a pain. I hate scrolling down a page and then having to jump back up to the top of the page in order to scroll down the second column. And employing a single column allows readers to quickly scroll down to the particular article or two they want to read (I don't flatter myself thinking that every 'hit' represents a reader who reads ALL the articles, though I hope some do).

The main subject I want to comment on is Lloyd's opinion of newscritters at conventions. Most of the time I feel the same way, it just isn't worth drawing their attention to fan events, and fans like Steve Forty have told me how specifically local reporters have insulted them. But then I remember Richard Brandt's article in the 1980s. He pointed out, based on his experience, you can cultivate reporters and get reasonable coverage - if you simply groom them, and they aren't coming *cold* to the whole scene. How do you reconcile the two stories here?

In the old days Michael Walsh, being a member of BCSFA from the get go, was able to plant stories favourable to us in the newspapers; likewise Chuck Davis. But Michael works the finance section now I believe, and Chuck is retired. We no longer possess 'insider' access to the media.

Easily. They're both right. Mostly, we let reporters come to SF fandom and conventions *without* advance briefing like press kits, or cultivating a personal relationship. Very occasionally, someone with more savvy puts in the effort. You want my opinion? We do not have the kind of fans in the Lower Mainland conrunning area who know how to cultivate the press, or who will put in the effort.



Publicity has always been tricky for us. We've tried professional style publicity releases & kits, to little effect. 'Free' publicity is mostly right out, since we're not a 'free' event. We rarely have the funds to purchase adverts. And as for cultivating individual reporters, how? Meet them socially? Where? Drop by their office? They won't have time for us. Demand an interview? Impossible. Offer an interview? Why would they respond? Worst of all, reporters resent being 'led' or lectured on how they should report. That generates hostile press. The best we can hope for is to cooperate closely with what reporters do show and strive to give them as many 'angles' and 'hooks' to render their reports as interesting as possible. VCON 32 had good local TV and radio coverage, in large part due to strenuous concom effort to make the reporter's job as easy as possible, rounding up volunteers for interviews, etc. I'm not familiar with what we did this year. At any rate, VCON does put in an effort, just not consistently. A difficult, almost impossible task to generate ANY publicity, let alone positive reportage. Very much a Sisyphian task I'm afraid. Loads of fun for them as likes challenges though...

Garth

From: LLOYD PENNEY, November 27th 2008

Dear Graeme:

Thanks for another WCSFAzine, issue 15, and I see a deadline looming, so I'd better get on with another loc.

A question...the current qualifications for a fanzine to be eligible for an Aurora award is that it not be a clubzine, if I recall. This qualification may be done away with next Aurora business meeting. Is WCSFA a club or a legal organization? I think it's the latter, which would make this zine eligible. Anticipation's PR3 will be here soon, and there may be an Aurora nomination form in it; Clint Budd would know for sure.

I believe the fanzine award is for single or multi-editor zines not affiliated with any organization. WCSFAzine, published on behalf of a registered society, falls under the purview of 'Fan Achievement (Organizational)'. It would be nice to be nominated for that, but I also entertain hopes that SPACE CADET, once I get it rolling again sometime before the new year, will be nominated for the 'fanzine' award. One can always dream.

If you were actually printing this zine out, I could understand Taral's concerns about expenses. I wonder if the information at the back could be there every second issue... That would save on time, and give you a break when you are feeling stressed or behind on your deadline.

I guess my basic idea is that any given issue might be the first a particular reader, say a neo-fan, is viewing and that I want to expose said neo to as many 'classic' resources as possible. Kind of silly, since probably only die-hard fanzine fans check out efanzines. People wanting to print out the zine could always delete the material they don't want first... Wait a mo... Just had an idea...Aha! The solution!....(See Resource Info below)

VCon 4...did Carl Chaplin do any other artwork for Vancouver fannish publications? He seems to be a devotee of pointillism, and I might have mistaken his artwork for that of Brad Foster's.

I'm afraid I have no idea. I have the vague sense that he was more involved in comic fandom than SF, but I don't actually know. I'll keep an eye out for any of his work whenever I'm perusing the archive.

Robert Silverberg is an author I've wanted Ad Astra to bring in as a GoH for some time, but some on the committee feel that nearly none of the current people attending the convention would know who he is. At first, I disagreed, but now I do agree. It's a function of age...I'd like to meet Silverberg, and I know of a handful of others who also would, but the average attendee at Ad Astra these days? No, they wouldn't know who he is.

Sigh, I desperately wanted to get Silverberg back to VCON, and when he finally came as GoH for VCON 30 in 2005 I couldn't afford to attend the convention. But I had a free pass for the Sunday, since I was giving the Elrons, and managed to take in his last panel before he left for the airport. He gave a very droll talk on how typewriters actually work for the benefit of those in the audience who had no idea. And by God, there were young 'uns present who'd never seen one. Has it been *that* long since the world stopped using typewriters?

Ah, modern VCon reviews. All positive, and I sure that if a negative review had been offered, you would have published that, too. All had a good time, and it looks like the committee made everything work. More and more, that's a tough job to do, to get everyone to leave their egos at the door and work together to make the event happen.

We've got a pretty good team nowadays, and thank Ghu there's a fair amount of concom continuity from one con to the next of late, though signs of burnout are evident. VCON 34 will take place for sure. After that?

There is always the possibility that something has been forgotten or overlooked when it comes to club tables, or just about anything else at a con...one odd question I always asked of a hotel was to provide us with a full inventory of chairs and tables, especially a breakdown of 4-foot, 6-foot, 8-foot and banquet, and any other odd sizes they may have. Once you know what you have to deal with, planning for the convention floor manager gets easier. If the dealers' room has been selling 6-foot tables, for instance, save the 6-footers for them, and registration, art show, etc. can use what's left. dividing up the hotel's available resources can make life easier for everyone.

Good advice. I think we do something similar, but I don't actually know. If not, we should.

We are usually picky enough to keep any receipts any convention issues for our registration; a number of times, when the registration records are incomplete, the receipt gets us in with badges and

sheepish looks from reg. Yvonne has earned herself a lifetime membership from Toronto Trek/Polaris; now, I just have to look after my own pre-reg. I find that many conventions, in an effort to come up with original programming, wind up making all tracks of programming suitable for authors and would-be authors only. Programming for other interests are completely forgotten. Having Jaymie Matthews as a GoH is a natural; I've met him before, and he is a lot of fun. Have him every year? If you can, do it. And, Tanya is a great guest, too. We go back a long ways...it's great to get a hug on the rare occasion that I see her.

VCON has an excellent record when it comes to offering diverse programming. After all, we promote ourselves as a general interest SF&F convention. Still, much depends on what the GoHs want to do. Fortunately, most Authors have wide interests and enthusiasms beyond their own writing.

Ditto seems to have slipped into eternity. I think the last Ditto was in Gualala, California, near where Art Widner lives, last year. Corflu marches on, however, and I hope that you will find the con suite on the first day of Corflu Zed, next year. The Seattle folks, namely Randy Byers, Andy Hooper and crew, should stage a great convention. Wish I could be there.

I'd like to go, but don't know if I can afford it. Also, I don't have a passport. And I heard somewhere if you carry pills (my heart medicine for instance), you have to have a prescription from an American doctor or else risk being arrested. All in all, my best chance of attending a Corflu or a Ditto would be if it were held in Vancouver, but that's rather unlikely, given that there are only three fanzines fans in the Lower Mainland, and I'm one of them. Sigh. There's so much I could do if only I win the lottery....

Rob Sawyer has been tagged to host a television show called Supernatural Investigator, and he's just finished all the intros and extros to the first batch of episodes. The show will be shown on Vision TV sometime in the future, not sure when...

One good thing after another happens to Rob. Don't think it's luck exactly, has more to do with his talent and sheer energy I think. The man is a living dynamo.

My letter... I did not go to Canzine in Toronto. I figured that my time and money was better spent elsewhere. I know what I like, and don't need to pay people to tell me I'm a sci-fi nerd. (I know other people who will tell me that for free.)

Everyone's a nerd of one kind or another. Sci-Fi fans just happen to be the top caste in the system. Ask any fan.

I'm still at SGS, and my 12-week contract expires tomorrow. Now to see what they do...please, please, please...



Really hope it works out. Never felt more helpless than when I was unemployed. I've been lucky of late, been working steady since 1989, even worked up a mite of a pension... I'm working poor, but at least I'm working. Hope you get in solid. Best of luck!

Oh, well, what happens, happens. Wish me luck, and thanks for more fine fannish stuf to read. Can't get enough these days. I'm awaiting issue 16.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

INFORMATION RESOURCE!

Permanent: Upcoming Conventions / Local Events / Local Clubs
Rotating: Non-Local Canadian Clubs
Next Month: Foreign Clubs

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

SOURCES: < <http://www.locusmag.com/Conventions.html> > & < <http://www.sfnorthwest.org/northwestcons.html#cons> >

RUSTYCON *GENERAL SF* JAN 9-11, 2009 SEATTLE, WA: < <http://www.rustycon.com/> >

RADCON 5A *RELAXACON* FEB 13-15, 2009 PASCO, WA: < <http://www.radcon.org/news.php> >

POTLATCH 18 *GENERAL/LITERARY SF* FEB 27 - MAR 1, 2009 SUNNYVALE, CALIFORNIA:
< <http://www.potlatch-sf.org/> >

DAK-KON XIV *GAMING* FEB 28 - MAR 2, 2009 COURTENAY, BC:
< <http://members.axion.net/~murdock/tourney.html> >

CORFLU ZED -- CORFLU 26 *FANZINE FANDOM* MAR 13-15, 2009 SEATTLE, WA:
< <http://www.corflu.org/> >

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FANTASTIC IN ARTS *ACADEMIC* MAR 18-22, 2009 ORLANDO, FLORIDA: < <http://www.iafa.org/> >

STARGATE SG-1/ATLANTIS *MEDIA* APR 2-4, 2009 BURNABY, B.C.
< <http://www.creationent.com/cal/sgvan.htm> >

EMERALD CITY COMICON *COMICS* APR 4-5, 2009 SEATTLE, WA:
< <http://www.emeraldcitycomicon.com/> >

NORWESCON 32 *MAJOR REGIONAL SF CON* APR 9-12, 2009 SEATAC, WA:
< <http://www.norwescon.org> >

SAKURACON 2009 *ANIME* APR 10-12, 2009 SEATTLE, WA: < <http://www.sakuracon.org/> >

CALGARY COMICS & ENTERTAINMENT EXPO *COMICS* APR 25-26, 2009 CALGARY, ALBERTA: < <http://www.calgaryexpo.com/> >

2009 EATON SF CONFERENCE *ACADEMIC* APR 30 - MAY 3, 2009 RIVERSIDE, CA:
< <http://eatonconference.ucr.edu/> >

WORLD HORROR CON 2009 *HORROR* APR 30 - MAY 3, 2009 WINNIPEG, MANITOBA:
< <http://www.whc2009.org/> >

ZOMPIRE UNDEAD FILM FESTIVAL MAY 15-17, 2009 PORTLAND, OREGON:

< <http://www.zompile.com> >

CONCOMCON 16 CON RUNNERS CON JUN 5-7, 2009 SURREY, B.C. < <http://www.swoc.org/ccubed/> >

ANIME EVOLUTION ANIME JUN 12-14, 2009 VANCOUVER, B.C. < <http://www.animeevolution.com/> >

FIESTACON / WESTERCON 62 MAJOR REGIONAL SF CON JUL 2-5, 2009 TEMPE, AZ:

< <http://www.fiestacon.org/> >

SPOCON GENERAL SF JUL 31 – AUG 2, 2009 SPOKANE, WA: < <http://www.spocon2009.com> >

ANTICIPATION (WORLDCON 67) WORLDCON AUG 6-10, 2009 MONTREAL, QUEBEC:

< www.anticipationsf.ca >

VCON 34 GENERAL SF OCT 2-4, 2009 SURREY, B.C. < <http://www.vcon.ca/index.htm> >

WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION FANTASY OCT 29 – NOV 1, 2009 SAN JOSE, CA:

< <http://www.worldfantasy2009.org/> >

LOCAL EVENTS

POP CULTURE COLLECTIBLES FAIR

What: Multi-tables fair selling new & vintage comics, toys & collectibles, records, cds, dvds, manga, anime, comic books, video games, magazines, hot wheels, sports stuff, etc.

When: Saturday, December 6, 2008, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Where: Croatian Cultural Centre, 3250 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, B.C.

Cost: Free admission & free parking!

CTHULHUPALOOZA

What: Rock Band competition followed by silent film adaptation of the classic weird tale “The Call of Cthulhu” as produced by the < [HP Lovecraft Historical Society](http://www.hplovecraft.org/) >, along with other short films to be announced! Ending with concert by ‘Darkest of the Hillside Thickets’, a Lovecraftian Rock Band.

When: Saturday, December 6, 2008. Doors open at 5:00 PM.

Where: Rio Theatre, Broadway & Commercial next to the Skytrain Stn, Vancouver, B.C.

Cost: Tickets are available now - \$16* @ Neptoons, Red Cat Records, RX Comics, Lucky’s, Pulp Fiction, and The Rio Theatre.

Website: < <http://cthulhupalooza.protoncharging.com/> >

VANCOUVER COMIC JAM

What: Local comic artists are invited to come out, socialize, and build a collaborative story, panel by panel. 4th year anniversary VCJ!

When: Saturday, December 13th, 2008. 8:00 PM to Midnight.

Where: Upstairs room of the Clubhouse Japanese Restaurant, 255 West 2nd Avenue, Vancouver.

Cost: Free! But buy some food & drink.

Website: < <http://vancouvercomicjam.com/> >

LOCAL CLUBS

B.C. BROWNCOATS (FOUNDED APRIL 2004, FIREFLY & SERENITY FANS):

< <http://www.browncoats.ca/> >

B.C. RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL: < <http://www.bcrenfest.com> >

B.C.S.F.A. – THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION:

Founded 29th January, 1970. **Membership is now free!** BCSFA holds a monthly social gathering at the home of the Editor, a book discussion on a monthly basis at the 'Our Town Café', and offers free monthly on-line issues of BCSFAzine (or, if you have no computer access, a paper version at cost, availability severely limited).

ADDRESS:

BCSFAZINE EDITOR (submissions, letters of comment, trades) – BCSFAzine, c/o Garth Spencer, P.O. Box 74122, Hillcrest Park, 4101 Main Street, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V5V 3P0.

Email < garthspencer@shaw.ca >

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON: Sunday December 7 @ 1:30 pm at Spaghetti Factory restaurant at 50 8th street next door to the New Westminster Skytrain Station. Phone Garth at (604) 325-7314 to confirm your attendance.

BOOK DISCUSSION: Thursday December 11 @ 7pm at the "Our Town" café, 245 East Broadway, Vancouver. The topic book will be 'Watchmen' by Alastair Alan Moore, Dave Gibbons & John Higgins.

ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Friday December 12 – See Garth at Fred or send to Editor's Address above.

BCSFAzine PRODUCTION: Friday December 26 - See Garth at FRED for your paper copy. Trying to reduce the number of paper copies as much as possible.

BCSFA YAHOO DISCUSSION GROUP: < http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bc_scifi_assc/ >

B.I.F.F. MEETINGS (Burrard Inlet Fan Fellowship): – Every Friday (except long weekends & VCON weekend) @ 6:30 PM till closing time (officially 9:00 pm). A weekly social meeting for SF fans, founded June 11th, 2005. Held at The Eighties Restaurant, 110 West 14th Street (at Lonsdale) in North Vancouver: < <http://biff.realityfree.ca/> >

FANCOUVER: VANCOUVER SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY MEETUP:

< <http://scifi.meetup.com/278/> >

F.R.E.D. MEETINGS – Every Friday @ 8:00 PM. Weekly social meeting for SF fans, founded May 3rd, 1979. Usually held at Boston Pizza, 1333 West Broadway @ Hemlock (2 blocks East of Granville), Vancouver.

For details & info: < <http://www.facebook.com/group.php> > or Ryan Hawe @ < luxdoprime@yahoo.com >

MONSTER ATTACK TEAM CANADA:

< <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MonsterAttackTeamCanada/?yguid=8788> >

MONSTER FIGHTERS ONLINE CLUB (MATC):

< <http://movies.groups.yahoo.com/group/MonsterFighters> >

THE 13TH COLONY – VANCOUVER'S BATTLESTAR GALACTICA FAN CLUB:

< <http://13thcolony...> >

USS MAJESTIC NCC-78601 (REGION 10 STARFLEET -- VICTORIA):

< <http://www.uss-majestic.org/> >

VANCOUVER DOCTOR WHO MEETUP GROUP: < <http://drwho.meetup.com/115/> >

VANCOUVER FIREFLY/SERENITY MEETUP GROUP:

< <http://firefly.meetup.com/12/> >

NON-LOCAL CANADIAN CLUBS

FREDERICTON SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY:

< <http://www.celtic-dragon.ca/fsfswebsitemain.html> >

K.I.D.C. – KLINGON IMPERIAL DIPLOMATIC CORPS: < <http://www.klingon.org> >

MARITIME SCIENCE FICTION MODELERS: < <http://msfm.seryan.com/> >

MONSFFA – THE MONTREAL SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY ASSOCIATION:

< <http://www.monsffa.com/> >

OSFA – THE OTTAWA SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY: < <http://osfs.ncf.ca/> >

SFL - SCIENCE FICTION LONDON (CANADA): < <http://sfl.london.on.ca/> >

STARFLEET REGION 10 (ALASKA & WESTERN CANADA): < <http://www.10thfleet.org/> >

COLOPHON

WCSFAzine Issue # 16, December 2008, Volume 2, Number 12, Whole number 16, is the monthly E-zine of the West Coast Science Fiction Association (founded 1993), a registered society with the general mandate of promoting Science Fiction and the specific focus of sponsoring the annual VCON Science Fiction Convention (founded 1971).

Anyone who is a paid member of VCON 33 or who has paid a membership fee of \$5.00 to WCSFA is a member of WCSFA till noon, Friday, October 3rd 2009 (when VCON 34 registration opens). No other criteria applies. Said membership involves voting privileges at WCSFA meetings.

Current Executive of WCSFA (effective October 21st 2008 Annual General Meeting):

PRESIDENT: *Danielle Stephens.*
VICE PRESIDENT: *Palle Hoffstein.*
TREASURER: *Tatina Lee.*
SECRETARY: *Keith Lim*
VCON 34 CHAIR-- *Danielle Stephens.*
ARCHIVIST: *R. Graeme Cameron.*
MEMBER-AT-LARGE: *Deej Barends.*
MEMBER-AT-LARGE: *Garth Spencer.*

Since anyone can download WCSFAzine, the act of reading WCSFAzine does not constitute membership in WCSFA or grant voting privileges in WCSFA. Therefore you don't have to worry about WCSFA policies, debates, finances, decisions, etc. Unless you want to. Active members always welcome. Currently, easiest way to join WCSFA is to attend VCON 33. See info page

WCSFA Website: < <http://www.user.dcnnet.com/clintbudd/WCSFA/> >

WCSFAzine *IS* a fannish E-zine publication sponsored by WCSFA to promote and celebrate every and all aspects of the Science Fiction Community on the West Coast of Canada.

You can download the latest issue (and past issues) from < <http://efanzines.com> > or contact the Editor at: < rgraeme@shaw.ca > and ask me to email you a PDF version.

WCSFAzine is not intended to be an information newswire service, or an industry promotional outlet, but rather an eclectic ongoing anthology of bits and pieces of nifty rumours and misinformation as viewed through a fannish lens. You can expect the focus to be on the West Coast, but with a peripheral vision including the entire world of fandom. Anticipate info on upcoming books, fannish events, local clubs and conventions, film reviews, short essays, weird cover art, spin doctor publicity announcements, peculiar speculations and astounding bits of trivia to put you in touch with your fannish heritage.

Anyone (even non-members) may submit short articles, mini-essays, letters of comment, art fillers (small pieces of art) and/or cover art to the Editor at:

R.G. Cameron, Apt 72G – 13315 104th Ave, Surrey, B.C., V3T 1V5.

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