

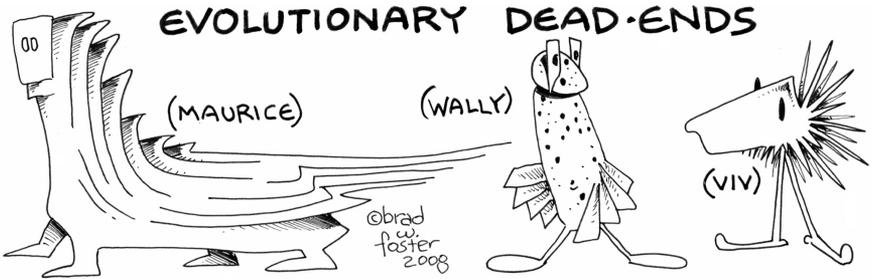
# BCSFA Zine

The Newsletter of the British Columbia Science Fiction Association

#460

\$3.00/Issue

September 2011



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Please send comments, suggestions, and/or submissions to Felicity Walker (the editor), at [felicity4711@gmail.com](mailto:felicity4711@gmail.com) or #209-3851 Francis Road, Richmond, BC, Canada, V7C 1J6. *BCSFAzine* solicits electronic submissions and black-and-white line illustrations in JPG, GIF, BMP, PNG, or PSD format, and offers printed contributors' copies as long as the club budget allows.

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## This Month in BCSFA

- Sunday 18 September @ 7 PM:     **BCSFA meeting**—at Ray Seredin's, 707 Hamilton Street (recreation room), New Westminster. Call 604-521-0254 for directions. [*October meeting is Sunday 16 October 2011, same time, same location.*]
- Thursday 22 September @ 7 PM:   **September Book Discussion** at the Grind gallery & café, 4124 Main Street (near the corner of Main and King Edward), Vancouver. Book to be discussed will be *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card.—**Doug Finnerty**
- Friday 30 September:             **'BCSFAzine' production** (theoretically).

## About BCSFA

The incumbent BCSFA Executive members are:

President & Archivist: R. Graeme Cameron, 604-584-7562

Vice President: TBA

Treasurer: Kathleen Moore, 604-771-0845

Secretary: Barb Dryer, 604-267-7973

Editor: Felicity Walker, 604-448-8814

Keeper of FRED Book: Ryan Hawe, 604-448-8714

VCON Ambassador for Life: Steve Forty, 604-936-4754

BCSFA's website is at <http://www.bcsfa.net/>. The BCSFA e-mail lists are BC SciFi Assc ([http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bc\\_scifi\\_assc/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bc_scifi_assc/)) and BCSFAnet (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bcsfanet/>).

## Letters of Comment

[*Editor's responses in brackets.*]

**Garth Spencer**  
[garthspencer@shaw.ca](mailto:garthspencer@shaw.ca)

Thursday 1 September 2011

Dear Felicity,

Neat. Right away I can update the [BCSFA.net](http://BCSFA.net) events page.

The Anarcho-Surrealist Party title actually ends with "...Hot Tub in the Back-yard Society Inc." Not that it matters.

Garth

[*It would have mattered to me! I just didn't know about it because Facebook truncates the name at "So." I hope it's a also hot tub time machine, so I can visit the 1980s. Thanks for adding me!*]

**Dave Haren**  
[tyrbolo@comcast.net](mailto:tyrbolo@comcast.net)

Friday 9 September 2011

Hi Felicity,

I'm waiting for Lloyd Penney to talk about Reno. I was going before I had my excitement. Now it'll have to be vicarious.

Mike Hart has died on us after a long run of changing the world. He's the founder of Project Gutenberg. His efforts over the years have realized a science fiction dream. The handheld personal library now exists.

Like the handheld comp predicted by Asimov in *Foundation* which is also here now. His projection was 10,000 years in the future.

[*Foundation also predicted the speech-to-text transcription machine, with a sense-of-usage checker and a realistic handwriting font! We don't have that yet, but I'm in no hurry; I like typing.*]

ebook readers have dropped below \$100.00 in multiple places so my prophecy was correct...*grin*. Now I can hang out a shingle as a futurist.

My new prediction is that Graeme is going to dazzle the world with his newly conceived awards for fanzines.

Remember you heard it here first.

His attack on *Bob* is awful though, nobody else gives you a money back guarantee on salvation.

[*The Subgenius Bob? (I'm way behind on zine reviews.)*]

Check out [http://theoatmeal.com/comics/senior\\_year](http://theoatmeal.com/comics/senior_year).

[*Ha ha! © I like their grammar police and cat cartoons too.*]

I found a copy of Vinge's singularity paper on-line. It is highly interesting from a number of points. The interaction between two chatbots might lead to the conclusion that Vaughn Bode was a better prophet in his *Junkwaffel* comics. Those of the movie generation just think future scenes in the *Terminator* movies.

Jinnie Cracknell has a nice zine up. She's at issue 5 of *Quantum Bollocks*. Highly talented and fun to read.

As usual the techno future is bearing down on us like a runaway glacier while the world wastes its psychic energies on ridiculous politics and worse journalism.

[I've been reading *The Social Animal* by journalist David Brooks, in which he says that politics can change culture and save society from itself. I'd like that.]

And here's my contribution to a better future:

Oh ye of little faith, lift up your hearts, lift up your eyes to the skies. Up there is a whole planet broken into chunks for easy access. Up there are two huge balls of hydrocarbons. And just as soon as you go up there, your problems are too much energy.

Those who wish to stay here squabbling over scraps are welcome to it. The rest of us are going to the stars on pillars of nuclear fire.

The future is going to get more exciting every day.

My reaction to *Swill* is a simple one. I would not trade anything in the world for the science fiction community. The oddest furry and the strangest *Trek* fan are head and shoulders above the rest of humanity because they can embrace the possibility of difference. That doesn't make them perfect; it just means they are better.

Warmest regards,

Dave

**Jim McPherson**

[jmcp@phantacea.com](mailto:jmcp@phantacea.com)

Friday 2 September 2011

**Goddess Gambit**

For the Dead to thrive, the Living must die

Coming Soon: Book Three of *The Thrice-Cursed Godly Glories*'



Already available: The three mini-novels comprising ...

**The 1000 Days of Disbelief**

Book Two of *The Thrice Cursed Godly Glories*'



Jim McPherson's  
**PHANTACEA Mythos**  
[www.phantacea.com](http://www.phantacea.com)

Phantacea Publications are distributed worldwide by Ingram Books and Ingram International  
Order online or from your favourite bookseller

Thanks for *BCSFazine*, Felicity. And thanks for recent inclusion of *Phantacea* update.

Attached is a copy of the b/w ad that's going in VCon Program, all goes well. It's grey scale so, with only modicum of manipulation, should reproduce both for digital and print publications. While I'm still hopeful Verne Andru, who did cover for *Feeling Theocidal*, will have cover of *Goddess Gambit* ready in time for VCon, we may only have the poster of it ready.

Also, still haven't quite wrapped mind around notion of e-books. Have, however, been convinced that not enough folks are willing to pay \$20+ for a POD novel or even \$10 for a mini-novel like *Janna Fangfingers* by relative unknowns like me.

As a consequence, hope to get all pHant publications, including comic books, in e-book format b4 year end. In this regard I'm looking into purchasing *In Design CS 5.5*, which sounds to be vastly improved over *CS 4*, the one I use.

I'll let you know when I get technology down enough to go ahead with aforementioned e-books. With much lower prices I expect to reach voracious readers who

use digital systems and will trust them to pass on positive recommendations to regular book readers like myself and most others I know.

Getting pHant print publications into local libraries is next project.

Jim McPherson

[www.phantacea.com](http://www.phantacea.com)

**Lloyd Penney**  
1706-24 Eva Rd.,  
Etobicoke, On.  
M9C 2B2  
[penneys@bell.net](mailto:penneys@bell.net)

Sunday 11 September 2011

Dear Felicity:

While Hugo-winning fan artist and madman Brad Foster scribbles something extremely fannish and silly above the index, I will say thank you for issue 459 of *BCSFazine*, and will dive directly into the contents.

Looks like there's lot of people requesting your attention to their product, or your consideration for the Aurora Awards, coming up sooner than we think. Should I ask for the same consideration on the Aurora ballot? I have some hopes, and I will be there at SFContario 2 for the Aurora banquet and awards ceremony. Fingers crossed!

When Earl Kemp does wind up his series of fanzines under the title of *eI*, that will be a shame. It started as an autobiography of his career in soft core pornography in the 1960s, and is ending as a great history of the very beginnings of science fiction publishing.

My loc...I didn't get that job I wrote about, and we did go to Reno. A lot of walking, but a great convention, lots to do and see, lots of old friends I hadn't seen in some time (hello, Fran Skene!), interesting things to buy, special events like the Hugos...five days of crazy is how I described it, and I stand by that description. Of course, to get to everything I wanted to see, I would have needed another five days. I ran into Greg Benford in the fanzine lounge, and had the chance to talk with him. He said he regrets having to cancel out on VCon, and is looking forward to Vancouver next year.

The Hugo ceremony should be watched, and I believe it is available somewhere on YouTube. When Chris Garcia accepts a Hugo, he does it in a big fashion. I was there live, and it was a fun time. Chris sure deserves that silvery rocket. And already, we've been talking about next year's Worldcon in Chicago.

Given the time of the month, and what's happening the end of September, I want to wish you all a fun and successful VCon. Maybe one of these days, I'll be able to join you again.

I think I have done all I can for right now. Take care, and see you with the next issue.

Yours,  
Lloyd Penney

**We Also Heard From:** Toren Atkinson, R. Graeme Cameron, Steve Green.

## Calendar

Note to print readers: underlined events have an associated URL. Links included in the PDF version at <http://www.efanzines.com/BCSFA/>.—Julian Castle

### September 2011

September is Be Kind to Editors and Writers Month and Library Card Sign-Up Month.

1, 15, and 29 September 2011: Burnaby Sci-Fi Writers' Group meets alternate Thursdays 7–9 PM at Metrotown Public Library (program room) or Connections lounge. Open to new members, mainly sci-fi/fantasy or what have you. Contact Allan @ (604) 946-2427 or email [lowson@dccnet.com](mailto:lowson@dccnet.com) for details.—Allan Lowson (on Richmond Writers Network Facebook Group)

2 September 2011: Premiere of films *Shark Night 3D* (SF/horror; Donal Logue) and *Apollo 18* (horror/SF/conspiracy/found-footage).

3 September 2011: *Tim Burton* Theme Ball!, 9:00 PM–3:00 AM at Club 23, 23 West Cordova, Vancouver, BC. Halloween is such an amazing, well-loved holiday that it should be held twice a year, not just once! *Saturday September 3 Sanctuary proudly presents the fourth annual costume wonderland: Tim Burton Theme Ball...at Club 23 West!* The debut of this event in 2008 and follow up parties in 2009 and 2010 saw *massive* responses, and we're stepping it up even further for the *fourth* year in a row, turning the spotlight on to the creepy cast of creative chameleons that comprise the dark & alternative scene of the Vancouver nightlife. Photo gallery from the 2009 party here: [[Gothic BC](#)] Photo gallery from last year's party on Gothic BC here: [[Gothic BC](#)]... ■ *Prizes for best Tim-Burton-inspired costumes of the night!* Outrageous, fanciful, mind-bending costumes, make-up and props of all sorts not required but highly encouraged! Ideas: your favourite character from any Tim Burton movie, vintage, Victorian or fancy ballroom dress, brides & grooms, pale/undead skin, zombies, vampires, ghosts, monsters, classic Hollywood, top hats, stripes, '50s and sci-fi themes, scientists, sexy or scary aliens, circus, carnival or voodoo themed outfits, Christmas & Halloween themed outfits...winners announced every hour at 11 PM, midnight and 1 AM! ■ *Suggested movies for inspiration: Alice in Wonderland, Sleepy Hollow, Pee-Wee's Big Adventure, Charlie & The Chocolate Factory, Beetlejuice, Frankenweenie, Big Fish, The Nightmare Before Christmas, The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy, Corpse Bride, Ed Wood, Mars Attacks!, Edward Scissorhands, Sweeney Todd...*the list just goes on and on! ■ *Resident DJs Pandemonium & R-Lex* spinning only the best alternative / rock / electro / industrial / new wave & loads of Tim Burton movie soundtrack gems! ■ *Tim Burton visuals & decorations/photo booth by Atratus* Dive head-first into a completely Tim-Burton-themed environment! ■ *Tim Burton theme burlesque performances* by Rianne Aconda, Cherry OnTop ■ *Tickets \$10 with pass/\$12 without* Click on "attending" to the event, and we'll email you a pass right to your inbox at 2 PM day of the event,

which you can print off at home, or, pick one up ahead of time from any of the many cool funky shops and retailers around town!—Isaac Terpstra

4 September 2011: **Lezli Robyn**'s birthday.

6 September 2011: Greater Vancouver Boardgames Meetup Group Monthly Meetup, 7 PM [location shown only to members of the Meetup group]. The games played depend on what everyone brings. If there is a game that you would like to play let it be known and we'll see if someone can bring it. Also if you have a great game to share we're always excited to try it out. \$1.—Keith Lim

8 September 2011: International Literacy Day.

9 September 2011: Premiere of films *Contagion* (action/SF; Gwyneth Paltrow, Matt Damon, Laurence Fishburne, Jude Law, Kate Winslet, Demetri Martin, Elliot Gould, Enrico Colantoni, Bryan Cranston, Sanaa Lathan, Sanjay Gupta) and *Creature* (horror; Daniel Bernhardt, Sid Haig, Pruitt Taylor Vince).

11 September 2011: Vancouver Comic Con, 11 AM to 5 PM at Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue). Special guest: Matthew Clark (*Ghost Rider, Doom Patrol*). Featuring: Ed Brisson (*Murder Book*), Derek DeLand (*Copyright Infringers*), Kim Glennie (*Emily & Zola, Girls' Room*), Mike Myhre (*Space Jet*), Jenna Sokalski, Gurukitty Studios, and others! Dealer tables: \$55/centre; \$65/wall. Hourly door prizes! Admission: \$4.00/kids under 14: free. Comics for Classrooms: Donate a new or gently-used school-appropriate graphic novel for free admission to this show. Books collected will be donated to Vancouver schools. Follow us on Twitter at: [twitter.com/vancomicon](http://twitter.com/vancomicon). For more information on either show: <http://www.vancouvercomiccon.com/> or call 604-322-6412.—Leonard S. Wong

12 September 2011: National Video Games Day.

15 September 2011: Reel Reads Movie Night: *Children of Men*, 6:30 PM at Alice MacKay Room, Lower Level, Central Library, 350 West Georgia Street, Vancouver. "In the year 2027 the human population has lost its ability to procreate. Based on a novel by P.D. James, *Children of Men* stars Clive Owen, Julianne Moore, and Chiwetel Ejiofor. No registration required, admission is free."—Julian Castle

16 September 2011: **Melissa Tookey** and **Kris Gallant**'s birthdays. Premiere of film *Restless* (drama/ghost).

17 September 2011: Rascal's: Steampunk Party, 8 PM–1 AM at WISE Hall, 1882 Adanac Street (at Victoria), Vancouver, BC, V5L 2E2. Rascals is an event geared towards the serious player with the opportunity for newcomers to the lifestyle to see and experience BDSM in all its forms.—Keith Lim

19 September 2011: International Talk Like a Pirate Day.

20 September, 18 October, 15 November, and 13 December 2011: Alternative Worlds Book Club, 6:30–8:30 PM at Morris J. Wosk Board Room, Level 7, Central Library, 350 West Georgia Street, Vancouver. “Explore the diverse worlds of fantasy fiction. Registration limited to 20, begins Saturday 9 July at 10:00 AM at the Level 3 information desk. Call 604-331-3691 for more information.”—[Julian Castle](#)

22 September 2011: Vagon Poetry, 6:30 PM at Alice MacKay Room, Lower Level, Central Library, 350 West Georgia Street, Vancouver. “Are you the best Vagon poet? Submit your absolutely worst poems to be presented slam style at our VPL/VCON Gala. Prizes in earth dollars. To enter: submit two poems to [l2programs@vpl.ca](mailto:l2programs@vpl.ca) by **8 September**. Rules and more information: 604-331-3687. Come dressed in your best science fi/fantasy costume at the Gala. Co-sponsored by VCON: Vancouver’s Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention.”—[Julian Castle](#)

25 September 2011: National Comic Book Day.

25 September 2011: [Word on the Street Festival](#), 5:00 PM at Library Square and CBC Plaza, Georgia Street at Hamilton Street. “Join us for a jam-packed day of author readings, exhibits, performances, and all-round literary mayhem. For more information check [www.thewordonthestreet.ca/wots/vancouver](http://www.thewordonthestreet.ca/wots/vancouver).”—[Julian Castle](#)

27 September 2011: Storytelling for Adults, 12:00–1:00 PM at Alma VanDusen & Peter Kaye Rooms, Lower Level, Central Library, 350 West Georgia Street. “Join us for a series of lunchtime storytelling programs for adults. September’s theme is *Moon Explorations*. Speaker to be announced. Contact 604-331-3691 for more information.”—[Julian Castle](#)

27 September 2011: Page to Screen, 6:30 PM at Alice MacKay Room, Lower Level, Central Library, 350 West Georgia Street. “How well do classic science fiction books fare when adapted to the big or small screen? A presentation and discussion covering, among other topics, Canadian authors and shows filmed in Vancouver. Co-sponsored by VCON: Vancouver’s Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention.”—[Julian Castle](#)

# VCON 36

30 September–2 October 2011: [VCON 36](#) at Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel, 7551 Westminster Highway, Richmond, BC, V6X 1A3. Vancouver’s Science Fiction & Fantasy Convention. Theme: Visions of the Future: Imagining Tomorrow in Science Fiction from the Past to the Present. Guests of Honour: Larry Niven, Jean-Pierre Normand, Lisa Lassek.—[Keith Lim](#)





Graeme reported that Taral Wayne had received his tenth Hugo nomination for Best Fan Artist. Graeme outlined the different awards and what types of media were eligible as fanzines. The Hugos currently include podcasts as zines, but there may be a new category created in future. The vote on whether or not to propose to create the category (I think I have that right) will be at the 2012 World Science Fiction Convention. The Auroras allow zines in PDF format as well as blogs. The

Fanedes (created by Graeme) will be for paper zines only—“plunging furiously backwards in time,” Graeme said.

Ray declared that “SF is dead on broadcast TV.” Joe noted that *V* and *The Event* have been cancelled and proposed that “fantasy has replaced SF.”

Graeme was surprised to read that Johnny Depp had been cast as Tonto in a new *Lone Ranger* movie. I replied that Depp is part Cherokee, hence his films’ heavy rotation in the programming grid of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. Graeme added that Jason Momoa, the star of the new *Conan* movie, is Hawaiian.

Someone—I think Barb—said that on Saturday 27 August at 5:00 PM, there would be a barbecue behind the Planetarium, courtesy of the local Browncoats, Trekkers, and *Battlestar Galactica* fans.

Barb asked if anyone had heard about an incident at Brighthouse Skytrain Station the day before, in which a person dressed as a zombie was seen walking around with a rifle, and the police were called. I said it sounded like someone who had been to the Zombie Walk, holding a prop rifle. My notes don’t say if anyone else had more information.

Ray remembered Wacky Packs—trading cards and stickers made by Topps, parodying real products. Kathleen and Joe remembered them too.

Ray mentioned trains, this time in the context of the Civil War. Because each train only runs on one gauge (track size), people and cargo have to switch trains every time the track changes gauge. The North only used two different gauges, whereas the South used several, which meant it was slower to transport.

Someone—I think Graeme—had new information about Hitler. It was 1931, the early days of the Nazi Party. At the manslaughter trial of four Sturmabteilung members, Hans Litten, a Jewish attorney, subpoenaed Hitler and cross-examined him for hours, using facts and reason to destroy Hitler’s claim that the Nazis were peaceful, which caused Hitler to completely blow his composure. Litten refused to leave Germany even after Hitler took over, and Hitler had him arrested, tortured, and sent to several concentration camps. Litten eventually committed suicide in one of the camps. Today, however, the bar association of Berlin is named after Litten, and the BBC has just made a movie of his story: *The Man Who Crossed Hitler* (2011).

This branched into the topics of kitlers (cats that look like Hitler) and *Now Show Me Your Belly Button!*, a book with photos of politicians with odd expressions, with humorous captions added.

Someone asked about Pierre Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, and Graeme said that when Trudeau and his colleagues were young politicians just starting out, they were not taken seriously by the media. Nevertheless, the media enjoyed covering them, because they were hip, weird, and in-



novative. They were seen as a novelty, the way that early feminists were; Graeme remembered a “clump” of feminists (as they were described at the time; not by Graeme!) on Johnny Carson’s show, who were just there to be comedic fodder. Carson got laughs just by saying “sensible shoes.” One thing Graeme didn’t like about the Trudeau era was when Defence Minister Paul Hellyer regrouped the Royal Canadian Air Force, Royal Canadian Navy, and Canadian Army into the Canadian Forces, presumably hoping to downplay the English side of Canada’s origins. One of the few good things Stephen

Harper has done has been to change it back—although, added Kathleen, the army is still called the Canadian Army.

Graeme and Kathleen also talked about different military marches. The goose-step, with its high, stiff-legged kicks, seems silly when one person does it, but scary when huge, synchronized groups do it, which many nations’ armies still do on ceremonial occasions. It looks like it would really hurt and possibly injure the soldier. The mameluks (medieval Arab slave soldiers who ended up becoming a powerful warrior class) had an unusual three-step march—two steps forward, one step back, in time with music—which was difficult to master but visually impressive.

Felicity Walker

Sunday 21 August 2011

## September Book Discussion

Dear Felicity:

Here’s notice of the next book discussion. Any questions, comments or concerns, you know who to call.

Next book discussion is Thursday September 22 @ 7 PM. It’s at “The Grind” gallery and coffee house, 4124 Main Street, Vancouver. This time we’re discussing *Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott Card. In October, the book is *Ender’s Shadow* by Orson Scott Card. November’s book is *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. LeGuin.

Doug Finnerty

Saturday 27 August 2011

## ‘Reality Skimming’ Solicits Content for ‘Ethics in SF’

Have a gut reaction to a situation in your favorite SF? Or a moral question SF explores you’d like to highlight? Reality Skimming, the Okal Rel Universe blog, is booking features by writers, fans and other interested parties for the 2011–2012 season. We are working with two formats: single posts of about 200 words and serial interviews of 2–4 posts for longer interviews. Posts should aspire to inspire comments. No previous experience (or degree in ethics) required. But do reference any

published work sufficiently to identify it. E-mail your idea to [lynda@okalrel.org](mailto:lynda@okalrel.org) and [ojoosan@gmail.com](mailto:ojoosan@gmail.com).

Lynda Williams, author

<http://www.okalrel.org/books.html>

<http://clarionfoundation.wordpress.com/tag/lynda-williams/>

Lynda Williams

Saturday 3 September 2011

## **Michael Stern Hart 1947–2011**

Michael Stern Hart was born in Tacoma, Washington on March 8, 1947. He died on September 6, 2011 in his home in Urbana, Illinois, at the age of 64. He is survived by his mother, Alice, and brother, Bennett. Michael was an Eagle Scout (Urbana Troop 6 and Explorer Post 12), and served in the Army in Korea during the Vietnam era.

Hart was best known for his 1971 invention of electronic books, or eBooks. He founded Project Gutenberg, which is recognized as one of the earliest and longest-lasting online literary projects. He often told this story of how he had the idea for eBooks. He had been granted access to significant computing power at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. On July 4, 1971, after being inspired by a free printed copy of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, he decided to type the text into a computer, and to transmit it to other users on the computer network. From this beginning, the digitization and distribution of literature was to be Hart's life's work, spanning over 40 years.

Hart was an ardent technologist and futurist. A lifetime tinkerer, he acquired hands-on expertise with the technologies of the day: radio, hi-fi stereo, video equipment, and of course computers. He constantly looked into the future, to anticipate technological advances. One of his favorite speculations was that someday, everyone would be able to have their own copy of the Project Gutenberg collection or whatever subset desired. This vision came true, thanks to the advent of large inexpensive computer disk drives, and to the ubiquity of portable mobile devices, such as cell phones.

Hart also predicted the enhancement of automatic translation, which would provide all of the world's literature in over a hundred languages. While this goal has not yet been reached, by the time of his death Project Gutenberg hosted eBooks in 60 different languages, and was frequently highlighted as one of the best Internet-based resources.

A lifetime intellectual, Hart was inspired by his parents, both professors at the University of Illinois, to seek truth and to question authority. One of his favorite recent quotes, credited to George Bernard Shaw, is characteristic of his approach to life:

“Reasonable people adapt themselves to the world. Unreasonable people attempt to adapt the world to themselves. All progress, therefore, depends on unreasonable people.”

Michael prided himself on being unreasonable, and only in the later years of life did he mellow sufficiently to occasionally refrain from debate. Yet, his passion for life, and all the things in it, never abated.

Frugal to a fault, Michael glided through life with many possessions and friends, but very few expenses. He used home remedies rather than seeing doctors. He fixed his own house and car. He built many computers, stereos, and other gear, often from discarded components.

Michael S. Hart left a major mark on the world. The invention of eBooks was not simply a technological innovation or precursor to the modern information environment. A more correct understanding is that eBooks are an efficient and effective way of unlimited free distribution of literature. Access to eBooks can thus provide opportunity for increased literacy. Literacy, and the ideas contained in literature, creates opportunity.

In July 2011, Michael wrote these words, which summarize his goals and his lasting legacy: “One thing about eBooks that most people haven’t thought much is that eBooks are the very first thing that we’re all able to have as much as we want other than air. Think about that for a moment and you realize we are in the right job.” He had this advice for those seeking to make literature available to all people, especially children:

“Learning is its own reward. Nothing I can say is better than that.”

Michael is remembered as a dear friend, who sacrificed personal luxury to fight for literacy, and for preservation of public domain rights and resources, towards the greater good.

This obituary is granted to the public domain by its author, Dr. Gregory B. Newby.

Project Gutenberg via [Dave Haren](#)  
Sunday 11 September 2011

### **Cliff Robertson (1923–2011)**

The actor Cliff Robertson died Saturday, 10 September, the day after his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. He received the 1968 Academy Award for his role in *Charly*, adapted from Daniel Keyes’ Hugo Award-winning short short “Flowers for Algernon” and the Nebula Award-winning novel of the same name. His other appearances included *The Twilight Zone* (“A Hundred Yards Over the Rim,” 1961), *Brainstorm* (1980), *Escape from L.A.* (1996), and the *Spider-Man* trilogy (as Uncle Ben, 2002–2007). In 1977, Robertson uncovered a scandal at Columbia Pictures involving the cashing of fraudulent cheques by the studio head; although it was Robertson who reported these criminal activities, he was effectively blacklisted for three years.



[Steve Green](#)

Wednesday 14 September 2011

## Zines Received

**‘Opuntia’ #70.5A** (July 2011). Published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. Perzine issue.

“Hell’s Bells No More”: Dale has retired, and, like Graeme, is now free to pursue his personal projects full-time. As more fans of that generation retire, we may be treated to an increase in fanac. Credit to Taral for coining the phrase “Retirement Age Fandom.”

“Visting Mr. Spock’s Home”: Vulcan—Vulcan, Alberta, that is. I was surprised to read that it was as late as 1995 when the town first decided to up-play its *Star Trek* connection. It’s too bad the Enterprise Family Restaurant has gone out of business.

“2011-04-17”: A six-lane highway flooded and Dale was able to take a photo, which shows a few drivers ignoring the first-responders’ roadblock and trying to plow through the 40-centimeter-high (about 1½-foot) water. I wonder if they made it across or if the water got into their engines.

“Glitches in the Papernet”: Dale says that landscape format is the only way to go for PDF zines, and it’s a hassle to read portrait-format PDFs. I agree that *Opuntia*’s 8½×5½-inch format is perfect for a computer screen, but in my experience, portrait format is also readable as long as the text is single-column; then all the reader has to do is scroll down once.

Also: “The Bow Tower”; “Letters to the Editor”; “World Wide Party #18.”

**‘Opuntia’ #70.5B** (August 2011). Published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. Perzine issue.

“The Traveling Truss”; “Why the Google Street View Staff Get Ulcers”; “Rocky Mountain Way, June 2011”; “Look What the Tow Truck Dragged In”; “Speaking of Mountain Roads.”

**‘Opuntia’ #71** (September 2011). Published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. Sercon issue.

“Colliding in Cowtown”: Dale’s report on When Words Collide, a new, strictly literary convention that covers “SF and fantasy but also mystery, historical, and romance fiction.”



The weekend before the convention, Dale encountered members of a steampunk club at a street festival in his neighbourhood. They hadn’t heard of the convention, which for Dale was further proof of the atomization of fandom, which he partly blames on the Internet. Foreshadowing an item in “Seen in the Literature,” he writes that “atomized fans only search for their interests, and only blog with their own kind.” I think having eclectic interests (like Dale’s) reduces a fan’s atomization. Not all interests will blend or cross-pollinate, but some will.

Dale writes that Robert Sawyer said (in his GOH speech) that in one of his novels he'd re-written the famous William Gibson line as "The sky was the colour of a television set tuned to a dead channel—blue." I remember tweeting that at some point, thinking I'd made an original point. I don't know whether to be disappointed at being scooped or pleased at having thought alike to a professional. I recently discovered, however, that dead channels can still be viewed as snow, but there's a setting in TVs and VCRs that replaces snow with a blue screen, and it's the default setting. The Dead Channels would be a good name for a Television cover band.

The Alberta Romance Writers Association's panel title was "Behind Every Great Story Is a Romance." Dale writes that "Billie Milholland said romances are about relationships, so readers drawn into books by characterization will like them." My mileage varies. I like characterization but that doesn't automatically make romance interesting to me.

"Seen in the Literature": Passages in scientific journals noticed by Dale. "Emergence of Segregation in Evolving Social Networks" underscores Dale's earlier thoughts upon meeting atomized steampunks. It turns out people prefer to associated with like-minded people.

"Costs \$20 to Kick Attorney-General": Surprisingly, this was not a crash blossom or garden path headline; this 1908 article, found and reprinted by Dale, is saying that kicking the attorney-general cost a man \$20. I learned the word "blatherstike" from this article.

Also: "Letters to the Editor."



*My friend Amos says that someday this will happen to me.*

## Felicity's Collecting VHS

Felicity Walker

**Introduction.** Collecting VHS has become a hobby for me in the last few years. Of course, I'd been doing it for much longer than that, only for the first decade and a half it was just called "collecting movies." But why collect an obsolete format?

**Preservation and Archiving.** Some things are available on VHS that aren't available in any other format. Other things are only available in their original, non-reversioned form on VHS (for example, the original *Star Wars* trilogy). These things should be preserved. True, VCRs start to wear out after two years, and someday it won't be possible to buy a new VCR, but fortunately there are USB VCRs to transfer the information.

I'll also keep the physical tapes, to save the box art and other styling that would undoubtedly be changed in future rereleases.

**Affordability and Risk.** Collecting VHS is more affordable than ever, and because of that, I can be much more adventurous in my tastes than I could when VHS was new and owning a movie cost \$20 and up. For \$20, a movie has to be brilliant. For 50¢ to \$2, a movie just has to be fun. In the last few years I've bought scores of obscure B-movies on which I never would have gambled if I'd had to pay full price.

**Nostalgia and Warmth.** I'm glad that new technology makes greater precision possible, but I also find new movies too cold, shiny, and sharp. That's partly a result of the tools being used (digital cameras and heavy-handed colour-grading that imposes orange onto faces and blue onto backgrounds) and partly because that's the current style of popular culture. The look of VHS feels right to me, with its slight blurriness and natural colours. (Those colours that weren't natural were at least achieved through physical optics like lighting gels and lens filters, and that seems to have helped.) Movies are probably never going back to this warm, smooth style, and future digital copies of VHS-era movies are likely to be artificially sharpened and colour-graded, with no "unenhanced" option available.

**Conclusion.** Now that that's out of the way, I hope to use this space in future *BCSFazines* to show you some of the tapes I've rescued from the abyss.

Felicity Walker

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