

WIERDS DID IT

The title is inspired by 'The Ruin', an 8th century Anglo-Saxon poem describing the ruined Roman/British city of Aquae-Sulis (Bath), in which, as was the common usage of the time, the term 'wierd' (also 'wyrd', 'werd', modern spelling 'weird') is a noun referring to a race of fates or supramundane beings that do odd things.

*"Well-wrought this wall: Wierds broke it.
The stronghold burst...."*

-- 'The Earliest English Poems', Penguin Classics.

Thus do Science Fiction fans assault the fortress of Mundania!

1968/1969 ACADEMIC YEAR:

BEGINNINGS OF THAT WHICH SPAWNED BCSFA:

In the fall of 1968 a bunch of University of British Columbia (UBC) students who worked part time in the University computer centre maintained a 'lending library' of SF books for members of their group. Two of these students, Maynard Hogg and Claire Toynbee, decided it would be neat and nifty to develop the group into an on-campus Science Fiction club. So Claire Toynbee put a notice in the student newspaper "The Ubysey" to promote a meeting (at 12:40 pm, October 9th, 1968 in Math 104) to establish a club. Twelve 'members' (of the library group) and possibly as many as 12-13 newcomers, some of whom had been unaware that other fans -- let alone fandom -- existed on campus, answered the call. Among the students showing up for the first meeting were Mike Bailey (who later founded BCSFAzine), Daniel Say (who later got the ball rolling for the first V-Con -- I know, it wasn't called V-Con, something which will be explained at the appropriate time), as well as Brent Maclean, Ed Beauregard, Maynard Hogg, Claire Toynbee, Bill Webb, Vince Manis, and Don Marquardt.

According to the minutes (a copy of which is miraculously preserved in the WCSFA archive -- donated by Ken Wong), Maynard Hogg acted as Chair, whereupon he appointed the following:

UBC SFFEN EXECUTIVE (Temporary) - 1968/1969 ACADEMIC YEAR

General Chairman -- Maynard Hogg
Secretary/Treasurer -- Claire Toynbee
Librarian -- Don Marquardt
Information Officer & Public Relations Officer -- Mike Bailey

Among business conducted: Maynard reported that 20 people had been signed up at Clubs Day (thus indicating this was merely the first 'formal' meeting of a club in active preparation); it was announced the lending library would now be housed in a locker within the Student Union building (S.U.B.); and it

was felt that it would be in the interests of the club to join the National Fan Fantasy Federation. After 40 minutes of discussion, the meeting was adjourned

Ed Beauregard remembers the meeting as rather dull and that the only activity the new club offered was the lending library which was open just two afternoons a week. However, membership was but 2 dollars and 5 books. As Ed put it: *"At the next meeting I coughed up the \$2 plus the five worst books culled from my collection."*

The second meeting was held October 29th, 1968, in Buchanan 222. Formal elections resulted in:

UBC SFFEN EXECUTIVE - 1968/1969 ACADEMIC YEAR

Chairman -- Maynard Hogg
Secretary/Treasurer -- Claire Toynbee
Librarian -- Don Marquardt
Public Relations Officer -- Vince Manis
Information Officer -- Mike Bailey (because he actually knew something about fanzines)

Among business conducted: it was reported that the lending library would be moved into locker 16 in the S.U.B.; carried that *"all notices of general interest to the club would be posted on the club's locker;"* suggested that 'discussion groups' be organized on an informal basis; and that next month's meeting outline a program for the club. In addition, there was a lengthy *"discussion about organization of library files. It was decided to keep the file on IBM cards. Vince volunteered to lend his report generator for the IBM 1130 for library lists..."*

The club, already known as the UBC SFFEN by the second meeting, was neither large nor especially active in the 1968/1969 academic year. As Mike Bailey put it: *"It neither received nor published any fanzines and had no contact with fandom at large. Most importantly, no personal bonds were welded among club members and consequently the club was weak."*

However, before the end of the academic year, the club did produce a constitution (in April of 1969), no doubt with the intention of laying the groundwork for the club's function and activities in the 1969/1970 academic year to come.

Article I stated: *"The name of the club shall be UBC Science Fiction Fan Club, abbreviated as SFFEN or UBC SFFEN."*

Other Articles of interest include:

Article II: *"Purpose of club. 1) To provide reading material to science fiction fans on the UBC campus. 2) To provide information about the field of science fiction to science fiction fans on campus."*

Article V: *"All banking and financing shall be done through the Alma Mater Society subject to rule and regulations of the A.M.S."*

And among the Bylaws, Bylaw IV (Duties of Officers) includes the following:

That (among other duties) the Public Relations Officer *"shall represent the club in all dealings with the UBC Alma Mater Society and the University Clubs Committee,"*

And that the Information Officer *"A) Shall be responsible for publication of a club newsletter at least bimonthly during the University year, B) Shall, through the newsletter, keep club informed of club activities and of current events in Science Fiction and fantasy fandom."*

In fact, No newsletter or fanzine was published (just the minutes and copies of the constitution) but the next academic year (1969/1970) would witness the birth of the UBC SFFEN Newsletter.

To sum up the activities of the club in its first year, the group met infrequently (for one thing, they lacked an office on campus) but as they were a UBC club they could and did reserve on occasion rooms in the Student Union Building (SUB) for partying purposes, usually on Friday nights. Most parties were held in member's homes. Claire Toynbee, who was a member of MENSA (the organization of high IQ people) hosted several, sometimes combining UBC SFFEN meetings with MENSA meetings (which must have been interesting!). A small beginning, but a beginning.

1969/1970 ACADEMIC YEAR:

The first meeting in the new academic year was held 16th September, 1969. It was decided to man a booth at the UBC Clubs Day and recruit like mad. Thanks primarily to the energetic efforts of Daniel Say, about 40 to 50 people left their names and addresses at the booth, some of whom did eventually join the club, including Norma Hele, whom Ed Beauregard later married. The legendary Daniel Say was a phenomenon in his own right. Ed Beauregard describes Mr. Say in Garth Spencer's history of BCSFA "On The Bonny, Bonny Banks Of The Fraser" as follows:

"Dan Say was unquestionably the most energetic, the most vocal, and the most enthusiastic of our group. He seemed to have embraced the concept of fandom with almost religious fervour. His 'conversation' was essentially an ongoing monologue filled with humour, insult, sarcasm and just plain bullshit. His appearance today is unchanged from UBC days, and among callow students he was certainly a sight to behold. His perpetual air of superiority offered no offense, since it was coupled with the most incredible behavior, which could not fail to leave one laughing hysterically. I became one of his favourite targets, and the verbal jousting did much to sharpen my own skills."

My own recollection of Daniel Say (based on my involvement with the club in 1971/1972) was that he would dominate a room as soon as he entered, bouncing up and down in one place, clapping his hands in glee as he fired off a torrent of ideas faster than the human mind could follow. Boredom was instantly vanquished. You couldn't help but be infected by his excitement. A most interesting character, and extremely useful to the club.

On either 7th or 17th of October 1969 the club's second executive was elected:

UBC SFFEN EXECUTIVE - 1969/1970 ACADEMIC YEAR

General Chairman -- Maynard Hogg
Secretary/Treasurer -- Norma Hele
Librarian -- Christina Moore
Public Relations Officer -- Nadir Mirhardy
Publications Officer -- Ed Beauregard

Because of the increased membership, the University AMS decided to grant the club use of room SUB 216F in the Student Union Building for an office. This inspired Ed to publish Vol. 1, #1 of the UBC SFFEN Newsletter, dated October 1969, with a banner headline reading: "GLORIOUS NEWS FROM THE BUREAUCRATIC FRONT!" In it he announced the acquisition of the office and encouraged members to bring their friends. The office served as a permanent meeting place (discussion groups every Monday night, for instance), as a drop-in centre, and as a secure base for their rapidly growing lending library of SF magazines and books.

During November 1969, the office now available, club activity picked up. For one thing, members began coming up with ambitious proposals, such as inviting Isaac Asimov to come and lecture. The club contacted the AMS Speakers Committee and they wrote to Asimov. He wrote back: *"I am the last person left in our jetset society who absolutely refuses to use airplanes. Consequently I don't travel long distances and will probably never see British Columbia."*

Vol. 1 #2 of the newsletter was published in November. Again Ed pleaded for members to encourage friends to join. He also advocated showing a film to raise funds sufficient to produce a fanzine, but what with the spectre of impending Christmas exams, this was put off till January of 1970. Meanwhile the club did find enough energy to apply to Canada Council for a grant paying the expenses of four people to travel to Heicon, the 1970 Worldcon (in Heidelberg, Germany). In spite of, or perhaps because of, the many hilarious reasons put on the application form (though one, "inspiring Canadian Speculative Literature," sounds legit), the request was turned down.

Vol. 2, No.1, #3 of the UBC SFFEN Newsletter was printed in January of 1970 as the "Glorious New Year Ish" by "Publisher, Editor & Chief Censor" Ed Beauregard. In it he announced a new office for the club, SUB 216B, which was smaller, but better located. It was hoped that this would help bring in more members (the club membership only 43 as yet). Ed also talked about the fanzine shaping up, noting that it yet lacked a name and still needed several thousand words of copy to fill the issue. As he put it: *"If the response doesn't improve, we're going to drop the idea altogether. DON'T YOU WANT A FANZINE?"*

Ed also uttered the eternal lament: *"It's been suggested (with good cause) that we could use a much larger number of female members. (We only have about 4 or 5). Need I say more?"* And goes on to complain that only 19 members showed up for the last general meeting. Ed pleaded for members to make an effort to attend.

In Garth Spencer's BBBF, Ed Beauregard, in reference to the January '70 issue of the newsletter, said:

"Included.... was a list of members, a list which is worth spending a few minutes going over.... The core group, the dedicated fans who almost lived in the club office, included such people as Daniel Say, Bob Bells, Mike Bailey, Stan Talarczyk, Ken Stairs, Brent Maclean, Maynard Hogg, and Norma and I."

These were some of the people keen on producing a proper fanzine, as opposed to a one or two page newsletter. The club had received a small grant from the University Clubs Committee, but this was insufficient to cover the cost of the proposed fanzine. The solution, as announced by Beauregard, was to show the movie "One Million Years B.C." on Thursday, January 29th, beginning at 12:30 pm. In #3 of the newsletter he commented:

"We hope that Raquel Welch will prove sufficient attraction to bring in enough people to cover the cost of the movie and other expenses. (Otherwise we may become suddenly bankrupt)... We are considering letting members in free, providing we get enough help for all the publicity and sundry chores... If you want to get in free, come and help!!"

Years later, in BCSFAzine #80 (published in February, 1980), Ed Beauregard described the consequences of the showing as follows:

"We decided to show a film to raise money. This was quite common on campus, with various groups showing movies and charging 25 to 50 cents to attend. We risked a large portion of our cash reserves (about \$25) to rent 'ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.' It was the 'best' we could obtain and hope to attract a reasonably sized crowd. We spent two nights putting up posters and chalking adverts on blackboards. On 29th January, 1970, we presented 'ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.' (starring Raquel Welch) in Angus 104. To our immense surprise, the 50 cent admissions totaled to just over \$140. We were ecstatic, but quickly were confronted with a terrifying problem....."

THE EMERGENCY BIRTH OF BCSFA:

The problem was this: The University of British Columbia's Alma Mater society funded special interest clubs on campus (through the University Clubs Committee) with small grants at the beginning of the academic year. However, by the end of the academic year, any monies remaining (including any profits earned) were automatically forfeited back to the AMS. Members realized there was no reasonable way they could use up the movie's profits before this happened. Furthermore, individual clubs did not possess their own bank accounts, their funds being held by the AMS; consequently it was impossible to 'hide' the money from the AMS. In short, the club would 'lose' their windfall! What to do?

That very night an emergency meeting was held in the club office. Those attending included Mike Bailey, Ed Beauregard, Bob Bells, Maynard Hogg, Daniel Say, Claire Toynbee and several others. Mike Bailey is believed to be the originator of the solution. He conceived of a dummy/front off-campus organization to which every member of the UBC club would pay dues!

As a result, the very next day (30th January, 1970) Ed Beauregard, Norma Hele and Maynard Hogg went to the 10th & Sasamat branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and became signing officers on behalf of the B.C. Science Fiction Society (later known as the B.C. Science Fiction Association), depositing \$100 into account number 90-63. They then bought an 'official' stamp for

letterhead purposes and a couple of account books. The remainder of the money was to be put towards the production of the UBC SFFEN fanzine 'STAGE ONE' scheduled for publication in late March 1970.

But published first was UBC SFFEN Newsletter Vol 2, No. 2, #4 which came out in early March, produced by "*Chief Bull Shitter*" Daniel Say. In it he mentioned a possible election to be held at an upcoming meeting on March 12, which had to do with proposed constitutional revisions to allow fall/winter members:

"...to belong to the summer association of UBC SFFEN. Convert others to UBC SFFEN over the summer. Non-students to the B.C. Science Fiction Society, our off-campus group, and UBC students and grade 12's to the UBC SF Society. More girls, girls, GIRLS please."

To which Ed Beauregard added:

"For the mere charge of 50 cents per member (\$30) all members of UBC SFFEN have been enrolled as members of the British Columbia Science Fiction Society. Watch the newspapers (when they return) for meeting notices. This new organization has been set up to encourage fandom in B.C. and act as a co-ordination agency for fan activities. Let's try for a worldcon in 81! (Vancouver's Centennial.)"

In reference to the film showing and resulting fanzine, Daniel wrote:

"[The] film went very successfully. We had a good crowd, but not too many people came out to help. More volunteers next time and we may let you touch the money.... Fanzine is definately coming out. We need more typists and there is still time to submit some material. But not much more than a couple of thousand words. Become famous. How about a review, poem, etc? Haven't decided whether to ditto it or have the AMS print it..."

Other items of interest in the newsletter:

"Have you seen the March GALAXY? Harlan Ellison has taken over. The new editor Ejler Jakobsson has gone New Wave or something. Maybe he is really HE in disguise.... Space War was cancelled by the Computer Club for Open House because some little old lady complained about war.... Say a prayer for John Beynon Harris (John Wyndham) who wrote 'Day of the Triffids', 'Midwich Cuckoos' and 'The Crysalids', etc. He died March 9, 1969... State of the Library: More space needed. We are very overcrowded. All magazines before 1969 are now in the locker to allow the novels on the shelves. Most of the books are on IBM cards now but we need a file box. Bob Bells says of the quality of library "Ha Ha! What Quality of library?..." Party at Maynard Hogg's, March 14th, free booze if general meeting approves.... if you think you can do better on this newsletter, go ahead and work on it...."

THE PRODUCTION OF 'STAGE ONE':

'STAGE ONE', which came out in Late March, 1970, was edited by Robert Bells. At 50 pages, it can be considered quite an ambitious effort. The primary motivation behind its creation?:

"This magazine has been published to prove to ourselves that we can produce just as professional a fanzine as the February 1970 GALAXY"

'GALAXY' was a digest-sized SF mag at that time edited by Ejler Jakobsson who had revamped the format and given it the subtitle "The Best in Pertinent Science Fiction" in an effort to make it more appealing to fans. He even ran 'SUNPOT' comics by Vaughn Bode! 'GALAXY' eventually folded in 1980. All the same, I suspect UBC SFFEN did not succeed in their goal.

The fanzine's pages were printed by purple ditto, and were stapled between two stiff buff-coloured pieces of cardboard. The cover depicted a blocky yet somehow streamlined spaceship drawn by Ted McPherson.

Some 12 poems were present, not all of them SF, with titles like "DIRECTIONS TO THE DEAD END," and "LET US PREY." The budding poets were Ted McPherson, Ken Stairs, Paul Green and John Patrick Hewson.

Ken Stairs and Robert Bells contributed a couple of very short stories, but 17 pages are taken up by the "novel(ette)" 'ONE BRIGHT DAY IN THE MORNING', written by Mike Bailey and illustrated (4 illos) by Ted MacPherson. It is the tale of the youthful barbarian Graimon, who having robbed the wizard Haemon, and mercifully ravaged the fair Praeskilla, is pursued by the Glem, a jewel with the power of a Thral, and.... well, you get the idea. The story was introduced with the comment: *"Mike Bailey is the club historian"* but not, as you can perhaps guess, world-renowned Fantasy writer. Still, a worthy effort (and possibly a spoof? Not sure.)

Ed Beauregard contributed an essay titled 'HEINLEIN IS A HARSH MASTER' in which he argued there is no contrast between 'STARSHIP TROOPERS' and 'STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND', that in fact:

"All of Heinlein's novels (at least within the last 15 years) are the result of one political philosophy, and that he has not contradicted himself, or proposed opposite types of societies. Within the framework of 'What-if?', all his stories are consistent." The article was prefaced, *"Note: The opinions expressed in this essay are those of the author only and quite possibly no one else in the world."*

Stan Talarczyk provided an article about a board game he'd invented and was planning to copyright, called 'SPATIAL WAR -- A GAME OF STRATEGY', essentially a space battle concept employing the use of travel through hyperspace to give it a kind of 3-D feel. Robert Bells and Ron MacFarlane contributed some art as well.

But it is not for all of the above that 'STAGE ONE' has a notorious Fan reputation. It was the inclusion of the story 'GONAD THE CONQUEROR: THE GREATEST SWORDSMAN' (by 'Anonymous') that led to controversy and infamy. Ed Beauregard seized the entire print run and hid it in a locker, refusing to release it till the (possibly offensive) pages had been removed. A compromise was reached. Brown paper sheets were inserted to set the story apart, with the following warning written on the first sheet:

"RESTRICTED. For mature eyes only. Strong stomachs only."

Gonad was a most precocious lad. I quote the following excerpts for you edification, but ask you to bear in mind the above warning:

"To maintain the tremendous blood pressure required to expand his organ to its maximum length (14 feet) he has a second heart in his lower abdomen. The heart has 12 chambers so the pressure can undergo gradual increase, thus reducing the damage to his other (normal) circulatory system."

"The majority of his head is an enormous blood sinus to supply blood for his erection. This explains why most of Gonad's movements are spastic, spasmodic, and instinctive. It also helps to explain why Gonad is not excessively bright."

"Gonad's death we have determined from probability studies as being one of the following three. Gonad, as he always wished to, died in bed. But as he never wished to, he died in bed, alone."

"1) Gonad laid on his face, had an erection, and fell from a great height, smashing his blood sinus."

"2) Gonad laid on his face, had an erection, and drove himself through the concrete ceiling."

"3) Gonad laid on his face, had a wet dream, and drowned."

Hmmm, not great literature, but it does maintain reader interest.

Ed Beauregard later described 'STAGE ONE' as *"a truly amateurish effort"* but it was probably, judging by the contents, a lot of fun to produce. As of January of 1992, the UBC Science Fiction Society (the successor to UBC SFFEN) still had about 20 copies of 'STAGE ONE' hidden in its SUB office.

After the publication of 'STAGE ONE' the course of the club, in the words of Ed Beauregard, was *"all downhill as conflict and confrontation came to dominate UBC SFFEN."* (Which may hint that the 1970 summer session for the club did not work out). This may explain why Ed Beauregard and Norma Hele dropped out of both BCSFS and UBC SFFEN and did not rejoin till 1973 when BCSFA was recreated as a truly independent entity totally separate from the UBC club. Still, enough members came back for the next Academic Year to ensure continuity and survival for both organizations.

There was a very curious wrap-up to the 1969/1970 Academic year which is still preserved in the WCSFA Archives. A most remarkable document, one might say:

1969--1970 YEAR END REPORT BY DANIEL SAY:

Unfortunately, it was indeed written by Daniel Say, which means that it is a unique and highly individual document. By this I mean that a straight-forward accounting of events is not what Say had in mind.

For instance, in reference to actual events in the course of the year, Daniel has only this to say: *"As you were here most of last year, you know most of what happened."* Undoubtedly this was true for the

readership at the time, but for a contemporary historian-wannabee like myself, this minimalist approach is extremely frustrating!

The rest of the 12 page document consists entirely of Daniel Say's personal recommendations to the club executive. It is to be born in mind that Daniel was intensely energetic, both physically and mentally, and that sarcasm was but one of many rapier-like weapons his wit employed. Here are some of his suggestions:

"RECOMMENDATION: That the General Chairman keep a most secret and personal file on the members so that we can get the most of their power relationships and knowledge."

"RECOMMENDATION: That we take over and/or change the Summer Session into the Summer Science Fiction Society." (Beside this someone drew a clenched fist and the words "All power to SF Fen!")

"RECOMMENDATION: How about we sign up some honorary members? Say people of stature in the SF world, like Isaac Asimov, Raquel Welch, and others?"

"RECOMMENDATION: That the Vice-Chairman be made responsible for the complete takeover of the UCC (University Clubs Committee) and assist in the takeover of the AMS (Alma Mater Society)."

"RECOMMENDATION: That the Vice-Chairman try to get as many of our members as possible onto the University Speakers Committee, the Special Events Committee and academic activities as possible with the purpose of making UBC one of the major ports of call of the SF writer and for the purpose of holding a Worldcon (or a con with so many great stars of SF that it could be called the GREATESTCON)."

"RECOMMENDATION: An Annual SF film festival, with lots of publicity among the psuedo-sophisticates and therefore movie-symbolist members of the press..."

"RECOMMENDATION: That the Secretary act as archivist and keep a record of events and what happened, collect all accounts from the press and other fanzines and mentions on radio and TV about us and form an archives with lists of members and as many group photos as possible. These should be stored in yearly vaults and with a list of contents on the outside of the steel box..."

"RECOMMENDATION: The President should be able to recognize on sight every member of UBC SFFEN." (In ink beside this is the note: "I hereby resign, Pres.")

"RECOMMENDATION: The Secretary should write letters to the editors of such rags as 'The Ubssey' complaining about the lack of SF in the paper, complaining that they have very little SF, complaining that they don't have enough SF, complaining that they should devote a whole issue to SF, complaining that they should change their name to the 'SF FEN WEEKLY NEWSLETTER'." (He also suggests sending the papers "distorted pictures of small lizards crushing the life out of dolls....")

"RECOMMENDATION: That the Librarian and a team of musclemen go to the domiciles of delinquent borrowers to get the books back and make sure the borrower regrets owing any books to the library and will never do it again."

"RECOMMENDATION: That as Vancouver will become the world centre of SF....."

And concludes with: *"Good luck. You will need it."*

To be fair, there are lots of practical suggestions, but the above are samples of Say's style of humour which I suspect he was employing to tweak fellow members over various grandiose plans being bandied about. That his humour was, if anything, understated is shown by the plans drawn up the following year....

1970/1971 ACADEMIC YEAR

(NOTE: No material exists in the WCSFA archives to indicate that UBC SFFEN or BCSFS 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.

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) sent word that he would be passing through Vancouver. Daniel Say and Vice-Chairman Robert Scott went to meet Mansfield at the Hotel Vancouver. There he treated them 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.

Note: The above paragraph was in the first version of this history and appeared within the relevant chapter published in BCSFAzine #236, Jan 1993. I later met John Mansfield at PRIMEMEDIA in Toronto (I'd been sent there as the 1997 CUFF winner), and apparently the true story is that John, while staying with fellow fen in the student dormitory at UBC, proposed to help the UBC/BCSFA/SFU club put on a convention. Daniel Say, whose ego is easily as big as the planet, maybe bigger, refused his offer, saying they didn't need him. John predicted disaster, which did not come to pass. The convention was a success.

It strikes me the above story implies John Mansfield 'invented' VCON (not the name, the convention). He had previously helped organise OROMOCTOCON (in Oromocto, New Brunswick) in 1970, So you might think the course of general discussion veered towards his BNF status (as far as organizing Canadian inventions went) and he surprised Vancouver fen by suggesting they do what other Canadian fen had already accomplished elsewhere.

However, the UBC SFFEN had, in truth, already contacted certain authors as they tentatively planned their first convention in the coming year, plans which ballooned wildly into the stratosphere as you will soon read. So, presumably, John was merely generously offering to share his expertise, only to be rejected. Must have been quite the discussion!

An interesting post script is the origin of the collection of slides depicting VCON I which I borrowed from Steve Forty who in turn had borrowed them from John. I had assumed this meant that John had attended VCON 1 and taken the slides. On the contrary, turns out this was a set of slides collected by Daniel Say and sent to John Mansfield to prove that Vancouver fen didn't need John's help in putting on a con. Ah, Fannish politics. Tis forever thus. But enough digression –

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:

(Read this proposal very carefully and see if it doesn't take your breath away. Ambitious doesn't even begin to describe it! And as far as I can tell, unlike Daniel Say's year-end report, this proposal was dead serious.)

"FILM FESTIVAL: Continuous films in the SUB auditorium with series and individual tickets being sold. The theatre would be cleared between showings. Because of problems with the distributors of these films they would rent for about \$100 each and to this must be added the cost of projectionist facilities. Experimental and short science fiction films will be shown also. These would be shown in the old auditorium. If Ed Emshwiller comes he will bring many of these including his own."

"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."

"Local Paul Green gives a talk on Cycles in SF with some readings of SF prose and poetry."

"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."

"Dinner, (with recipes from the SCIENCE FICTION COOKBOOK edited by Ann McCaffrey) with short statements from all guests."

"OTHER FEATURES:"

"Display of SF art. Artists will be present to answer questions and to sell their work."

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

"Auction Bloch. The fans bid for exclusive time with an author and the money going to charity."

"Displays from NASA on the main mall."

"The main library to display their extensive collection of SF magazines."

Wow! What a lineup! If I interpret the above correctly, their projected Guest of Honour list included: Ed Emshwiller, Judith Merril, Harlan Ellison, Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, Poul Anderson, Fritz Leiber, John W. Campbell Jr., Ursula K. LeGuin, Frank Herbert, Stanley Kubrick and Robert Bloch! And, as the following selection makes clear, Ted White, Frederik Pohl and Philip Jose Farmer! 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. Somewhat understandably, the author of this proposal took the trouble to explain why the authors were worth it:

"SF AUTHORS:"

"We have phoned many of these and they all seem to say the same thing: they need two months' notice and will come if all expenses are paid. They often want an amount of money as well as expenses and they definitely must get part in advance. They all belong to a union SFWA Science Fiction Writers of America which is cracking down on the authors who will come for next to nothing, in an attempt to upgrade the profession and stop groups getting a writer for exploitation purposes. These authors may have some arguments with each other or dislike a certain person. Care must be taken that they do not come into conflict."

"ISAAC ASIMOV: Anybody's first choice. Fantastic personality in his own right. Prolific writer, over 100 books.... Devised a whole series of books around the three laws of robotics.... The classic trilogy of the Galactic Empires end and attempts to save it. Is a warm, humane man with a good sense of humour.... Get him at any price.... Get him here a week early and you will have a self-made publicity machine...."

"JUDITH MERRIL: The den mother of SF. Burst on SF scene like a nova with a fantastic story. Never looked back.... Knows almost every good author in SF. Reads everything with the slightest bit of SF in it. Lived in Rochedale College for a time. New Canadian. Public library created a special SF branch to house her collection of 8,000 books which she donated...."

"TED WHITE: Author, editor. Will talk at the drop of a hat. Fastest rising young magazine editor in the world. Is attracting writers to his magazine like flies to honey. Well respected by many authors. Will come for plane fare and a lot of flattery."

"JOHN W. CAMPBELL JR: Editor. Was author. Started the modern branch of SF. Offensive or controversial in his philosophies. Many dislike him as a person...."

"FRANK HERBERT: Author of the award-winning and monumental DUNE. Proposed arctic submarine tanker in 1957. Strong mystical streak, ecologically minded, university affairs reporter...."

"FRED POHL: Author editor. Part of a famous SF team. Is nowadays trying to introduce SF to non-readers. Good editor and talker. Has done a lot of hotline shows...."

"PHILIP JOSE FARMER: Brought sex into SF. Used to write porno. Very funny novelist but has a deep concern for the world and its problems, supporter of Triple Revolution...."

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.

I particularly like the pithy capsule descriptions of the various authors; I find them quite charming in their naivete. Whoever wrote them evidently had no idea he (or she) was making them out to be a right lot of loonies that nobody in their right mind would ever fund to speak on campus. But full marks for trying. It was a grand vision.

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.)

FEBRUARY 1971:

Meanwhile Mike Bailey and Daniel Say were pushing ahead with plans for a much more modest convention. On February 11th, 1971 Daniel say wrote the following to Usula K. LeGuin:

"We would very much like to have you as Guest of Honour at the Vancouver Science Fiction Convention held on April 9-11, 1971 at the Hotel Georgia 801 West Georgia Street."

"The first evening will be a socializing and getting together."

"The convention will start in earnest on the Saturday with an introduction of the more prominent members and then a panel discussion which we hope you would take part in. I would hope that you would also give a short talk in the afternoon on one of these suggested topics: Fantasy; My life as a mother and SF writer; What it feels like to win a Hugo and a Nebula; Sex and gender in SF; or you may suggest one yourself, whatever you wish. There will be a fan panel and a proposed multi-media presentation at other times in the day."

"A short film and slide show will be going on between major events. At the banquet that evening there will be several after-dinner speakers and perhaps you might want to add to their diverse ramblings. Parties will continue in the evening and this will be the end of the formal convention."

"We shall pay your expenses and if you want get you a babysitting for your children. The convention will be a relaxed affair and you may participate at any event you wish, but please come as our star."

"Please come! We want you as our first Guest of Honour at the first Vancouver Convention. Ever since the interview in November, we have had literally hundreds of people want to meet you, and now everyone seizes on your stories."

"Please come! A splendid time is guaranteed for all!"

LeGuin wrote back quickly, on February 17th, 1971, confirming that she would come, along with her husband and children, providing that a prior commitment to a SFWA meeting whose date was not yet set did not stand in the way. (It didn't.) She also made it clear that her family would not attend the convention but would go sightseeing. She, on the other hand, would be willing to be on a panel, and would bring a short speech *"which if forced I will deliver. Call it Style and Fantasy, tentatively. Style in Fantasy? But not after dinner!!!"* This would become "THE CRAB NEBULA, THE PARAMECIUM, AND TOLSTOY." (See last issue for an account of this talk.)

As for the "interview in November" Say referred to, this must have been one of many interviews with SF authors that he conducted for his SF3 Newsletter over the years. (For example, he conducted an interview with Frank Herbert at the LA Worldcon in 1972, and distributed it at V-Con 3 in 1974 when Herbert was Guest of Honour.) In other words, he and LeGuin had already met, and this contact, plus her desire to see Vancouver, not to mention the thrill of being Guest of Honour for the first time anywhere, induced her to accept.

A poster was quickly drawn up for publicity purposes. The heading read: *"Where the mountains meet the sea in a kiss..... VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Canada."* A bit sappy, but why not? A drawing of North America with a dot to mark Vancouver's location may have been of some limited use (I'm sure most of the people around town who saw the poster already possessed some notion of where they lived....). Of particular interest to me is the notice at the bottom of the poster: *"Sponsored by UBC SFFEN, SF3, and BCSFA."* Confirming once again that we were the BC SF Association (and not the BC SF Society) well before the convention.

MARCH 1971:

BCSFA MEETING - SUNDAY, MARCH 7TH, 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.

FUTURE GOD-EDITOR MEETS BCSFA:

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.

The next day (Monday, March 22) the Sun reporter who had been present at the meeting phoned Rob Scott and asked for a press release. On Tuesday the Vancouver Sun carried the following notice: *"WRITERS' GROUP MEETS. A two-day science fiction convention will be held on April 9 and 10 in the Hotel Georgia. Panel discussions and a special mystery event will be featured at the meet, sponsored by the B.C. Science Fiction Association. Guest Speaker will be Ursula K. LeGuin, author of 'THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS'. Convention rates are \$3.50 before April 1st, and \$5.00 after that date or at the door..."*

BCSFA WRITERS WORKSHOP - 26TH MARCH, 1971:

In the March/April 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 thought 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 BCSFA/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. Members were promised:

"Events begin on Friday with a get-together party and a panel on some irreverent topic. Strange liquids of obscure origin will be available at this party. The next morning, various university

professors, fans and groupies will participate in panels and talks. Later in the day Mrs. LeGuin will give a talk on Style in Fantasy. Just before the Au Revoir party, there will be a special mystery event."

Elsewhere club members are reminded: "*Remember, all you UBCers, you are also BCSFAers!*" I much prefer our current term 'BCSFAn'... 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:

A BCSFA meeting took place at the Vancouver Library on the fourth of April and was apparently a last minute planning session for the convention. For some reason I did not attend.

THE VANCOUVER SF CONVENTION - APRIL 9-10, 1971:

FRIDAY, 9TH APRIL, 1971:

The convention (retroactively known as V-Con I) began at 1:00 PM in the convention suite (room 1208) on the 12th floor of the Hotel Georgia (room 1208 -- the convention was confined to this one suite until Saturday, when programming began in the York banquet hall). I arrived promptly and set up my 8mm projector in the bedroom, laying out a number of the infamous edited-down 12-minute-long versions of film classics like: 'BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN', 'DRACULA', 'IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE' and '20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH' available via mail order from FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND. Throughout the course of the two day convention, people wandered into the darkened bedroom and threaded the projector themselves if they wanted to see the films. The projector ran continuously, or as the Program Book put it: "*Selected short films will be shown throughout the day.*"

At first I was a little disappointed, as there were only about ten people present. Then some Seattle people arrived, including (I think) Frank Denton, and the conversation became more interesting. Too shy to participate, I sat on the edge of the couch and listened. All present agreed that Philip K. Dick was the best SF writer on Earth, for instance. Then Vancouver Sun reporter Jacques Khouri, accompanied by Sun photog Ray Allan, showed up, much to the displeasure of the con organizers present. (It seems that LeGuin had specified that no reporters interview her, and above all, no photos be taken.) Khouri questioned those present in an effort to understand modern SF but seemed hung up on BEMs (Bug-Eyed Monsters).

Circa 5:00 PM Ursula K. LeGuin walked into the suite. She was momentarily nonplussed by the presence of the reporters, but quickly and graciously consented to an interview. The photo which accompanied the article in the paper the next day was flattering, even striking, so she was well served. Khouri's headline ran: "*SCIENCE FICTION FANS RAP ON AUTHORS. BEMS SCARCE AT HIBITED GET TOGETHER!*" (Must have been some old timers present. The 'Hibited Men' was the name of an SF club run by Norman G. Browne here in Vancouver back in the 1950's.) His article stated:

"Who should glide in but Ursula herself...direct from Portland, Ore. Minds were zapped instantly. Did she come by astral travel? Or was it molecular retransformation? A time-space pill? Magic carpet

ride, even? 'She drove up here from Oregon,' whispered one fan. He was quickly silenced... As soon as she sat down she was immediately drawn into the Sun interview... 'People still have an awful faith in science,' the 41-year old mother of three began. 'Almost like religious faith.' ... 'The years between now and the turn of the century will be critical ones for mankind,' Mrs. LeGuin said.... 'Part of the trouble is that we've felt we could control the future,' she went on.... 'Trying to run things is bad. There's no way anybody can understand all the effects any action can lead to.'"

Later in the article there appears the following:

"Said Robert Scott, president of the UBC Science Fiction Society, 'We're getting better sci-fi writers today than we ever had in the past. They are now dealing with deep philosophical themes rather than simple space exploration.'"

In my diary I recorded my own perception of LeGuin: *"Hugo award winner, sci-fi writer and a nice human being. Gentle sophisticate, beer drinker, obviously intelligent."* Yep, Ursula K. LeGuin encapsulated. Right.

When the interview was complete I ran to my apartment for a quick supper, then returned to the convention suite in time for the 7:30 pm panel 'SF LOVES AND HATES' featuring UBC's John Park and Brent Maclean, and SFU's Bill Dodds. This was great fun as they 'attacked' such prominent SF icons as Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein. The response from the assembled fans, more than 30 people swarming everywhere, on chairs, the couch, the floor, under the table, perched on windowsills, was terrific. Everyone joined in the dismemberment of 'serious' writers like Roger Zelazny, Kurt Vonnegut and Philip K. Dick. Some of the more prominent fans present were Lawrence Ehman from Calgary (a member of the Alberta SF Association), Regina's Leland Sapiro (editor of *The Riverside Quarterly*), and Seattle fan Frank Denton (one of five directors of *The National Fantasy Fan Federation*). It was hard to tear myself away from all the excitement, but it was getting late and I wanted to be fresh for the morning.

SATURDAY, 10TH APRIL, 1971:

Programming (a single track confined to the York room, the 12th floor suite now serving as a hospitality suite) began in the York banquet room at 10:00 AM with about 70 people present. A talk entitled "RUSSIAN FANTASY" by Murray Shoolbraid had originally been scheduled, but was cancelled as he suddenly developed a bad case of flu. SFU Professor Mason Harris was cornered in the party suite Friday night circa 11:00 PM and asked to fill in -- which he did this next morning without preparation, speaking off the cuff -- with a fascinating talk on H.P. LOVECRAFT, (according to my diary notes) *"explaining the weirdness of that peculiar man. Went out only at night. Kept the blinds drawn all day. Lived alone with his maiden aunt. Very peculiar."*

Daniel Say took notes during Mason Harris's talk and printed it first in his perzine 'ENTROPY NEGATIVE' and then later in a limited edition of 150 copies (together with an interview of Frank Herbert) which were sold at V-Con 3 in 1974. Among other things, Mason Harris stated:

"The pulps are now a bygone era, and Lovecraft, having many things wrong with him from a literary point of view, might have been expected to disappear with the rest of them. Instead he has persisted to

the present day, gaining a wider and wider readership and more and more critical attention. People are attracted to him and keep on reading him despite his obvious shortcomings. And it seems to me, finally, that he is probably going to be around for a long time. Maybe he's immortal, who knows? Perhaps people will still be reading Lovecraft stories a hundred years from now...."

"...Bradbury, sophisticated, obviously an important modern author, knows about style, plot, technique; Lovecraft, naive, primitive, overusing adjectives in a horrifying manner, ramshackle plot, apparently no consistent idea of technique, or style or literary discipline... The odd thing is that he does succeed in creating a real sense of horror.... How he manages this I'm not quite sure. It's an interesting problem...."

"....He had cancer and something else too, but I can't help somehow, but feel that his neuroses helped kill him. And his writing got better and better, but as he developed he wrote less and less. His writing seems to have been some kind of attempt to come to grips, unconsciously of course, with his hangups, and as he wrote less and less, I feel his hangups got the better of him and finally did him in..."

"...His racism really redeemed himself in his writings because while he starts sniping at Italians, Poles and so on, he always winds up showing that the true degenerates are the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants...."

"... and he works out a whole system for this called the Cthulhu cycle. I have no idea how to pronounce it. I don't know if anybody does. Mrs. Le Guin has suggested that if we did know and said it, he would appear if you pronounced his name right. I apparently haven't pronounced it right, so far. Not much has been made of the Cthulhu cycle. I don't think much of it myself..."

"...avaricious New England traders..... had interbred with this undersea race who are horrible, froglike, smelly, slimy beasts, to produce a degenerate race in this seaside town with the characteristic Innsmouth look. Sort of low forehead, scally scabby, hair falling out, peculiar small, and frog-like eyes. It's interesting that whenever Lovecraft gets going, he always relates his horror of dark races back to the New England Puritan. I grew up in this area, and I think I have located Innsmouth as Gloucester, Massachusetts. It's a smelly town, lots of fish factories, rather degenerate and decaying because the fishing industry has been driven out of business by Canadian competition. And it's a Portuguese town in an otherwise WASP district.... Lovecraft probably didn't approve of the Portuguese and he seems to have made this the basis of his degenerate race fantasy..."

"...'THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS'... here are eight foot high penguins in this city which as the things start coming at them run around squawking and gobbling at each other. The giant amoeba rushing up the tunnel is compared to mucous being blown through a nasal passage. One of the young men on the expedition, a Bostonian, goes mad and decides he is trapped on the Boston Subway, and starts shouting "Parks Street Under, Charles Street, Please let me out at Harvard Square." Any of you who have ever used the Boston Subway system will recognize these places immediately. As an old Bostonian, I just cracked up at that point, laughing...."

"We find perhaps the most obvious of all Lovecraft's sexual imagery in Wilbur's abnormally early maturity, goatish odour, hairy lower parts with monstrous protrusions concealed under the clothing, and indecent bodily fluids.... Now it's been said of Lovecraft, and of this kind of thing in horror fantasy

generally, that this is false, because the sexual is put outside yourself -- There is the Beast -- It has nothing to do with me. You know -- I don't have any responsibility for this, it's all from Outer Space -- I'd like to point out, however, that Lovecraft always relates this in the end to himself, because it is so obvious that he is a New England antiquary and identifies himself with the Puritan tradition; the Puritans are always practising witchcraft and miscegenation with the Beast from the Deep. And therefore he is really talking about himself and his own hangups...."

"....Therefore I recommend Lovecraft to you as someone who has real psychological interest. You can't take his monsters seriously but one must take the inner darkness of Lovecraft's psyche seriously and that's what I think fantasy is all about..."

Wow! No wonder I found his talk fascinating! It was a revelation to be exposed to such a serious approach. At last I had escaped the mundanes!

Then it was Ursula K. LeGuin's turn to deliver her first speech at a convention (this being her first convention. Seems she accepted the invite primarily because her husband had always wanted to visit Vancouver). It was titled: 'THE CRAB NEBULA, THE PARAMECIUM, AND TOLSTOY.' In my diary I commented: *"She managed to tie it all in. I didn't quite agree with her idea of total order in all levels of the Universe, but it was very interesting."*

Province critic Michael Walsh described her speech somewhat more accurately in his article '*CITY HOSTS INTERNATIONAL FAN FRATERNITY*' appearing in the Province on Monday, April 12th, 1971: *"Mrs. LeGuin argued that from the microscopic atom to the astronomical vastness of the Crab Nebula, nature shows a tendency to order. So too living organisms, from the simple single-celled paramecium to the complexity of man, show the same general order, a generally lawful way of operating."*

'Art does what the universe does,' she said. Her definition of art: 'The rearrangement of experience in an orderly fashion.'

With Copernicus people learned that their tiny planet was not the centre of the universe. Today, Mrs LeGuin said, we are learning that humanity is not necessarily the centre of the intricate web of life.

"The revolution that began in astrophysics ends in the human spirit," she said. Science Fiction takes its place in the scheme of things by asking the questions important to our times just as Tolstoy asked the questions important to his.

Science Fiction, at its best, asks: Who are we? How are we to make our way in this greater universe?

Afterwards Leland Sapiro asked if he might reprint the text of her talk in his RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY. Of course, Mrs. LeGuin said. But only if he threw in a subscription to his fanzine in the bargain. After all, everybody at the convention was a fan."

A panel on 'FANTASY AND LITERATURE' was the next scheduled event, but as the two lectures had run longer than anticipated, the panel was cancelled so that everyone could break for lunch.

After lunch "Films" were scheduled, according to the program book, but no times or titles were listed. If anything other than my 8mm shorts were projected, I have no recollection of it.

At "about 2:30 pm" (to quote the program book), SFU Professor R. D. Callahan delivered a lecture titled 'SF, INSULATION OR ILLUMINATION?' I didn't like it. To quote from my diary: *"Prof. Callahan regards Sci-fi as worthless. His talk was long, at least two hours. Said basically -- though in an involved, obtuse way -- that literature is a mind-opener, an axe with which to crush the frozen sea within, and that Sci-fi merely enlarged the mindless sea due to the stultifying nature of its concepts. Somehow or another he even threw in quotations from an article about the methods employed by certain African tribes to teach girls the pleasures of orgasm and how to prepare for marriage. His entire speech was littered with such oddities, but the thread of the basic premise ran throughout, and I managed to understand almost all of it."*

Following were two panels titled 'SF AND SOCIAL REALISM' and 'SF AND SERIOUS STUDIES' of which I saw only one (or possibly the two were combined due to time considerations?). At any rate my diary comment was:

"The panel was extremely well done. All in all, a very intellectual-type convention, as most American cons tend toward the mindless adulation type I'm told."

By whom? I may have been listening when Michael Walsh talked with Frank Denton, to judge by this quote from Michael's Province article:

"The Vancouver gathering tended towards the highly educated end of the spectrum, Denton said, and he agreed with Leland Sapiro that this convention was one of the better ones he'd been to. 'It's certainly a lot more scholarly than a lot of the American conventions,' he said." And then Michael added: "The tone of the convention, one of literate appreciation rather than fascinated adulation, was set from the beginning by the science fiction sophisticates from the sponsoring clubs."

Science fiction sophisticates!!!Gee, it sure helps when the media is one of us, eh? Lesson number one: infiltrate the media! Thanks, Michael.

There followed a supper break, and 29 of us went down to the Ho Inn in Chinatown, including, I assume, Ursula and her husband Charles LeGuin, a Professor of history at Portland State.

Back at the convention, beneath the crystal chandeliers of the York room, took place the much-touted 'mystery event', nothing less than the momentous occasion of the first awarding of the ELRON AWARDS! (Fiendishly conceived by the fiendish minds of Mike Bailey and Brent MacClean.) This was reported in the Province Newspaper by Michael Walsh thusly:

"Following two days of panel discussions and carefully considered lectures, the convention established the Science Fiction Worst Awards, presenting trophies in four newly-created categories."

Mike Bailey, member of the UBC SF Society and a computer programmer for the federal government, introduced the idea explaining that "99 percent of all science fiction is crud."

In order to recognize "the vast majority" the convention had decided to award an Elron, a bronzed lemon on a plywood base, to the year's least outstanding efforts in the science fiction field.

(The name "Elron", Bailey said later, should really not be confused with L. Ron Hubbard [Founder of Scientology].... the Elron doesn't take its name from L. Ron, say its creators.)

Voted LEAST PROMISING NEW WRITER was Robert Moore Williams, author of '21st Century Vigilante whose "unremembered Zanthar easily made the famed Lancer Easy Eye series."

Williams beat out Canadian-born A.E. Van Vogt for the award although Van Vogt, an author who sometimes works on 30 books simultaneously, was described by Bailey as "the penultimate hack."

WORST NOVEL OF THE YEAR award went to the former "dean of science fiction," Robert Heinlein, proving, said Bailey, that "an author who really tries can reach the pinnacle of failure." [Heinlein undoubtedly received the award because of his novel "I Will Fear No Evil" which was published in 1970.]

Selected passages from the nominated novels were read, to hilarious advantage, by Paul Green, a UBC creative writing graduate and freelance broadcaster who recently completed a series of radio shows exploring cycles in science fiction for CBC-FM.

The film, 'Beneath The Planet Of The Apes', scored as WORST MELODRAMATIC PRESENTATION and Lin Carter, writer of painfully derivative sword and sorcery novels, was voted the ELRON HALL OF FAME for his "consistent standard of poor writing."

I can add that a clip from one of my 8mm animation experiments was shown (somewhat unfairly) as an example of the quality of special effects to be found in the winning film. My clip depicted a Godzilloid creature stumbling across a tabletop. People laughed. Good. They were supposed to.

After the awards the convention partied into the night, its members dispersing the following Sunday morning.

Of late there has been some controversy as to who actually put on the convention. Michael Walsh, in his article, stated that the convention was jointly sponsored by the UBC and SFU Science Fiction Societies, which is true. At the same time, the UBC people (and some of the SFU people, Daniel Say, for instance) belonged to BCSFA. However BCSFA did not yet exist as an entity separate from UBC SFFEN. For the record, the sponsoring organizations are listed on the first page of the program book as follows:

- B.C. Science Fiction Association.
- Simon Fraser University Science Fiction Society (SF3).
- University of B.C. Science Fiction Society (UBC SFFEN).

In reality, the lion's share of the credit goes to Daniel Say and Mike Bailey who functioned as Co-Chairmen. Writing in BCSFAzine #100, Mike Bailey comments:

"I should point out we never had any official positions. In retrospect, based on the way we acted, Daniel Say and I were the two who did things. Dan ran around, got things done. I handled operations during the execution of the convention, moderated the talks, introduced the GoH, and I sort of controlled the money because I was signing officer for the BC club (later known as BCSFA)."

The last is an interesting memory slip on Mike's part, for the club was already known as BCSFA BEFORE THE CONVENTION! As per my membership receipt, for instance.

The convention lacked certain amenities normally associated with SF cons. There was no banquet, no art show, and no dealers' room. Attempts had been made to bring these about, but not enough people were interested. But the convention did have a program book, a rather interesting first effort. Enclosed within a folded card-photo of the city (probably provided by the city or the Chamber of Commerce or some such) was a brief 3 page booklet outlining the convention events and some of the attractions the city had to offer. Gastown and Chinatown are mentioned as locations of interest, with the advice: *"Ask locals at the convention for their opinions on these and other places."* That certainly saves a lot of space from being wasted on descriptions of restaurants and such, doesn't it? A model of brevity.

In addition a number of suitably fannish ads were placed:

- "FOR SALE OR TRADE: One used scout-ship. Must sell or for what have you, due to death of owner. Slightly damaged but a bargain for the mechanically adept. Contact M. Walsh."

This a reference to a story written by Michael about an ant alien from ANTares who is unfortunately stepped on before he can accomplish his mission on Earth, leaving a teeny tiny spaceship bereft of owner.

- "WANTED: Skeleton of child less than one year old. It doesn't have to be wired together. Write to Brent Maclean."

- "FOR SALE: Souls bought and sold. Good prices paid. One of this areas largest dealers. Also buy lifesblood for fan cocktails of Gestetner ink and blood. Ask for Devil Sayton."

And lastly:

- "WANTED: Money. Additional donations are gratefully accepted by Rob Scott and Daniel Say. Help the Con break even."

Well, it didn't, sad to say. The Con lost about \$100, a loss split evenly between the two university clubs. Despite this, the Vancouver Science Fiction Convention of 1971 was considered a roaring success. I know. I was there.

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."* I assume this means 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."*

1971/1972 ACADEMIC YEAR:

OCTOBER 1971:

The clubs were indeed dormant during the summer. The UBC SFFEN Newsletter #1 (for 1971/1972) came out October 24th, 1971, with the following handwritten note: *"Since the BCSFA was not active this summer we are extending your membership for another year."*

But in this new academic year UBC SFFEN was certainly active. New members were reminded *"to bring in their five books in order to complete their membership fee... the office (open every weekday from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm) has over 1,000 books, so come in and borrow them."*

This issue, a 2 page ditto, was edited by Robert Scott & Robert Leung. After mentioning the Hugos (Larry Niven won for RINGWORLD), they comment:

"All kinds of good things are planned for this year in SFFEN.... One such plan is the running of films... Another convention is in the planning stages.... BCSFA will be more active than ever in the months to follow so try to make it to the meetings. We hope to have a party in the near future...."

NOVEMBER 1971:

A general meeting was held 9th November, 1971. The following individuals were elected:

UBC SFFEN EXECUTIVE - 1971/1972 ACADEMIC YEAR

Chairman -- Robert Scott
Vice-Chairman -- Brian Greiner
Secretary -- Rebecca Bradley
Treasurer -- Mike Bailey
Publications Officer -- Robert Leung

In the UBC SFFEN Newsletter #2, produced by Rob Scott & Rob Leung, the workings of the club library are explained. For example, recent mail order books by LoveCraft not available in Canada *"will not be placed on the shelves but in the club's locker.... A deposit of one dollar must be placed on each book you borrow.... All newsletters such as LOCUS or LUNA cannot be borrowed until one week after they have been received. They will be on the bulletin board.....Private orders may also be sent through the club at a 20% discount..."* Ah, the advantages of belonging to a club with an office!

Other interesting tidbits of info to note: *"Harlan Ellison has a bit part in an orgy scene in Bill Rotsler's movie 'THE GODSON'. The scene was filmed in Harlan's house..... Phillip Wylie, author of 'WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE', died Oct 25 of a heart attack at his Florida home.... George Pal, producer of many grade B SF movies, has acquired the movie and TV rights to all 181 DOC SAVAGE novels. These will be played in order. He plans to start with movies and move into TV when interest in the films decline."* DOC SAVAGE, MAN OF BRONZE came out in 1974. It bombed.

Also in this issue it is announced that:

"On February 18th & 19th, 1972, the UBC and SFU Science Fiction Societies are hosting the 2nd annual Vancouver SF Convention. The Guest of Honour will be Philip K. Dick, author of MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, UBIK, A MAZE OF DEATH and about 25 other novels. The convention will be held at the Biltmore Hotel on 12th & Kingsway. There will be a banquet at which the Guest of Honour will speak, panels, a varied program of speakers, films, symposiums, parties, an art show and a fashion show. The rates are \$3.50 before Feb 4th, \$5.00 after. Banquet tickets are \$4.25... there is a choice of Salmon steak or veal cutlets...."

Not all of these promised items were to occur. It is of interest to note that no mention is made of BCSFA as a sponsor for the second convention. In fact, the flyers produced for the convention say: *"SF3*

with the cooperation of ubc sf fen PRESENTS" etc., so it looks as if the concept of BCSFA as a coordinating entity had been discarded.

DECEMBER 1971:

A party was held Friday, December 3rd in the Clubs Lounge of the Student Union Building at UBC, beginning 7:30 pm. A BYOB affair, slides of various conventions were shown. One of the highlights of the evening would appear to be the subject of an apology printed in #3 of the newsletter in January of 72:

"Apologies to any of you who were injured at the party when Mike Bailey jumped off the top of the door. It seems Mike misunderstood when we asked him to be doorman."

And then there was that obscure reference in #2:

"At the age of 4 years Mike Bailey started the SFFEN tradition of standing on the tops of doors and leaping onto anyone unfortunate enough to walk through."

Hmmm, can't quite picture it.

Meanwhile, on behalf of SF3, SFU student Daniel Say was producing a monthly newsletter. The December issue makes for an interesting comparison with the UBC SFFEN Newsletter. It has nothing on club activities, other than mentioning that the SF3 membership fee is \$1.00 and seven books (as opposed to SFFEN's \$3.00 & 5 book fee). In general SF3's newsletter is more literary, with comments like:

"EXTRAPOLATION is now in the SFU library. This is a Mod. Lang Assoc. fanzine. [Academic zine with articles like] 'Olaf Stapledon, Saint & Revolutionary', & 'Intelligence Testing in Utopia.'" And "You may be tempted to buy the 'Science Fiction Story Index 1950-1968' by Fred Siemon. DON'T!... He only indexes 200 anthologies and has left out at least 50 that were published in 1968.... doesn't even know the many pseudonyms of the various authors..." and more in that vein. I found particularly interesting the announcement: "New World will begin filming DUNE in Czechslovakia in summer. Producer: Roger Corman..." Sigh, was not to be. Would have been a wonderful B movie....

JANUARY 1972:

Newsletter #3 came out on January 12th, 1972, written and printed by Robert Leung and Robert Scott.

In reference to the upcoming convention:

"All members are strongly urged to join soon. Note that the convention is budgeted for \$500 so we need about 150 attendees to break even.... Philip K. Dick's talk will be entitled "The Human and the Android: a contrast between the authentic person and reflex machine". His new novel is FLOW MY

TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID and he describes it as being objective as opposed to all his recent novels. He is also collaborating with Roger Zelazny in what is sure to be a mindblower of a novel, *DEUS IRAE*."

In fact, Dick had been suffering from a writer's block due to his personal problems. The invite from Vancouver had inspired him to write the above mentioned speech, his first sustained writing for quite some time.....

In addition, the newsletter noted that the 'fashion show' mentioned last issue was, in fact, to be a masquerade.

A humorous note was the statement: "*There will be a special meeting of the UBC SFFEN on April 29th, 1986 to watch Halley's comet come to perihelion. The meeting place has not been decided upon but will probably be somewhere.*" Alas, Vancouver was overcast throughout Halley's visit, which wasn't very spectacular anyway.

As for the club's library service:

"The club has decided not to subscribe to any magazines from now on. The reason being that very few of the members make use of the hundreds of magazines we already have..... The club is still operating a book buying service. You can buy virtually any pocketbook, hardcover or magazine (even back to the 1930's) and receive discounts up to 20%, and pay no sales tax."

Wow! Apparently Robert Leung and Mike Bailey were the operators of this marvellous service....

"It is possible to order tapes of old radio plays through the club. Contact Fred Whitehead for this service..... The club will shortly join the SF Book Club..."

UBC SFFEN was obviously a book and magazine collectors paradise at this time.

Other items of interest: "*Harlan Ellison chased some people who hit his car recently and was beaten up when he unfortunately caught them.*" It seems Harlan-interest stories were a running feature... And the credentials of Steven Spielberg, director of the TV movie "SOMETHING EVIL", starring Sandy Dennis as a frightened woman discovering her home is Satan's playground, are listed simply as: "*Duel*". All the rest was yet to come.

FEBRUARY 1972:

2ND VANCOUVER SF CONVENTION - FEB 18TH & 19TH, 1972:

Philip K. Dick was Guest of Honour. Since I don't have much material on the actual convention, but am aware that Dick's experience in Vancouver during and after the convention transformed him

radically, I've decided to devote the rest of this chapter to describing what happened to him as best I can with the material available to me. A bit of a digression, in other words.

My sources of information are:

-- DIVINE INVASIONS: a life of Philip K. Dick' (an excellent biography) by Lawrence Sutin, Harmony Books, 1989.

-- Dick's own articles in Mike Bailey's perzines 'THE LONG HELLO' & 'THE LONG GOODBYE', circa 1975, plus Bailey's comments in same.

-- Dick's letter recounting his Vancouver experience in the December 1972 issue of SF COMMENTARY (#31) published by Bruce R. Gillespie.

-- my own interview with local Journalist Michael Walsh (Province Newspaper Movie Critic) in May, 1994.

How did Philip K. Dick come to be invited as GoH? Mike Bailey explains in his perzine 'THE LONG GOODBYE':

"It all started in April 1971 at the first Vancouver SF Convention.... on the first night in the party suite we had an informal discussion about "favourite authors". Phil Dick's name came up several times and the remark was made by Frank Denton of Seattle that Dick was an author who apparently shunned fandom. The seed was planted. We thought that because Dick was highly thought of by many fans, including myself, and because he shunned fandom, then his presence as guest of honour at our next convention would help make the convention a success..."

-- 'The Long Goodbye' #20.

However, when Philip K. Dick was invited by the organizers to be Guest of Honour, no one knew he was on the verge of a complete mental breakdown. But initial correspondence began to raise doubts:

"Before he came to Vancouver he wrote some personal letters and we were a little apprehensive about what to expect when he arrived. We worried a little about drugs also..."

-- Mike Bailey: 'The Long Goodbye' #20.

For one thing, his house had been ransacked three months earlier, as described by Dick in an article sent to Mike Bailey originally in December 1972:

"...the vast robbery and looting of my house a year ago in San Rafael, which caused me to move out of the United States entirely while I thought it over. I came home one evening and found rubble and ruin, my locked files blown open, papers of every sort gone, stereo gone, virtually everything gone, windows and doors smashed. To this day I don't know who did it. Robbery was not the motive; too many valueless items were taken, too much care to take correspondence and business records.... the police to a certain extent favored the theory that I'd done it myself. I didn't. I to a certain extent favored the theory that they had done it..."

-- 'The Long Goodbye' #21.

And the bank was about to foreclose on his house (which happened while he was visiting Vancouver). No wonder the thought of an all-expenses paid trip appealed to him.

"When he arrived in Vancouver (Wednesday, February 16th), we were pleasantly surprised by his turned-on, humorous manner. He flew in at night and he was such a whirlwind that within a couple of hours we had checked into the hotel and visited a downtown cabaret..."

-- Mike Bailey, 'The Long Goodbye' #20.

However, Mike was a bit surprised -- and worried -- to hear Dick declare during a quiet moment *"that he felt he didn't have long to live, and would never write another book."* This was not quite the sort of exciting guest the local fans had been looking forward to.

However, Dick perked up somewhat the next day (Thursday, February 17th), when:

"...the university English Department held a luncheon on his behalf in the University of B.C. Faculty Club (very high class), and afterwards he gave his convention speech in a large, filled lecture hall. It was very well received..."

-- Mike Bailey, 'The Long Goodbye' #20.

Stan Hyde recalls that years later, while sitting in Susan Wood's office at UBC discussing SF, another Professor (who'd attended the faculty luncheon for Dick) walked in and asked:

"Whatever happened to that wonderful man, Philip Dick? You know, he was his own worst enemy."

Yep, that's Dick in a nutshell.

Of the speech, Dick wrote in late 1972:

"I think I worked four months on it, trying to sum up an entire lifetime of developing thought. At the time my personal difficulties were so great (in November 1971 my house was torn apart and looted, evidently by political extremists) that I felt I wouldn't live much longer; I sensed, incorrectly I'm glad to say, that the speech would be the last thing I wrote. Therefore I poured into it all the remaining ideas in my head, in particular my germinal notions for future books. However, I did live on."

"I flew to Canada in February 1972, but bad luck still plagued me: the girl with whom I had been in love since my wife left me in 1970 did not as planned accompany me; at the last moment she tore up her plane ticket.... Kathy is her name; she is the girl mentioned at the end of the speech who stole the cases of Coke and then turned in the empties for the deposits. I had expected her to be seated beside me in Vancouver when I delivered the speech, and at UBC when I gave it there. She hadn't known I'd be telling about her prank in the speech and I had planned to turn to her as I ended and kiss her..."

-- 'SF Commentary' #31.

"It almost killed me, though, to be in a strange country without friends, without her specifically..."

-- 'The Long Goodbye' #20.

Kathy had been so important to him and his proposed speech that before arriving in Vancouver he had sent a press release to the Vancouver Province which read in part:

"...He is currently working day and night on his new novel simply called KATHY, named after the girl he is bringing with him to the Vancouver Science Fiction Convention on February 16.... The novel really does not exist as yet, except in his head, but Kathy does, and he hopes the people at the convention will welcome her and like her...." -- 'The Long Goodbye' #21.

Dick was extremely disappointed and depressed that Kathy had decided not to come and be with him when he gave his speech:

"...My determination to make Kathy.... remembered had to content itself with this piece in the Province. Kathy was immortal, but only in Vancouver. I felt, though, that I had done something important to me in getting this into print, but I couldn't stand to realize that she hadn't heard me give the speech about her, since it was in the speech that I developed my concept of the authentic person that so clearly described her..."

-- 'The Long Goodbye' #21.

After giving his "THE ANDROID AND THE HUMAN" speech at UBC:

"We went to the Graduate Student Centre and had a round-table discussion which was supposed to be a radio interview. But Phil completely befuddled the interviewer. (For example, just as a tape ran off the machine, Phil held up his hand and exclaimed that he had just figured out how to express all his philosophy in one sentence. The announcer scrambled to get a new tape onto his machine, and didn't realize he had been taken until we all started laughing.)..."

-- Mike Bailey, 'The Long Goodbye' #20.

At the convention itself, the following day (Friday, February 18th), Dick astonished Mike Bailey, and damn near everybody else, with his energy. He apparently mingled madly, with particular emphasis on the women. Local fans were delighted, and responded accordingly. Said Michael Walsh:

"There was a certain dynamism. A bear-like presence with a beard -- in a ratty trenchcoat. Walk in some place where you are greeted jovially as Dick was at this convention and you'll respond to the general level of good will in a room. It never occurred to me that he wasn't doing anything other than reflecting back the good will he was getting from people who were really happy to get somebody with his reputation right here in Vancouver saying things that were, in their way, extremely his ideas, highly unconventional, in what at the time I regarded as a sort of Marshal McLuhan manner."

Before the first day of the convention was over (according to Michael Walsh), Dick announced he was going to live in Vancouver from now on. This made for the following headline in the Vancouver Province: "CANADA GAINS A NOTED SCIENCE FICTION WRITER." One possible explanation for the sudden outburst of energy could be the methanol nose drops (it is alleged) he was constantly inhaling. They supposedly contained Speed. However, this is somewhat contradicted by the reasons he later gave for his decision to live in Vancouver:

"After the convention I decided to stay in Canada, feeling I had nothing to go back to in California; I had lost Kathy, most of my friends had become drug addicts (I had gotten deep into the drug subculture, but seeing the fast deterioration of young addicts, especially the girls, I had changed my whole basic view towards drugs and become strongly anti-dope), my house was gone, and bitter memories of my wife and child leaving me would be revived if I returned."

-- 'SF Commentary' #31.

And then there's Michael Walsh on the subject of Dick's drug-taking:

"...He was constantly snorting what he purported to be snuff. To this day I've got no reason to believe otherwise...."

Mike Horvat introduced Philip K. Dick for his keynote speech (not delivered at a banquet, for the banquet was cancelled, not enough interest). The basic idea in Dick's talk was, instead of studying machines to gain insight into human behaviour as scientists currently do, why not study humans to gain insight into machine behaviour? This in order to understand the difference between human and non-human in human behaviour. He argued that much human behaviour was truly non-human, that government already possessed the science of "*inauthentic human activity*", and that if totalitarianism is to be avoided:

"The ethics most important for the survival of the true, human individual would be: cheat, lie, evade, fake it, be elsewhere, forge documents, build improved electronic gadgets in your garage that'll outwit the gadgets used by the authorities."

In other words, typical Dickian thinking. One gathers that, were he alive (he died March 2, 1982), he would be entranced by today's computer hackers.

Unfortunately for myself, I didn't attend this convention. I had not yet read Dick and did not know he would become my favourite SF author. I do remember walking past the hotel while the convention was still on. I've been kicking myself in the butt ever since.

Other events at the convention included a showing of the film 'THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME.' I would have liked to have heard what Dick's comments were on that film, but Dick didn't see it -- according to Michael -- because when not actually lecturing, Dick was too busy charming the women at the con to bother with scheduled events....

There was also a masquerade in which Bill and Bubbles Broxon (prominent American fans) won an award for a mad doctor and victim/patient skit. Again there was no art show, no hucksters room. Again Daniel Say and Mike Bailey functioned as Co-Chairman, and yet again, attendance fell below the budgeted break-even point. Fewer than 100 fans came, the convention losing \$50 which Mike Bailey covered with his personal funds.

Oddly enough, no Elron Awards were presented this time. Though garnering many laughs at the first convention, some big name fans out east reacted negatively on hearing about them, and the concept was dropped to avoid hostile pre-con publicity.

"One last thing needs mention," to quote David George and Pat Burrows from BCSFAzine #100: "The first four Vancouver SF cons were held at times when it would be easy for UBC students to attend. The first was over an Easter weekend, and the next three were in February during UBC's midterm break, since a majority of the con members seemed to be students, and during the semester they would be in town."

After the convention was over Dick stayed with Province critic Michael Walsh and his wife Susan Walsh, sleeping on their living room couch till he could find an apartment of his own. He turned out to be an exhausting guest, as Michael Walsh explained when I interviewed him in 1994:

"Following that particular V-Con I rashly invited the Guest of Honour, Philip K. Dick, to put up in my own home until such time as he could find himself his own digs. Frankly I thought, hey, this is a genuine story and perhaps, having been the guy to break the story there might be a useful follow-up. And besides, it seemed like the hospitable thing to do for someone so obviously keen on our country and our city, and that was the beginning of an interesting encounter of the third kind...."

"...I can't pretend to have any profound insight into what made him tick. Dick lived in an alternate reality. He was in touch with voices all his own, and it was hard to know at any given time exactly which of his many realities he was connected to. There was no sense of being in touch with the person so much as the personality. More and more you had to wonder whether or not it was a personality that you wanted to spend a whole lot of time with..."

"...Here's an example. I have a phonograph record on which Marshal McLuhan put together music, bits and pieces of dialogue and assorted sound effects jumbled together that was supposed to give you some sense of McLuhan's thoughts on how the media work, and worked us over, as he would say. Well, we started playing this for Dick because we thought it would be the sort of thing he'd enjoy, and all of a sudden he started yelling, "Turn it off! Turn it off! It sounds like the inside of my head!...."

"....There was something scary about his detachment from what we think of as the real world. It's a detachment that I thoroughly enjoy, briefly, in a controlled situation like the movies. I find it very difficult living in a world where everyone was like Philip K. Dick, which is the kind of world he created in his fiction. It would appear that what he was writing was very much his take on the world around him...."

"...He could give speeches, exciting stuff, heady stuff, give you a little bit of an intellectual high, and that I appreciated. At close quarters on the other hand, it was too impersonal tracking ideas with him. He could put across with enthusiasm, but as soon as you tried to engage him in conversation about those ideas, he took that as a challenge, and rather than respond in a dialogue his tendency was to wig off into what I suppose was a kind of defensive manoeuvre; he put on a performance that precluded any kind of debate or discussion. I didn't like that. I really didn't. I wanted to talk to the guy. I couldn't. He couldn't. I don't know if anyone could...."

"....There was a superficiality and a degree of maliciousness that was not endearing. I was happy as hell when he did move out. Because it was getting a little tense....."

"...I wouldn't jump to any kind of conclusion, on the basis of the very little contact I had. All I can tell you is the reaction I had to what he did, rather than why he did what he did. It's the reporter in me. You gotta be accurate....uh, okay... the guy was a nut. But what kind of nut I don't know...."

"...Definitely an alien being was Mr. Dick...."

After two weeks, the Walsh's asked Dick to leave.

MARCH 1972:

I don't know much about Dick's subsequent activity in Vancouver. I do know he lived for a while in a suite on Cornwall Avenue overlooking Kitsilano Beach, which faces English Bay, downtown Vancouver and the North Shore mountains beyond -- no doubt Dick enjoyed the view. As he put it:

"I rented an apartment in Vancouver, and found the science fiction people there, such as Mike Bailey, good new friends. I even met a new chick. It looked good. FM radio station CKLG interviewer Bob Ness had me on his show and we became close friends...."

-- 'SF Commentary' #32.

"Close friends?" How close? According to Mike Bailey, writing in the April 1975 issue of 'THE LONG HELLO':

"When Phil was living in Vancouver, he was interviewed by Bob on CKLG-FM and was somewhat unimpressed by the attention Bob gave to the girl he had brought with him."

-- 'The Long Hello' #19.

The "girl" was presumably the "new chick" Dick was seeing:

"In Canada I met a little black-haired chick named Janis the first five minutes of the Con, and fell in love with her...."

-- 'The Long Goodbye' #20.

Still, despite Dick's jealousy being aroused, he and Ness evidently kept in touch. Then in 1975 something unusual happened, Ness apparently managed to convince Dick's current girlfriend (Tessa) to fly up to Vancouver. As Dick wrote in a letter to Ness:

"Bob, as you know, I'm generally amused when my chick is ripped off because usually it's by some seedy guy within fist's reach, but here it has been done by mail and from another country by a famous and powerful DJ who earns huge and unusual profits and like that, so what can I do?.... Perhaps you would like to reconsider whether she is actually Miss Right for you.... if the above advice doesn't convince you to do what's right, I WILL GET YOU. Can you dig it? Please reply soon, as my patience is short. Formerly yours, Philip K. Dick."

-- 'The Long Hello' #19.

The full letter is several pages long and reads very tongue in cheek. I don't think Dick was genuinely angry, yet Mike Bailey's comment makes me wonder. At any rate, the letter itself and the fact it was published in Bailey's perzine in 1975 is indication enough that he kept in touch with several Vancouverites for a number of years after his visit.

Still, as his short-lived habitation with Michael & Susan Walsh showed, he could be rather wearing on the people he was hanging around with. As he himself wrote at the time of his Vancouver visit:

"They think I'm weird.... I just bop around getting weirder all the time. Gradually everybody is beginning to realize that despite my fame and my great books I am a distinct liability to know or have anything at all to do with."

-- 'Divine Invasions'.

Then came disaster. Shortly after he had a dream in which a mounted policeman rode a horse over his California house and crashed to the earth in a bloody sprawl, Janis left him. Dick promptly identified himself with "the broken horse":

"...then the new chick all at once decided to leave the vancouver area. My life fell apart again all at once, just as I was recovering from Kathy's leaving. I made an abrupt, almost successful suicide attempt..."

-- 'SF Commentary' #31.

Dick tried to kill himself on March 23rd, 1971, by ingesting 700 mg of potassium bromide, a sedative. Then he changed his mind and called for help:

"Fortunately, Suicide Intervention (the BC Crisis Centre) intervened and suggested I go to a residence therapy organization called X-Kalay...."

-- 'SF Commentary' #31.

X-Kalay, meaning "the hidden path", was a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. He wrote this description of his suicide attempt at the centre :

"I was really down. The next day or so I had a total freakout, breakdown, identity crisis, psychotic break, convulsion of misery and just general bad time. Now I'm part of X-Kalay; they came in and scooped up the puddle of ooze from the floor of my apartment that was me, or what remained of me, carted me back to their house where they -- and now I -- live, put me to work, put my head back together enough so I didn't try to snuff myself every half hour, kept someone with me night and day.... and finally, a week later, I'm again beginning to function...."

-- 'Divine Invasions'.

"X-Kalay turned out to be by-and-large a heroin rehabilitation organization, like Synanon in the US. Under their overwhelming attack therapy and heavy workload and discipline I soon got my head together, pulled out of my depression; within a week I had an office and typewriter and was hard at work doing PR for them. I found that rehabilitating former heroin addicts was the most rewarding, soul reinforcing pursuit I'd ever encountered...."

-- 'SF Commentary' #31.

APRIL 1972:

Philip K. Dick stayed with X-Kalay a total of three weeks, enough to kick his alleged twenty-year amphetamine habit. In mid-April he flew back to California....

"Anyhow, I left X-Kalay and Canada on an invitation from the state college at Fullerton, California to fly down and supervise the archiving of my MSS at their library's special collections. So many of my possessions had been destroyed or stolen in Marin County that I wanted to turn over what remained to professional safekeeping...."

-- 'SF Commentary' #31.

I think it would be fair to say that Philip K. Dick underwent in Vancouver nothing less than a cathartic experience which exorcised some of his personal demons and allowed him to seek new goals. Forever after he usually referred to Vancouver with something approaching fondness.

1972 - END OF SESSION & THE DYING OF THE CLUBS:

You've noticed I haven't referred to anything UBC SFFEN did after the convention. Apparently activities sort of petered out. A good many core members of the club graduated at the end of the academic year and were not present to provide continuity for the club in the following academic year (72/73). It is my understanding the UBC club was dormant during that time. I assume the hundreds of books and magazines the club owned remained locked in the club's lockers, awaiting renewed interest in running a University SF club.

Meanwhile BCSFA enjoyed a kind of ghost existence, in that money continued to sit in its bank account under the sole signing authority of Mike Bailey, BCSFA's last treasurer. But for all intents and purposes, BCSFA was dead.

1973 - THE REAL BIRTH OF BCSFA:

This year witnessed a kind of fannish miracle, the rebirth of BCSFA, not as a front for a university club, but as a true, independent, wholly self-sufficient SF fan club.

During the first six months of 1973 ex-members of UBC SFFEN/BCSFA occasionally phoned each other to talk about reviving the club, but nothing came of these tentative contacts. Then in June the University of Western Washington Continuing Studies hosted the FIRST FANTASY AND FACT FAIR with Guests of Honour Ursula K. Le Guin -- who participated in two panels and impressed everyone with her usual gentle good nature -- and Harlan Ellison, who attended the first evening only. Vonda McIntyre was also present. Canadian speakers included Province movie critic Michal Walsh and SFU Professor Dr. Kris Paulsen. A small, intimate convention, it's success was to be instrumental in inspiring the rebirth of BCSFA.

Of the 90 people registered, at least a third were Canadians from the Lower Mainland! People like Ex-BCSFAns Mike Bailey, Pat Burrows, David George, Chuck Davis, John Thomson and Daniel Say, plus SF fans like Fran Skene and CHQM radio reporter (and later CBC National News reporter) Eve Savory. To quote Mike Bailey, *"32 Vancouverites joined the Bellingham convention and we had only heard of 7 of them. This situation implied that 25 people who had never been members of SFFEN had enough interest in SF to travel to Bellingham from Vancouver. Consequently, we (Mike, David & Pat) decided that the basis existed to form a successful off-campus organization."* Mike obtained a copy of the Con's mailing list from Pauline Palmer, the chair, with an eye to contacting these people and arranging meetings to discuss resurrecting BCSFA as a permanent off-campus club.

JULY 1973:

The first meeting of the reborn BCSFA was held July 27th at Pat Burrows' house. Old-timers like Rob Leung, Rob Scott, Claire Toynbee Hogg, David George, Chuck Davis Mike Bailey were present, and a few new recruits. About 10 to 15 people in all. Apart from talking about the club and SF in general, the upcoming World Convention in Toronto was the major topic of discussion.

AUGUST 1973:

The second meeting was also held at Pat Burrows' house, on August 10th. Similar to the first in every way, except that people were becoming more and more interested in holding another convention.

THE BIRTH OF BCSFAZINE

Though it wasn't actually called BCSFAzine until issue #34. The very first issue was, in fact, titled 'VANCOUVER REVIVAL MEETINGS' and was mailed out on August 18th. Mike Bailey explained its origin in BCSFAzine #38: *"While struggling to get BCSFA rejuvenated, I became tired of telephoning people to advise them of future meetings.... Consequently, one day at work I spontaneously punched out a stencil with the relevant data and ran it off using government (my employer) stationery on a government Gestetner. Thus the newsletter was born. Later I wrote a computer program to generate address labels and added frills such as issue numbers and publication dates."* #1 consisted of a single sheet, and the postage (8 cents per) was paid out of the club bank account Mike had retained control of while BCSFA was dormant.

In the Newsletter Mike mentions the upcoming Torcon, recent books by Michael G. Coney & Roger Zelazny, and calls for articles to be submitted to his own fanzine LAGNIAPPE. He also comments on the first two meetings: *"David George and Pat hosted the meetings, the object of which was to organize an of-campus group. Our first meetings had an atmosphere that was a little tight. Some people didn't know one another and most of them didn't know what to do. There should have been more people present so smaller groups could start discussions and participants could find their own soulmates. Next meeting will have more people...."*

TORCON 2: THE 31st WORLDCON: AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 3, 1973:

A horde of BCSFAns attended this Toronto World Convention. Mike Bailey, Brent Maclean, Pat Burrows, David George, Daniel Say, Michael G. Coney and Chuck and Edna Davis were present, along with Victoria fans like Stan G. Hyde. Torcon II was the largest SF convention ever held up to that time, with more than 2,700 attending. Robert Bloch was the GoH, Bill Rotsler -- fan cartoonist and porno film-maker -- was Fan GoH, and other pros present included Isaac Asimov, Frederik Pohl, John Brunner, Harry Harrison, Robert Silverberg, Poul Anderson, Larry Niven, Clifford Simak and Jerry Pournelle.

The Hugo awards included: BEST NOVEL - 'The Gods Themselves' by Isaac Asimov -- his first hugo! (David Gerrold, who was runner-up, was overheard in the hall afterwards saying: "Next year I'll pack the convention with Trekkies and they'll never have heard of Isaac Asimov."), BEST FANZINE - Canada's own 'Energumen' produced by Mike Glickson and Susan Wood (the first Canadians to win Hugo's, I believe..), and JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD FOR BEST NEW AUTHOR - Jerry Pournelle.

The BCSFAns had a wonderful time at this massive convention and came out of the experience determined not only to launch a third convention on Vancouver, but to make a bid for Westercon 30 as well!

SEPTEMBER 1973:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #2 - SEPTEMBER 15TH, 1973:

This was a two-sheet gestetnered newsletter by Mike Bailey announcing the next meeting of the '*what are we?*' (ie: BCSFA), and giving the bare facts about Torcon. Among other news was the report that Harlan Ellison had severed his relationship with the Canadian TV series 'STARLOST' (his pseudonym 'Cordwainer Bird' would appear in the credits for the first two shows), and that "*Very important Australian fan, Bruce Gillespie, will be visiting Vancouver sometime this year. Bruce publishes what is probably the best SF fan magazine, SF COMMENTARY, and hopes to run off an issue in Vancouver.*" Mike also reviewed "COOKING OUT OF THIS WORLD" edited by Ann MacCaffrey, which contained wondrous recipes contributed by SF writers, such as: 'Squid With Pine Nuts' (John Brunner), 'Spam Chowder' (Grant Carrington), 'Cafe Ellison Diabolique' (Harlan Ellison), 'Crab Nebula' (Ursula K. Le Guin), and 'Busted Kneecap' (Larry Niven).

BCSFA MEETING - FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 21ST, 1973:

This was held at Pat Burrows house. Attendance again hovered around 10-15 people. Programming consisted of a slide show of photos taken at the recent Torcon, followed by discussion of the proposed third Vancouver convention, focusing on ideas for panels and events. Since 'The Third Vancouver Science Fiction Convention' was not considered very catchy, preliminary efforts to come up with something better produced suggestions like 'Vancon III', 'Van3Con', and 'Vanclave'. This meeting also saw the return of Ed and Norma Beauregarde to BCSFA.

OCTOBER 1973:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #3 - OCTOBER 4TH, 1973

Mike Bailey announced that the next convention would take place February 22-23, 1974 (the date was selected by Pat Burrows to coincide with the UBC midterm break), and that a huge turnout of the membership was desired in order to get planning underway. Among problems to be resolved soonest were a decent name for the con and a suitable publicity poster.

More astounding, the news that -- as of September 29th, 73 -- BCSFA was bidding for Westercon 30 in 1977, and that the Hyatt Regency, a 700 room hotel, had already been booked. Considering that BCSFA at this time was a very informal organization, lacking both an executive and a constitution, this was a display of raw courage on the part of BCSFAns!

Sadly, a paragraph is devoted to the death of John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, who had passed away Sept. 2nd from the effects of a perforated ulcer. Mike recalled that when this was announced at Torcon, there was concern among fantasy fans as rumours swept the con that Tolkein's will specified that any unfinished works were to be destroyed upon his death.

Mike also mentions THE NAMELESS ONES, the Seattle fan group of the day, perhaps to provide BCSFAns with a useful comparison, describing them in this manner: *"The Nameless Ones has been established a long time and, in fact, they organized a world convention in 1961. The people in the group are much more varied in background than we are -- from doctors to college profesors to students to SF writers to porn-sellers and from about 15 to 60 years of age. They have no officers, no dues, no objectives -- they just meet once a month and have a good time, talking about SEX, politics and science fiction."* Perhaps Mike was holding them up as an ideal to be copied....

Elsewhere Mike mentions that:

- Dell Books was about to publish 'VENUS ON A HALF-SHELL' by "well known Kurt Vonnegut character, Kilgore Trout. Incidentally, Philip Jose Farmer denies he is the culprit."

- And also that Philip K. Dick had informed Mike he had written his first non-commissioned story in six years (which one? I wonder).

SF3 NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 1973, BY DANIEL SAY:

This issue of SFU's SF clubzine is of interest because it mentions BCSFA: *"The next meeting of the so-called B.C. SF Assoc. will take place October 20....The main item on the agenda will be the forthcoming convention. There is even talk of hosting the Westercon to Vancouver, though why we want that kind of trouble I don't know..... The B.C. SF Association is a loose grouping of former U.B.C. people who have irregular meetings in an effort to form an off-campus group and has grandiose plans. We shall see...."*

Daniel also writes about the ill-fated 'STARLOST': *"Television has shot its bolt again with STARLOST, made in Toronto using a chroma-key-like process of actors shot with one camera and miniature sets shot with another camera and the two images blended together. It's cheap, and it shows along with the poor plotting and acting. Harlan Ellison wrote the first six scripts but has disowned it. Ben Bova is science editor-consultant."* (Ben Bova's 1975 novel 'THE STARCROSSED', about a 21st century TV ratings war, is said to be a thinly disguised account of the STARLOST fiasco...)

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY OCTOBER 20TH 1973:

The turnout for this meeting at Chuck and Edna Davis' house was very good, some 30-35 people. For many, it was their first BCSFA meeting. Now lifetime member Fran Skene recalls (in BCSFAzine #25): *"I remember my first meeting when the club was getting on its feet. After being at the Bellingham conference in the summer my name got on a list and so I was informed of the meeting. But I really didn't know anyone and was feeling great trepidation when I arrived alone, on a saturday night, at a private home filled with strangers. I didn't even bring something to drink as I thought I might just scoot right out again. As it happened, Chuck Davis (he of the books and the radio show) turned out to be the soul of affibility as he greeted me, and then Dan Say and Michael Walsh zeroed in..."* Fran adds that: *"It took, though, several months before I felt really at ease at a BCSFA meeting, One problem is the natural tendency to form cliques..."* (This is always a problem with any organization. As a neofan unsure of myself, I had floated about the periphery of BCSFA throughout 1971, but despite being involved with the first convention, felt like an outsider and so drifted away just before the club died. Welcoming new members and involving them in club activities should be a major priority for any club that wants to remain healthy.)

Current lifetime member Al Betz (Mr. Science) also attended BCSFA for the first time: *"I knew David George through a record collecting club and commented to him that I happened to like reading science fiction. He told me about the meeting, and I went there and was surprised with it all, I suppose, but I kept on going..."*

The discussion over the naming of the convention continued. Among the suggestions considered were 'Vicon', 'Con-fu', 'Kingcon', WesCanclave, Canclave and Vcon, the latter (suggested by Chuck Davis) being termed the tentative winner, though no one was really certain what the final decision would be. However, on the following Monday, October 22nd, Michael Walsh (a long-time BCSFAn present at the meeting) announced in his column in the Province newspaper that V-Con 3, the 3rd annual Vancouver SF convention, would be held in February. As David George later said, *"(It was) Michael Walsh who first said it in print, and stuck us with it irrevocably."*

Other matters discussed included the idea of establishing membership dues beginning in January, and setting up a permanent meeting schedule -- the third Saturday of each month at a rotating site. Ron Norton, later the manager of THE COMIC SHOP, offered his services in producing artwork for con flyers and program book (which he subsequently did, to be described at the appropriate time). And author Michael G. Coney offered his house in Sidney as a potential future meeting site.

Not to give the impression that all was deadly dull and serious, Ed Beauregarde in BCSFAzine #100 referred to this meeting as *"the one that had all kinds of drunks,"* and Al Betz remembered that the main activity had been the writing of a group story, the phrase *"coruscating neuronc-whip"* being particularly vivid in his memory. I believe this was probably "NEURONIC WHIPS -- A 'STIRY'" which was later printed in BCSFAzine #24. It contains the following sentence: *"With palpitating heart, and sweat on her upper lip, she was placed under arrest by one of the foul, disgusting, coruscating, neuronc-whip wielding, green-scaled Andromedan overgrown insect men."* 'Coruscating neuronc whips' became something of a club catch-phrase.

In #24 Fran Skene described the group story process as follows: *"Sometimes at our meetings a typewriter is present and after several imbibitions, many members lose their inhibitions and wish to demonstrate that those pros who earn money by writing are just a bunch of no-talent bums."* Participants in this particular group effort included Chuck Davis (he of many puns), Brent MacLean, John Park, Daniel Say, Al Betz and others. The closing sentence is particularly fine: *"Now that," said John W. Campbell, finishing his lunch, "is not my idea of a great story. But at half a cent a word, who cares?"*

The meeting was a solid success and placed the momentum and enthusiasm of the club on a sound footing. Things were happening! The club was well and truly back in action!

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #4 - OCTOBER 26TH, 1973:

"This newsletter is the semi-official organ of the semi-existant British Columbia Science Fiction Association. It is written, typed, run off, collated and mailed by Mike Bailey to approximately 100 people who are hopefully interested in SF." Mike was now producing 4 pages of single-spaced typing on 'his' government Gestetner. Most of this issue is taken up with pleas for volunteers to serve in varying ways at the upcoming convention, and by an editorial on what it is to be a fan, which is more in the nature of an appeal for members to get more involved with the club. As for BCSFA itself, Mike wrote *"We (myself, David George, Pat Burrows and Rob Leung) have some good ideas for the future of the association which will slowly unfold over the next few months. If you have ideas, let us know."*

Mike also complains about postage costs, some \$8.00 per distribution. (In 1993 our membership is only 30% greater but our postage costs are 1,000% higher!) He also notes that an 'official' club post office box has been established at Stn. E, P.O. Box 35577. (This remained operative for twenty years until the post office phased out that particular station and forced the club to make use of the V-Con P.O. Box at Bentall centre.)

NOVEMBER 1973:

V-CON MEETING - NOVEMBER 11TH, 1973:

Volunteers for the convention executive met at Pat Burrows house. They included Mike Bailey, David George, Pat Burrows, Rob Leung, Ed Hutchings, Diane Keswick, and Ron Norton. Michael and Susan Walsh showed up with Bill and 'Bubbles' Broxon from Seattle. Bubbles contributed a great deal, suggesting a panel based on the famous Clarion SF workshops that would consist of workshop veterans

who'd dissect submitted stories before an audience. She also promised to arm-twist some SCAN people from Seattle to come up and organize an event. (SCAN is now known as the SCA, the Society for Creative Anachronism.)

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #5 - NOVEMBER 1973:

Editor Mike Bailey officially announced the birth of V-Con III, and that Frank Herbert (Author of DUNE, WHIPPING STAR, THE GODMAKERS, etc.) would be the Guest of Honour. It would be at the Georgia Hotel February 22-24, 1974. The cost was \$3.50 advance, or \$10.00 with a banquet ticket. After Feb. 1st the membership fee went up to \$5.00. It's interesting to note that money orders were payable to BCSFA, rather than to the V-Con committee as a separate financial entity -- a concept which did not seem to have evolved as yet.

Mike also commented that the Christmas issue of his perzine LAGNIAPPE would contain an article by Philip K. Dick that Dick sent him as a gift the previous Christmas! Wow! It's titled "THE EVOLUTION OF A VITAL LOVE" and was a sort of sequel to his V-Con II talk "THE HUMAN AND THE ANDROID."

And Mike also refers to "THE CHRISTMAS COMET": *"Beware of the harbingers of doom! In spite of rumours to the contrary, I don't think the comet Kohoutek is a sign signifying the second coming. However, this is going to be an impressive comet -- bigger than Halley's -- which should become visible in late November and by Christmas it should be the third brightest object in the sky. It will continue waxing until about January 15th, 1974. Be sure to get a good look at this "God From Outer Space" as it will not return for 75,000 years."* ...I remember Kohoutek -- a tiny splinter of fuzzy light barely visible to the naked eye....

And in the 'more things change, the more they stay the same' category, Mike responds to complaints that the audio cassette tapes made by Chuck Davis at June's Fact & Fantasy Fair in Bellingham have not yet been mailed (just like the delay in getting out the Westercon 44/V-Con 19 masquerade video tapes). Seems Chuck mislaid the list of names he took, so all those involved are requested to re-submit their names.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17TH, 1973:

This took place at the Walsh's, allegedly to celebrate the opening of the Suez canal in 1869 on the same date, but more probably because it was also Chuck Davis's birthday. About 35 people attended, including people from Seattle. Now life member Kat Ferguson attended for the first time. To quote Mike: *"The meeting was essentially a social occasion, but some business was transacted early in the evening and some attendees sounded me out with ideas for the convention..... Allen Dickeson suggested an alpha-wave recording device for display and use... Later in the evening David George gave a verbal updating on the convention and presented Chuck Davis with a birthday present.... Al Betz asked me if I'd be willing to publish a complete listing of SF radio programs. I am, and maybe in a few issues, it'll start appearing...Some people didn't make it: Mike Coney phoned his regrets from Victoria (car trouble), Ed*

and Norma Beauregard went to the Island, Eve Savory was covering the municipal elections for CHQM...."

DECEMBER 1973:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #6 - DECEMBER 1973:

In an editorial Mike Bailey explains that the newsletter is available to anyone who contributes \$1.00 a year (to cover postage costs), and that a portion of BCSFA member's dues would pay for their subscription costs, once *"we formalize our organization"* and actually charge dues. In the meantime, any contributions would be welcome.

Mike also announced that member Michael Coney had sold a story to Harlan Ellison for his anthology LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS. The two had been feuding over critical interpretation of a story (WHEN IT CHANGED) by Joanna Russ, and Coney's story had been written in response to a challenge by Harlan to write something 'better.'

In OTHER NEWS Mike Bailey had further interesting tidbits concerning Philip K. Dick. For example, Dick had sold the movie rights for DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP (eventually made into the movie BLADERUNNER in 1982), and in a letter to Mike, quotes an interesting newspaper ad misprint: *"CHICKEN FARTS SIXTY-FIVE CENTS A POUND,"* which is precisely the sort of odd reality-warping detail Dick would notice. In reference to Bubbles Broxon, Dick had written *"She's a pro writer now; wow! When you see her give her a kiss for me and congratulate her."* And concerning the upcoming Westercon, Dick commented: *"I doubt if it's worth it to drive down here to Westercon, or even fly. I'm having doubts myself, and I live here."* Even weirder, he was the Guest of Honour!

Mike also reported that Ursula Le Guin had written from Portland: *"I do hope you are awarding the Elrons this year. I have several nominations....If this letter does not reach you, please inform me promptly..."*

Another item of interest is that the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS) had just purchased their own clubhouse (11360 Ventura Blvd. in Studio City) for a mere \$32,000. Sigh, it is to be jealous....

Meeting reports and book reviews round up what was becoming an increasingly meatier BCSFA Newsletter.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15TH, 1973:

Held at Clayton Vogler's house. Some Bellingham fans attended and, appropriately, John Thomson showed slides he'd taken at Bellingham's Fact and Fantasy Fair in June. (I don't have any specific details because I lack BCSFA Newsletter #7 which presumably contained a meeting report.)

TO SUM UP:

Like reptiles and other 'primitive' lifeforms, the newly hatched (or 'reborn') BCSFA was able to fend for itself immediately, not only in terms of feeding itself (attracting new members), but by indulging in truly adult displays of territorial aggression (taking on both V-Con and Westercon). A formidable animal indeed!

1974 - V-CON III & BCSFA GETS ORGANIZED

This year began well with a successful V-Con, but the immediate aftermath threatened to split the club. For a while David George and Mike Bailey printed rival issues of the BCSFA newsletter. In the end the controversy forced the club to unite under a formal organizational structure, giving itself a backbone on which an evolving membership could be permanently anchored, thus enabling the club to endure.

JANUARY 1974:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #7 - JANUARY 1974:

Editor Mike Bailey reports on plans for V-Con 3: *“The Guest of Honour is Frank Herbert. The convention membership cost is \$3.50 (up to February 1 -- \$5.00 thereafter) and the banquet costs \$6.50 (\$7.00 after February 1). Note that the banquet is a convention event and although it’s not obligatory to purchase a ticket, you’ll be missing part of the convention if you don’t.”*

On the subject of V-Con 3’s Elron Award event: *“I’ve received some nominations for Elrons (given to discourage persons of ineptitude from contributing more to SF) and to my surprise there has been some consistency in them. Apparently, Duncan Lunan is writing some first class garbage in IF... Also, extremely busy anthologist, Roger Elwood, has been nominated more than once... If you have any nominations, let me know quickly...”*

Interesting film news tidbit: *“A movie version of STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND is being planned. The star – David Bowie.”* Did this project evolve into THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH (1976) or was it a separate project which got shelved?

This was followed by some extremely interesting excerpts from letters to the editor, starting with one from California by Philip K. Dick: *“Bob Ness” (Vancouver DJ) “wrote to me to say that some ‘heavy radio people’ wanted to do a phone interview with me about the new comet, but they never phoned. Anyhow, what do I know about a comet? What do I know about anything, in fact? Ponder that, and write me IMMEDIATELY... or you will disappear oddly, with no warning. The comet will get you.”*

Phil also commented on the dust cover of his newly published novel FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID *“It’s a good one, since there’s a photo of me on the back cover. The blurb however... (Don’t quote that remark... just mention how good I look, like I’m staring into the far future with VAST Understanding.”*

To which Mike responds *“Gee, Phil, to me it looks like you’re staring into the future with VAST Puzzlement, or perhaps staring into the future and trying not to laugh.”*

‘Bubbles’ Broxon writes: *“Despite my statistical questions and the enclosed Elron nomination, I am not a rabid man-hating feminist. I’m a gentle, reasonable, rabid stupid-hating humanist. In the was of the sexes I try to run the Red Cross.”*

And ‘From down south in Los Angeles, Bjo Trimble writes *“Isn’t it awfully C*O*L*D in Vancouver in Feb? A nice little convention sounds good, though; I’m pretty tired of cons that are so large you never get to talk to anyone at all, because you spend all your time going around trying to find them.”*

Mike comments *“It’s January 6th as I type this, Bjo, and looking outside I see a clear, blue sky (and it’s been that way for a couple of weeks) and the only snow visible is on the North Shore mountains. C*O*L*D? Well, I’ll admit to chilly.”*

Fact is the Vancouver area is atypical of the rest of Canada. Warm winds off the ocean prevent snow for most of a given winter. We sometimes don’t get any snow at all!

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, JANUARY 19th, 1974:

This was held at Chuck and Edna Davis' house. 30-40 people showed up including Don Glover and other members of THE NAMELESS ONES in Seattle. Though the main topic of conversation must have been the approaching V-Con III, Mike Bailey in his meeting report simply comments *“A good time was had by all and I had a chance to talk to many new people and absorb new ideas for the future.... We wish to thank Edna Davis for being an excellent hostess (I sure liked those marinated uh, whatever-they-weres) and for putting up with the midnight daylight lagging time exit of the laggards.”* So it sounds as if BCSFA was a roaring success at least as far as partying was concerned.

FEBRUARY 1974:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #8 - FEBRUARY 1974:

Mike Bailey starts off by devoting a page to the coming wonders of V-Con III. He comments *“So that working people (those involved in setup) won’t miss any scheduled events (on Friday) we won’t program anything till after supper. However, Frank Herbert will make his presence known by circulating and meeting people in the hospitality suite.... Our main programming concept for Friday is that people should get to know one another.”* He also describes the Clarion style Writer’s workshop in which stories submitted by anonymous volunteers will be dissected: *“If someone runs screaming and sobbing from the room, he/she is one of the secret volunteer authors.”*

There follows some news items, such as:

- L. Sprague De Camp had completed his biography of H.P Lovecraft, to be published in June under the title "An Eldritch Yankee Gentleman." (In fact, I believe it didn't come out till 1976, and was titled, rather simply, "Lovecraft, a Biography.")

- Frank Herbert had stated the filming of DUNE would begin in Turkey in the summer. (Nope!)

- "The Caves of Steel" by Isaac Asimov was to be produced by Columbia pictures. (Nope again!)

Then Mike prints excerpts from various letters. A Ken Bieber from Waterloo suggests BCSFA is really just a Vancouver SFA (a charge often made). To this Mike replies: *"Our newsletter goes to people in Chilliwack, Squamish, Victoria, Gibsons, Winlaw, Agassiz and Kamloops."* (Today BCSFAzine goes as far afield as Kiev, Ukraine, not to mention all over North America, so were not doing too badly.)

Fran Skene, who works in the main branch of the Vancouver Library, remarks *"that more SF books are ripped off than in any other genre."*

From author Ursula K. Le Guin comes the note: *"Any (Roger) Elwood nominations for the Elron have my enthusiastic second. I still think John Norman of Gor should get at least a Bronze Lentil (at the Elrons), for relentless effort in the cause of semiliterate fetishism. Love and a smashing Con to you all."* And as you will see, these suggestions were taken up by David George.

Jim Maloan is rash enough to write: *"I also consider Harlan Ellison the most overrated Fantasy Writer in existence."* This provoked a reaction from Harlan himself, to be described later.

And from Goran Bengston of Stockholm: *"I don't suppose I'll be able to come to your Con, but I sure wish I could. Problem is, who'd want to pay the round trip for a slightly shop-worn Swedish TV executive?"* Who indeed.

The newsletter concludes with a review of Philip Jose Farmer's 'THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST' by Michael G. Coney. He didn't like it. In a letter to Mike he says, referring to his review, *"I must apologize that I was not able to say anything more constructive and appreciate that you may not want to use what I have written. I found the book very heavy going..."* He describes IMAGE OF THE BEAST as *"a powerful evocation of menacing and sadistic sexual images which at times becomes surreal. When the plot takes over, the writing is hack. When the images begin, it is brilliant. It is not a dirty book. That is why it fails. It is, quite simply, not entertaining."*

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this issue is that 300 copies were printed. I suspect Mike was sending it to many more people than just BCSFAns -- subscribers of his perzine perhaps.

V-CON III - FEB 22-24, 1974:

The poster art for this con was done by Ron Norton. It depicts a hooded figure standing atop a sand dune, his robe blowing in a gust of windborn sand, backlit by the light of two moons shining in a star-studded sky. A scene inspired by the Guest of Honour's 'DUNE' series. Even more dramatic is the cover art Ron did for the program book. It shows Vancouver Planetarium with its famous -- and huge -- metal

crab sculpture standing in a fountain. Landing beside the saucer-shaped building is a U.F.O. identical in appearance, with giant alien crabs rushing down its ramp to greet the statue. The scene takes place against the backdrop of the Vancouver skyline lit up at night. Quite striking.

The program book states: "*V-Con III, the Third Vancouver Science Fiction Convention, has been sponsored by the British Columbia Science Fiction Association.*" The Con exec are listed as follows:

Mike Bailey - co-chairman, treasurer and promotion.
Pat Burrows - registration, costume ball and information.
Allan Dickeson - displays and promotion
David George - co-chairman, hotel and suppliers arrangements and information
Ed Hutchings - Metropolis
Diana Keswick - program book
Robert Leung - hucksters
Ron Norton - Art show and art work

(As the cons get bigger in the years -- and chapters -- to come, I will list only the major positions and reserve complete listings for an appendix.)

I should add that Al Betz was in charge of audio recording (a first for both Al and V-Con), recording ten of the events on audio tape reels. In fact, he 'lived in exile' in the ballroom's balcony where he operated the recording equipment picking up the feed from the speaker's microphone. At intervals he would lean over the parapet of the balcony to aim a shotgun mike at the crowd to record their comments. This produced more than one alarmed double-take on the part of assorted audience members...

Frank Herbert was Guest of Honour. The venue was the Georgia Hotel.

FRIDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY, 1974:

Although the five buck entry fee blew my budget, I was eager to plunge into the con when registration opened at 1:00 PM. The fact that nothing was scheduled till 7:30 PM struck me as odd, but there was plenty to do nevertheless. The art show, hucksters room and hospitality suite were open, and it was fun running into people I had known when I belonged to BCSFA in 1971/72. For instance, as soon as Mike Bailey saw me he said, "World's greatest pseudo-intellectual, right?" He remembered! And the dervish Daniel Say came bounding up to shout, "So there you are! About time you showed up! Where have you been all these years?" Before I could say more than "Well..." he'd leaped halfway across the room to harangue someone else. Brought back memories, it did.

The displays were quite interesting. The Scientologists had a booth where I spent a pleasant hour trying to argue philosophy with their Rep while he tried to sell me pamphlets. We both might as well talked to a brick wall for all the communicating we accomplished. Doug Seeley and Barry White contributed a computer terminal on which 'FANWEB' was displayed, a computer program matching up fans with common likes/dislikes etc. There were electronic arcade games like 'Space War' rigged for free playing, a Moog electronic music synthesizer, and the promised Alpha brain wave device, also real live, genuine lasers doing something or other. And, of course, the hospitality suite serving beer on the 12th

floor. Fire regulations allowed no more than fifty people at a time in the suite, so parties were encouraged in other suites down the hall to handle the overflow.

At 7:00 PM I wandered into the ballroom to get a good seat for Frank Herbert's keynote address "SCIENCE FICTION AND THE WORLD IN CRISIS," (Later printed in full in the book "SCIENCE FICTION, TODAY AND TOMORROW.") My diary note of the day reads: *"Frank Herbert and Chuck Davis sit in front row talking to each other for half an hour before the lecture. I sitting in second row directly behind them, staring at their baldspots, listening to their conversation. Frank Herbert middle height, slight belly, long blond hair combed back from balding pate, viking beard, enormous ear holes, tiny eyes but alert & clear, wearing blue suit with white turtleneck. Herbert needed program to look at, I handed him mine, he looked at me! Spoke to me! Touched a piece of paper I own! Big deal, etc. I jest. Good speaker, slightly nervous, somewhat superficial, lots of feeble jokes, digressions, but very entertaining. Professional speaker unfortunately, but worth listening to."*

I think this says more about my neo-fan frame of mind than it does about Frank Herbert. For a more realistic appraisal, it is worth quoting in full his bio in the program book, which was written by Philip K. Dick(!): *"Generally it is one of the most unlucky events in your life to meet your favorite SF author face-to-face at long last. I have had fans tell me that after meeting me they either (one) did not care to meet any more writers ever or (two) ever meet anybody of any sort again. Classic in this regard is Harlan Ellison's remark when he finally met his idol Isaac Asimov: "Why, you're a nothing!" (Or so Asimov tells it; I tend to believe him, having seen the same look on fan's faces at one convention after another when they meet the legend that wrote the immortal novel they will remember eternally.)"*

"This reaction of acute depression is a natural one, because SF writers are by and large as dull, ordinary-looking and badly dressed as door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesmen. Worse than that they are pompous. They believe you want their opinion on everything and are therefore prepared to answer any question. They hope you will quickly ask them the significance of all life, how to become suddenly powerful and rich, how to make out with expensive girls -- and are childishly eager to tell you, with relish, of all their own bumbling efforts in all these directions. Never model yourself after any SF writer.... except Frank Herbert. He is, in my mind, a great writer -- but even more, a great and kind human being, with a twinkling, genial worldly wisdom you should pay attention to, and which you may never see the like of again."

"SF writers are almost universally failures in some basic sense, and have taken refuge in their profession because of this, whether they know it or not. SF writing, as a career, is a difficult compensation for some deeper, earlier failure in us. Not so with Frank; he radiates the natural strength of a man who need not apologize to God nor the authorities for what he is or what he has accomplished. I would call him a vastly balanced man, the ideal of the Greeks: at home in all he does, with everyone, capable and at ease, out to prove nothing, fearing nothing, understanding in an almost physical way all the various things we must understand in order to get by. I like him. Hell, I love him. In all the years I've known him not once have I ever heard him speak badly of anyone nor have I heard even the meanest creature concoct an insult in his direction."

Frank Herbert is, in all respects, a big man, well above the petty, beyond the cruelties that whirl around us all in our usual gatherings. You have, I'm sure, read his writing and know how excellent and important they are; you came here with that experience. Now you have this good and fine man before

you, a superb author rising above his own writing, spinning his work's dignity out of his own dignity, their depths out of his own. Had he been a plumber or a bricklayer he would still be Frank Herbert and it would still be our privilege and joy to know him. We are merely lucky that he also writes, as well as exists as the human being, the man that he is. Otherwise he might not be here; otherwise we might not have met him, nor even known who and what we had for all time missed."

If Frank Herbert was a trifle nervous, the task of living up to this paean of praise may have had something to do with it!

Immediately after Herbert's talk, I went home to get plenty of rest for the next day's events. Meanwhile the hotel cash bar opened, followed a half hour later (9:00 PM) by a costume party with prizes, enlivened by the presence of the SCA people from Seattle, no doubt in turn followed by the usual fannish partying into the wee hours.

SATURDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY, 1974:

Though there was but a single track of programming, it was a busy one! As I wrote in my diary: "A remarkable day, an excellent day, interesting, stimulating; I would have more like it."

At 10:00 AM Frank Herbert delivered a talk titled "SCIENCE FICTION AND PREDICTION." His central theme was that SF was too conservative, often failing to predict important social trends or technological developments. As an example of the former, he cited the rise of the Women's liberation Movement. As an example of the latter, he quoted Edgar Allan Poe who wrote in 1857: "Someday, within a hundred years, New York will have buildings ten stories tall." Herbert then proceeded to offer a few predictions of his own: that money would disappear as a medium of exchange within fifty years, and that computers would soon be influencing us more and more. Hmm, pretty cautious himself, or as he put it: "Difficult to write Science Fiction today as technology advances so quickly." After the talk, which was well received, he had to leave quickly in order to catch a plane. Though he was present for only a part of the convention, he had made himself freely available to the fans while he was there, which was greatly appreciated.

At 10:30 AM Mildred Downey 'Bubbles' Broxon moderated an authors panel titled "IS SEX NECESSARY IN SCI-FI?" In general, the authors -- whom I believe included Michael G. Coney, F.M. Busby and Eileen Kernaghan -- all seemed to think it was very necessary indeed. Unfortunately I neglected to record any stories by the panel, but I do recall the audience roared with laughter from time to time. I did write: "The talk was too general...I was hoping for specifics..." but I don't know if I was referring to 'writing' or to 'sex'...

"FACISM IN SCIENCE FICTION" was the title of a lecture delivered by well-known writer Crawford Kilian beginning at 11:15 AM. Mike Bailey had promised this talk would "raise a few hackles" and he was right. Kilian introduced himself as being of "middleclass bourgeois marxist origin" which was a giveaway the talk would be political in nature. I'll say. According to him SF largely dealt with individuals (heroes) who triumph over the will of the majority and are therefore to be considered fascist. He also condemned many Fantasy worlds as fascist because they were either great empires or based on feudal orders. I agreed with virtually nothing he said, but found his perspective fresh and intriguing. Audience discussion at the end was quite lively, not to say heated.

After a lunch break (which I spent with John Park, getting reacquainted and talking -- as we did in 1971 -- about how bad my writing style is...sigh), the infamous "CLARION WORKSHOP PANEL" began at 1:30 PM. This was moderated by 'Bubbles' Broxon and included Michael G. Coney as one of the judges (executioners?). Three stories had been submitted anonymously and been printed in full in the program book so that the audience could share in the fun. As Bubbles put it: *"The essence of the Clarion method of critique is, each person has a turn, and no one else may speak during that turn. The Author must keep his/her lip zipped until rebuttal, acknowledgement, explanation, or lame excuses time -- his turn is last..."* Rather than describe each story I will simply quote the first paragraph of each -- which captures the flavour rather well -- and record the judges' response. I will also reveal, perhaps for the first time in print, the true identities of the luckless souls who submitted to this torment.

The first story, titled -- simply enough -- "STORY #1" begins: *"Milton Snider's eyes popped open and blinked anxiously at the ceiling. There was too much light there. His face already wreathing itself into a shape appropriate for whimpering, he turned his head slowly and looked at the alarm clock. For a long, clenching moment he realized the horror of his predicament. He had overslept. The alarm clock had not rung."*

Alas, this effort was torn to shreds. *"A shaggy dog story.... Too many modifiers....Repetitive... It offends my eyes.... Badly written...."* were some of the kinder opinions offered. Poor Chuck Davis! He, of course, persisted in being (and remains to this day) a successful media commentator and writer.

The second story, "OH, SAY CAN YOU SEE..." by 'Abner A. Aaronson' (in reality Province Movie critic Michael Walsh) began: *"The Earth was dead."* This story fared even worse. *"It sucks!"* declared one judge. Even now Michael often has occasion to say the same about the movies he reviews.

The last story was called "A DREAM OF ARMAGEDDON" and was written by John Parks. *"Now that you are dead Bruno, I will say what I should have said before....Did you ever say you would not live without her? I never knew it if you did.... But I am speaking not to you, but to a stone monument. To my conscience, perhaps."*

This story generated some favourable response, though muted, in that they still attacked it, but considered it the best of the lot. John Parks then took revenge -- on behalf of all three writers -- by revealing himself as the author and taking the judges to task for failing to recognize that it was based on a famous H.G. Wells short story. (Though I have no idea which one...) Much fun was had by all, except perhaps, the three victims. Subsequent V-Con workshops have tended to be closed sessions rather than public demonstrations.

At 3:00 pm Professor Mason Harris of Simon Fraser University delivered his classic talk: "FEAR OF SEX AND FOREIGN RACES IN THE FANTASY OF H.P. LOVECRAFT." This was not the same talk he had given at V-Con I -- which had been a spur-of-the-moment off-the-top-of-his-head sort of affair -- but a carefully researched and masterfully delivered monograph. (Nearly two decades later, he continues to receive requests from other scholars for copies of this paper.) Mason was very enthusiastic about Lovecraft and it showed, his delivery style involved much dramatic gesturing and arm waving. He held the audience riveted as he dissected Lovecraft's probable obsessions and motivations.

There was one curious digression, when author H. Warner Munn (a "WEIRD TALES" veteran whose werewolf-point-of-view story "The Werewolf of Ponkert" had been suggested to him by Lovecraft in 1925) stood up and declared: "*I knew Lovecraft and the only thing he was afraid of was fish!*" (I hasten to add, not fish as critters per se, but seafood in general. Seems Lovecraft got very, very sick once...) This was, by far, one of the most entertaining lectures I've ever heard at any convention.

Finally, V-Con succeeded in holding a banquet (the banquets for the first two conventions had been cancelled for lack of interest). Fans had a choice of Baron of Beef or Stuffed Breast of Chicken, but I could afford neither and was back at home gobbling up peanutbutter sandwiches. I managed to run back to the hotel in time for the next scheduled event.

At 6:30 PM David George presented the ELRON AWARDS, saying: "If we honour the greatest, should we not also recognize the least?" thus setting the tone for the awards:

- LEAST PROMISING NEW AUTHOR went to Jerry Pournelle, with a BRONZE LENTIL FOR SEMI-LITERATE FETISHISM to John Norman, author of the infamous GOR series of novels (this latter award suggested by Ursula K. LeGuin).

- WORST NOVEL was awarded to "Breakfast of Champions" by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

- WORST TELEVISION PRODUCTION was given to the monstrously inept Canadian TV series "The Starlost." (Hmm, wouldn't mind seeing it again. Was it really as bad as I remember?)

- WORST SF FILM was won, hands down, by "Chariots of the Gods," the ludicrous "documentary" based on the "historical" drivel spewed by Von Daniken, one of the great con-artists of all time (and incidentally, runner-up nominee for all the other Elron categories).

- And finally, a special ELRON HALL OF FAME AWARD was presented to Roger Elwood for the myriad original anthologies he edited (80 in all). At this period his anthologies represented 25% of the SF short story market, and many writers (including probably Ursula K. LeGuin, who had suggested this award) felt that his prohibition of sex or religion themes -- he was a devout Christian -- was unduly restrictive.

Following the awards the SCA put on a lively medieval dance demonstration, after which the York Banquet Room was converted into a movie theatre for the showing of a 16 mm print of Fritz Lang's silent SF classic "METROPOLIS." Ed Hutchings, our resident film expert, had gone to a great deal of effort, as witness his comment in the program book: "*The print is as good and complete as the print of this film held in the New York Museum of Modern Art, and is in better condition. Silent film works much better with musical accompaniment, and I have taken some trouble to have good music for this show. The print we will have is about 140 minutes at silent speed. As far as I have been able to tell, this is the same English version that was shown in New York in 1927.*" ...when, by the way, 10,000 people lined up for tickets at the Rialto Theatre on Broadway. It was a privilege to listen to Ed's in-depth introductory lecture (truncated somewhat when some yahoo shouted out "Get on with the bloody film!") and an equal privilege to watch the fruition of his effort, a showing repeating as closely as possible the original opening night viewing experience. As I wrote in my diary: "*Love that Rotwang!*"

Undoubtedly much partying subsequently ensued, but I being shy and innocent went home to bed.

SUNDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY, 1974:

At 10:00 AM Chuck Davis moderated a panel on "FANDOM REVEALED" with participants Hugo winner Susan Glicksohn (Susan Wood), Seattle fan Frank Denton, Elinor Busby, and Mike Bailey. This was my first introduction to the fact that fans produced and distributed their own zines, with mailings to up to 200 people "*not uncommon.*" I found this amazing. Also the fact that fanzines "*had something of their own vocabulary, apparently.*"

The one specific note on this panel in my diary reads as follows: "*A girl from Regina (who?) quite aggressive. She'd handled publicity for TorCon 2 in Toronto last year. Said she showed reporters blowups of headlines from the first Torcon (held 25 years previously in 1948) which read: 'Zap! Zap! Horror Fiends invade town!' and told them not to do it again. So naturally they wrote: 'This is the image fans are trying to get away from but of course they can't.' Chuck Davis interjected with the comment: 'The one thing you must never do to a reporter is tell him what to say and what not to say. I remember interviewing you about a year ago and the first thing you said was, 'If you ask me any stupid questions I won't answer them.' I mean, WHOA! This is NOT the way you handle the media.'*" It was an interesting conflict of viewpoint, she couldn't see that she had done anything wrong. Always better to treat media respectfully." Indeed, still a problem whenever we hold a V-Con. Alas, once a geek, always a geek, so sayeth the media, who tend to search out the most visually arresting (and absurd) fans. Always a challenge for the con publicity officer to counteract this.

Incidentally, this was Susan Wood's first VCon. She won a fan Hugo with Mike Glicksohn in 1973 for 'Energumen', and would win another in 1974, and again, in 1977. In 1975 she and Eli Cohen moved to Vancouver after she was offered a position in U.B.C.'s English department. She later became assistant Professor and won tenure. I'm glad to say she became very active in both VCon and BCSFA. All this will be described in the appropriate chapters to come.

At 11:00 AM the last scheduled event took place, another lecture by Professor Mason Harris. Originally he was to lead a discussion on the works of Philip K. Dick, but Kilian's talk on "FACISM IN SF" had really gotten under his skin, and he felt compelled to deliver a rebuttal. If anything, he was even more animated, pacing up and down, swaying back and forth, shaking his fist. Add my description of him as "*a gangly New England type, long limbs and a high forehead,*" a sort of Lovecraftian John Cleese, and you have some idea of the drama of his lecturing style. Among his many points, he argued that fictional societies with medieval feudal overtones are not fascist, but indicative of family relations, clan unity and togetherness, and that in any case, a little fascist fantasy is good for you, in that it brings things out in the open where they can be confronted and dissipated. It was an exhilarating lecture which ended the convention on a high note.

Was the convention worth it? Despite some internal problems which led to a schism immediately afterwards, the convention itself was a great success. Mike Bailey had predicted (in BCSFA Newsletter #8) that 246 people would show up. The final attendance figure was 419 (paid). It would have been even higher but for the fact that people had to be turned away at the door because of space limitations. In fact, VCon III turned a profit of \$578.22. Not bad, not bad at all.

One reason for the increased turnout was undoubtedly the Guest of Honour, Frank Herbert. His novel "DUNE" was a phenomenal bestseller, with more than TEN MILLION copies in print! The majority of his readers were not SF fans at all, but 'mainstream' readers anxious to read the latest 'relevant novel' discovered by influential mainstream critics. So many of the people who attended V-Con III were there only to see Frank Herbert speak, and as soon as he left, they left, for the SF aspects of the con did not interest them. It is to be hoped, however, that we made at least a few converts to fandom.

At the end of the Con, inspired by the fun I'd had, I rejoined BCSFA, though my participation was to be limited to receiving newsletters in the mail, largely because of the impression I soon received that club matters were too political...

MARCH 1974:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #9 - MARCH 1974:

Mike Bailey's Post Convention Report is brief and suggestive: *"What happened? I only attended one event during the entire con and so I really don't know what happened or how events were received. I don't even know who won the Elrons, or how many people attended. Personally I didn't really enjoy the convention, however I guess that's part of the price I had to pay to be one of the executive. More on this topic later in the newsletter..."*

Indeed. But first some rather remarkable correspondence:

Charlie Brown of LOCUS writes: *"I'm one of those opposed to the ELRON AWARDS mainly because they seem to breed nothing but bad feeling....the awards mostly go to a disappointing book, not really a bad book."*

And Philip Jose Farmer wrote in to comment on Michael G. Coney's review of his IMAGE OF THE BEAST: *"Amazing and fantastic though it is ((astounding?)), I had never read a pornographic book before I wrote IMAGE... I wrote IMAGE as a sort of modern-day Gothic with smog taking the place of fog.....What is pornography anyway?"*

Evidently Mike was sending copies of the BCSFA Newsletter to various pros in the hope they would LoC. Harlan Ellison did more than LoC, he opened fire...*"After eighteen years as a professional writer, after paying dues that total 800 stories, 26 books, two dozen teleplays, half a dozen series pilots, eight or nine movies, after being praised by critics ranging from Dorothy Parker to James Blish.... the word is finally in. I no longer have to concern myself with my ultimate worth as a writer. Yay, the word is in:*

"From Port Coquitlam, Jim Maloan writes, "...I also consider Harlan Ellison the most overrated Fantasy writer in existence."

"What a relief to get, at long last, an authoritative and well-reasoned assessment of my talent from a learned student of modern literature. This unsolicited but nonetheless incisive statement at long last dispels the cloud of ambivalence that has shrouded my self-evaluation. Clearly, I'm a bum, whose virtually non-existent talent has been pumped full of air by know-nothings like the over two hundred

academic anthologists who have selected my stories for college-level textbooks on contemporary literature....

"So, these few words of thanks are sent with utmost gratitude for cleaning up my muddy thinking.... But now things are all straight, and I've decided to make life richer for Mr. Maloan: I'm returning to truck driving as an occupation, just as soon as I can sell my typewriter...."

"With undying thanks, Harlan Ellison."

At first sight it might seem amazing Harlan would take the trouble to write such a letter (of which I've quoted about half, Mike printed it in full), but Harlan began as a fan, knows what fandom is all about, and chose to reply in full fannish-feud fury. The letter is a masterpiece of sarcasm, and -- to my mind at least -- quite, quite funny. Nor was this the end of the matter, of which more later.

After a couple of book reviews (Barry M. Malzberg's BEYOND APOLLO & Michael G. Coney's HELLO SUMMER, GOODBYE), Mike devotes the rest of his newsletter to an item titled "FANDOM REVEALED OR... WHEN YOU'RE UP TO YOUR ASS IN CROCODILES..." in which he reveals that a dispute between himself and David George/Pat Burrows had led to his being removed from the office of VCon Treasurer by unanimous vote at the last ConCom meeting. On the other hand he was still Co-Chair of the ConCom, and still Treasurer of BCSFA. Anticipating a motion to remove him as BCSFA Treasurer at the upcoming March meeting, he proposed to launch a counter-motion. The nature of the dispute is not made clear, but was evidently a personality clash over policies and procedures concerning VCon and Club funds. This is not a matter I intend to research, for this type of organizational glitch, while looming large at the time, is not the sort of stuff of which fond memories and nostalgia are made of, and the purpose of this history is to recall the good and the interesting, not dredge up extinct, fossilized feuds.

Mike closed this issue with the statement: *"Note that this is the official BCSFA NEWSLETTER and the other you will receive is a convention committee newsletter."* That 'other' was:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER Vol. Two, No. One - MARCH 1974:

Subtitled: "V-Con III and beyond," it was a 3 page co-operative effort by Pat Burrows, David George, Diana Keswick, Robert Leung, John Tomson and Susan Walsh, run off an AB Dick offset press at Vancouver City College campus, courtesy of Lawrence Fast of the English department. I suspect the numbering of the issue was a carry-over from the old UBCSFFEN Newsletter days. Essentially a straightforward information sheet, it stressed the importance of the upcoming meeting, announced that BCSFA was in the process of establishing a constitution in order to become a registered society, listed the audio tapes available from the Con, and concluded with a disappointing Con report. Written as a report by an alien spy, it totally lacked specifics, being composed of generalities so vague as to apply to any con. (EG: *"The Ball Room -- Mass gatherings were held here. This room was grossly underused when it came to its primary function, cultural inhibitions prevailing. The talks, Clarion session and film were largely superior in quality. The subliminal imprint on Frank Herbert is creating relatively valuable and stimulating situations; this type of experiment should be repeated."*)

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #9(a) - MARCH 1974:

This 'special edition' was sent out *"with the agreement of the entire convention committee of V-Con III."* Referring to the matter between himself and David George/Pat Burrows, he stated that no motions would be raised at the upcoming meeting, no general discussion of the matter would take place. In other words, it seemed things were being worked out between the parties involved.

Meanwhile, *"The BCSFA is in the progress of setting up a constitution in order to be registered under the BC Societies Act....All executive positions of the BCSFA are vacant; all persons holding defacto, pro tem, or original founding-member executive positions have resigned effective March 24th, 1974. After a constitution is formulated, elections for the executive will be held...."*

Apart from politics, Mike mentioned that *"Ron Norton (who was in charge of Vcon III art show) and Ken Witcher are looking for a site to rent for a bookstore specializing in comics and SF. If all goes well, they will have access to 30,000 comics when they open."*

Mike also reveals that Jim Maloan, in response to Harlan's letter in #9, had sent him an "Open letter to Harlan Ellison" which he had passed on to Harlan. *"If Jim Maloan receives some direct response, I think we'll let the matter lie; however, if Ellison again replies to me, I can only assume he wants it out in the open and I'll oblige."*

Lastly, Mike writes an editorial concerning the future of the newsletter: *"I started it last summer on my own initiative in order to attract people to our meetings. Since that time it has slowly (and consciously) evolved from what you might expect to find in a newsletter to something which may be called a newszine.... I have attempted to put some personality into it, yet not sacrifice fact and credibility. Future plans included the adding of illustrations and special supplements such as essays on SF.... However this may be the last newsletter I do.... There may not be a newsletter for some time.... Although because of my experience I think I would have a reasonably good chance of being elected Publications Officer (or whatever the position will be titled), I may not want the position because of the way it might be restricted by the constitution. Consequently, in order to influence the direction of (your) newsletter, I urge you to let your opinions and desires known, so that the persons setting up the constitution may make the best decision."* It seems Mike was concerned about proposed checks and balances, ie newsletter content to be reviewed by other members of the executive before publication.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, MARCH 30TH, 1974:

This was held at Pat Burrows house. Very little information about it can be gleaned from the newsletters. Apparently the dispute was discussed, with a number of people expressing displeasure over Mike Bailey's handling of the newsletter. John Thomson was to give a summary of progress into setting up a constitution, and actively seek *"interested members to aid him in setting up a committee to work on this complex matter,"* but it seems very little was accomplished, at least as planned. Instead, Ed Beauregard, presumably as a neutral but experienced BCSFAn, *"was, somewhat unwillingly, given the job of Interim Chairman until a constitution was adopted and a board of directors elected."* He then managed to dragoon Mike Bailey, David George, Norma beauregard, Jim Mackenzie, Fran Skene, John

Thomson and Gary Walker into a constitutional committee. It is to be hoped that the showing of slides taken by John Thomson at V-Con III ended the meeting on an upbeat note.

APRIL 1974:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #10 - APRIL 1974:

Well, sort of a BCSFA Newsletter. It's not labeled as such (It's called "Transition.") but the fact it's numbered #10 and was sent to BCSFA members like myself indicates Mike was carrying on from previous issues.

In a brief editorial, Mike Bailey stated: *"I've decided not to run for any office of BCSFA. Some of the people who'll probably run unopposed are vehemently against me doing the newsletter and if I were elected to the position of Publications Officer, tension would result and the newsletter would deteriorate."*

"However, I've received support in the mail (and verbally) for continuing the newsletter as it is." For example, Frank Denton wrote: "It's lively and newsy at the same time and I'd hate to see it go by the boards."

Mike concludes by saying: *"Consequently, if I keep receiving good response I'll continue this newsletter on my own...."*

In a separate note he writes: *"Special thanks should go to Ed Beauregard who became acting Chairman last month and has done a good job getting things straightened out -- especially our finances and our constitution."*

Mike mentions his intent to purchase a copy of 'THE WORLD OF FANZINES' by Dr. Frederic Wertham (the chap whose book 'SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT' resulted in the comics code -- he'd charged that Batman & Robin were homosexual role models, Wonder Woman a lesbian, and he really tore into Bill Gaines's E.C. horror comics, accusing them of 'causing' juvenile delinquency. Oddly enough, he liked fanzines).

Other items of note: *"Harlequin, Canadian-based, is about to enter the SF field with about 50 titles a year edited by the famed Roger Elwood..... The revival of WEIRD TALES is apparently going to be short-lived. Sam Moskowitz is no longer editor and is back to editing QUICK FROZEN FOODS..... The April issue of CRAWDADDY has an interview of Kurt Vonnegut conducted by Kilgore Trout.... In a letter he wrote to me, Phil Farmer mentioned that THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST might be made into an underground comic. However, because of a recent obscenity ruling, he doubted that it would come off."*

Most intriguing of all is this delightful travel story by Mike. It might even be true! *"Last summer Brent Maclean and I drove to Torcon... A small town called Sauk City was situated on the route (in Wisconsin, U.S.A.) and as we were getting the gas tank filled there, I casually asked the attendant if he'd ever heard of a publishing company called ARKHAM HOUSE. He smiled to himself and turned and pointed, "It's over there, just across from the graveyard."*

"Forbidding the house was, surrounded by large shade trees, especially the barking watchdogs. I got out of the car and began snapping pictures as the person, one Roderic Meng, who operated the business (after August Derleth's death) came out to inquire about our purpose.

"He was a young man with an unhealthy pallor, but he willingly showed us the warehouse and gave me a dust jacket for THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND. However he refused to show me the interior of the house itself. When I inquired about August Derleth a noticeable sweat appeared on his face in the 90 degree afternoon and he stated that Derleth was buried in the graveyard across the street. I snapped a few more photos and then we drove off, carefully parking down the street. Brent and I then walked all through the graveyard and a marker for August Derleth was not to be seen. I took a few photos of a recently dug (or emptied) grave and we departed.

"Curiously, not one of my photos developed properly and I have no photographic record of Roderic Meng."

Arkham House Publishing was founded by August Derleth to print the definitive H.P. Lovecraft collection and went on to publish works by other authors in the same vein. Lovecraft died in 1937, Derleth in 1971. I think both would have appreciated the tone of this account by Mike.

Last but not least, Mike reported that Harlan Ellison had replied to Jim Maloan's letter and that *"consequently I'm assembling a special supplement for next issue entitled 'A TRIBUTE TO HARLAN ELLISON' or 'I HAVE NO BRAINS AND I MUST SCREAM -- FORM OVER CONTENT.'"*

BCSFA MEETING - APRIL 27TH, 1974:

Held at the house of Michael and Susan Walsh. Tensions seemed to be easing, in that Susan is recorded to have said, *"I don't know why you people call these things meetings -- they are really parties."* On this occasion she served *"an excellent punch and mushroom desert goodies."* Nevertheless, the 25 people present discussed the constitution as presented by Ed Beauregard who stated, in a written report submitted on behalf of the constitution committee, *"I'm pleased to report that after only four meetings we have hammered out a pretty satisfactory document.... The constitution and by-laws still have to be approved by the membership, but as there was unanimous agreement within the committee, I don't foresee any difficulties."*

However, as Mike Bailey subsequently reported: *"Thanks to continual harrassment by Daniel Say, we didn't get far into the constitution, and we'll continue at the May meeting. Constitutional matters aren't necessarily boring. It's amazing what resolutions are raised after a few beers."* Membership rates for BCSFA were also approved: \$5.00 for family rate, \$3.00 for active (B.C.) membership, \$3.00 for associate (outside B.C. - no voting rights) membership, and \$1.50 for newsletter subscription only.

BCSFA NEWSLETTER Vol. Two, No. Two & Three -- APRIL 1974:

This did not come out till after the April meeting because a postal strike delayed the mailing. It was written by John Thomson and Ed Hutchings, and 'approved' by interim Chairman Ed Beauregard, with

375 copies produced. Ed Beauregard's report as Interim Chairman is printed, in which he defines the tasks of the proposed five executive positions (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Information Officer). Elsewhere members are informed that *"Elections will be held at the June meeting with ballots and information on the candidates will be mailed out with the June newsletter. Michael Walsh, as a non-candidate, will be supervising the June Newsletter to make sure there is no bias in the newsletter."*

An interesting review of LOCUS is included (it reads like Hutchings usual style): *"Calls itself the newspaper of the SF field; fen reaction is that this is about right. Everybody else steals items like mad for their own stuff (us too)...specializes in more or less hot news: advance bulletins from publishers and (I suspect) literary agents...Great on conventions and Hugo/Nebula stuff. Some economical reviews but short on highbrow analysis and similar deep utternesses. Seems to carry a very complete file on Harlan Ellison's fist fights."* LUNA MONTHLY fares not quite so well: *"Poor gossip -- nothing on who punched out Ellison last week..."*

And speaking of Ellison, there's a special 'IT'S TIME TO SAY SOMETHING NICE ABOUT ELLISON DEPARTMENT' in which it is announced he'd been nominated for an Edgar (the mystery equivalent of a Nebula) for "WHIMPER OF WHIPPED DOGS," and that he'd won the Writers Guild Award for Best Dramatic Episode Teleplay for "PHOENIX WITHOUT ASHES," his original screenplay for "STARLOST" (but not the one actually produced).

MAY 1974:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #11 - MAY 1974:

Another one of Mike Bailey's "unofficial" BCSFA Newsletters, this one appropriately titled "Getting There." He mentions that, at the time of writing, Fran Skene and David George were interested in being President, Gary Walker Vice-President, and John Thomson Information Officer. No one wanted to be Secretary or Treasurer, and it seemed that Mike was sticking to his decision not to run....

He comments he'd received a letter from Clair Toynbee and Maynard Hogg (the founders of UBCSFFEN back in 1968, which led to the creation of BCSFA in 1970). Both had studied Japanese, and after marrying and graduating, had gone to live in Japan.

But the meat of the issue is the 'SPECIAL MEAN SUPPLEMENT' devoted to Harlan Ellison. First Mike quotes from Jim Maloan's 'Open Letter to Harlan' where Jim is critiquing Ellison's "I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream" story. *"That story has holes in it so large that you could shove the complete works of Leo Tolstoi and Isaac Asimov through them at the same time..... You postulate a computer which can somehow 'feel' hate for humans, but hate is really a mechanism for triggering aggressive behaviour; it is a biological necessity and a natural result of our evolutionary heritage. Therefore, it would serve no purpose in a computer.... Another flaw in the story's logic is: the question of the machine's limits and capabilities -- it can materialize all sorts of ghastly wonders, make men immortal, remold them into blobs of jelly, but when it comes to repairing something as simple (relative to the aforementioned miracles) as a stab wound in a freshly injured body, the machine is impotent; '...he was not God.' You could have fooled me. Altering the body in such a way as, say, amputation of both legs results in a distinct rise in blood pressure and a rise in body temperature due to the resultant loss of*

surface area. Yet this machine turns a person into a slimy slug without any deleterious effects save to his appearance and psyche.... besides that, the narrator uses such well-turned phrases as 'Tasted like boiled boar urine.' I wonder how he found that out."

Considering that Harlan's previous letter had been in response to a single line by Jim Maloan, it's not to be surprised that a gold-embossed envelope with three pages of fannish fury arrived quickly. Among many things, Harlan commented: *"I'm not altogether happy with Canadians at this moment. It was Canadians (in concert with inept Americans) who took a viable series concept and made it 'happy' and turned it into what was called 'The Starlost.' And if it remained for me to have any doubts that those Canadians didn't know their ass from their elbows, my winning the Writers Guild of America Award for Most Outstanding Episodic Script with my original version of the pilot segment, 'Phoenix Without Ashes,' convinces me. For a series that was so badly rewritten and produced... by Canadians.... that it never went beyond the first 16 episodes and won a well-deserved Elron Award.*

"When I came to Canada to work on the series, I wanted to use Canadian SF writers. But you have only two; Phyllis Gotlieb and Michael Coney. You can't seem to work up enough energy to produce writers of SF, but you sure as hell have a loudmouthed crop of noisome fans....

"So in the spirit of crippling Canadian-American relations, why don't you save your postage by refraining from sending me the newsletter...

"So unless you'd like to come up with about two grand to bring me to Vancouver to lecture you happy little bands of fans personally, in an effort to bring the light of culture to your dreary existences, I see no further need for communication between us.... With chuckles, Harlan Ellison.

"P.S. I see by your newsletter that Americans aren't the only corrupt, conniving, power-mad, rapacious swine on the continent ... I can't help smiling with soft joy that you are yourself apparently entwined in the coils of fannish sophomorphism.

"...Ah well, fandom do go on forever, it would seem. Crawling effortlessly and endlessly up its own ailimentary ((sic)) tract.

"Good luck, oh Defender of Canadian Fandom!"

There are times when I think Harlan is the Hunter S. Thompson of SF.... which is a compliment, by the way.

At any rate, excerpts from Harlan's letter were interspersed with Harlan stories from various sources, plus Mike's own comments. Certainly makes for jolly interesting, if controversial, reading.

Sample comment by Mike: *"Ellison recently wrote a letter to DC, the comic book publisher, praising THE SWAMP THING. It must be great to be so literate."*

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, MAY 25TH, 1974:

Took place at the house of Fran Skene beginning at 8:00 PM. Nominations were made, and four positions not being contested, were elected by acclamation:

President - Fran Skene
Vice-President - Gary Walker
Secretary - Rick Mikkelson
Treasurer - Al Betz

These people became, in effect, the first "official" executive of the independent BCSFA.

Meanwhile, in a surprise move (considering his previous statement of intention to opt out) Mike Bailey contested the position of Information Officer, facing John Thomson in an election. I have no other information concerning this meeting, but assume that the rest of the provisions of the proposed constitution were ratified at this time.

JUNE 1974:

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - JUNE 4TH, 1974:

Apparently this meeting was called to work out the logistics of conducting an election. The only information I have is that it was decided that anyone joining the club at the June BCSFA meeting would have the right to vote in the election at that meeting.

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #12 - JUNE 1974:

Another Mike Bailey "unofficial" BCSFA Newsletter. I did not receive it (and thus have no copy) as Mike had written on my copy of #11 "*Last issue without a response.*" I suppose, since I'd paid my BCSFA membership, I'd assumed I'd continue to get his zine. The fact that I didn't can be interpreted to mean that he was dropping any stance of maintaining that it was the 'official' newsletter. But I label it as such because of the continuity of the issue numbering. In any case, this issue probably contained the "*mad-dog attacks on the various candidates*" he had promised in the previous issue (which may imply #12 came out in late May before the nominations).

BCSFA NEWSLETTER Vol. Two, No. Four - JUNE 1974:

This issue says, "*Sorry, no credits. Everyone (well, everyone important) helped out.*" Presumably it was overseen by Michael Walsh as promised to ensure lack of 'bias.'

After giving the results of the April meeting, the Convention Financial Statement for V-Con III is listed. Expenses were \$2,367.68, (including \$180.22 for Frank Herbert), and credits were \$2,945.90 (including \$1,679.50 from 419 paid memberships), for a total profit of \$578.22.

The next page was devoted to the first article written for BCSFAzine by Al Betz, part one of a series titled 'SCIENCE FICTION ON RADIO' which reads in part:

"The earliest examples of radio SF that I can find are those editions of BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY, a program that began in 1931 and ran until 1939..... In 1933 the A.C. Gilbert company, makers of the Erector Set, sponsored a series called THRILLS OF TOMORROW that explored as yet undeveloped inventions as the "Planemobile" and the "Amphibian Train.".... A number of minor series devoted solely to SF began in the 1940's and early 1950's. Some of these were BEYOND TOMORROW, EXPLORING THE UNKNOWN, EXPLORING TOMORROW, DESTINATION SPACE, STARR OF SPACE, LATITUDE ZERO..... Even Jack Benny once starred in "I FLEW TO MARS," a 1953 sketch on his own show..... The comedy team of Bob and Ray ran the adventures of "Lawrence Fechtenberger, Interstellar Officer Candidate," and his sneering partner Mug Mellish.... And what was the SF story most often presented as a radio show? It was "MARS IS HEAVEN" by Ray Bradbury."

The third page was devoted to campaign statements by Mike and John.

MIKE BAILEY described his experience as: *"A founding member and first publications officer of the UBC SFFEN; Treasurer of UBC SFFEN for three years, Involved in newsletter writing and production at UBC, founding member of BCSFA and original Treasurer; Co-Chairman of all three Vancouver SF conventions; and producer of 10 newsletters on behalf of BCSFA."* The last point is interesting. It would appear that he was defining issues one to nine-a as 'official' BCSFA newsletters, and subsequent ones as perzines. No doubt a concession on his part to help resolve the last vestiges of the 'dispute.' He went on to say *"Under my aegis the newsletter would have maximum exposure to the unique sub-culture of which we are a part. The form (not so important as the content) would evolve so that illustrations and regular columns would appear."*

John Thomson mentioned *"While at UBC I joined the UBC SFFEN and held the office of Vice-President,"* and that *"I would like to see our meetings changed from monthly to biweekly with the second meeting being some sort of serious SF discussion group, thus leaving the other meeting free for club business and socializing..... At any rate my main concern is to get the club structured and stabilized and have a strong, team-oriented executive."*

And finally Gary Walker reported on the results of the SF Correlation Questionnaire he'd handed out at V-Con III (which is different from the Fan-Webb Questionnaire that was also handed out). According to the results, *"It was shown that on average the most probable SF fan is a first-born student with a science background, between 17 and 25 years of age, who drinks, and first became interested in SF around age 11."* Hmm, well, they got the drinking part right....

With the zine came a return envelope with a voting ballot, signed with the initials of Ed Beauregard and Michael Walsh, to be mailed to Michael as returning officer. I didn't vote. Don't know why. Still have my ballot. Probably the only one in existence. Estimated worth to a collector? Probably zero. Why have I kept it all these years? So I could write this paragraph, of course.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, JUNE 15TH, 1974:

Held at Chuck and Edna Davis' house. The ballots were counted and the result announced: Mike Bailey had been elected as Information Officer. I have no other information about this meeting except that beverages left over from V-Con III (beer and hard liquor only, the 38 unopened bottles of wine left over had been purchased from the club by a thirsty member) were consumed, no doubt with wild abandon.

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - MONDAY, JUNE 17TH, 1974:

Al Betz, functioning as Treasurer of BCSFA, proved to everyone's satisfaction that to reconcile the amounts of money held in the club's two bank accounts (one savings, the other chequing) "*with the vast quantity of paperwork and receipts from the convention is impossible.*" So it was moved that the two accounts be accepted as they stood. The club had \$542.01 in its savings account and \$45.24 in its chequing account.

JULY 1974:

BCSA NEWSLETTER #13 - JULY 1974:

In fact, strictly Mike's perzine titled "Son of Machiavelli," but carrying on the numbering continuity of the BCSFA newsletter. In #14, the 'official' club newsletter, he writes of #13: "*As most of you know I also publish another monthly which hopefully will contain all my slander, mad-dog attacks, flattery, personal messages and real, inside news. I'm going to keep publishing it and the subscription rate is the same as for the BCSFA newsletter.... Whereas most of the copies of the BCSFA Newsletter go to persons residing in the lower mainland, about half the copies of the personalzine go south to people who aren't all that excited by reading about our meetings.*" This meant that Mike's very personal approach was to be contained strictly within his perzine, and that, in my opinion, the tone of the BCSFA Newsletter became somewhat drier and duller as a result. On the other hand, Mike did begin to open it up to more contributors....

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #14 - JULY 1974:

Written by Mike Bailey with help and contributions by Fran Skene and Rick Mikkelson. Apart from pushing his perzine, Mike's contribution appears limited to basic news items: brief meeting reports, volunteers requested for V-Con IV, and the fact that the executive was attempting to arrange club member discounts at various bookstores in the city.

Fran Skene contributes news of recent books in the city library, including this amusing review of EROS IN ORBIT, an original anthology edited by Joseph Elder: "*Sex on top of a read-out console; with a sex-research robot, your sister, a car, children; between two robots, two brain fragments; by long distance; on a voyage to Mars. Interesting, although the erotic component is not up to mainstream standards. The most successful story, i.e., both sex and SF are essential to the plot, is George Zebrowski's 'STARCROSSED' (sex between two fragments). The funniest stories are Ron Goulart's 'WHISTLER' (sex with a sex research robot) and Thomas Brand's 'DON SLOW AND HIS ELECTRIC GIRL GETTER (sex with a car).*"

Fran also contributed a WESTERCON 27 REPORT: *"Five people from this area -- Mike Bailey, Michael Coney, Dave Garayt, Jim Maloan and myself, went down (to Santa Barbara, University of California).... The pro Guest of Honour, Philip K. Dick, was unable to attend for health reasons; however toastmaster Bob Silverberg and Fan Guest of Honour, Charles Burbee, gave very entertaining speeches.....The BCSFA is bidding for Westercon in 1977 as conference goers were informed by two full-page ads in the program book.... Voting for the location of that Con takes place next year at Westercon 28, being held at Oakland (across the bay from San Francisco).... We should be down there in force next year, to drum up support and to add our votes for Vancouver!"* Mike Bailey throws in the comment: *"For a longer, more revealing report, read (my) personalzine."* It seems Mike was reserving his real fervour for his perzine. This is to be regretted.

The last page contained what I believe to be the first illustration to appear in the BCSFA Newsletter (BCSFazine): a fox striding along on his hind legs with his hands clasped behind his back, peering intently at the viewer and saying, "Nice fanzine you have here." The artist? His name is James Shull, the first artist to appear in BCSFazine!

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, JULY 27TH, 1974:

Held in cottages #17 & 18 at Golden Tides Resort at Birch Bay, south of Bellingham, Washington. I assume this was more in the nature of a party than a meeting. In #14 Mike had written: *"The cabins are essentially 2, 2-bedroom dives, but there is plenty of room. Even though the owner knows we'll be having a meeting, she doesn't expect 35 people to sleep in them. Beverages will have to be purchased in the U.S. and no club wine will be available. The cottages do have refrigerators, however, so beverages can be cooled. Slides and tales of the recent Westercon will be in abundance."*

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - WEDNESDAY, JULY 31ST, 1974:

On this date, wherever held, the final, approved version of the constitution to be submitted to the government in Victoria was signed by the complete executive: President Fran Skene, Vice-President Gary Walker, Secretary Rick Mikkelson, Treasurer Al Betz, Information Officer Mike Bailey, and as witness: Diana Keswick.

AUGUST 1974:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #15 - AUGUST 1974:

Last issue was all-white paper, here Mike Bailey with help from Gary Walker and Rick Mikkelson puts out a two-sheet of buff and tan paper.

Mike announces a contest: *"To go hand in hand with our proposed book discounts, we require membership cards, and not surprisingly, a design for them. Consequently we are herewith announcing a contest for such a design. The prize will be a two hour cassette of SF radio shows donated by Al Betz..."*

And on Constitutional matters: *"We are in the process of becoming registered under the societies act in Victoria. Advantages of doing this include a legal constitution, power to obtain liquor licenses, and hold raffles..."*

And assorted news items such as the fact that Michael Coney had sold HELLO SUMMER, GOODBYE to DAW Books. Mike Bailey adds: *"Incidentally, LOCUS reports that Wollheim (of DAW) has withdrawn his name from the Hugo Award Nomination for best editor. He was editor of ACE for years before starting his own company and he surely has done a good job over the years (bringing the first Delany to print, for example). I guess he's just modest."*

Al Betz contributes part II of SCIENCE FICTION ON RADIO: *"South Africa still does not have television and not surprisingly, radio drama has continued. In 1968, a series appeared which was devoted entirely to SF, and which was titled, appropriately enough, SF-68. The total number of programs in this series is not known, but 16 are currently available on tape..."* Al then lists them, including "WANTED IN SURGERY" by Harlan Ellison, and goes on to list various BBC, CBC and American radio shows, of which the most interesting are probably two LUX RADIO THEATRE presentations, "WAR OF THE WORLDS" with Dana Andrews (1955), and "THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL" with Michael Rennie (1954).

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, AUGUST 24TH, 1974:

At the home of Michael and Susan Walsh. About 25-30 people attended, including Claire Toynbee Hogg (One of two founders of UBC SFFEN, the parent organization to BCSFA) who, though living in Japan, visits North America once a year as a kind of sabbatical. Mike Bailey expressed the hope she would contribute an article on Japanese SF. Diana Keswick announced she would be moving soon to Osoyoos, B.C.

At the meeting copies of the club constitution were handed out (and subsequently mailed to members not present).

SEPTEMBER 1974 :

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #16 - SEPTEMBER 1974:

"We had a reporter (Vera Johnson) at the Worldcon in Washington D.C. and right after the banquet she telephoned Fran Skene with the results so we would be able to scoop Locus with the announcement....Meanwhile, I moved all my possessions on the Labour Day weekend and was thoroughly exhausted. My telephone was also disconnected. Consequently it wasn't until the September 7 weekend I found the time and energy to produce this newsletter. But Dan Say had already produced his with the Hugo Awards announced in it. Sorry about that."

Mike then goes on to list the awards:

BEST NOVEL: "Rendevous With Rama" by Arthur C. Clarke.

BEST NOVELLA: "The Girl Who Plugged In" by James Tiptree Jr.
BEST NOVELET: "Deathbird" by Harlan Ellison.
BEST SHORT STORY: "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" by Ursula K. LeGuin
BEST EDITOR: Ben Bova (Analog)
BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: "Sleeper" by Woody Allan.
BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Kelly Freas.
JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD (BEST NEW AUTHOR) A tie: Spider Robinson and Lisa Tuttle.
BEST FANZINE: A tie: "Agol" (Andy Porter) & "The Alien Critic" (Geis).
BEST FAN WRITER: Susan Wood (Glickson).
BEST FAN ARTIST: Tim Kirk.
SPECIAL AWARD: Chesley Bonestall (Illustrator).
GANDOLF AWARD (FOR FANTASY): J.R.R. Tolkein (posthumously).

The remainder of the issue is largely taken up by a lengthy review of "WATERSHIP DOWN" (the bunny epic) by Fran Skene. She liked it, but: *"And here we have my one reservation....released from the jail-like conditions of Woundwort's warren are a dozen female rabbits plus one male who had been attacked and seriously injured from attempting to run away a previous time. This rabbit is depicted as being at death's door yet he is promptly assigned to look after the dozen healthy females during the escape. And it turns out to be necessary, as the females tend to freeze in fear, run in the wrong direction.....the message that males can transcend biology, but females are bound by it, is of course the refrain of male chauvinists everywhere..."* But apart from the male chauvinism, Fran found the book "an enriching experience."

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST, 1974:

Took place at the home of Fran Skene. About 25 people were present. The highlight of the evening was a panel moderated by Chuck Davis titled: "RELIGION AND SCIENCE FICTION." The panelists were Michael G. Coney, John Park, Susan Walsh and Ed Hutchings. All present judged the panel most successful and worth repeating. "How about SCIENCE FICTION AND DEATH?" suggested Fran.

It is probable that one of the topics of conversation was the planning of V-Con IV, and volunteers for ConCom may have come forward at this meeting.

OCTOBER 1974:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #17 - OCTOBER 1974:

"All unsigned verbiage is by the editor."

Mike Bailey announced the Fourth Vancouver Science Fiction Convention to be held February 21-23 1975 *"at a yet unnamed hotel. Neither can the Guest of Honour be announced yet. So what's news? The convention membership rates are \$4.00 till December 1, \$5.00 until February 1, and \$7.00*

thereafter. I was surprised at the rates myself. I suggested \$4.00 & \$6.00 to the committee, but they wanted more, so we compromised by having three rates."

Mike Bailey would be Chair, Vicki Bushell Treasurer, Ed Beauregard Programming, and Al Betz Recording. Ken Wong (his first mention in BCSFAzine) would run Hucksters. A complete list will be presented in my account of the convention.

Then comes news of a snag hit by the Constitution committee: *"As most members know, Victoria rejected our initial attempt to register the BCSFA under the societies act. We weren't allowed to have the name 'BCSFA.' Further inquiry led to confirmation that it is the words 'British Columbia' which they are objecting to; however the position of the words in our name is most important. It was intimated during a telephone conversation that "Science Fiction Association of British Columbia" would be acceptable. The reasons why the order is important are unclear, except that this reflects policy of 'higher ups.'"* It may be that the government felt that the use of BCSFA implied we were a Government organization, whereas SFABC did not.

"Consequently, we have chosen as alternative names -- and we're still open to suggestions -- Western Canada Science Fantasy Association (WCSFA), Vancouver Science Fiction Association (VSFA), and Lower Squamish Science Fiction Association (LSSFA). Of course, we must also seriously consider SFABC."

"Concurrent with the name problem, Gary Walker has uncovered some problems with our proposed constitution. For example, it doesn't explicitly state when or how a member ceases to be a member. Hence, every member will receive an addenda to the constitutions which were handed out previously. (This may seem ridiculously formal, but these are the requirements of the Societies Act.)"

Then assorted news items, including the fact that IF MAGAZINE would be ceasing publication with the December 1974 issue: *"With Jim Baen as editor I was just beginning to upgrade my opinion of the magazine. In recent issues, they even have reprinted comments from Daniel Say's fanzine ENTROPY NEGATIVE. (Dan, incidentally, had an entire article reprinted in Richard Geis' THE ALIEN CRITIC.) GALAXY will maintain its monthly schedule, reduced to 160 pages. Can AMAZING and FANTASTIC be far behind?"*

Following a listing of new fiction at the Public Library provided by Fran Skene, Al Betz contributes part 3 of SCIENCE FICTION ON RADIO, a complete list of all the programs in 'DIMENSION X,' an NBC SF radio series which ran from April 8, 1950 to September 29, 1951. The very first show, interestingly enough, was based on a short story by Graham Doar, called 'THE OUTER LIMIT.' Did the creators of the 60's TV series 'THE OUTER LIMITS' ever hear this?

On the third and final sheet are two forest-gnome-type portraits by Jim Maloan, and a proposed membership card illustration by Vicki Sutherland depicting a typical atom's pattern of orbiting electrons with BCSFA in the centre and the words of our name spelled out along the orbital paths.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19TH, 1974:

Held at John Park's house. The promised launching of the first FTL pumpkin (hmm, sounds like an early MR. SCIENCE experiment?) was cancelled due to technical difficulties. This being the Club's Halloween party, some of the 25 or so people attending wore costumes. Mike Bailey gave an off-the-record report on V-Con IV planning. *"Some Monty Python records were played, and a typewriter set up -- a la NAKED CAME THE STRANGER. The typewriter brought about several plotting duels: someone would type a beginning, then someone else would twist the nascent plot into something else -- usually so horrible as to be indescribable."* This had also been done at the October party in 1973, and in 1975 would become a regular tradition.

NOVEMBER 1974:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #18 - November 1974:

Apart from the usual news concerning meetings, this issue contains a letter from Michael Coney critiquing Fran Skene's review of 'WATERSHIP DOWN' which had appeared in #16. *"Now, I'm very interested to see whether the BCSFA is an equal opportunity employer.... At no time during the flight do the females freeze in fear or run in the wrong direction.....a contrast was intended between free, undisciplined rabbits (who tend to have too many leaders) and rabbits kept under repressive conditions (who tend to look to others for leadership.) The question of male or female is incidental..... Why should anyone want to discover offensive sexism in a book about rabbits?"*

There is a list provided by Fran Skene of new editions in SF at the V.P.L. including yet two more anthologies by Roger Elwood, and part 4 of Al Betz's SCIENCE FICTION ON RADIO in which he lists the broadcasts of the series 'X MINUS ONE' *"the longest running series of radio programs devoted entirely to SF"* which ran from April 22, 1955 to January 8, 1958. Al's list goes up to Sept 56, to be completed in issue #19.

Mike Bailey announced *"V-Con IV lives! The fourth Vancouver SF convention will occur on February 21-23, 1975 at the Sheraton Landmark Hotel in downtown Vancouver (1400 Robson).... The Sheraton-Landmark is 42 stories; ice and soft-drink machines are on every floor; every room has a balcony -- and colour TV; and a revolving restaurant crowns the tower....As an experiment, we decided to have a buffet dinner instead of a more formal banquet. The cost (guaranteed) including gratuity is \$9.75. Swallow that gorge. I know it's almost \$3.00 more than last year's cost, but have you checked your local restaurant recently?....The Guest of Honour is Robert Silberberg, AKA "Silverbob." The programming will include a costume ball -- with music and dancing -- a freaky affair.... Films are being sought. We already have a commitment for "BAMBI MEETS GODZILLA."....The dance company, Synergy, (Linda Rubin) in conjunction with Allen Dickeson, is working on costumes for a special "abbreviated" presentation...I almost forgot: Brent Maclean promised to give an Elron presentation if I were Con Chairman. I hope you didn't "almost" forget, Brent..."*

And the issue concluded with a fictitious interview "I AM NOT ASHAMED" with SF writer Michael S. Looney by "F", which includes the following:

"F: Hello, Mike, you are looking happy.

"M: Yes, I got some good news today! The famous teenage critic, Jim Baloney, has called me 'over-rated'. Now I'm in the same class as the well-loved author Cordwainer Bird!"

"F: That's nice to hear. Tell me, how is your writing going?"

"M: Not too well. It took me an entire month to write my last book."

"F: A month?"

"M: Writing during weekends, that is, and the last weekend was devoted to polishing the manuscript. I guess I'm just a perfectionist."

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH, 1974:

Held at the house of Chuck and Edna Davis. About 25 people attended. Al Betz started the program by playing a radio version of Isaac Asimov's "NIGHTFALL" (probably from X MINUS ONE, the 7th December, 1955 show) which must have seemed very dated as most people found it hilarious. Then Mike Bailey, in a hopeless effort to delay the panel, showed slides of past conventions. Next followed a panel: "PORNOGRAPHY AND SCIENCE FICTION" with panelists Michael Walsh, Ed Hutchings and Mike Bailey. *"It had moments"* according to Mike. People were encouraged to purchase V-Con IV memberships at the meeting.

DECEMBER 1974:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #19 - DECEMBER 1974:

Reporting on V-Con IV, Mike Bailey writes: *"As of December 1, V-Con IV had 50+ members and Nick Grimshawe had prepared the first progress report (to be sent to convention members). Now that a Guest of Honour and a hotel have been secure, the committee is turning most of its energies to programming...."*

Amid NEWS FROM OTHER SOURCES: *"Richard E. Geis, winner of a Hugo for his fanzine THE ALIEN CRITIC, has decided to publish a new personalzine, RICHARD A. GEIS. This is a clever move, because it will increase his chances for another Hugo.... LOCUS reports that one of Brent Maclean's favourite authors, Otto Binder, died recently....The most recent LOCUS carries a full page ad for 'THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE' by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle. It contains the quote: "Possibly the finest science fiction novel I have ever read," Robert A. Heinlein. This 570 page novel is possibly the only competition Ursula K. LeGuin will face this year..."*

Treasurer Al Betz submitted a report stating the club accounts stood at \$417.01 (Savings) and \$41.20 (chequing).

And Fran Skene reacted to Michael Coney's critique of her critique of 'WATERSHIP DOWN': *"I would like to respond to Mike....missed what I thought was obvious: that since this was a work of fiction (imagine the confusion of a library patron who is given 'WATERSHIP DOWN' in response to a request for 'a book about rabbits') the story must come first, with the novelist incorporating or ignoring 'facts' as he thinks best in the course of getting the story told..... Do real rabbits: have a language, legends, a God? Do they: play tricks, make plans, mount rescue missions for mice and seagulls? Moreover, at least two facts about real rabbits are not given: 1) their sense of smell is an important factor in their survival, and 2) their own excreta is used extensively as markers.... Could anyone seriously claim that a novelist's personal prejudices won't come through just because his main characters are rabbits?.... "Why should anyone want to discover offensive sexism in any book?" May I point out that this is rather curious, coming as it does from the person who so publically objected to the Nebula winner by Russ 'WHEN IT CHANGED', on precisely these grounds -- of offensive sexism!"* Thus the traditional 'splitting of Hares' so common in zine writing is well represented in the BCSFA Newsletter....

John Park contributes a review of 'TO DIE IN ITALBAR' by Roger Zelazny: *"I have been disappointed by almost everything I've read by Roger Zelazny in the last five years. I'm sorry to say his recent novel is no exception....The rich, often ostentatious verbal brilliance of the early Zelazny has been replaced here by a language terse, efficient, and rather flat..... 'TO DIE IN ITALBAR' is not a bad novel - it moves too briskly with too many good ideas and momentary images for that -- but it is an average novel, overall a forgettable novel; and from the author of 'A ROSE FOR ECCLESIASTES' and 'THE DREAM MASTER', that is a disappointment."*

Jim Maloan contributes, A LA God reaching out to Adam, a beautifully drawn pen & ink sketch of the hand of an alien reaching out to a human hand. And last but not least, Al Betz completes his listing of the 'X MINUS ONE' radio shows in part 5 of his series 'SCIENCE FICTION ON RADIO.' He also lists 10 SF dramas produced by the CBC Radio Workshop 'THE THEATRE OF THE MIND' between January 1956 and July 1957.

BCSFA DINNER - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH, 1974:

Thus begins the annual club tradition of holding a Christmas dinner prior to the December meeting. In this case it was held at the Kingsland restaurant at 987 Granville in Vancouver. Turn-out was good, some 30-35 people attending, and the (Chinese) food was good, but the service was poor. In Mike Bailey's words: *"atrocious, attritional, and lacking -- if not worse."* Not all of the dishes ordered were served, for example. Desperate BCSFAns were driven to consoling themselves with additional drinks. As Mike put it: *"When reading the following sketchy account of the meeting itself, you'll have to consider that your reporter absorbed several whiskey sours while awaiting his food."*

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH, 1974:

"Let's see -- I remember Michael Walsh commenting on my driving seconds after I pulled away from the curb. I remember parking near the Walsh's 'near' the curb, entering the house and immediately uncapping a beer..." It seems BCSFAns arrived at the home of Michael and Susan Walsh in a mellow mood. Probably a good time was had by all, particularly during the panel, titled 'HUMOUR IN

SCIENCE FICTION,' which, moderated by Mike Bailey, included Fran Skene, Brent Maclean and Ed Beauregard. It may possibly have been recorded by Al Betz on audio cassette.

BCSFA PARTY - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31ST, 1974:

An open house was held by Fran Scene for BCSFAns and others at her home to celebrate the new year.

TO SUM UP:

There was cause to celebrate. A 'reborn' BCSFA had weathered a storm or two and settled into a routine of monthly activity. The 'old guard' from UBC SFFEN days who were responsible for the rebirth of BCSFA were now sharing 'the reins of power' with 'new blood.' BCSFA was expanding, growing. More on this in Volume II, covering the years 1975-1979.

JANUARY 1975

BCSFA NEWSLETTER # 20 - JANUARY 1975:

This issue contained a ballot presenting the members with alternate names for the club that would be acceptable to the Provincial Government for registration. The choices were:

- West Coast Science Fiction Association (WCSFA).
- Western Canada Science Fiction Association (WCSFA).
- Western Science Fiction Association of British Columbia (WSFBC).

(Hmmm. Ultimately that would have resulted in 'WSFBCzine'. Hmmm.)

Editor Mike Bailey reminded BCSFAns that the club was bidding for the 1977 Westercon. He described Westercon as the oldest convention in the region and added: "*Perhaps Star Trek conventions held on the west coast are larger, but Star Trek hasn't been around for thirty years and isn't likely to.*" ...Oops... Voting for the 77 convention site would take place in July at Westercon 28 in Oakland, California (GoH: David Gerald), and he urged as many members as possible to attend.

Mike also casually mentions that at the December executive meeting (which may have been separate from the December 14th general meeting) it was "*decided to bid for the 1978 Worldcon to be held in Vancouver. Hotel reservations have been made and the Convention Bureau notified.*" Great Ghod! Talk about ambition! He suggested everyone plan on attending the 1976 Worldcon in Kansas City, Missouri (GoH: Robert Heinlein!) to vote on the matter.

Fran Skene contributes reviews of HOUSE OF ZEOR by Jacqueline Lichtenberg and PARAMIND by Jim Weller: "*As solidly entertaining a Science Fiction novel as HOUSE OF ZEOR could only have*

been written by a longtime fan. I doubt that Jim Weller, author of PARAMIND, is in that category, or for that matter he is a Science Fiction writer, really. I have the strong impression that he simply had some things to say and it just happened the result was an SF novel." Fran also lists the latest SF acquisitions at the Vancouver Library.

Al Betz continues his SCIENCE FICTION ON RADIO series with a listing of isolated SF shows from series not normally SF, for example: THE HEAVY DEATH from the series MURDER AT MIDNIGHT. Al also lists shows from EXPLORING TOMORROW, an SF series spanning 1957-58 "*produced, narrated and occasionally written by John W. Campbell*", the most influential Editor in the genre, Editor of ASTOUNDING STORIES (retitled ANALOG in 1960) from 1937 to 1971, and author of WHO GOES THERE?, the short story that THE THING was based on (both film versions). You didn't know he did radio? You do now!

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, JANUARY 18TH, 1975:

Held at Fran Skene's house. Because recent meetings had been heavily programmed, it was decided that this would be a purely social event, with an emphasis on getting to know new members. The highlight of the evening was the writing of a group story (which was supposed to be published in the February BCSFAzine, but did not, in fact, get published. Editor Mike Bailey pleaded he was overwhelmed by work).

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - MONDAY, JANUARY 27TH, 1975:

This (or the executive meeting in December) appears to begin an experiment in which Executive meetings are held separately from general meetings. All the executive were present at Rick Mikkelson's apartment, plus Ed Beauregard and David George.

Mike Bailey reported that V-Con IV had 140 members to date, and that a certain Mr. (*Censored!*) would be in town and would probably attend.

Only 5 votes had come in by deadline, but as all were for 'Western Canada SF Association', Al Betz moved that BCSFA be changed to WCSFA and a ballot be provided in the next BCSFAzine.

Mike Bailey suggested that we could save time and trouble by simply declaring WCSFA as the new name of the club and wait to see if anyone even bothered to protest. David George said this would be ultra vires and could lead to the recall of the executive. In any case, though the constitution was not legally registered -- yet -- those who signed it considered themselves bound by it. Hence procedures would be followed.

Further, "*David George explained his reasons for opposing a Worldcon bid by Vancouver in 1978: lack of people experienced in working on a worldcon committee, and Vancouver not successfully holding a Westercon first. Rick Mikkelson moved we rescind the motion to bid on Worldcon in 1978; Gary Walker seconded, passed.*"

FEBRUARY 1975

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #21 - February 1975:

This issue provided a ballot for the membership to approve the proposal to change the name of the club from 'British Columbia Science Fiction Association' to 'Western Canada Science Fiction Association' which, it was understood, would meet the requirements of the Provincial Secretary's Office. It was explained that *"Our constitution states that we are governed by the provisions of the Societies Act, whether we are registered or not. The members of the Executive Committee have all signed our constitution and agree that we are bound to abide by it..... The Societies Act states that the only acceptable method for an organization to change its name is by a vote on an extraordinary resolution.... Passage of an extraordinary resolution requires a 2/3 affirmative vote."* This line of reasoning would later have important consequences.....

Mike Bailey pushes the upcoming V-Con, noting that those who didn't want to pay for their memberships could be 'paid' by becoming security guards. An interesting policy.

Fran Skene contributes another list of new SF books at the V.P.L., and Al Betz concludes his SCIENCE FICTION ON RADIO series with yet more lists of drama titles, including a number of SPACE PATROL and TOM CORBETT, SPACE CADET episodes. Of the latter, Al remarked *"Tom Corbett was the only successful TV series to then become a successful radio series."*

Under the heading LAST MINUTE ITEMS, Mike Bailey notes that *"Susan Wood has accepted a teaching job at UBC effective July 1st."*

V-CON IV - FEBRUARY 21-23, 1975:

I did not attend this convention. As a result the following account has been cobbled together from many sources.

The Convention Executive included the following:

CHAIR - Mike Bailey.
TREASURER - Vicki Bushell.
PROGRAMMING - Ed Beauregard.
PUBLICATIONS - Nick Grimshawe.
REGISTRAR - Gary Walker.
PUBLICITY/ART - Allan Dickeson.
HUCKSTERS - Ken Wong.
FILMS - Ed Hutchings.
RECORDINGS - Al Betz.

Months later, in the convention's final report, Mike Bailey made the following comments: *"The subsequent SF activities of ex-conCom members might make an interesting in-house sociological study*

someday.... Mike Bailey vowed to himself never to become involved in the planning and execution of another SF convention. Vicki Bushell's club activities have slowly declined. Ed Beaugard became BCSFA President and remains actively interested in conventions. Gary Walker has slowly dropped out of SF activities. Ed Hutchings and Al Betz seemingly have been unaffected by the convention. Ken Wong now may be more interested in club activities than previously. Nick Grimshawe has not appeared at a club meeting since V-Con IV and his membership has lapsed. Allan Dickeson has stated that he doesn't wish to be associated with any future SF conventions, feeling that the rewards (egoboo and trauma) do not justify the work. So it goes."

The poster for the convention (by artist Carl Chaplin) depicts a gnome-like author with pen nibs for shoes, book in hand, sitting in a flying chair. A nearby planet appears to be spitting bullets at him (or spaceships?). Anyway, kind of neat.

Carl Chaplin also did the cover art for the program book, a pen and ink depiction of buildings in Vancouver's West End with several unusual touches; like a monorail, a Saturn Five about to lift off, and a smouldering volcano among the North Shore mountains in the background. The Peacock, frog, ferns, mushrooms and swamp cabbage added nicely to the scene as well.

The program book was twenty pages long and 8 & 1/2" by 11" in size. Among other items it featured a three page glossary of fandom by Ed Beaugard, listing such terms as BNF, CRIFANAC, GAFIA, etc.

The convention took place at the Sheraton Landmark Hotel (featured prominently in the Program book cover) on Robson Street in the West End, a district which lies between Downtown Vancouver and Stanley Park, and between English Bay and Coal Harbour; a perfect setting to impress out-of-towners.

Guest of Honour was Robert Silverberg. Writer Frank Herbert (V-Con III guest and author of 'DUNE') provided this introductory essay in the program book, titled "A Man Of Many Talents": *Are you ever fortunate to have a man of Robert Silverberg's talents as your guest of honour! The word prolific was invented to take care in describing his out-put. As you may realize now and certainly will realize by the end of your convention, he is known far beyond the field of Science Fiction. He has published more than 450 books, almost 1,500 magazine pieces -- and Sf represents less than 20% of that output. But thank God he wrote/writes SF, a field in which he is an accomplished master. He deals better than most with the complex interaction between science/technology and humans.*

It was on Fred Pohl's advice that I read 'DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH', which has to be the definitive book on alien-human interaction. I believe the first Silverberg I ever read was 'MAN IN THE MAZE', the signal that there was an artist--storyteller in our midst. I particularly enjoyed 'HAWKSBILL STATION' and 'THE SECOND TRIP'.

Behind that goateed face with its hint of Mephistopheles there is an intellect as sharp and curious and imaginative as any in letters today. What you should know about Silverberg to appreciate his many facets is that he is also a well-respected author in history and politics and that he is able to make these subjects highly readable and enjoyable to both young readers and adults. He is that rare fellow, a scholar who can take a difficult subject and hold you spellbound as he unfolds the fabric of his exposition. Within easy reach in my bookcase right now is a book called 'HOME OF THE RED MAN'.

The author is Robert Silverberg. Truth to tell, he once spent about ten years hiding out from Science Fiction, writing all sorts of interesting works -- fiction and nonfiction -- exploring many fields. Did you know he is well-respected as a writer in the field of archaeology? Ask him about Roman Britain or the ruins of Persepolis. Then prepare to be spellbound.

Silverberg is a Columbia University graduate (1956) which makes him comparatively young in the writing field. If he continues to be as prolific across the next twenty years as he has been in the preceding twenty, he may well be the author who finally breaks the back of academia. they'll never be able to completely cross-reference, analyze and "study in depth" all his works down to that final exclamation point. If we have nothing else to thank him for, that would be enough -- but we can also delight in the fact that whatever he does, he does it with artistry and sensitivity.

Prepare yourselves for a memorable experience with Robert Silverberg as your guest.

Herbert must have been prescient, for it turned out that Silverberg was once again thinking about "hiding out from Science Fiction." As far back as December 18th, 1974, he had written to the ConCom: "I warn you that it's going to be rather more somber than the job I did at Westercon; I've been having some heavy thoughts about the future of Science Fiction and in particular the future of me as a Science Fiction writer..." On January 27th, 1975, he added: "Your guess is correct: I'm discouraged by the state of SF and by recent events in my own career, and I'm going to quit writing it on the grounds that the sort of thing I write is not really what the bulk of readers want to read. I thought I'd explain the reasons for the dismantling of my career at Vancouver. It does make a somber talk, I know, but it might be instructive..."

The ConCom was upset with his proposed keynote speech. As Mike Bailey later wrote in BCSFAzine #22 "The Committee knew in advance what Bob Silverberg was going to say and it presented a scheduling problem. When a major genre author quits writing at a convention at which he is being honoured, it is more than ironic. Do you clap when he says he is unappreciated? We scheduled him for Sunday and he handled himself well: we knew he would."

Silverberg got a surprise of his own when he stepped off the plane at the Vancouver airport. It had been snowing, and though the ground cover had melted, the airport snowploughs had left enormous banks of snow lining the runways. Silverberg was stunned, as he had flown in direct from California and was wearing a light shirt, shorts and sandals. So, a "chilly reception." But hey, this is Canada after all, snow all year round, commuting by dogsled, igloos for office buildings....

As for the convention, Silverberg is said to have remarked later in a Locus interview that "no one seemed to know him", but, according to Stan G. Hyde, fans shied away because he tended to give short, non-committal answers to questions and it took a real effort to engage him in conversation. Still, he must have had a good time, because he came back next year for V-Con V as an attending pro rather than a guest.

FRIDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 1975:

The action began at 2:00 pm with a showing of videos in the Broughton room. At 3:00 pm 16mm films began in room 102 of 'the annex' (very inconveniently located. Guests had to leave the hotel, walk

past the parking lot entrance and go back in up one flight of stairs). This convention marked the first time continuous showings of films had been arranged at V-Con, at least during the day. The films proved embarrassingly successful. As Ed Beauregard later wrote: *"The second most common complaint was that the film room was too small. There were two reasons for that. Firstly, it was the only room available for that purpose, and secondly, we just did not expect the balance that occurred in film-lecture attendance. Most committee members, myself included, felt that the lectures were the backbone of the convention. I was, and in fact, still am, disappointed in the meagre attendance given the lectures. At the same time, we felt the films would serve as a sort of sideshow for people with nothing better to do. Were we ever wrong! The films, in fact, turned out to be the most highly rated feature of the convention."*(in response to a questionnaire given to attendees.)

The program book states that videotape films would be broadcast internally on the hotel's closed circuit TV throughout the convention, but since the Friday News sheet only lists videos being shown in the Broughton room, I conclude the deal for using the hotel system fell through at the last minute. Further evidence for this is Ed Beauregard's comment that the Broughton room (located next to the huckster/art show room) was originally supposed to have been a combined hospitality/rest area, but wound up being selected for video display *"because there was just no other place to set up the equipment."*

As a result, the convention had NO hospitality room. Well, almost no hospitality room. Because of the con, there was no official February club meeting, so BCSFA rented a suite on the 40th floor to serve as an informal gathering place for BCSFA members and their guests, or for that matter anyone who dropped by (the idea being to sign up more members), but apparently not many attendees found their way up there. One who did was William Gibson, attending his first V-Con ever. Evidently he had a very good time, to judge by the letter he wrote Mike Bailey three months later: *"You probably remember me as the drunken ex-fan editor who went on and on in 4002 (the hospitality suite) about the fanzines he had edited as a boy and would doubtless edit again at the first opportunity, etc... Needless to say, in the cold post-con light, I developed a rapid case of cold publisher's feet. I'm still excited at having rediscovered fandom, though, and fan-writing, rather than fan-publishing, seems the most likely outlet for those mysterious fannish energies frustrated by ten year's fagination.... Specifically, I'm working on a review of Stanislaw Lem's THE INVESTIGATION...."*

At 5:00 pm came the CONVOCATION, with the official introduction of distinguished and/or notorious attendees. Frank Denton (well-known Seattle fan) was master of ceremonies, and spoke for 15 minutes.

At some point in the convention Stan G. Hyde found himself standing in line beside Dr. William Broxon, husband of author "Bubbles" (Mildred) Broxon. Dr. Broxon (now deceased) was a large man, a very large man, and Stan couldn't help noticing that, aside from the leather mask with enormous antlers Broxon wore and the full-sized spear he carried, there was a live six foot Boa Constrictor draped across his shoulders. Broxon saw that Stan was staring at him (at the snake actually).

Quickly, Stan blurted out the first thing that came to mind. "Uh, that's a nice snake you have there."

Dr. Broxon glared back. "It's a MALE snake."

"Oh, really?" replied Stan nervously. "I couldn't tell."

"That's because you're not a FEMALE snake!" declared Dr. Broxon, lowering his antlers in what Stan construed as a threatening manner.

The snake's name, incidentally, was 'Sigmund'.

Possibly this meeting occurred while they were waiting to enter the ballroom for the costume ball, the IMPERIAL COSTUME BALL, where *"due to atmospheric conditions, masks are mandatory."* The ball was supposed to begin at 8:00 but was delayed half an hour, in part because Allan Dickeson, the ball's organizer, was busy elsewhere trying to calm an LSD-excited con member, and in part because the hotel PA system was found to be inadequate and a jury-rig system had to be patched together. The 'Free Air Ensemble' and 'Ross Barrett & Friends' were able to perform, but 'The Synergy Dancers' were asked not to perform because of an *"inadequate technical environment"* or as another source put it, because of *"bad vibes."*

Said "bad vibes" were the result of Allan Dickeson's conception of the ball. He wanted a *"far-out affair by having a real ball"*, i.e. live music and dancing. This was not what some fans were anticipating. As the Saturday News sheet put it the next day: *"If you observed or heard the hassle in the ballroom last night and don't wish to know what happened, stop reading.... At SF conventions in the U.S. (traditionally), masquerade balls are more or less amateur nights. Fans dress in an SF-or-fantasy-oriented costume, are presented, and perform in a short skit. Realizing that 80% or more of the V-Con membership are unaware of such a tradition, the committee organized (just) a dance with live music. Unfortunately several longtime fans expected a presentation and became noisy in their disappointment."*

Leading the charge was the antlered Dr. William Broxon, who at one point was seen prodding Mike Bailey across the floor with his rubber-tipped spear shouting *"I wish it were real!"* But when he began to shake Sigmund at Mike, Sheraton management moved in and demanded he divest himself of his snake. Michael Walsh, Province movie critic, rushed to Sigmund's rescue. He explained to management that the spear-carrying, snake-brandishing man in the antlered leather mask was in fact a renowned medical practitioner, whereupon hotel management backed down, permitting Sigmund to remain, providing Dr. Broxon *"kept it upon his person at all times."* In the interests of peace, anyone who wanted to make a presentation of any kind was now requested to do so.

Mike Bailey later described the costume ball as a fiasco, but on the positive side it was certainly memorable. Ed Beauregard commented: *"The organization of the costume ball was the principal 'organizational' complaint received and, unfortunately, very justified complaints they were. One can cite the obvious problems we encountered -- inadequate and hastily assembled sound systems; misunderstandings between those in costume and those conducting the affair; but all these do not disguise the fact that we overreached our skills and experience...."*

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 us." "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 1993 he'd won 15 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 empathatic 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.

SUNDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY, 1975:

The day began at 9:45 am with a showing of 'TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL' in the 16mm film room.

At 11:00 am Mike Bailey moderated a panel on THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF FANZINE EDITING with panelists Susan Wood, Elinor Busby and Frank Denton.

From Noon to 1:00 pm various NASA film shorts were shown.

Then at 1:00 pm Guest of Honour Robert Silverberg delivered his keynote address. Province Reporter Michael Walsh described the talk this way the following Monday: *Discouraged, disillusioned and visibly weary of it all, one of Science Fiction's most prolific and respected writers has decided to quit.*

"It's too confusing for me to work for a largely indifferent audience and for largely contemptuous publishers," Robert Silverberg told a hushed crowd of SF fans Sunday. "I'm going to step out... to give myself a prolonged sabbatical."

The Guest of Honour at V-Con IV, the fourth Vancouver SF convention, Silverberg, 40, made his surprise announcement to the nearly 200 convention members who attended his keynote address in the ballroom of the Sheraton Landmark Hotel. "These are nervous times," he said, "and I am not optimistic."

A past President of the SF Writers of America, Silverberg's departure from the scene is expected to send shock waves through the fan press and cause considerable controversy among his fellow writers. In

what effectively became his farewell address, he said that a decade of dedicated effort has failed to turn SF into a respectable literature. The great experiment, he implied, is now at an end.

"The vibrations out of the New York publishing industry are very ominous," he said. Hard times, aggravated by shortages of paper and a shortage of money, are now with us. "No one's taking any chances."

In the case of his own chosen field, Silverberg said, publishers "are returning to the tried and true juvenile adventure fiction that SF once was." As a result he had come to the conclusion that "the glorious revolution of the 1960's -- that outpouring of talent and energy known as the New Wave -- has been very quickly undone."

Silverberg made these remarks to convention members in even, unexaggerated tones, without gesture or a prepared text. He described a situation in which many writers were striving to turn their craft into an art while publishers -- and a discouraging majority of readers -- continued to regard their work as "a category of crude, commercial fiction."

Hoping these conditions would change, he had attempted to "travel the whole route. Professionally, creatively, it has been folly," he said.

"I've never felt less sure of my value as a Science Fiction writer," he admitted. Now, "I'm tired of being pushed around between art and commerce."

His conclusion: "I choose silence."

Well, hmmm. Bummer.

Local fan folklore has it that V-Con IV was THE convention where Silverberg FIRST announced he'd quit writing, and Michael Walsh's article and the quotes from Silverberg's own letters seem to bear this out. On the other hand, Stan G. Hyde believes Silverberg first declared his intentions at Worldcon in 1974 (DisCon II in Washington, D.C.) and then repeated his declaration at 2 or 3 other conventions PRIOR to V-Con IV. Susan Wood alone heard Silverberg give essentially the same speech on at least three occasions.... Whatever the truth of the matter, obviously it was on his mind for quite some time. Not to worry, his self-imposed exile didn't last. 'LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE' was published in 1980.

Immediately after Silverberg's dignified but downbeat speech, at 1:30 pm, panelists Mildred D. Broxon, F.M. Busby, Michael G. Coney and John Park bravely tried to discuss SCIENCE FICTION IN THE YEAR 2000. No doubt the first comment was that Robert Silverberg wouldn't be writing SF at that time.

Then Jerry Wasserman of the UBC English Department delivered a lecture titled: VAN VOGT'S 'THE WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER' -- 1984 REVISITED, which sounds suitably dark-moodish. Not a light topic.

Then, as if by competitive contrast, Mason Harris of the SFU English Department delivered a talk on SCIENCE FICTION AS THE DREAM AND NIGHTMARE OF PROGRESS, relying mostly, I believe, on the works of Philip K. Dick. Mason had originally planned to give this talk at V-Con III, but scrapped it to deliver an off-the-cuff rebuttal to a talk by Crawford Kilian.

The convention then wound down, though for those who stayed there was a special showing at the MacMillan Planetarium in Kitsilano of VORTEX, a light and sound extravaganza, beginning at 10:30 pm. Tickets had been available for congoers at the registration desk for the special rate of \$1.30.

Overall, the Convention was considered quite a success, with 600 people attending (the hotel could have accommodated 650). Total income for the con was \$4,375.00, total debits \$3,559.63, which left surplus funds to be handed over to BCSFA to the tune of \$715.37.

Mike Bailey later commented: *"When the V-Con IV committee first met, one of the basic issues was to decide whether to attempt to promote a large convention or one with a controlled smaller attendance. The committee, concluding that experience was needed in organizing a large convention, opted toward size. Consequently, gaining experience was one of the objectives of the committee.... Many attendees were expecting a professional and not an amateur convention. I don't know how to adjust for such an expectation. We are amateurs and will remain so. However, we could have used more help...."*

This was the first convention Ed Beauregard worked on the Executive. In Garth Spencer's history of the club (BBBF) Ed is quoted as saying: *"The outstanding characteristic of this committee was how inappropriately chosen the committee members were. The Treasurer could barely count, the Publications Officer was illiterate, and I was in charge of programming, though I had never attended a single convention and had little interest in the job. We somehow muddled through, and actually made a decent profit."*

Hey, any con which turns a profit is a success in my books.

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - FEBRUARY ?, 1975:

The Executive (with the exception of Gary Walker) were present, also Ed & Norma Beauregard, Vickie Bushell and David George. In the afterglow of V-Con IV profits it was moved by Mike Bailey *"that the BCSFA purchase a duplicating machine which will be available to all members who supply their own materials, to be kept at the home of the Information Officer. Seconded by Al Betz."* Little did Steve Forty know what would eventually befall him as a result of this decision!

MARCH 1975:

REGISTRATION OF THE V-CON TRADEMARK - MARCH 4TH, 1975:

On this date Mike Bailey successfully registered 'VCON' as a trademark in Ottawa under his own name, rather than the club's. It may be that, remembering all the controversy over the post-con finances after the completion of V-Con III where he'd been co-chair with David George, he decided to ensure

some leverage in the club (and in any debate over the finances of V-Con IV, its financial report not yet ready) by 'owning' the convention 'name'. Or perhaps it was a precaution to prevent it from being mis-used. In any case, ownership was eventually transferred to BCSFA on 17th September, 1977. The registration was subsequently allowed to lapse (an oversight), ultimately to be renewed under BCSFA's ownership in February of 1990.

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #22 - MARCH 1975:

Editor Mike Bailey reminds people of the upcoming May Executive election and the need for people to send in their ballots for the proposed club name change. In reference to the BCSFA membership table manned at V-Con IV, he proudly announces that 40 new memberships were taken in! Wowsers! That's amazing!

John Park contributes a lengthy book review of DHALGREN by Samuel R. Delaney. His first paragraph reads: *"I don't usually expect Sf to scare or disorient me: Lovecraft bores, Poe leaves me cold; Philip K. Dick, a more relevant example, is an exasperation because his worlds are so insubstantial to start with, that I feel no sense of dislocation when he begins to subvert reality in them. But Samuel Delany's huge novel came close to giving me nightmares."* His concluding paragraph states: *"I don't know whether DHALGREN will make new friends for SF or for Samuel Delany; I suspect it will not convert any of his enemies, but it leaves me in a state somewhere between impatience and apprehension, wondering what he can possibly write next."*

Al Betz starts a new series, SCIENCE FICTION ON TELEVISION, listing shows from TALES OF TOMORROW. He comments on how few collectors of TV programs exist. *"The main reason for this state of affairs is the very high cost of collecting anything on film. A six-hour tape of radio shows can be purchased for as little as ten dollars, but an original TV print on 16mm sound film, when available, goes for \$15 to \$25, or more, for one half/hour program."* This, of course, was before VCR's and video cassettes existed.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, MARCH 22ND, 1975:

Held at Chuck and Edna Davis' house. This was the very first BCSFA meeting missed by Mike Bailey, as he was away in Montreal. Ed Beauregard and Mike Bailey reported on the research they'd conducted into acquiring a duplicating machine. The choice had been narrowed to either a Gestetner or an A.B. Dick machine. The former being cheaper, it was moved by Al Betz that it be purchased.

Then the extraordinary resolution name change ballots were counted: 18 ayes, 11 nays. A 2/3rds membership affirmation being required (according to the strict interpretation of the club constitution), the resolution -- despite winning the majority of votes -- fails. Never say die, Fran Skene moved that the club change its name to the Greater Vancouver Science Fiction Association (GVSFA), with ballots to be distributed in the next newsletter. Had the Executive not been so literal in upholding the constitution's requirements that the club function as if it were already under the Societies Act, the whole registration problem could have been resolved at this time very simply. Oh well.

The fun part of the evening consisted of listening to a tape provided by Al Betz of an old radio version of Heinlein's THE ROADS MUST ROLL.

APRIL 1975:

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - MONDAY, APRIL 7TH, 1975:

All Executive present (except Gary Walker), also Vicki Bushell, David George & Ed Beauregard. It's announced that pending our winning the Westercon 30 bid, Damon Knight agrees to be Guest of Honour, his airfare and hotel bill to be paid by the Westercon Committee. Whereupon it was considered a good idea that a Westercon Committee be formed as soon as possible.

The other principal item of business: a contract was signed to purchase a Gestetner 360 for \$669.50, including servicing, parts and labour. V-Con IV profits made it possible.

BCSFA NEWSLETTER # 23 - APRIL 1975:

This issue was the first BCSFAzine to feature cover art, in this case a somewhat psychedelic human-headed snake drawn by Jim Maloan. President Fran Skene explains the defeat of the previous extraordinary resolution and pleads with the membership to pass the current extraordinary resolution (to change the club name to Greater Vancouver SF Association) for which ballots are enclosed. She mentions that a 2/3rds majority of the club's 80+ members is required. 80+ members? Zounds! That means the V-Con IV membership drive which pulled in 40 new members effectively DOUBLED the size of the club! Impressive!

Mike Bailey contributes a short review of THE CORRIDORS OF SODOM, written jointly by Poul Anderson and Barry Malzberg. He comments: *"I confess to having mixed feelings toward this novel. I think that this was a collaboration written in a unique manner. It's almost as if the authors never spoke or communicated with one another during the writing."*

Fran Skene provides another long list of new books at the V.P.L. and Al Betz lists the programs of the TV series THE OUTER LIMITS.

BCSFA MEETING -- SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH, 1975:

Took place at Fran Skene's house. The voting on the name change ran 22-4 in favour. Not enough. So BCSFA remains BCSFA, and unregistered.

Nominations were accepted for the upcoming May election. There being but one individual nominated for each position, all were declared elected by acclamation, to take effect after the May meeting.

The fun part of the evening consisted of a group story being composed by all those in attendance called A SERIOUS STORY. How serious? Consider the following:

"Kill the lizard men," screamed Theobald, "Stab the lizard men! Slaughter the lizard men!"

"My God, this John Theobald Park is verbose," said the lizard man.

Or:

He broke open the glass case marked 'Emergency' and withdrew the CORUSCATING NEURONIC WHIP!

Not to mention:

"Not so fast, you brazen bra'd bitch" Park screamed, leaping into the dissimulator in fast pursuit. In a moment, locked in a limbo eight parsecs west of Arcturus, biting and clawing at each other, limbs hot with massive bronze-thewed coruscating neuronc passion, they perverted the subquantal structure of space time itself and, plunging into dimensions hitherto unplumbed, they screwed the shit out of each other.

Hmm, a lot of not-so-hidden talent in BCSFAns!

MAY 1975:

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - MONDAY, MAY 5TH, 1975:

Held at Fran Skene's house. Present were Fran Skene, Mike Bailey, Gary Walker, Al Betz, David George, and Ed and Norma Beauregard.

The general state of the club being discussed, Al Betz suggested that a non-elected position of Archivist be created to ensure preservation of all association documents. It would be some time before this proposal was taken up.

David George, acting as recording secretary while Rick Mikkelson was vacationing in Africa, noted *"The meeting ended with rather frivolous debate on the subject of dinosaurs, and the notion that if they could fly, one would need to carry a steel umbrella."* This debate was inspired by the April issue of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, which contained an article on migrating dinosaurs.

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #24 - MAY 1975:

The cover consisted of a large-nippled, bare-breasted barbarous-looking Lois Lane, a bizarre concept. It was created by RBWW (who ever that is -- I don't know).

This is the last BCSFA Newsletter to be edited by Mike Bailey, its creator. He states: *"I will devote my time to loafing, my personalzine, and paying my debts."* His editorial consists of capsule descriptions of the upcoming Executive. There are minutes of meeting, a listing of the 1975 NEBULA AWARDS (Damon Knight won a special award for founding the Science Fiction Writers of America, and Robert Heinlein received one as Grand Master), and NEURONIC WHIPS - A 'STIRY', which I believe was the first group story the club did back in October of 1973 (or maybe it was the one unpublished from the January 1975 meeting?). I'll quote the opening two paragraphs:

Once upon a time -- but why do all such stories start once upon a time? -- no, there was a time when susurrations of murmurous twilight reverberated through the hallowed halls of Blackfriars Grange. Suddenly there was a flash and a sharp acrid smell as the door was blown open. In came our heroic protagonist Edward Fox the famous amateur brain surgeon and part-time werewolf: the silver radiance of the high full moon glistened on his silky-tufted ears. "Oh damn," he lisped. "Shit, I thought this was a whorehouse."

But of course it was not because the pink floor and large round windows indicated that it was the North American Azygnyent research Unit. From the top floor there showed a silver radiance which illumined his unusual costume. The previous word at the beginning of this line was illumined. So there!

BCSFA CONSTITUTION MEETING - MONDAY, 12TH MAY, 1975:

Held at Ed Beauregard's house to discuss and clarify recent amendments to the constitution.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, MAY 24TH, 1975:

Held at the home of Michael and Susan Walsh. Apparently there was a lunar eclipse, to judge from David George's comments in the June issue of BCSFAzine: *"The Total Lunar Catastrophe was observed through various spyglasses from vantage points around the castle, and the dragon did indeed seem to devour the moon. Spurred on by the coruscating neuronc whips of the castle guards, slaves moved the giant laser canon, cleverly disguised as a Gestetner machine, to the highest battlement."* I take it our new Gestetner was unveiled at the meeting. Other highlights included the showing of 16mm sound films (which ones?) and a raffle to raise money for the Westercon 30 Bid Committee (\$12.50 produced).

On the business end of things, it was announced that the Provincial Government had recently allowed to be registered a society whose name began "B.C.", but that there was still no hope for BCSFA, because the society in question was government funded, i.e. the government bends the rules for its own, but not for the likes of us.

At the close of the meeting the new BCSFA Exec were confirmed.

BCSFA EXECUTIVE FOR 1975/1976:

PRESIDENT - Ed Beauregard.

VICE-PRESIDENT - Mike Bailey.
TREASURER - Al Betz.
SECRETARY - David George.
INFORMATION OFFICER: Fran Skene.

Note that Fran Skene, BCSFA's first President, becomes BCSFAzine's second Editor, while the Zine's first Editor, Mike Bailey, becomes BCSFA's second Vice-President. Also that Al Betz, BCSFA's first Treasurer, begins a second term. Ed Beauregard (and Mike Bailey) had been very active in the ancestral UBC SFFEN, and David George, one of the driving forces behind the rebirth of BCSFA, had been co-chair of V-Con 3.

JUNE 1975:

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - MONDAY, JUNE 2ND, 1975:

At the home of Ed Beauregard. All Executive present. Al Betz reported the treasury stood at \$57.67 chequing & \$277.67 savings. A donation of \$25 to the Westercon Bid Committee was approved. A new dues structure was proposed and approved, to take effect August 25th, 1975: Voting - \$4.00, Family - \$6.00, Associate - \$2.00. In addition, Vicki Bushell was appointed OFFICIAL GREETER at general meetings to help newcomers fit in.

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #25 - JUNE 1975:

This was Fran Skene's first issue as Editor. Whereas those edited by Mike Bailey were called 'Mad Dog Publications' (as his perzines continued to be called), Fran refers to this issue as 'Pterodactyl Publications', calling future issues by the names of other prehistoric critters.

Fran points out in her editorial the need to make newcomers feel comfortable *"Now I'm hoping that we can all make BCSFA meetings more enjoyable. How about 'Have I talked to someone new tonight?' as something to ask yourself? Guests are welcome provided you don't think they will be too bored by SF topics. Also recently we have had a fair amount of business at meetings, which rather dampens party spirits. Hopefully more of this can be put in the newsletter instead, leaving the general meetings free for socializing, movies, slides, etc."* The trick of conducting business without spoiling the meeting remains the Holy Grail for Club Executive even now.

Fran also reports on progress with the Westercon Bid. The Hyatt Regency had been booked, but recent room rate increases led to the cancellation of the booking. At Mike Bailey's suggestion the facilities at UBC were surveyed. Gage was already taken, but Totem Park residence proved available and was booked. The communal bathrooms were considered a drawback, but the relatively inexpensive rates, plus the convention facilities, which Fran describes as *"the best I've ever seen"*, were considered suitable. *"Ed Hutchings, who is in charge of programming, is already thinking about some of the really interesting things that can be done in a place like this."* To this day, the advantages and disadvantages of the Totem site remain a hot topic.

Ed Hutchings reviews the infamously boring yet classic SF film SOLARIS. *"Solaris was shown privately at the Dunbar Theatre a year ago. A bunch of us saw it, talked about possible ways of reviewing it, and did nothing. Since I exhibited the biggest mouth, I guess I should be the one to write it up.... This doesn't quite come off. Those of the audience who were unused to the slow pace of the standard 'art' film were just plain bored..... In Russia the mystical artists (and also the stoniest individualists) are Ukrainian.... As a true Ukrainian mystic, Tarkovsky (the director) takes forever to get started, adding bits of mood here and portent there; and when the story eventually gets going it's always pausing for thought..... There's no reason why SOLARIS couldn't have made all its points mystical, psychological or whatever in half the time, and I guess that we have to put SOLARIS in that irritating category of mainstream art that uses SF but ignores the craft tradition (there is one) in SF. Another difficulty is that Stanislaw Lem's original novel is intellectual and introspective, but not particularly mystical. In converting the novel to a mystical film, Tarkovsky has left in heaps of dialectical beardmutterings by the crew of the station. This probably went unnoticed in Russia, where film heroes talk like that all the time, but it's jarring to a western audience and is more or less irrelevant to the movie (though not to the novel)... Even taking the slow pace into consideration, I don't think the film realizes its possibilities. I even have the impression that the director was just not quite big enough for the ideas in the film..."* I quote at length to convey an impression of Ed's inimitable style.

WESTERCON 30 BID COMMITTEE MEETINGS - JUNE 1975:

Held in preparation for Westercon 28 in Oakland come July 6th: At David George's Wednesday, June 11, at Fran Skene's Wednesday, June 18, and at Vicki Bushell's, Monday, June 23rd.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, JUNE 21ST, 1975:

Took place at Chuck and Edna Davis' house. It was discovered there were at least eight people who planned to attend Westercon 28 to help with the bid for Westercon 30.

On the fun side, according to David George, *"A long and involved story was typed in one area of the house, and the word 'coruscating' was used up, demolished, generally abused, done in, and hopefully buried for all time."* The story, titled THIS IS NOT IT!, contains the following gems:

Relic sauntered along the Denudian shore admiring the coruscating antimaterial sunset... No sooner had it cra, then green slime had thickly encrusted it, yea, even as far as the coruscating singe-pods.... a Zenzobam stone had fastened itself upon his coruscating foot... He decided to ask Coeurl, then decided to enquire of the coruscating Betz. The coruscator replied, "So, the end has begun."... The CIA (Coruscating Interterrestrial Agency)... she had turned to George and said, "Oh, look at the chorus skating!" ... Betz (the beast) lifted one tentacle.....twitching his neuronc timepiece...."Curse you, you coruscating scumbag!"....the mystery of the slimy green female foot-biting Zenbobam stone... if only he could find just one still shyly coruscating in the light of the slime... Think of it, the end of the world Cor, us? Cating.... melt down core, make thin film, attach core-film to cable, wait for wind, then use core as kite... Pointing at a group of voluptuous, undulating Latin loviess he screeched, "I'll take a score!" "Us, Kate. He means us!"... "Cor! Ass! Kate will report us..." Out there was a star twinkling. It was, oh, no, no.... a coruscating star."

Hmmm, I see what David George meant. Dave Williams led the attendees in this coruscating workshop.

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - THURSDAY, JUNE 26TH, 1975:

Held at Mike Bailey's place. All the executive were present, and Norma Beauregard. Upcoming meetings were discussed. Mike was asked to take charge of the member card file in order to update the computer mailing list (which I believe Mike maintained in an office computer where he worked). Advert rates were worked out: \$6 per 1/2 page, \$10 per full page. Mike noted that Fran had mailed copies of the June clubzine to various clubs on the westcoast to garner support for the Westercon bid and he felt it was a conflict of interest (she being zine Editor and Bid Chair). No one else agreed. Al Betz reported the club had received \$13.60 from the BidCom for use of the Club Gestetner.

JULY 1975:

AS I SEE IT #1 - JULY 8TH, 1975:

Mike Bailey put out a one page perzine scooping the BCSFA Newsletter (mailed two days later) on the news that VANCOUVER WON THE WESTERCON 30 BID! *"The vote for the site selection was a close 87-80 win over OakLacon and reflected some spirited politicking. Jerry Jacks of San Francisco, who indicated he was considering bidding, was persuaded to back Vancouver, as did the Phoenix group which is bidding next year. However the current committee put on a serious bid and made things hot."*

Mike noted: *"This one-pager is being sent to almost the entire club membership. The purpose is to give my slant to local SF happenings (read: BCSFA activities) and to divorce such content from my personalzine which will become more general."*

The one item of personal interest to me was the notice: *"Richard G. Cameron has finished and mailed a 70,000 word novel to a publisher. It's not SF, though, but instead is about people coming to Vancouver expecting a 'promised land'." Sigh. My novel "Rainshine" made it to the Editorial Board of Clark & Irwin in Toronto. They eventually rejected as being too bloody boring...er..."too monotonous in tone."* They're out of business now. They should have published my book! They'd be rich! Rich! ...Or gone out of business sooner.....

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - WEDNESDAY, JULY 9TH, 1975:

An 'emergency meeting' called by Ed Beauregard. Also present, Mike Bailey, David George, Norma Beauregard, Fran Skene, and possibly others (Al Betz?). It seems Mike had mentioned that the club constitution stipulated the Vice-President be a member of any ConCom and a signing authority, and that this had caused an uproar, hence the meeting.

"Norma Beauregard (Treasurer of Westercon 30 and not a BCSFA Executive member) objected to me being a signing officer. David George stated Westercon wasn't a V-Con and hence these

requirements weren't applicable. I pointed out that Westercon had been advertised as V-Con VI and further, the constitution made no reference to the name of the convention. Hence, his comment was irrelevant."

"Fran Skene pointed out that the successful bidding Committee brought back \$700 and no financial aid from BCSFA was needed. Consequently, the BCSFA constitution need not be considered. Westercon 30 could now return the \$25 BCSFA had contributed...."

"The meeting ended inconclusively with the decision to be made at a later date by the Westercon Committee."

Ultimately, Westercon 30 was simply a Westercon (V-Con VI following the year after), unlike Westercon 44 in 1991 which was a joint venture with V-Con 19. This kind of jurisdictional squabble (or the difficulty of maintaining clear guidelines in an evolving organizational structure) is with us to this day.

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #26 - JULY 1975:

An Archeopteryx Publication. The big news, of course, was winning the bid. BCSFAns present at Westercon 28 were Ed Hutchings, Al Betz, Rick Mikkelson, Fran Skene, Ed & Norma Beauregard, Jim & Bob Johnston, John Park and Michael G. Coney & family. Also present was Susan Wood.

Norma and Ed contribute an article titled WINNING WESTERCON 30 OR WE CAME, WE SAW, WE CONQUERED. Excerpts:

"Our bidding Committee worked very hard at winning the bid.... We spent a lot of time accosting and haranguing all manner of interesting people, most of whom were met at the parties we put on Friday & Saturday nights.... We continually manned the table at which site selection ballots were sold (although we were only required to man it half the time). The closeness of the vote (87-80) showed that this extra effort was all worthwhile."

"The opposing bid, by almost the same OakLacon committee organizing Westercon 28, began as a caretaker bid, however by the time we arrived it had become a full scale serious bid. Fortunately for Vancouver this committee seemed inclined at times to not take our bid too seriously. As a result the OakLacon people did not try as hard as they might have done."

"In fact their presentation at the Sunday morning business meeting seemed poorly prepared, and was poorly delivered. Although the problems of running the current convention must have eaten deeply into their time and energy, our committee did not have an easy time of it either. Our presentation was well received and undoubtedly brought in last minute votes....I'm very happy to record that when we were announced as the winners a cheer went up from the audience..."

In her editorial Fran announces that Westercon 30 will take place at Totem Park residence at UBC July 1-4, 1977. The idea is to take advantage of the Canadian July 1st holiday (Dominion Day - later renamed Canada Day) and it's American equivalent, July 4th (Independence Day). Pro Guest of Honour

will be Damon Knight, with Frank Denton of Seattle as Fan Guest of Honour. She presents a tentative ConCom list which is interesting to compare with the final list.

CHAIRPERSON - Fran Skene.
COORDINATOR (LOGISTICS) - David George.
PROGRAMMING - Ed Hutchings & Rick Mikkelson.
PUBLICITY - Vicki Bushell.
MASQUERADE - Bubbles & Bill Broxon.
ART SHOW - John Trimble (& maybe Bjo).
TREASURER - Norma Beauregard.
REGISTRAR - Ed Beauregard.
AUDIO - Al Betz.
VISUAL - Ed Hutchings.
PRO LIASON - Michael G. Coney.
HUCKSTERS - Jim Johnston & Ken Wong.
PROGRAM BOOK/PROGRESS REPORTS - Chuck Davis.

One interesting aspect of this issue is that, apart from the five letter size sheets of zine material, there are two sheets of adverts from Northern Comfort Communications for books and comics by Vaughn Bode (SUNPOT, CHEECH WIZARD, DEADBONE, JUNKWAFFEL, etc). I suspect this was part of a deal (they did pay us for the advert) in exchange for which BCSFA received permission to run a Vaughn Bode cover. However, this did not appear till #40 in 1976, no doubt delayed in the interest of good taste because of the artist's death this month, July 1975.

Fran also contributes another list of books new at the V.P.L. and prints A SERIOUS STORY (composed at the April meeting). In part 3 of SCIENCE FICTION ON TELEVISION Al Betz lists 28 of the 78 programs from SCIENCE FICTION THEATRE. Ed Beauregard reviews THE BRIDGE by D. Keith Mano: a book about militant ecologists ruling the world. *This is a well-written, indeed brilliant book. The imagery and atmosphere are superb, while the characterization has depth and evokes pity. As might be expected, the theme is essentially propagandistic: without Christ there is only barbarism or degeneracy, and they each contain the seeds of the other. Christianity maintains the balance, just as Paul characterizes post-Christian man: "People who are guilty when they breathe with the lungs God gave them, who have no way to expiate their guilt." Though the message may not thrill you, the overall effect of the novel is stunning....*

ANDREW PORTER VISIT - SATURDAY, JULY 12TH (?), 1975:

About this time, Andy Porter (then Editor of AGOL, later Editor of SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE), having visited the 2 AGOL subscribers in Victoria, dropped in on Vancouver and was shown around Gastown and Chinatown by Daniel Say and others. The next day Fran Skene had lunch with him, prior to his leaving by train. When he got back to New York he sent in a subscription to the club newsletter!

WESTERCON 30 CONCOM MEETING - SUNDAY, JULY 13TH, 1975:

Apparently it was decided to negotiate a new relationship with BCSFA in which the ConCom would retain the \$25 grant & association with BCSFA, and return a share of Con profits to BCSFA, but the business about the BCSFA Vice-President having to be on the Concom would be ignored.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, JULY 19TH, 1975:

Took place on Vancouver Island at Daphne and Michael G. Coney's house in Sidney. 15 BCSFAns attended including 4 from Victoria: Linda Thompson, Bruce Zado, Kirk Bullough and Stan G. Hyde, who announced they were in the process of forming a Victoria club. From Vancouver came Ed & Norma Beauregard, David George, Pat Burrows, Fran Skene, John Thomson, John Park and Al Betz. Barbara Dryer came down from Kamloops.

During a short business meeting John Thomson motioned that, based on the club membership list, a club directory be set up which would list the members and their interests (at their option). Seconded by Kirk Bullough. Passed. John Thomson also motioned that an opinions column be included in the newsletter. Seconded by Al Betz. Passed. Partying then ensued, with some people staying overnight. Among the hot topics debated: "Hot-shoe vs. Hot-foot" (which is something to do with photography. Now obsolete technology?).

AS I SEE IT #2 - JULY 22, 1975:

Another Mike Bailey perzine, this called 'A Fan and Claw Publication.' Essentially Mike complains about 'conflict of interest', about the club mailbox also being used by the Westercon Concom, the latter also acting as V-Con V Concom, the weirdness of Westercon 'negotiations' with BCSFA when 4 out of 5 of the BCSFA Exec are also on the Westercon Concom, etc.

Interestingly, in #26 Fran Skene had stated: *"right after the V-Con III convention, Co-Chairman Mike Bailey had a major confrontation with all the other members of the convention committee. When they got back together it was decided to make up a Constitution and By-Laws including a spelling out of the relationship between the club and convention committees...."* In other words, the motivation behind the creation of the constitution was not just to get registered, but to define the relationship between BCSFA and V-Con. At this point, obviously, neither had been successfully accomplished.

Some of the hard feelings being expressed may have been generated by the fact the final report on V-Con IV had not yet come out. Originally Nick Grimshawe was supposed to issue it after getting the financial report from Vicki Bushell, but had opted out. Ed Beauregard then agreed to work on it, but couldn't find the time. Finally all relevant papers were turned in to Mike Bailey on July 11th, and the report was still in progress at this point.

Mike concludes his perzine with the statement: *"This club has evolved (or degenerated) from an SF club to a social club to a political club (which stage you're in depends on your involvement)."* It is ever thus....

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - THURSDAY, JULY 24TH, 1975:

At the house of Ed & Norma Beauregard. All executive present, plus Norma Beauregard.

David George announced that He would like to Chair V-Con V and was putting together a committee. Any & all bids were then formally invited to be submitted.

Al Betz moved that the club Secretary maintain a book of minutes. Fan Seconded. Passed.

Fran Skene moved that a "Standing Constitutional Committee" be set up to resolve the confusion around the Constitution & By-laws. Al Betz seconded. Passed. Ed Beauregard then moved that Fran Skene be appointed Chairman of the committee. David George seconded. Passed.

AUGUST 1975:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #27 - AUGUST 1975:

A Pteranodon Publication. Editor Fran Skene announces a Loc column to begin next issue and states that an audio cassette of the November panel discussion on "Pornography and SF" will be the prize for the best Loc sent in over the next few months. The cover, depicting an SCA type woman playing ball (with a planet?) is by 'Winifred' (Sylvia W. Skene, Fran's daughter).

John Park contributes a short story titled AN OLD-FASHIONED SHORT STORY (one of the few times fiction, apart from club meeting group efforts, is published in BCSFAzine) and Daniel Say reviews the spoof SF novel BERNHARD THE CONQUEROR by Sam J. Lundwall: *"It is a rushing-onward book as any parody must be to cover the ground in doing in a genre. Yet it is not a sharp incisive razor that Lundwall wields but rather a slap-board. He exaggerated the scenes too much and hits obvious targets. It's no fun if you fully agree with him. It's a puff book but fun for the hour."*

Fran reviews AGOL (Editor Andrew Porter), LOCUS (Editor: Charlie Brown), and the SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (THE ALIEN CRITIC) (Editor: Richard E. Geis): of the latter, commenting that the book reviews were of no use to her in selecting SF books for the V.P.L. as they were too subjective, but that this is precisely what made the zine so interesting. Fran makes it clear that all three are worth subscribing to.

At 12 letter-size pages, the zine is becoming increasingly meatier.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, AUGUST 16TH, 1975:

Held at John Park's house. 30 people attended including Karen and John 'The Gaar' from Washington state. The films THE MONOLITH MONSTERS and TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA were shown (probably 16mm films). During a short business meeting Ed Beauregard mentioned that the cost of producing the newsletter was \$1.75 per copy per year! In addition, acting on Al Betz's suggestion of May 5th, Chuck Davis moved that an archivist be appointed. Al Betz seconded. No one volunteered, though.

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - TUESDAY, AUGUST 26TH, 1975:

Held at David George's house. Present included: Fran Skene, Al Betz, David George, Ed Beauregard, Mike Bailey.

Fran Skene made an official presentation to the executive on behalf of Westercon 30, and David George on behalf of V-Con V. In separate motions both committees were officially affiliated with BCSFA. A grant of \$100 was made to V-Con V.

Ed Beauregard then announced he was going to organize special film nights on a monthly basis beginning in October and Fran Skene suggested a motion of support. Al Betz seconded. Passed.

SEPTEMBER 1975:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #28 - SEPTEMBER 1975:

A Hesperornis Publication. The cover illustration by Tim Hammell (his first for BCSFAzine!) is a gorgeous, under-water tentacled-vegetable Alien.

Sadly, this issue announces the Death of Vaughn Bode: *Vaughn F. Bode, artist and cartoonist and an attendee at V-Con IV, died on July 18. LOCUS reports that "Bode was using a bondage device which cuts off breath and then is supposed to release. This time, apparently the fifth time he used it, it caught and strangled him. Police have ruled it an accident. His body was cremated on July 22, his 34th birthday." Bode won the Hugo in 1969 as Best Fan artist.*

The 1975 Hugo Awards presented at Aussiecon August 16 are listed:

BEST NOVEL: 'The Dispossessed' by Ursula K. Le Guin.

BEST NOVELLA: 'A Song for Lya' by George R.R. Martin.

BEST NOVELETTE: 'Adrift just off the Islets of Langerhans' by Harlan Ellison.

BEST SHORT STORY: 'The Hole Man' by Larry Niven.

BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR: Ben Bova (Editor of ANALOG).

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Kelly Freas.

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: 'Young Frankenstein' by Mel Brooks.

BEST FANZINE: Science Fiction Review (The Alien Critic).

BEST FAN WRITER: Richard E. Geis.

BEST FAN ARTIST: Bill Rotsler.

JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD FOR BEST NEW WRITER: P.J. Plauger.

GRAND MASTER OF FANTASY (GANDALF AWARD): Fritz Leiber.

BIG HEART AWARD: Donald H. Tuck.

FIRST FANDOM AWARD: Donald A. Wollheim.

AWARD FOR SF SCHOLARSHIP: Walt Lee for Reference Guide To Fantastic Films.

Fran also lists the 1975 FAAn awards:

BEST FAN EDITOR: Bill Bowers.
BEST FAN WRITER: Don C. Thompson.
BEST SINGLE ISSUE: Outworlds 21/22, Bill & Joan Bowers.
BEST FAN ARTIST (HUMOROUS) Bill Rotsler.
BEST FAN ARTIST (NON-HUMOROUS) James Shull.
LEST LoC WRITER: Harry Warner, Jr.

Fran also contributes a page of news items such as Gene Roddenberry's word on the upcoming first Star Trek movie (as printed in Sirius XIV): *"We plan to do a good deal more with our script than we were able to do on television. For example, many of you will find that the theme of our story will be quite controversial.... We plan to use as many of the original television cast and staff as are available."* Fran also reports that Sterling Lanier's HIERO'S JOURNEY is to be filmed in Canada and Hawaii (Nope! Never happened.), and that 'A young woman came into the library a few days ago and asked for "anything be Harlan Ellison, even Science Fiction."

The long-threatened LoC column appears for the first time under Fran's editorship (excerpts from LoCs had appeared frequently when Mike Bailey was Editor):

Andy Porter (Editor of AGOL) writes: *"The large and long 'Vancouver. Get together at our place' poster (handed out while promoting the Westercon 30 bid) is now residing on my living room wall, neatly filling the space between the TV and the AGOL card file....hope you could find a niche for the AGOLS I donated to the library...I've got all five branches of Duthie Books selling AGOL, with a standing order for 50 copies!..."*

Demian Q. Morgan comments: *I read your recent newsletter with some interest...a sickening chill spread throughout my bones: something was missing, something thirsted for and long demanded. In growing anguish I scanned the fiction section, but found only a derivative scrap of verbiage, a perfunctory excuse for a story (AN OLD FASHIONED SF STORY, #27), in no way offering any of the qualities of exuberance and iconoclasm I was seeking..I appeal to you, I implore you, in the name of all true members of the BCSFA I raise to you this heartfelt cry -- GIVE US BACK OUR CORUSCATING NEURONIC WHIPS!... Demian was in luck, as this issue contained the first part of THIS IS NOT IT written at the June meeting.*

P. Esposito praises AN OLD FASHIONED SF STORY: *It is a very long time since I have seen a work of the concision and subtlety of Mr. Park's story.*

S. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, tears the story to bits: *You expect people to read shit like that?... Whoever you are, Park, I've got some news for you: It's been done before!.... That stylistic trick -- short sentences used to sound tough and dramatic -- is beneath pity, but if I see another clanging 'subtlety' like that didactic last paragraph I'll cancel my subscription...*

What makes the above three letters particularly amusing is the fact that all three were written by John Park, author of the story in question. I believe this falls under the category of 'minor hoax'.

One page of #28 is devoted to a cross word puzzle contributed by Chuck Davis. It includes items like: 18 across - Local SF writer, 39 across - President of BCSFA, 46 across- Local fan, publishes own zine, 13 down - Local SF writer Kernaghan and 41 down - Radio SF enthusiast Al. The answers, of course, were: Michael G. Coney, Ed Beauregard, Daniel Say, Eileen Kernaghan and Al Betz.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH, 1975:

Held at Fran Skene's house. 27 people attended. David George made a formal presentation to the membership for V-Con V. After much discussion, John Tomson moved the traditional \$100 grant. Al Betz seconded. Passed. Fran Skene then spoke on behalf of Westercon 30, asking for affiliation and a token \$1 as a show of support. Al Betz so moved. Chuck Davis seconded. Passed. Some discussion centred on whether V-Con V should be held on the May long weekend (May 21-24) as it was feared many people might leave town, but it was decided to pick this date anyway.

The programming for the evening consisted of listening to a tape of a radio show prepared for the CBC by Chuck Davis. It included items recorded at Torcon and 'Belliecon', interviews with BNF Fans and Authors, with humorous running commentary by Chuck himself.

The assembled BCSFans then created yet another group story, this one titled 'A Tale of PUNishment', which seems to be a rather Lovecraftian tale about eels pursuing David George, er, David Meanwhile. Sample gems: *...singing a coruscating song about the lone prairie and the eels basking in the sun... David reeled back in shock, for the silently scudding moon had revealed off in the distance an entire regiment of the ghastly critters, storming toward him in their drunken frenzy. "Great scintillating synaptic flagellators!" he cried... he started to swim out along the gleaming silvery path of the full and rising moon. Several deep ones, strumming guitars and croaking nameless versions of old Beach Boys songs, hunkered in their bathing shorts on the reef and flexed their stubby, batrachian fingers... into a coruscating hell of ululating silver eels.* Hmmm. Interesting. The term 'coruscating' not entirely dead yet.

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH, 1975:

Present included: Al Betz, David George, Ed & Norma Beauregard. David George reported that the club minutes file was as complete as was possible. Ed Beauregard having arranged a 12% FST exemption for the newsletter, David George would write to Gestetner and ask for taxes paid on supplies to be returned. As no Archivist had yet been chosen, Ed moved that all archives be kept in the home of the Info Officer. Al Betz seconded. Passed. Al Betz moved that the post office box maintained at the Bentall Centre for V-Cons be paid for by BCSFA on an on-going basis, to be available to any affiliated con committee. David George seconded. Passed.

OCTOBER 1975:

FILM NIGHT - FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3RD, 1975:

Was to have been held at Ed & Norma Beauregard's place. Would have included TARZAN THE APE MAN (1932) and STEAMBOAT WILLIE (first sound Disney cartoon), but only 2 people showed interest, so the night was cancelled. Ed withdrew his offer to hold a regular film night, but the club would continue to show movies at meetings on an irregular basis.

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #29 - OCTOBER 1975:

William Gibson, who joined the club some time earlier, contributes a delightful cover. It depicts a propeller-beanied lizard who's just fired a water pistol/ray gun. With it is the inscription: "*Traditional Folk Arts of Fandom: The Hand-Cut Illo.... Next Month: Under-Water Beanie-weaving and How to Spot a Corflu Junkie.*" This was the first of a number of illustrations Bill would provide for the newsletter. In addition, he is known to have participated in most (if not all) of the group story writing sessions in 1975 and several years thereafter. Ultimately, the spectacular success (and demands) of his professional writing career took him away from active participation in the club, but he remains a frequent guest at V-Cons and still keeps in touch with his old friends in BCSFA.

Also in this issue is a brief article by William Gibson in which he attempts to create the perfect SF anthology. Titled IMAGINARY ANTHOLOGY OF IMAGINATIVE FICTION: A MODEL KIT, Bill prefaces it with the comment: "*The book as conceptual art; reader assembles required texts and reads stories in prescribed order. Reading other stories in required texts negates editorial function; the editor accepts no responsibility, aesthetic or otherwise, for stories not included in the following table of contents:*" William Burroughs ('Mother and I Would Like to Know', 'Wind Die. You die. We Die', & 'Johnny 23'), Terry Southern ('The Road out of Axotle', 'The Blood of a Wig.'), Julio Cortazar ('Continuity of Parks', 'Letter to a Young Lady in Paris.'), Thomas Pynchon ('Lowlands') and Ahmed Yacoubi ('The Night Before Thinking.'). This gives a good indication of Bill's influences at the time.

The second part of THIS IS NOT IT! (the group story from June in which 'coruscating' is done to death) is printed here and is well worth quoting *Relic looked around, but all he could find was his second best pair of skates -- very blunt skates. Not for nothing was he known as the champion coarse skater of Denudia. He flashed down the corridor, and saw a crocodile in a grass skirt. "Get out of here, you gorse gator!" he cried... And what of Kate, alone on her planet, a sort of Robinson Crusoe Kate. Her only supplies a single box, a box of corkscrews. A corkscrew crate.... etc. etc.*

Daniel Say reviews A MIDSUMMER TEMPEST by Poul Anderson and finds it good. Fran announces yet another impending Roger Elwood anthology, lists more books at V.P.L., and reviews Daniel's perzine SF3 to contrast it with Mike Bailey's MAD DOG PUBLICATIONS. SF3 tends toward book and film reviews, academic essays, and criticisms of BCSFA. Mike's zines are mostly personal commentary and essays, and criticisms of BCSFA. As Fran puts it *A major problem as far as I'm concerned is Mike's love for controversy.... But Dick Geis (of SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW) gets Hugos and maybe with more practice at playing "Let's you and him fight" Mike too will get there. Not my style at all, but I'm very aware there are many fans out there who dig this sort of thing.*

F.M. Busby sends in a LoC commenting on past conventions in Seattle: "*SEACON in 1961 was the first poolside Worldcon, held at Hyatt House adjoining Sea-Tac Airport. Membership was 500.... Bob Heinlein was our GoH; instead of hiding out as most GoHs did in those days, he and Ginny held open*

house in their suite during most of the con... Harlan was Toastmaster... By contrast with current cons, membership cost \$3 attending and the total con income/outgo was just over \$3,500... Approximately \$1,000 in profits... It was interesting, but I'll never do it again!"

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18TH, 1975:

Held at Chuck & Edna Davis' house. 38 people attended. David George announced that Larry Niven would be the Guest of Honour for V-Con 5 with Terry Carr as Special Guest.

Then the members settled into the principal event of the evening, the group writing of END: *Daniel gives up.... "Abba Dabba Dabba Wooble," he muttered to Mr. Gibson, the bevested absurdist poet.... Silently, Coeurl prowled. "Jesus, Van Vogt, does Coeurl always prowl silently?" asked Constant Reader. "I mean, why don't you make him loquacious? Garrulous? Talkative?"..... Coeurl prowled. Then he spoke: "Aliens! Aliens! Come out, come out wherever you are!" They didn't come out... Their boots made a coruscating tintinabulation on the marble steps.... The pig awoke from a deep slumber. "Oink," she oinked. The sheriff gazed at her longingly. The End.* From the references, we can assume Daniel Say, William Gibson and possibly Constantin Hiebner were among the participants.

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29TH, 1975:

Held at Mike Bailey's house. Those present included David George, Mike Bailey, Al Betz and Ed Beauregard. The latter stated he had been in Victoria and discovered that we can register the BCSFA name if we can show that we represent people from all over B.C. and that the club is the largest in the province. Hmm. Otherwise, light business discussed, i.e. where to get cheap Gestetner ink, etc.

NOVEMBER 1975:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 1975:

Surprise! There was no newsletter this month as a postal strike occurred.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH, 1975:

Held at John Park's house. 25 people attended. It was announced that Mike Bailey (who was away) had resigned as liason with V-Con 5 and Westercon 30, but would continue as Vice-President of BCSFA. Fran Skene announced an upcoming V.P.L. event with Judith Merill that would involve BCSFAns. Programing for the evening: Ed Beauregard finally got to show TARZAN THE APEMAN.

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH, 1975:

Took place at Ed & Norma Beauregard's house. Present included Al Betz, David George, and Ed & Norma Beauregard. Al Betz objected *"to Fran's committing the club to co-sponsoring the Judith Merrill event without the advance approval of the club, and moved that the club not be committed to anything without the majority of the executive approving in advance. Ed Beauregard seconded. Passed."*

JUDITH MERILL EVENT - MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH, 1975:

As part of a B.C. tour, sponsored by the Canadian Writer's Union, Judith Merrill gave a talk at the Vancouver Public Library. Chuck Davis, who had interviewed her at Torcon, introduced her to a crowd of about 50 people. Afterwards she retired with BCSFAns to Pat Burrows house for a social gathering. Judith Merrill, who was once a part of the Futurians Fan Group, is a prominent SF anthologist, writer and critic -- the first U.S. supporter of 'New Wave' SF -- and founder (in 1970) of the Merrill Collection of SF, Speculation and Fantasy at Toronto P.L.

DECEMBER 1975:

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #30 - DECEMBER 1975:

Tim Hammell contributes a magnificent portrait of a helmeted warrior with eyes like a lunar landscape for the cover. An Ichthyornis Publication edited by Fran Skene. Fran notes that the club is down to a mere three houses for meeting places and needs more options. (Always a problem throughout our history. Where do we hold the next meeting? Where?)

Fran also reviews NITWIT I, the first zine of the Ontario SF Club following the aftermath of Fan Fair III (August 1-3, 1975, GoH: Lester Del Rey.) when dissension split the club, it's former newsletter editor Taral Wayne MacDonald resigning to revive a club active in Toronto in the '40s and '50s, the Toronto Derelicts. Taral would soon become a regular Loccer to BCSFA. Fran refers to the Ontario Sf Club as the second largest club in Canada, BCSFA being the largest at this time.

John Thomson reports on Windycon II held in Chicago October 3-5, 1975, while Ed Beauregard comments on the November 8th Puget Sound Star Trek Convention held in Seattle (GoH: James Doohan). Ed, Norma and Al Betz drove down in Ed's car, a feeble Toyota which could only manage 30 mph uphill, a very faanish technological feat. The idea was to sell memberships to the upcoming V-Con, but in this they were unsuccessful. "Who's Larry Niven?" asked one of the Trek Con's organizers when told about V-Con's GoH. As Ed put it: *"A minority of the attendees were conversant with the SF field... but many others had little knowledge and little interest in the subject. Most of the teens and sub-teens fell into the latter category. This seems to contradict the contention that Trekkie fandom channels these people into our ranks....The 800 to 1000 attendees certainly enjoyed themselves though for those of us less enthusiastic about Star Trek, 'interesting' would be a more appropriate description. (Must I admit I used to root for the Klingons?).... Now 1000 people at \$10 each, or \$25 at the door....Hmmm, maybe it's time Vancouver had a Star Trek convention....."*

'A Tale of PUNishment' written at the September meeting is printed, a list of new books at the V.P.L., and for the first time, a list of club members and newsletter subscribers. 55 people are listed, but

another 35 or so refused to be listed or did not bother returning the inquiry form. I'm going to list them all, as it's interesting to see who was a member this far back who yet remains in the club (at least 9!):

Harvey Abramson, Mike Bailey, Tom Balanbov, Ed & Norma Beauregard, Alan R. Betz, John Brandes, Ann Brandes, Paula Brown, Bill Bunker, K. Patricia Burrows, Vicki Bushell, Sandra Carpenter, Mrs. Vee B. Cawston, Bill Collins, Michael G. Coney, Robert L. Coupe, Carl Cramer, Pam Dainard, Michael Dann, Chuck Davis, J. Robert Davison, Dave Dixon, G.S. Doran, William J. Douglas, Barbara L. Dryer, Steve Forty, T.R. (Tim) Forty, John Fraser, The Gaar, Henry Gasko, David George, William F. Gibson, Tim Hammell, Ed Hutchings, Vera Johnston, Bob Johnston, Jim Johnston, Don Livingstone, John A. Lloyd, Dusan Milatovic, L. Nesbitt, John Park, Andrew Porter, Bill Quee, Daniel Say, Robert J. Sicotte, Fran Skene, Vikki Sutherland, John Thomson, Susan Walsh, Dave Williams, Ken Wong, Bruce Zado, Dan Zimmer.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13TH, 1975:

26 BCSFAns went to the annual Christmas dinner, this time held at the On On Tea Garden at 214 Keefer (in Chinatown near Main St.). *"A multitude of dishes was enjoyed by the throng"* but no booze, as the On On did not have a liquor license. This was soon corrected at the subsequent partying at Fran Skene's place, which William Gibson described as *"the most enjoyable meeting yet."* Bruce Zado, Karen (?) and the Gaar came up from the States, sacked out at Mike Bailey's, then came back to Fran's place for breakfast and a joyous round of shoving her car out of a snowbank.

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16TH, 1975:

Held at Al Betz's place. Those present included Mike Bailey, David George, and Al Betz. Minor items of business: Mike Bailey reported a credit agency was asking for info about BCSFA. Al Betz and David George agreed no info should be given out till we know why we are being asked. Bill Quee to replace Mike Bailey as BCSFA concom liason. Balance of V-Con IV account now received into the BCSFA Treasury.

This article is part eight of my work-in-progress history of BCSFA. Previous installments are found in issues #236, #239, #240, #242, #246, #248 and #249 of BCSFAzine.

JANUARY 1976

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #31 - JANUARY 1976:

This issue, a Gaviiformes Publication, came out late (editor Fran Skene had been on vacation) and without art (the artist failed to deliver on his promises) but nevertheless contains much good stuff.

Barbara Dryer reports on the 'Puget Sound Star Trekkers Conference' (held November 8th, 1975 in Seattle, and previously reported on by Ed Beauregard in #30), commenting: *"It is common knowledge that a lot of people who go to Star Trek conventions are not interested in other SF at all; they are*

interested only in Star Trek. So Ed's remark that organizers and attendees were ignorant of most SF didn't surprise me. Although for most people Star Trek is their first taste of Science Fiction, I think there are very few trekkers, indeed, who are channelled into our ranks...

James Doohan, the actor who played 'Scotty' on Star Trek was there (He was born in Vancouver, by the way). When Doohan got up to speak the auditorium quickly filled as most of the con attendees squeezed in. During Doohan's appearance I received the distinct impression that he didn't really want to be there. He and Star Trek's other stars have moved on to other things, and I'm sure they're tired of making appearances at Star Trek conventions; this would account for Doohan's hassled appearance that day..."

In describing the awards ceremony, Barb reveals that "Kitty Canterbury, chairman of the conference, spoke of a letter she'd written to James Blish about the questionable quality of Blish's Star Trek books. Many fans have never been terribly happy with the adaptations Blish did for these books." (Twelve collections of stories based on scripts and one original novel "SPOCK MUST DIE!") "He wrote Kitty back and replied that he had difficulties writing the stories as many of the scripts he received were not finished drafts at all. Kitty read his letter and then proceeded to dedicate the conference to Blish."

In addition, there's a book review by Ed Beauregard savaging the novel 'VOYAGE TO A FORGOTTEN SUN' by one Donald J. Pfeil. As Ed comments: "We must face the fact that this man was the editor of one of the major magazines in SF... if he couldn't see the absurdities and contradictions in his own story, is he likely to see them in the works of others? the plot in this story must be examined piece by disjointed piece to appreciate the complete failure of Don Pfeil's literary skills..." (Ed is referring to Pfeil's VERTEX, the first 'slick' US SF magazine, published in 16 issues from April 1973 to August 1975. George Alec Effinger, Robert Silverberg, Norman Spinrad and John Varley were among the authors to be featured in VERTEX.)

Some samples of Ed's comments: "Off they go, to repeat their earlier miraculous trip, and soon you get to -- chapter seven, which is an explanation of how the hyperdrive works. The universe is like a folded handkerchief you see... There's also a confusing explanation that the reason all galactics look alike is that they've been exposed to so many different environments. No, I don't get it either..... Meanwhile, to provide the semblance of a plot, Mannerheim, for no reason whatsoever, attacks Zim, and attempts to kill him. They were, of course, lost in hyperspace with Zim their only hope of escape.... it is generally considered only sporting to leave a few clues around so that when an unlikely event like the above occurs, the reader gasps and says, so that's why X and Y happened four chapters ago. In this book, the reader merely gasps." And Ed concludes: "Well, there it is. So that's why VERTEX folded.... if this book represents the quality Pfeil searched for, I shan't miss the rag."

As well, several limericks spoofing BCSFAns by media personality Chuck Davis were printed, including:

*Our main movie buff is Hutchings
A victim of Cinema Clutchings
I could make this verse sing
Except for one thing
There's only one rhyme for Ed Hutchings*

*An extra-terrestrial mammal
Like a green-skinned eleven-humped camel
Is just a small part
Of his weird far-out art
So I'd walk a mile for a Hammell.*

Elsewhere in the issue Fran prints: Part 4 of SF ON TELEVISION by Al Betz in which he lists the Twilight Zone TV episodes, a poem by Barbara Dryer called 'BEYOND EARTHLY SKIES', a list of new SF books at the Vancouver Public Library, the text of a short story written at the October 75 meeting, and club minutes. Not bad for a 'rushed' clubzine.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 1976:

This meeting -- held at the home of Chuck and Edna Davis -- was very well attended: *"looked like the largest number yet"* (more than 30). The highlight was a panel titled "Secrets of a Writer, Or the Role of the Rejection Slips in SF Writing." Speakers were Ted Collins, Chuck Davis and John Park. Michael Coney, who had been scheduled to participate, was unable to make it. (Al Betz taped the panel and presumably it still exists on tape. At some point in the future I will access Al's fabulous electronic archives and incorporate the material into my revised edition of 'Weirds Did It' to be published separately.)

Another fun part of the evening was the writing of yet another group story titled 'STONED', with *"ringleaders being Lona Elrod, Bill Gibson, and Daniel Say.."* Perhaps because of Gibson, the story is (or begins, at any rate) on an astonishingly high level of craftsmanship:

"The clearing was circular, walled with dense green and roofed with clear, translucent blue. Beyond the tangled lianas and rotting boles of fallen date palms, the sea heaved rhythmically. Then, just beneath the swelling surface, the baroque iron prow of an exotic antique vessel was seen. Slicing with Victorian dignity through the limpid waters of the coastal shelf, it swung toward the beach. In the clearing, seven stone spheres rose smoothly from tangled beds of tropical humus.

A red and green parrot screeched as it fled from its perch into the jungle, and the screech was echoed from the undergrowth; a pig blundered through the clearing and disappeared between two slanting palms. At the beach, the long roar of the breakers was interrupted by the grating of the coral under a metal keel, then the waves parted in white foam and the rusted hull of the vessel rose dripping into the sunlight.

Seven stone spheres hung silently above the clearing, rotating above the ruins of a vast anthill. The jungle was silent."

I've quoted enough to establish the 'legitimacy' of this story AS A STORY, a FIRST for BCSFA. Alas, after a hopeful page or two, 'STONED' begins to change:

"...He whirled and howled. The seven spherical stones plunged in a line of formal perfection toward his.....crotch where he found, to his utter dismay, that they had lodged. O dear. O drat."

This was immediately followed by: "(D.S. has made this story something less than literature. -- Wm. G.)" to which was added:

"He rose, clutching his injured and strode toward the washroom, picking spherical stones from the region of his.... He sighed, grimacing in pain, and murmured, "I fear I shall never rise to the occasion again." For indeed, and yea, what writer can pursue a straight line with all these goddamned hermit crabs and screaming parrots all over the place?"

(Dear Wm. G. -- Literature is only writing that is not concerned with the real world and is not and does not use real words except in condescension or put down of the real working class, -- D.S.)"

And thus accelerates the transformation of 'STONED', perhaps reaching a negative apogee in this paragraph:

"Then he thrust her backwards on to the voluptuous expansive softness of the Venerian couch; feverishly his fingers penetrated the diaphanous folds tantalizingly cleaving to the frugiverous curves of her upper breasts, contentedly munching mangoes. Timidly, with a hesitant, gentle smile, he offered her upper left breast an apricot."

Sigh. Nobody writes like that anymore.....

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - TUESDAY, JANUARY 20TH, 1976:

Held at Fran Skene's, with Info Officer Fran Skene, President Ed Beauregard, Treasurer Al Betz and Secretary David George present, Vice-President Mike Bailey being absent.

Fran pointed out that some members were complaining they weren't receiving their zines. She felt it was due to the cumbersome nature of the newsletter publication process, what with Al Betz being responsible for maintaining the 'official' membership list, Mike Bailey punching computer cards to print out the labels, and David George picking up the club mail (including renewals) from the club P.O. box. If information passed between them is inaccurate or absent, members suffer. She commented: *"The separation of the various tasks was partly a result of paranoia as to the ways in which the Information Officer could abuse his or her position."* So what was the solution? Everyone promised to do better. (Today, I -- as God-Editor -- do all of the above. Trusting souls, these modern BCSFAns....)

FEBRUARY 1976

BCSFA NEWSLETTER # 32 - FEBRUARY 1976:

This Dsungaripterus publication features a fine cover by 'J. Cornelius', depicting a nattily dressed chap whose speech balloon reads: *"Wheras my previous work often dealt with invasions of Earth by ant-like creatures with periscope eyes and garish neckware, I now feel such themes to be below my serious consideration as a novelist..."* And of course, this is a good description of the character's own head!

This issue, apart from printing the story 'STONED' written at the January meeting, concentrates on editorial musings and news items. For instance, Fran reports that Susan Wood (Hugo-winning fan and lecturer at the University of B.C.) is *"fantasizing about starting a women's APA (amateur press association, in which each member writes a letter to all, then all letters make up a zine) called 'BREAD and ROSES'. I think that such a project would be very welcome, provided that Queen Bee types were at a minimum..."* (She did go on to produce an APA. Hope my readers can help me with this: title, number of issues, etc...)

Taral Wayne MacDonald writes from Toronto with a few clarifications: *"The Derelicts are not a club. They are just the majority of fannish people in Toronto. It is just ten people with rather similar views about "creeping mundania", big-business in conventions, and authority. We meet at each other's homes just as we always did, and will not likely miss OSFiC meetings if we stop going."* (OSFiC = Ontario SF club, now defunct.) Then, in reference to the BCSFA membership list printed in #30 (December 75), Taral writes: *"BCSFA is the largest Canadian SF club? How's that again? ... your list of 55... BCSFA will have to defer the honour to OSFiC's membership of about 80..."* To which Fran replies: *"BCSFA now has about 90 members...As to why so many chose not to be on the published list--I think that many SF fans value their privacy: I'd never seen so many P.O. boxes and unlisted phone numbers before.."*

CONSTITUTION MEETING - THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1976:

Held at Fran Skene's. Object: *"to take a final look at the club by-laws in the light of difficulties so far encountered"* and put together a package to be published and voted on.

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1976:

Held at the home of John Park and Lou Noodleman. Main event: the showing of the film 'X THE UNKNOWN', a 1956 British 'blob' movie made two years before 'THE BLOB'! Evidently suitably impressed and inspired by this, participants typed out 'A WEIRD STORY' containing the following lines:

"It crept toward him glistening, oily and slimy..... A vast, heaving mass dressed in rain-wet ostrich feathers and twenty or thirty pairs of purple platform boots surged across the pavement. Suddenly it got stuck in the crack in the pavement and it borke its mother's back. And borking, as we all know, is about the most horrendous thing one can do to one's mother...." Aha! A feeble attempt to recover from a typo! The story lacks a clear focus and was abandoned without an ending.

Two new members signed up, including Allyn Cadogan *"who had come from Parksville (Vancouver Island) specifically for the meeting"*.

Among club business: Fran moved that the club purchase a Gestetner colour change kit from Al Betz for \$30 (store price \$95), seconded by Bill Gibson, passed. (I include this for Gestetner-nostalgic fans.)

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1976:

Assorted odd bits like: left-over V-Con 3 bar tickets and plastic glasses donated to V-Con 5 committee (so how come V-Con 4 didn't get em?), plots afoot to order bulk Gestetner paper real cheap, and Bill Gibson relaying a request for more 'creative artwork' in BCSFAzine. (Have I flogged the Bill Gibson/BCSFA connection to death yet? No. Not yet. Mention him every time the records do.)

When I interviewed Steve Forty on the history of the club I asked: "How active was Bill Gibson?"

STEVE: "Bill used to be at all the meetings I went to. He liked his beer like the rest of us, and he and Chuck (Davis) used to enjoy working on the group stories, and talk about what writings they were working on, the ideas they had."

Q): I believe he was active in the club for at least three years? 75, 76, 77?"

STEVE: "Oh no, even longer than that. And he seemed to really enjoy it, but then he really got into his writing and we sort of lost contact with him. But when any of us talk to him he's still a hell of a nice guy, still the same Bill we knew back in the 70's, very relaxed and personable."

Steve mentioned that (back in 1976) Bill, Chuck and Ted Collins (Theo) were the three BCSFAns most serious about writing. Today Bill is one of the hottest talents in SF, Chuck has written a number of books about Vancouver, and Theo, last I heard, after achieving a Master's degree in Creative Writing at UBC (where in 1981 I directed a one-act play of his titled "I'M NOT FROWNING") devotes his energies to First Nation causes.

MARCH 1976

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #33 - MARCH 1976:

A Phororhacos publication, featuring cover art by Tim Hammell depicting a cylindrical spacecraft suspended in a space station dock. The first inside page has a nice logo-like art work by Taral MacDonald: a BCSFA stamp and stamp pad beneath the stamped word 'BCSFA'. Several nifty drawings by Dale Hammell are scattered throughout.

The zine follows Fran's now established format: illustration on the cover, first page devoted to meeting announcements, followed by a page or two of 'Editorial Ramblings', and then the rest of the material, concluding with minutes of meetings. The back of the last page is always left blank, as it forms the outside cover for stamp and mailing label after the zine is folded and stapled and mailed without envelope. Only eight cents postage!

In her editorial Fran mentions that Bill Gibson had toyed with the idea of running for editor but wasn't sure he "could get things done on schedule." As well, Fran takes Marion Zimmer Bradley to task for improper use of grammar in her writings. She quotes from Bradley's 'THE BLOODY SUN': *"But the crystal was dead, lifeless, and the girl had faded....He heard his own cry echo, foolishly, on empty walls..."* Fran comments: *"The girl did not fade; her image did... I have yet to hear anything echo*

foolishly; rather, the protagonist felt foolish." But Fran goes on to say: "All of the above isn't to say that Bradley and like should stop writing.....any book for which there are eager readers has a right to exist, even pornography and Gor novels (provided the readers don't confuse fiction with reality)...Enjoyment is good for mental health..."

On the other hand Fran tears "A STILLNESS AT SORDERA" by Thayer Waldo (appearing in the March 76 issue of F&SF) to pieces. *'...here's the plot: sudden silence descends on Earth; the protagonist first realizes it when he no longer can hear the ice cubes clinking in his glass....people come from outer space and 'spiritually infiltrate' the world.....our hero decides that silence makes the heart grow fonder: "Indeed, I must confess to being just generally fonder of that bright, unfailingly articulate dear girl, now that I don't have to listen to her." And "...Kathleen stood quietly at the rim, a woman whole enough to accept her natural role." Yassah, just putting us Uppity Libbers in our place.'*

Fran also pleads for a new name for the newsletter: "My kingdom for a name! Do you get tongue-tied when attempting to say the name of this zine? If you can come up with an inspired or at least short name I would like to hear about it! Examples of names already in use are Synergy, Synapse, Karass, The Revolting Librarian, Cygnus X-1, etc., etc."

Fran mentions that H. Warner Munn (Fantasy writer active since the 1920's) will be attending V-Con 5, and describes the facilities available for the convention at U.B.C. She also lists a number of conventions with guests like Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein. Alas, time has marched on.

CONSTITUTION MEETING - THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 1976:

Held at the home of Fran Skene. In 1975 two attempts to change the name of the club (so we could register in Victoria) by passing an extraordinary resolution failed because the proposed constitution demanded approval by two thirds of the voting membership, which resulted in all unreturned ballots being counted as 'no' votes. Fran moved that the above rule be amended to read "by two thirds of the voting membership casting ballots".

BCSFA MEETING - SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 1976:

Held at the home of Paula Brown. Only 15 people showed up, which seemed odd considering the 'crowds' at the last few meetings. Fran cites a number of reasons (some still valid today): *"Exams, new locale, no programming, exhaustion on the part of those attending a large number of compulsory meetings (constitution, executive, V-Con 5)."*

Nevertheless club business was carried out. Fran's resolution to amend the extraordinary resolution rule was presented, to be voted on by mail-in ballot, the club and V-Con 5 agreed to make a joint purchase of 25,000 sheets of Gestetner paper (special half price deal), members were reminded that BCSFA elections were coming up in May and that nominations were now open, and finally that Westercon 30 and BCSFA would share table and personnel to take memberships at V-Con 5. Ed Beauregard *"crushes democracy by fast adjournment. David Williams, Dan Say, and Sandra Carpenter complain about profocast actions. Meeting adjourned by a vote of 7 to 3."*

Possibly inspired by news of the impending paper purchase, BCSFAn's indulge in a paper airplane flight while others plunge into the writing of yet another group story, this one titled "SOMETHING DECENT FOR THE NEWSLETTER". It begins:

"It was a quiet evening when Ms. Woodworker suggested that this should be something decent for the newsletter. She said this while she was quickly undressing. But because she undressed in her usual demure way, this was also decent.

Suddenly there was a scream... "Oh God! What was that looking in the window?"

It was another guest coming to the meeting. Yawn.

Then the ceiling dematerialized and in his coruscating metallic costume descended the Deus Ex Machina....."Oh dear!" thought Alice, "there's not much decency in this story so far, in fact there's not much of anything." Idly she began to screw the white rabbit...

Meanwhile it was a dark and stormy night and a band of gypsies were camped around the fire and all of a sudden a dark and stormy knight rode up....."Bloody hell, what comes next?" thought the white rabbit, striving to break from Alice's iron embrace, several paragraphs old by now. With one tremendous, all-exhausting, final, ultimate, earth-shattering, convulsive quiver of his tail he broke free...

"A difficult situation," thought David, with his last breath turning into a phone booth... then the persistent phonebooth appeared at a meeting of the BCSFA with a plan for a new constitution, in exchange for which it hoped to be released from its terrible servitude.....

On the field of battle however, far from the meandering maunderings of contemplative commentators, the redoubtable Wontliams had devised a cunning plan. Adopting for the nonce his phone booth semblance, he jumped inside himself... the phone booth became Wontliams became the phone booth, both locked in mortal passion..."

Oddly enough, the above is a parody of Hamlet. Hmmm, perhaps the quotes I selected did not make this clear.

At one point the meeting came to a halt so that all present could watch the latest 'Monty Python' episode which featured the skit 'Full Frontal Nudity'. More inspiration
!

BCSFA EXECUTIVE MEETING - TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 1976:

It was determined that the cost of producing BCSFAzine was now \$3.00 per member per year (Contrast with 1994 at \$24.00 per member per year). Since the active member rate was only \$2.00 per year, this presented problems. Consequently membership rates were changed: Active from \$2 to \$4, Family from \$3 to \$6, Associate (no voting, only type of membership available to non-B.C. residents -- a definition which evolved into something totally different in later years) from Single \$1 and Family

\$1.50 to Single \$3 and Family \$5. (At this time memberships ran from June to May, which simplified keeping track of memberships but often led to budgeting problems toward the end of the 'BCSFA year'.)

It was also brought up that tickets for V-Con 5 were available at the Vancouver Ticket Centre and Eaton's downtown for \$9 each. (How did we manage that? Not repeated in later years. Did it cost us too high a percentage? A subject for further research.)

Al Betz was offered 1,000 free sheets of Gestetner paper in exchange for 16 tubes of ink he'd presented the club, which Al declined as the ink was a gift. The club extended their appreciation.

There is reference to "the first batch of 10 cassette tapes of SF shows received from Al Betz for the club library of audio cassette tapes." Said library no longer exists, unless it be in either the archives or stored alongside Al's personal collection. Again, subject for research. (Remember, these articles are only a first draft. I hope to publish a revised version separately, possibly some time early in the next century...)

And finally, policy was set that mail will be kept in a file at the home of the Information Officer (Editor), a policy still in effect today.

TO BE CONTINUED SOONEST.....