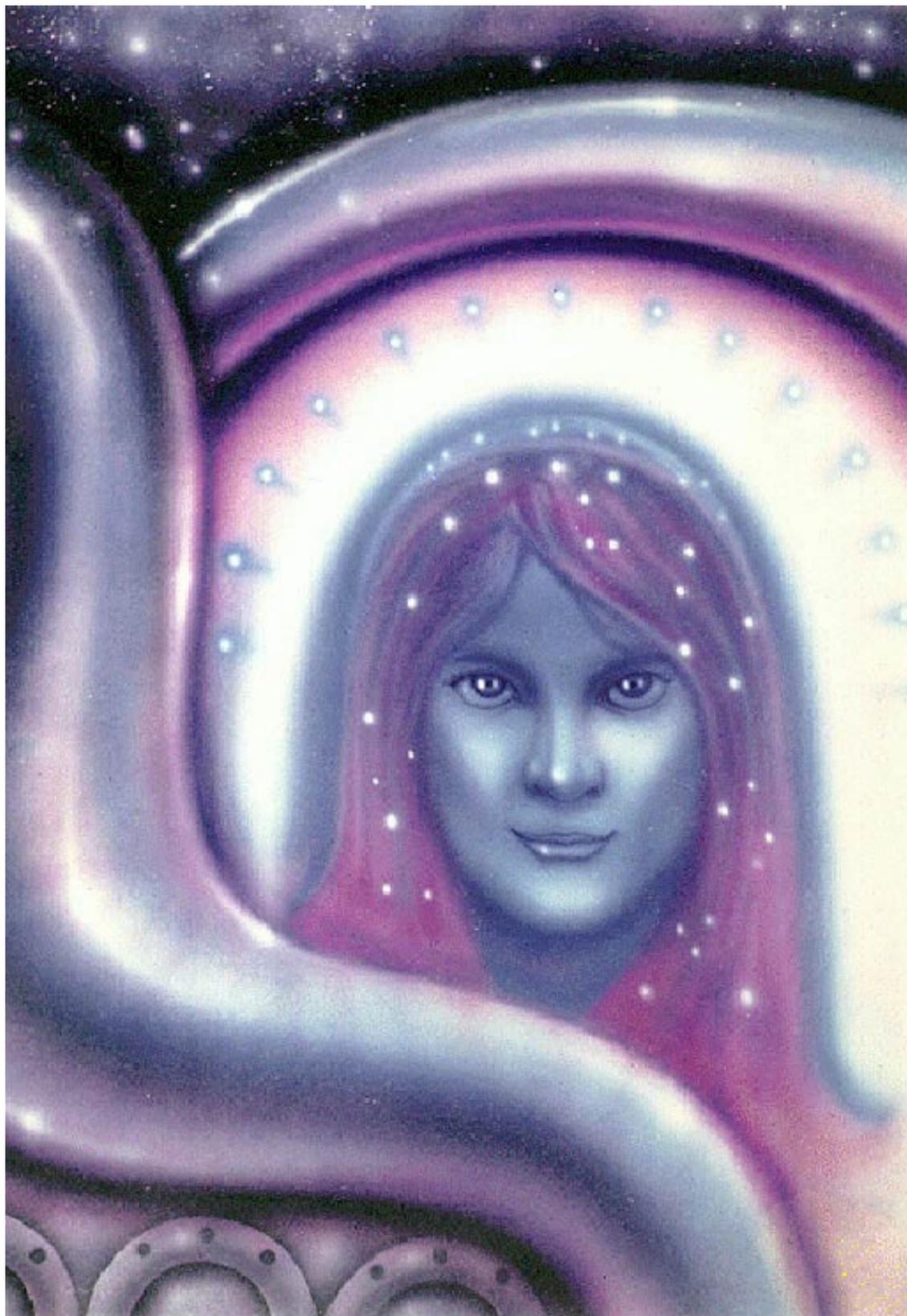


WCSF MAGAZINE

Vol. 27 Issue 10 Number 319
December 1999 \$2.50

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST COAST SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION



Serial Mainframe



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Peter Praises



Palle's Movie Mania



Web-Dragonriders

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 **BCSFAzine is also available as a full colour Adobe Acrobat file.**

WCSFACTIVITIES

F.R.E.D. - Every Friday

The weekly gathering of BCSFAns and all others interested in joining us for an evening of conversation and relaxation, with pool table option. At the Burrard Motor Inn opposite St. Paul's Hospital (Downtown Vancouver) 6 blocks south of Burrard Skytrain Station. 3 blocks west of Granville (where many buses run). #22 Knight/McDonald bus along Burrard. Begins 8:00pm. On the Friday before long weekends, FRED will be at the lounge of Bosman's Hotel. This is two blocks east and a part of a block north of the Burrard Motor Inn (actual address is 1060 Howe St.).

Contributor's Deadline - January 14th, February 18th, March 17th, April 14th, May 19th, June 16th Send, yourth, submissions/loc to John Wong at 2041 East 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V5N 1X9 or E-Mail me at woolf@vcn.bc.ca.

BCSFAzine Pickup/Collation at FRED - December 3rd. Friday before the first Sunday of the month. Pick up your issue of

BCSFAzine at FRED! Pristine, mint condition copies are available at FRED. Call Steve to let him know you wish to pick up your copy.

Discount Movie Nights.

\$2.00 Tuesdays are back! When? The second Tuesday of the month (Sep. 14th) at 6:30 pm. The place being New West Cinema at #229 - 555 Sixth Street, New Westminster. Meet in front of the Box Office at the above time and we'll decide on which movie, where to do coffee and in which order.

Annual Christmas Dinner December 11th, 7:00 pm at the home of Garth Spencer. 82 East 40th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. (near Main & 41st Avenue). The event is a potluck, but Garth will make a list of menu categories. Please call him and ask him what you can bring and he will check the item off the menu list. Phone: 325-7314

Saturday January 15th at 7 pm. **WCSFA Special Event. Modern Feminism inspired by 50's Space Babe.** Video lecture by R. Graeme Cameron. **VCON 25** planning meeting as well. 1129 Spruce Ave., Coquitlam, B.C. V3J 2P3

Keep an eye out here for future official WCSFA sponsored events.

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

Rustycon 2000 JANUARY 7-9, 2000 At the Everett Holiday Inn

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Artist Guest of Honor: Bear Brown

Fan Guest of Honor: Jon Gustafson

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Look for specials at con parties

At the Door: \$50.00 for the full weekend

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\$25.00 Saturday night (8:00pm) & Sunday

Address: Rustycon P.O. Box
84291 Seattle, WA. 98124-5591

Radcon February 18-20th, 2000! Will Be In The Pasco

Doubletree Inn 2525 N. 20th Ave.,
Pasco, WA 99301

Local Call: (509)-547-0701 or 1-800-222-TREE
Writer Guests of Honor

Steve Perry & Steve Barnes.

Artist GOH Elissa Mitchell,

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Rising Star Don DeBrandt,

Fan Guest Cthulhu Bob,

RadCon PMB# 162

2527 West Kennewick Ave

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\$15 Single Membership through InCon (October 15-17th, 1999.)

\$20 Single Membership until February 1st, 2000. \$25 At the door.

Potlatch 9 February 25-27, 2000, University Plaza Hotel, Seattle, Washington

New Rates: The membership rate for Potlatch 9 is still \$30, but the rate for the combined

Potlatch 9/Corflu 2000 (Corflatch) has been increased. Also, supporting memberships are available. These rates are subject to change:

Potlatch 9 Only: \$30 (£18.75)

Corflatch: \$70 (£45.00)

Supporting Membership: \$10 (£6.50)

Clarion West/Potlatch 9: Send to: P. O.

Box 31848 Seattle, WA 98103-1848.

Corflu 2000 March 3-5, 2000, University Plaza Hotel, Seattle, WA

Corflu Only: \$45 (£28.50)

"Carol Root/Corflu 2000" (if buying Corflu membership alone), or Potlatch 9/Clarion West (if buying both memberships); mail checks to

P.O. Box 31848 Seattle, WA 98103-1848.

LOC (LETTERS OF COMMENTS)

Dear John

First off, I may not be reading BCSFAzine since by the time this loc is published i still will be in my 6th month off welfare with only GST as income, and probably moved back in with my parents by December, oweing about \$360 on my rent.

I mention that not to get sympathy for my impoverished state.

If there's a rule about life, then it's this: never feel sorry for people

worse off than you. Just do something about bettering yourself, like meditation or peace activism. Oh, and avoid the deliberate overconsumption of alcohol alone. Sharing a beer means you get half of the buzz and twice the fun, especially with a nice slannish type of woman, or alien, or motss if that's your kink. Moderation is the key to a happy life. Buddhists know this better than a saint in Calcutta.

This loc has to do with death, in a way, since it's going to be Halloween, and my birthday happened on the eve of peace after 16 years of bloody fighting in Europe. Women helped to end that first experiment in new ways to make war hell like chemical warfare. Sanderon Beck details their experiences in one of his essays at <http://www.san.beck.org/WP29-Women.html>, a site on women and peace as the way to peace. I think that Biblical quote should be "Blessed be the peacemakers for they shall be daughters of all that is good in humanity." NATO's recent misuse as a tool of the warmakers proved only that the Americans were too slow to embarass Russia about those chemical and biological weapons they sold to the Serbs. Nobody won anything over Kosova, and people losts lives over nothing. This is the result of male dominance, so live with it. But please, work to change it or get out of my face!

Halloween was better off not being commercialized.

The eve of the Festival of the Dead was borrowed by the papists from the pagans. Then the Church got rid of the people who wouldn't go along with their politics. For politics and religion have been in bed together since some Neanderthal created the first grafitti a few 125,000 years ago. Or, is that 250,000? No matter, they're dead, probably absorbed into the sapients subspecies circa 50,000 years ago. It's debateable if neanderthalii were a separate species. I don't believe primitive humans were all that cruel and violent, except during the initial contact. Most people just want to be left in peace. War is unnatural.

Another reason for my topic of death is the Dr Media loc in #318.

At least that time, someone got caught after a convention-related death. Our first recorded death happened downtown prior to 1987. Steve40 related to me once about this. We had a memorial fund set up at one time for the lady. Same m.o. but that time, the lady was probably too far from the phone. I hope it was the same guy. That'd be karma, but I doubt it. There's more than one slidingdoor murderer in Vancouver, and it's possible they know each other. It's not an act of passion; it, like rape, is a violent act. Prison will take care of them, hopefully more swiftly than old age or cancer.

My birthday is on November 11, which is Remembrance Day in Canada and most Commonwealth countries. It's sickening to be reminded of the glorification of war that goes on that this time of year, though I will give my pennies to the cadets. Maybe this year I will rant about nonviolence and peace for their amusement.

When we perpetuate the myth that humanity has a natural tendency for violence, we do the world a great disservice, and treat our ancestors with the most severe forms of disrepect. Sure, it may be natural for animals

to be violent. The only thing natural about violence is animals do it for survival. We have no need to; we only want to do violence because we haven't mastered self-control and discipline in our short time on this planet. Being naturally lazy, humanity likes to find an easy way out. Violence is easier to commit than nonviolence. The latter takes more effort but proves we can evolve by brain not brawn, by intelligence and wit not muscles and genetics. To me, violence is plain childish. I'm sure the more intelligent of us can make use of the conclusions that

they come to after understanding what I am getting at.

Lest we forget...

In Gassho,

"Stephen H. Kawamoto"
[<skawamoto@alternatives.com>](mailto:skawamoto@alternatives.com)

Dear John/Ken:

I'm probably way behind, so here's a quick letter of comment on issue 315 of BCSFAzine.

The AGM and elections have taken place...I know now what has transpired, for I checked the website, and it hasn't been updated since July. I know that the soon-to-be-hitched God-archivist/secretary, R. Graeme Cameron, had decided to go for the even loftier position of God-president. No matter who went for what position, I hope you were able to elect at least five officers. I didn't know how precarious your society status was.

Peter Halasz of Mississauga attended ConSpec in Edmonton, representing the oronto on 2003 Worldcon bid. Many of us have been aware of the decline in nterest in the literary aspect of science fiction for some time; less than 70 people attended ConSpec. However, interest in a Toronto Worldcon is quite active; six pre-supporters were signed up, a good percentage for such a small con.

The letter column has had some great

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Then e-mail me at woolf@vcn.bc.ca and let me know that you want to switch your subscription over. You will then receive the next zine in your e-mail.

A sample copy of the Acrobat BCSFAzine is available on our website.

<http://www3.bc.sympatico.ca/dh2/bcsfa>

discussions in it, thanks to Lisa Gemino...yes, the fugghead factor in Fandom is significant. But, they are outnumbered by the good folks who make Fandom fun and worthwhile. The fuggheads make life unpleasant for those of us just trying to enjoy what we do, but we can't let them run our lives, or run local Fandom. We continue on with our activities, and ignoring the fuggheads with push them out or drive them away soon enough. I respect Lisa's opinion, and wish that her experiences had been more positive. I am one of those who speak of Fandom as a family, probably because the majority of my experience have been positive.

Aileen Forman echoes what many other female friends of mine have said...they feel safe. It's a feeling they don't often have in society, or in school, or even at work. At a con, or at a club meeting, they feel safe and secure, and able to have male friends without fearing they're going to be hit upon, or ogled, or groped, and that is a statement of trust of at least some male fans...the smart ones will not betray that trust, and neither will I. I have female friends who I am very close to, and I treasure them and the fact they trust me. My fannish experience is that a hug is as good as a hello, if not better, and that kind of human contact with those female friends is so important to me.

I never saw The Blair Witch Project, and I probably never will...doesn't appeal. However, it has tweaked a wry sense of humour in many people. How many companies have parodied this movie and its graphics? One local chain, Jack Astor's, has done so, and similar parodies have shown up on Space:The Imagination Station and on TeleToon. And, I suspect, just about every guy named Blair has taken a teasing over this, too...

Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars trilogy (now a tetralogy, with the addition of The Martians) is a series of books I've yet to get and read. The reviews have been uniformly rave. If a mini-series can be created from them, I think they could create some excellent television. The X-Men movie is in progress...Ray Park may not be looking forward to coming back to Toronto to work on this movie. Park was scheduled to be the main guest at a hug event in Toronto this past August called SFX, or the Canadian National Science Fiction Exposition. Park cancelled out at the last minute, and refused to return the money forwarded to him for transportation and fees. When he arrives to work on this new movie, SFX's lawyers will serve him with paper...he will have to show up in a courtroom at some point to defend himself. (Patrick Stewart and Famke Janssen will be reunited in this movie... Ms. Janssen guest-starred in a Next Generation episode some years ago.)

Finally, here are the results of this year's Aurora Awards...

The Aurora Awards, Canada's national science fiction and fantasy awards, were handed out at InConsequential II/CanVenton 18 on October 17, 1999. Here are this year's winners...

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- Best Long-Form Work in English:
Darwinia by Robert Charles Wilson (Tor, Jun/98)
 - Meilleur livre en francais (Best Long-Form Work in French):
orps-machine etreves d'anges par Alain Bergeron (Vents d'Ouest, 97)
 - Best Short-Form Work in English:
"Hockey's Night in Canada" by Edo van Belkom (Arrowdreams)
 - Meilleure nouvelle en francais (Best Short-Form Work in French): La Demoiselle sous la lune" par Guy Sirois (Fantasy, Fleuve Noir)
 - Best Other Work in English: Arrowdreams:
An Anthology of Alternative Canadas, Mark Shainblum and John Dupuis, eds. (Nuage Editions) (anthology)
 - Meilleur ouvrage en francais (Autre) (Best Other Work in French): (tie) "L'entreprise de Frankenstein" par John Dupuis (Solaris 126) Jean-Louis Trudel, critiques (Solaris 124-127)
 - Artistic Achievement: Jean-Pierre Normand
 - Fan Achievement (Fanzine):
Warp, Lynda Pelley, ed. (Montreal SF&F Association) (clubzine)
 - Fan Achievement (Organizational):
Ann Methe (Con*cept '98, chair)
 - Fan Achievement (Other):
Janet L. Hetherington (Co-curator, 60 Years of Superman exhibit at the Nepean Museum, Nepean, Ontario)
- And, also, as you can see from above, our new e-mail address is Penneys@netcom.ca. We still have to download an Adobe reader, but we'll do that when the next BCSFAzine arrives, I hope soon.
- Yours,

Lloyd Penney

Dear John:

The latest issue of BCSFAzine has arrived in an envelope that bears witness to the marvels of postal science. On its front are two bar codes, one in black running halfway across the width of the envelope, the other somewhat shorter in orange. On the reverse of the envelope the orange bar code is imprinted, this time running slightly more than half the width. There is a postmark bearing the date of October 4, cleverly disguised in a combination of Roman and Arabic numerals, stamped above the postmark is a long line of letters and numerals which include the date of October 3, and there are no fewer than three imprints of the mystic runes, POSTAL CODE. The missive arrived here on October 14, only a little slower than the pony express would have delivered it.

I wouldn't have recognized Marion Zimmer Bradley from your cover photo, based on my memory of our only face-to-face encounter many years ago and several pictures that have appeared in fanzines over the years. Apparently it was taken before she began to suffer the ravages of the ill health that had plagued her last years.

A fellow would probably need to be a longtime member of BCSFA to understand fully all the allusions in the loc from "Stephen H. Kawamoto". But I hope that he will reconcile himself to the fact that what is past is past and there's still a present and a future to enjoy in fandom.

The letter from Lisa is quite moderate and should help to prevent the discussion from turning into something nasty.

Maybe Halle Berry's troubles are based on the fact that there's no Justice anymore in her life. Palle's cast list for the new Lord of the Rings film cheered me up immensely because I had somehow acquired the idea the Christopher Lee had died, and there he is, as big as life, in a major role. Didn't John Rhys-Davies also get practice in

fantasy movies in the role of the Professor in the first year of Sliders? I remember the character because my initial impression was that Pavarotti had lost his voice and turned to television acting to make a living. And I wish Hollywood had chosen one of Stanley Weinbaum's space adventures to film instead of The Adaptive Ultimate which was more original as a story when first published than it is today after squillions of written and filmed stuff based on the same idea.

**Yrs., &c.,
Harry Warner Jr.**

Dear John who is really Ken:

Sorry for the long absence...we have a new computer, a new e-mail address (penneys@netcom.ca), and a lot of bid work to do...finally got around to downloading Adobe Reader, and now I have two issues of BCSFAzine to catch up with, 317 and 318. (Not sure I ever got 316...if you could send that along, I'd make sure.)

I've got one problem...I printed out two zines, one with a space city on the front cover, and one with the late Marion Zimmer Bradley on the cover. Both zines say Vol. 27 Issue 10, Number 317 on the cover. I look to the masthead on page two, and they both say June 1999, Volume 27, #9, Issue 316. It took me some leafing through both zines until I could figure out that the zine with the Bradley cover is 317, and the one with the space city is 318. Don't mean to take you to task, but I'm sure that Garth the club archivist will at some point.

A very interesting letter from Stephen Kawamoto. If only we could come complete with social skills, growing up would be much less painful. However, we must learn these skills, and it takes time; for some, more time than others. It sounds like Stephen has grown up in more ways than one, and will keep himself away from his preferred social situation until he is confident he can interact the way he'd like. This journey of self-discovery has probably been a painful one, but it has also been instructive. I hope Stephen can return to enjoy time with friends again.

I understand Harry Warner's frustration at rudeness. People now break minor laws and bylaws with impunity, unconsciously knowing that no one's around to enforce them. Companies couldn't care less about enforcing their own laws, or laws they are bound to enforce for another jurisdiction. Parking, smoking, speeding, trespassing, drinking... there are laws concerning all of these, but society as a whole seems to be saying, "Well, they can't arrest/fine/ticket/catch us all..." Malice and apathy rule today.

I hope you got the Aurora Award results I sent to you...no, I didn't win, but I am happy that Janet Hetherington won for her display of Superman through the years at the Nepean Museum.

Lisa Gemino tears down much of fandom's community...such community and family may be a fallacy for her, but not for a great many others. As I read this article, I can sense a lot of anger and disgust for fandom...she says she respects the opinions of people, and Garth and Graeme in particular, and then rips them apart. Lisa, they sympathize with you, and do not mean to place words in your mouth. Based on the article and your experiences, and your reactions, it may be time to put all of your fan activities behind you and leave for anything that will make you happier. Either that, or learn not to let them bother you.

The Lord of the Rings movie sounds like something to see; I might just make this one once it's in the theatres. The movie Supernova sounds like it's been taken from the late James White's Sector General novels.

318...Our First Thursday pubnights have finally found a new home...to the delight of most, we now have some facilities at The Granite Brewery, near Mount Pleasant Rd. and Eglinton Ave. E. As I write this, it is a First Thursday night, and we are off to party...

I shouldn't be too surprised at the decision of HBO not to take on the new Doctor Who series...not even the BBC understood the series too well, after becoming an SF adventure after its start as a children's show. Didn't know that Patrick Stewart went for the role of the Doctor in the 1970...he'd be even more elegant and refined than Jon Pertwee if he got the role. I have enjoyed all of Stewart's work...he is a fine actor and gentleman, and I suspect that if offered the role, he'd take it and play it for a lark.

More LotR casting...Brad Dourif is an interesting character actor. He's had roles in various series, such as Babylon 5 and ST:TNG, as characters that range from disturbed to deranged to psychotic.

Good words from the God-President...I would recommend having a look through all the other clubzines BCSFA trades for. They are full of past activities that others enjoyed and that this club may enjoy, too.

A tidbit of interesting news from our home...I may be in two movies. The first is a documentary that is being shot by Pete McGarvey and Don Hutchison on science fiction fandom. Pete is an amateur film maker, Don a professional TV and film person for many years, and both were involved in Toronto fandom as far back as the 50s. They will be talking to and filming Yvonne and myself, and following the Worldcon bid until the vote at next year's Worldcon in Chicago. The second movie is having its screenplay written right now...it's based on Robert Sawyer's novel *Illegal Alien*, in which Robert wrote me in as a character. Michael Lennick is a producer and special effects man based in Toronto, and an old friend. He bought the film rights for the book from Robert, and has told me his intentions to keep my character in the final script. I may wind up on the cutting room floor, but this may be my first chance to act in a movie. I may play Dr. Lloyd Penney, the forensic psychologist with a penchant for tacky tropical shirts, if I remember how Rob worded it...myself, but yet, not myself. If everything pans out, 2000 will be an amazing year for me. All I can say is, bring it on, I'm ready!

There may also be some interesting V-Con news soon...keep watching these pages!

Time to wrap it up...take care all, and see you next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

JWICK,

As a 23-year-old fan who spent most of her formative years at SF conventions and grew up with Heinlein juveniles as bed-time stories, I am quite insulted by Harry Warner, JR's statement about age restrictions on what should be read. "Lisa impresses me as being a bit too young to take refuge in fiction written long ago when she feels in the mood to read fantasy or science fiction." By this same mindset, most people alive today are too young to be reading Jane Austen for a good woman's story or Oscar Wilde when they want a cynical yet clever comedy/drama, and NO ONE can read Shakespeare when they're in the mood for a family drama or a comedy of errors (no pun intended, really.)

The reason Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke and Fritz Leiber works are considered classics is that they have no age limit. Yes, there are authors out there today who are of the same calibre, but that doesn't mean that a young fan is not entitled to appreciate the roots of the genre. Some of my fondest memories from childhood are my mother sitting on the edge of my bed, reading to me from *Have Space-Suit, Will Travel*. Kip, PeeWee and Mother Thing were my heroes, and still hold a special place in my heart. And so what if the technical descriptions usually put me to sleep, I can appreciate them now. And I do. Often.

Pauline Walsh



PETER PRAISES: THE IRON GIANT

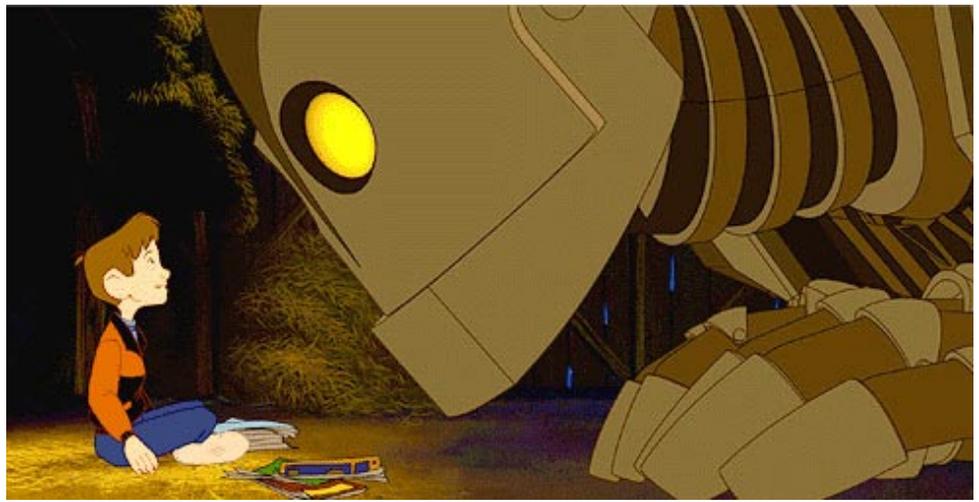
It's generally agreed that Disney has a lock on the American animated feature. Even the competitors seem to succeed to the degree that they follow the Disney formula; witness *The Prince of Egypt*.

Warner Bros. has a strange habit of producing or distributing animated features that try to break new ground, and then giving them half-hearted promotion in the theatres. Remember *Cats Don't Dance*? *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm*? Both had feeble advertising campaigns and no advance screenings for reviewers, resulting in poor box office. WB seems to be creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. If they think no animated movie can take on the Mouse House's annual big feature, why bother spending money to promote it?

What's regrettable about this is that a number of worthwhile features have gone to video after feeble, unheralded theatrical runs. *Mask of the Phantasm* was the first American action animation released in theatres in years, and boasted a better, smarter story than any of the live action *Batman* movies. This pattern seems to have repeated itself with the Warner Bros. animated feature, *The Iron Giant*, and an intelligent, heartfelt movie may end up buried deep in the video store, unseen.

The movie's story only loosely follows the original children's book. It's set in a sleepy New England fishing town, in 1957, shortly after the launch of Sputnik. Hogarth is a lonely but otherwise ordinary young boy living with his single working mother.

The giant robot of the title is of unknown



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origin and purpose, stranded on Earth alone and amnesiac. It subsists on metal and wanders about the forest, taking bites out of cars and farm equipment. When the Robot snacks on Hogarth's TV antenna, the boy follows it



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to a power station. There, the Robot is ensnared in power lines, but Hogarth risks his own life to free this unknown being.

Hogarth seeks out the Robot again in order to prove that he's not lying about it, but instead strikes up a friendship. The Ro-

bot is the ultimate kid's companion, capable of great feats but also needing Hogarth's companionship and guidance. It's the world's greatest toy, big brother and kid brother combined, exactly what Hogarth needs.

Things drift a bit in the second act, when Hogarth's at-

tempts to hide the Robot produce some overly broad humor (and make his Mom look like an idiot.) This is compensated by the genuinely warm relationship between Hogarth and his new friend. They play *Spaceman Spiff* in a junkyard in one scene and in the next Hogarth gently teaches the Robot that "it's bad to kill, but it's not bad to die," as they look at a deer shot by hunters. It's rare to see a child both innocent and wise so believably.

Along the way, our heroes are aided by Dean, a Beatnik scrap dealer/artist, and hounded by Kent Mansley, an investigator from a 'shadowy government agency'. Dean is played straight, instead of as a period caricature, and provides the Robot with his junkyard as hiding place and buffet. Mansley, by comparison, is 50s xenophobia and priggishness incarnate; a *Man In Plaid*.

The most intriguing character is the Robot itself. Over the course of the movie, it transforms from mute enigma to appealing innocent as Hogarth teaches it speech and values of morality and self-determination. At the beginning of the story, we wonder if the strange visitor is a threat. By the climax, with nuclear annihilation looming, we wonder what the Robot itself wants.

There were times I wished the story had taken a more complex turn. For instance, Mansley could have been motivated by genuine concern for his country, instead of ambition and knee-jerk xenophobia, and possibly sown seeds of doubt in Hogarth's mind about his new friend.

Another undeveloped character is Hogarth's mother who is, well, a mom. The story implies that her absent husband was a pilot killed in the Korean War. This further suggests that she is the source of the lessons about life and death and right and wrong that Hogarth imparts to the Robot. However, these only hint at any depths to this stereotypical clueless but loving mom.

Continued Next Page... 

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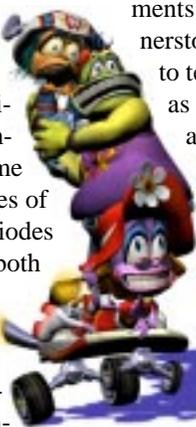
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SERIAL MAINFRAME

Mainframe Entertainment, the Vancouver-based computer animation studio, is probably best-known for its ground-breaking CGI TV series, ReBoot. This first-ever computer animated TV series debuted on television across North America in the Fall of 1994 and the company hasn't looked back since. Six years later Mainframe has 5 series on North American TV including 39 episodes of ReBoot, 39 episodes of Beasties — Transformers, 26 episodes of Shadowriaders, and Beast Machines and Weird-Ohs, both currently enjoying top five ratings in their first seasons.

The company has made great use of the SciFi genre in most of its productions because, as President & CEO Ian Pearson says, "In science fiction you can have wonderful surreal characters in weird and outlandish environ-



ments. That's a gimme for computer animation". However the cornerstone for all of Mainframe's productions is having a good story to tell. Says Pearson, "If you don't have a good story, you might as well not bother - doesn't matter whether its animation, live action or a puppet show!"

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This is the first in a series of article from Mainframe Entertainment for the BCSFAzine. Thank you to Mairi Welman, Mainframe Director of Communications and Adria Budd, Assistant to Ian Pearson, Mainframe CEO for this article.



...continued from last page.

It's unfair, however, to criticize this movie for not going a little further when it has already gone so much farther than expected. It breaks with Disney's post-Little Mermaid formula beautifully. There are no songs (well, one musical montage.) There are no cute sidekicks. There's a pleasant scarcity of merchandising hooks. The sense of humor is generally less slapstick, and the in-jokes for adults are less forced.

Perhaps a lot of this stems from the fact that The Iron Giant is born from one mind: Brad Bird, who directed and shared screenplay work with Tim McCanlies. There's a focussed, personal quality to the story that's absent in other animated features, which are often literally written by committee (Mulan boasted 6 writers.) Bird's well-considered ideas behind are elegantly demonstrated by his story.

As is typical for animated movies these days, computer-generated action is mixed with traditional ink and paint. This is used expertly to render the Robot, giving it solidity and realism, but also emphasizing its alien quality. It's an angular, metallic figure in a world of soft lines and earth tones. The

backgrounds are warm autumn greens and browns that change to stark whites and grays with the first snowfall in the final act. The character designs have an interesting, 50s look to them.

It's interesting that The Iron Giant may be a much more powerful story for the adults today who grew up under the threat of nuclear annihilation. Post-Cold War children may not get the satirical asides about "duck and cover" or feel the sense of dread at the sight of a missile rising out of the sea.

Note to parents: not having kids myself, I'm hard pressed to judge The Iron Giant on its suitability for children. The kids who were in the theatre with me for the Sunday matinee mostly laughed in the right spots and paid attention in the right spots. While there's a lot that will go over the heads of young children, the relationship between Hogarth and the Robot is very accessible. The messages about violence, self-determination and mortality may require some explanation from parents, but its good that a movie encourages kids to consider these issues.

Disney does not own the animated feature, and the animated feature need not include cute talking animals. My hope is that the upcoming release of Hayao Miyazaki's

masterpiece, Princess Mononoke, will show audiences, animators and producers that the action/adventure animated feature is viable in North America. In the meantime, treat yourself to this movie.

The Iron Giant will be released on video on November 23rd.

It may not still be in theatres by the time you read this, but I want to recommend the Japanese animated feature Princess Mononoke, created by anime legend Hayao Miyazaki (My Neighbor Totoro, Kiki's Delivery Service).

This medieval fantasy is definitely not for young children; apart from frightening monsters, there a fair degree of violence. However, these are small parts of a story that is a powerful allegory about the conflict of nature and civilization and the danger of consuming hatred, told with beautiful visuals. Even the dubbed English dialogue, adapted by Neil Gaiman and performed by name American actors (Billy Bob Thornton, Minnie Driver), sounds natural and eloquent. This may be the best English adaptation of Japanese animation ever.

Peter Tupper



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By Palle Hoffstein

First of all, let me say that the Devlin/Emmerich **Godzilla** movie sucked big-time. Not only was it not a good movie, it just wasn't **Godzilla**. Which is why I'm happy that the good people at Toho Studios are producing **Godzilla Millennium** as their big-budget 'Zilla flick. December 1999 will see the release in Japan and expect a later release date here in North America, if it gets any local distribution at all. I'm actually expecting to go straight to video here. **Kenji Suzuki** is directing, **Hiroshi Kashiwabara** and **Wataru Mimura** wrote the script and **Tsutomu Kitagawa** is the man in the rubber suit. The story involves (spot the subtext) **Godzilla** attacking Japan's major energy-producing centres, especially it's nuclear power plants. Then a UFO arrives and attacks **Godzilla**! To find out more check out Toho's English language web page at www.godzilla.co.jp/godzilla_2000/e_index.html or if you speak Japanese at http://www.godzilla.co.jp/godzilla_2000/welcome_j.html.

The Sixth Day, Columbia Picture's latest **Arnold Schwarzenegger** SF epic starts shooting here in Vancouver this December. I had previously mentioned this project as a **Joe Dante** picture but the director is now listed as **Roger Spottiswoode** (Tomorrow Never Dies). I don't know if Dante is still involved. Also starring **Michael Rooker** (the Bone Collector), **Michael Rapaport** (Copland) and **Sarah Wynter** (Species II). Schwarzenegger is the helicopter pilot who, after a near-fatal accident, discovers that he has been replaced by a clone of himself. When the clone's creators realise that the pilot is still alive the hunt begins. I can't get excited by this film myself, but I know that there's lots of Arnie fans out there. If you see a yellow Hummer driving around that's probably him. Expect the film's title to have changed by the time of the film's release.

An interesting project has developed within Columbia/Tristar. **The Darkness**, based on the dark, gritty super-hero comic book of the same name written by the talented **Garth Ennis**. What makes this project a little more promising than the myriad other comic book projects out

there is that Hong Kong action director **Andrew Lau** is behind this project. Andrew Lau is arguably HK's most lauded action director since **John Woo**. He has already had great success with filmic adaptations of Asian comic books such as **Stormriders** and **Hero From China**; adaptations that have impressed the comic book's fans. I saw Stormriders at an SF convention and it was pretty damn cool. The Darkness is about a hitman, orphaned in his youth, who becomes fabulously wealthy, then masters a force-like power called the Darkness that gives him tremendous power at night. In it's way it's a take on the Batman archetype.

Not to be outdone, 20th Century Fox has picked up the movie rights to **Alan Moore's The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen**. Moore, possibly the best Comic book writer of all time, is unfortunately not set to write the screenplay. That task has been given to **Alex Ayers**. **Don Murphy** is producing. The excellent science fiction comic chronicles the adventures of a special team of agents in an alternative 1898. The names of the agents should be familiar to most readers: Ms. Mina Murray, Mr. Allan Quartermain, Captain Nemo, Dr. Henry Jekyll, Dr. Hawley Griffin (a.k.a. The Invisible Man). Apparently, Moore sold the film rights to Fox before he even got the comic book published. The screenplay is nearly done it's second draft so now would be the time that the producers would be looking for a director. This could be a very cool project if handled right. Check out the comics if you can.

This winter will bring the release of **Pitch Black** from Polygram. I mentioned this film a few months ago as **Nightfall** (not to be confused with the Azimov story), the project's original name. This flick is really looking to be nothing more than an Alien's rip off. The aliens even look a lot like the beasts from that famous film series, but with the addition of wings. Groan! Directed by the very inconsistent **David Twohy** (The Arrival), who co-wrote the script, and starring **Radha Mitchell**, **Vin Diesel** (Saving Private Ryan), **Cole Hauser** (Good Will Hunting) and **Claudia Black** (Hercules, The Legendary Journeys). The premise: survivors of a crippled

spacecraft are marooned on an alien world where the sun never sets. The creatures on this planet are all nocturnal and stay underground BUT an eclipse (apparently a long eclipse) occurs and the nasties come out. One of the ship's passengers happens to be a deadly killer on his way to prison, his eyes have been enhanced for night vision, but he's almost blinded by daylight unless he wears special goggles. It all sounds fairly ridiculous to me, but hey, I'll probably see it. **Pitch Black** premiered at a couple of conventions where the reviews were quite mixed but even those that hated the film felt that there were parts that are very well done. The ship crash at the beginning and the film's ending have been noted as well done.

I've been holding off mentioning this next film just because I hate Tim Allen. I really hate Tim Allen. However, this is to be released soon and it wouldn't hurt me to be a little objective about things. **Galaxy Quest!** from Dreamworks/SKG is coming out this upcoming Christmas Day and it might actually be a lot of fun. The premise: The lead actor of a popular SF television series (in the William Shatner mold) and the rest of his "crew" are abducted by aliens who think that they're the real deal, enlisting them into a real interstellar war. Of course the crew cannot meet the expectations of the aliens but have to do their best. **Tim Allen** plays the "captain" and **Sigourney Weaver** (as a blonde!), the amazing **Alan Rickman**, **Tony Shalhoub**, **Daryl Mitchell** and **Enrico Colantoni** make up the rest of the crew. **Dean Parisot** (Home Fires) is directing, **Robert Gordon** and **David Howard** have written the script and the excellent **Stan Winston** (Aliens, Edward Scissorhands, Jurassic Park, The Terminator) is behind the special makeup effects. Industrial Light & Magic are doing the special effects. Like anything Dreamworks makes this is big-budget. The film trailer parodies the old Star Trek sandy rocks sets beautifully, Alan Rickman plays an "alien" in bad latex makeup and Allen is pompous and emotive as the Captain. Check out the official web page at www.galaxyquest.com and even better is Travis Latke's fan site at www.galaxyquest.com/galaxyquest. It's a mock fan-site shrine to the

imaginary TV series, complete with a story synopsis for every episode. It's a pretty good parody of TV fandom.

I'm going to do something I don't plan to do on a regular basis at MovieMania: review a couple of movies. I saw **Princess Mononoke** at the Oakridge Cinemas, one of only two screens in the lower mainland that are showing this film. In a year that I consider to be the best for film in over a decade this film stands as one of my favourites. It's a medieval fantasy that works at the same level of a good fantasy novel, possibly the first time this has been done in my eyes. **Neil Gaiman's** English script was fabulous. **Studio Ghibli** actually went to the trouble of re-animating lip movements to match his dialogue when he was worried that the synchs would be too far off, so the dubbing is never distracting. High praise for the voice work, especially from **Billy Crudup** as the hero, **Minnie Driver** as the misguided Noblewoman and **Gillain Anderson** whose rich voice lent the Wolf God a warm and wise nobility. Only **Billy Bob Thornton** seemed somewhat miscast to me. The film is breathtaking to look at, for it's backgrounds, character animation and director **Hayao Miyazaki's** trademark animation of weather, water and animals. The musical score might be the best I've heard all year. Certainly not a Disney film: the young prince who's quest is the heart of the narrative is intelligent and resourceful, rather than the bumbling, lots-to-learn stereotype we're so used to in feature animation. There are no musical numbers, no silly sidekicks. There are no villains, evil just for the sake of driving the plot. Even the characters who

ultimately are the film's antagonists are complex, capable of compassion and have reasons for what they do. The action is exciting, beautifully choreographed and wildly cinematic in scope. The film is moralistic in it's approach to it's environmental theme of progress versus nature, but not preachy or ever sappy. Most importantly this cartoon is magic: some scenes give me a chill now just to remember them. It's animistic world of gods is what most fantasy strives for; a synthesis of the ordinary lives of people with the wondrous and fantastic. If you love fantasy, please do yourself the favour of seeing this lovely film, in the theatre if you can. And if you are not a fan of Japanese animation, let me offer that neither am I. This is perhaps the first feature-length cartoon that has the best of what Disney offers, without their trademark crap, and the best of Anime, without the stilted animation or convoluted plots. Which leads me to my complaints on how this film is being handled. Over two years ago **Disney Studios** proudly announced that they were handling the North American release of this film (the English version has been complete for a year now). And yet they gave the film little advertising, no theatrical trailers and they held off it's release date until the release date of the **Pokemon Movie** is announced. Of course no North American theatre wants to carry two Japanese cartoons simultaneously and guess which one they chose. I'm wondering if Disney bought Princess Mononoke to bury it, to lose it in the shuffle. I would call this movie the first animated movie to raise the bar over anything Disney has done, and also having the potential for wide popular appeal. If you are an anime purist, by the way, usually opting for subtitled over the dubbed, you might find it interesting that many Japanese speakers who have seen both versions consider the English version to be the stronger, and Gaiman's changes to be improvements.

While on the subject of Studios it was interesting to read some comments that director **Tim Burton** made recently on the Howard Stern show and on a couple of other programs. He talked about how marketing drives the production of so many films. While trying to get his **Superman** project of the ground Burton was advised that the executives didn't like the red tights, they wanted Superman to wear shorts like Michael Jordan's, that his uniform should incorporate corduroy because corduroy is currently popular, and that there should be flames on his boots! While working on **Batman 2** the merchandising team at McDonald's saw some of the daily production rushes showing the penguin drooling black ooze out of his mouth and they complained vehemently that this would

hurt merchandising sales. For the rest of the film shoot Burton had to endure McDonald's executives on-set, looking over his shoulder at all aspects of production. The same happened on Mars Attacks (a most mis-understood film) to the point that Burton had to do some stuff secretly, away from studio and merchandiser eyes. You can't properly make a movie that way. Apparently his **Sleepy Hollow** was done as an odd, violent film from it's inception to keep interested merchandisers away and give Burton some room (as worked for him on Ed Wood). I saw Sleepy Hollow last night and his efforts are worth it. It is one of the most grisly and gothic films I ever seen and yet every moment is beautiful and stunning to look at. Every scene is a perfectly realised creation of a past that never existed, a nightmare fairy-tale world come to life. **Johnny Depp**, one of the best film actors ever as far as I'm concerned, and certainly one of the most-chameleon-like, is wonderful in his third film with Burton. His careful attention to the mannerisms and speech patterns of his character are a joy to watch. The script is wonderfully mannered, quite accurate as 1799 dialogue and true to the Hammer-horror film style that the film so carefully imitates. The whole film is an homage to the Hammer style of film-making (and Hammer veteran Christopher Lee makes a cameo). The whole thing is done in a limited colour palate that both accentuates the gothic tone of the work while being reminiscent of colours of cheap colour film. **Christopher, Christina Ricchi**, and a personal favourite of mine **Jeffrey Jones** were all terrific and composer **Danny Elfman** (who has scored every Burton movie) offers one of his best scores to date.

Burton, like New Zealander Peter Jackson is one of my heroes; he understands fantasy and SF and makes movies for fantasy and SF fans, not really for the general public. Like Mars Attacks, The Nightmare Before Christmas and Ed Wood I suspect that most of the people who see this movie won't quite "get it." There were groans in the theatre from most of the audience at dialogue that likely sounded cliched or events of plot that maybe seemed hackneyed, that were all internally consistent and consistent with the style of film-making being honoured. But audiences are used to movies that take place in the past where everyone talks like today (or worse they talk like Lawrence Olivier doing Shakespeare). Most SF and Fantasy films are made by people with no particular love of the genres for audiences with no particular love of the genres. Burton and Miyazaki have given us two wonderful exceptions this autumn.

Next month: The Year In Movies! with an emphasis on fantasy and SF.



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THE FINAL WORD ON LISA

I felt somewhat like Jerry Springer when I wrote this article. However, I soon realised that the materials covered would make for a very low rated show. In issue 313, Lisa's article on the state of fandom generated a lot of mail. Over the five months that followed, we had commentary from people who are not regular LoC'ers. Not only that, it generated much discussion among members whenever they got together. There was concern that the article and the subsequent letters may be bad for the club; that the points brought up from the discussion may divide the club and drive members away. The fear is that the letters column will become full of feuding letters which may get out of hand. It is with this in mind, (and the fact that the comments seem to be slowing down) that I throw some more fuel on the flames and close out any more commentary on this topic.

Let's start with Lisa's statement, "Fans disgust me". If ever there was a natural sub-header to an article, I have yet to come across it. Starting the first line of a new topic, I made the decision to bring people's attention to it by making it big, bright, and bold. It didn't help when I included a disclaimer in bright big blocky letters just before that statement. As a result, the line got more attention and emphasis than was intended. That is my fault.

As for the rest of the article, it was unfortunate that Lisa's article gave the impression that all fans are as she described, "the rudest, most ignorant, most inescapably uncaring people I have ever met in my life." In a subsequent response to the letters that we

received, Lisa qualified her response with the fact that there were some fans that she respected.

For the most part, the LoC'ers have been in agreement with Lisa. "I failed to think Lisa Gemino's article was so terrible in its accusations. Courtesy and contempt for the rights of others have grown so monstrously in recent decade that we would need to seek a supernatural explanation if fandom failed to share this problem. ... But I find mundanes behaving just as bad as fans in most places I frequent." Harry Warner Jr. (BCSFazine 317) However, they also point out that, in general, it is only a minority of the fans who are problematic. "I will agree with Lisa, but only to an extent. Some fans disgust me, with overweening egos, or lack of personal hygiene or social skills. They are in the minority. The majority of fans are great people." Lloyd Penney (BCSFazine 315).

Many of the LoC's compared the general public with fandom. The common consensus among the letters was that there is an equal ratio of idiots in fandom as in "regular society." "I take away the impression that most SF&F fans are just like hockey fans...some are very good people, some are absolute idiots and most are Nice People." Randy Barnhart (BCSFazine 318)

Graeme Cameron put it all into perspective though, when he commented on Lisa's "short list of rude and annoying behaviour of a minor and really quite insignificant nature." Graeme Cameron (BCSFazine 316). The things listed by Lisa in her original article are, to be fair, things you would find in mundane society. Lisa's main complaint though, is that she came across all this behaviour over a short period of time, (less than a month). I personally do not expect to come across more than two or three of the listed offences during an entire year outside of fandom. When there is such a high concentration of annoying behaviour in a single group, people question the nature of that gathering. Are the members of that group really people worth hanging around?

What surprises me the most about the letters we have been getting is the lack of anger in the letters. "I think the responses to Lisa's article inside are quite moderate in tone and well reasoned." Harry Warner, JR. (BCSFazine 318) One letter even professed to be a member of the minority which Lisa discusses. "Were I more courteous and polite, I might have never joined BCSFA or attended cons at all." Stephen Kawamoto (BCSFazine 317) The point made here is that

he found a group that was willing to put up with his behaviour. This is good up to a point.

Lisa's statement that the tolerance of bad behaviour in fandom does not necessarily nurture the individuals, but gives them a haven to continue such bad behaviour is one which I personally agree with. Without any corrective encouragement, the individuals will continue in their path of exclusion in "normal society. "People are what they are. You can't change them. So don't bother trying. Fandom, and conventions in particular, are a smorgasbord of potential human relations. Just pick and choose those you want and ignore the ones you reject. What could be simpler?" Graeme Cameron (BCSFazine 316) Implied here is that you let them continue on in their behaviour. "The minority of isfits serves a valuable purpose, actually...they provide the best examples of what not to do in fandom." Lloyd Penney (BCSFazine 315). Unfortunately, they may become more abusive and undesirable as a result of their being coddled in fandom. "Maybe there's a tendency in this sort of small interest group to tolerate socially inept behaviour far too much, and far too long." Garth Spencer (BCSFazine 316). Bad behaviour breeds more bad behaviour. Alarmingly, the actions of an individual soon become the actions of an entire group.

If fandom continues to look away every time some fan behaves badly, there is no incentive for the other fans to change. It is one thing to tolerate a certain degree of bad behaviour. It is quite another to turn a blind eye to it. Some people have come into fandom because they were shunned by the rest of society. If these fans are the same ones that Lisa's article spoke of, then there was a very good reason for their exclusion from mundane society. Fandom's tolerance should not be an excuse to be rude or uncaring towards fellow fans or even towards the rest of society. We should be there to help the misunderstood to blend into society better. As a group, fans are weird. This is the element of which society tags us with. We should tolerate the weird, not be badly behaved.

Lisa's article is a wakeup call for fandom. She has pointed out a problem in our group. Her tone may not have been the best one to take, I myself increased the tone by enhancing the wrong element, however, it takes a real friend to come up to you and tell you what a jerk you have been acting like lately. It gives you a chance to change.

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