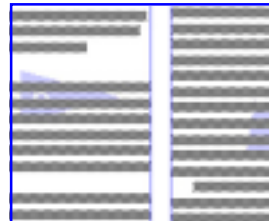


# WCSF FANZINE

Vol. 28 Issue 5 Number 324  
May 2000 \$3.00

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST COAST SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION



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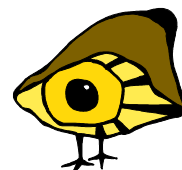
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Family (2 Votes) ..... \$31.00

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 **BCSFAzine is also  
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Adobe Acrobat file.**

## WCSFACTIVITIES

**Contributor's Deadline** - April 14th, May 19th, June 16th, July 14th, August 18th, Sept. 15th, Oct. 20th. Send, your submissions, comments, loc's to John Wong at 2041 East 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V5N 1X9 or E-Mail me at [woolf@mac.com](mailto:woolf@mac.com)

### 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.).

**BCSFAzine Pickup/Collation at FRED** - The 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.

**WCSFA Executive Meeting**, April 8th, 1 pm. Firehall Branch Library 1455 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver. Tenth & Granville.

## UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

### World Horror Con 2000

May 11-14, 2000  
**Guests:** Peter Straub, Melanie Tem, Harlan Ellison, J. Michael Straczynski, Steve Rasnic Tem, Ellen Datlow, Dan Simmons  
**Address:** WHC2000, Inc. PO Box 32167, Aurora, CO 80041-2167

**For a limited time**, WHC2000 memberships will cost \$75

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### Conduit 10

May 19-21, 2000  
**Author** GOH: Charles de Lint  
**Artist** GOH: Brian Durfee  
**Mail:** CONduit Organizing Committee  
PO BOX 11745, Salt Lake City, UT 84147-0745

**Phone Number:** SLC: (801) 294-9297  
Ogden: (801) 776-0164

**Hotel:** Salt Lake Airport Hilton,  
5151 Wiley Post Way, Salt Lake International Center Salt Lake City, UT 84116  
Telephone: 801-539-1515

### Membership Rates

Before November 15th, 1999 \$25.00

### Miscon 2000

May- 26-28 2000  
**Guests:** Jesse Marcel, Jr., Steve Jackson, Tom Smith

### Memberships:

\$15 until end of 1999

**Hotel:** Double Tree Hotel Edgewater 100 Madison Tel: (406) 728-3100

**Room Rates:** \$79/night

Miscon P.O. Box 7721 Missoula MT 59807  
[www.miscon.org](http://www.miscon.org)

### SEACOVER 2000

June 30th to July 3rd. Vancouver, BC A "Highlander: The Series" convention. Guests, Jim Byrnes, and various actors from **Highlander: The Series** and **Highlander: The Raven**

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Delta Vancouver Airport Hotel & Marina from Friday, June 30 through Monday, July 3. Admission (in Canadian funds) is \$90 for the full convention, \$60 for Saturday or Sunday only, \$30 for the reserved seating section, and \$24 for the Jim Byrnes Band performance (in addition to having a full or Sunday Only registration). The first 50 paid registrations will receive a free Sunday breakfast (value \$15). Tour prices will be finalized shortly.

For more information, or a Registration Form, email to [seacouver2000@aol.com](mailto:seacouver2000@aol.com) or send snail mail with SASE to:

Seacouver 2000  
Attn: Lisa King  
#101 - 1001 West Broadway, Unit 334  
Vancouver, BC V6H 4E4

### Toronto Trek (TT2000) Convention

July 14-16, 2000  
Guests Elric Stilwell, Larry Stewart  
Hotel: Regal Constellation Hotel 900 Dixon Rd., Toronto, ON M9W 1J7

Memberships: \$40 for adults, \$20 for children. at the door, \$50 for adults, \$25 for children.

Contact: Suite 0116, Box 187, 65 Front Street West, Toronto, ON M5J 1E6

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[www.commm.ca/tcon/](http://www.commm.ca/tcon/)

**Con-Version 17** Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention August 11-13, 2000 Calgary, Alberta, Canada Metropolitan Centre, 333 4th Avenue SW

Guests: Mike Resnick  
GoH, Candas Jane Dorsey  
CdnGoH, Julia Lacquement  
Artist Guest, Thor Osborn

Science Guest, Michael McAdam  
Toastmaster/FanGoH, Mike Dale  
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videos, costume contest, dance and more.  
Visit our website at:  
<http://www.con-version.ab.ca>



Science Guest  
Freeman Dyson



Author Guest  
Larry Niven



Art Guest  
Julia Lacquement



Special Guest  
George Dyson



Fan Guest  
Paul Carpentier &  
Julie McGalliard

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August 18-20, 2000

Western Washington University

Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington.

Viking Union 202 Box V-1 • Bellingham, WA 98225

## Memberships

\$20 US / \$225 CDN Until July 15 • \$30 US / \$40 CDN at the door.

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Then e-mail me at [woolf@vcn.bc.ca](mailto: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>

## Dear John

The March BCSFAzine has arrived safe and sound, although its envelope had another of those little tears at the corner of the flap that I've found on most fanzines in recent months. Someone in the postal system must think I'm receiving publications from a subversive or criminal network or getting illegal drugs through the mail.

Garth's narrative about the Illuminati covers some interesting ground, although I've never subscribed to that group's theories. I've found the Welluminati to be a much healthier organization. I might recommend one novel that is based on the survival of Jesus and his retirement to private life, *The Brook Kerith*. The trouble is, I keep mixing up George Moore and George Meredith and can never remember which of the two wrote the book. I consider myself a Christian but I wasn't shocked by the theme, considering it an early example of an alternative world novel. The climax comes when St. Paul comes across Jesus and realizes he is suddenly confronted with a series of problems.

Let's hope your article on fanzine publishing will encourage some readers to go ahead and get into the activity. As you might suspect, I do feel that at least at the start of a fanzine publishing career, the fan should consider the simplest, least expensive procedure and use a typewriter with simple layout. I prefer a non-electric typewriter, but I bought an electric one a year ago to use in emergency situations like the breakdown of my manual typewriter and the three-month search for a replacement. I published one magazine on the electric machine. Its list price was less than \$100, a local store had it on sale for one-third off list price, and I got an additional 10% discount as a senior citizen. It can produce even right margins, and it may even have a spell checker. (The instruction manual says so, but I haven't tried to use it because of my belief that freedom of speech includes the right to spell words imaginatively.) The only drawback I've found for this machine is my inability to find so far fabric ribbons that will fit it. For a starting fanzine career, this is much less hassle and expense and learning time than computer utilization.

My favorite Dr. Who was Tom Baker, so I might invest in a few of the prerecorded videos if they actually go on sale in the United States. Ray's mention of A & E bothers me. If he is referring to the cable channel, Arts and Entertainment, I'd hate to see it go all-dramatic because it's one of the only two sources of regular classical music programming available on the Hagerstown cable. Its Breakfast with the Arts program on Sunday morning usually offers some classical feature. The other source is the Catholic cable channel, EWTN, which has an hour or two of classical music on Sunday afternoons. Public telecasting used to offer lots of this type of programming but now it's down to about one item per month.

I love the portrait of Mr. Science in the VCon 25 advertisement. I would love even more his return to the pages of BCSFAzine as a regular contributor.

Yrs., &c.,

*Harry Warner Jr.*

## Dear John:

I've just printed out BCSFAzine 323, and it's time for a letter, a little early for a change.

That's a beautiful piece of art on the front cover. There are so many new artists up and coming who produce wonderful cover illustrations for SF&F these days. Mark Ferrari is the artist's name? Not sure I've heard of him before, but I think I will with art like this.

Upcoming Conventions...Norwescon 23 is coming up later this

month. I hope some of the VCon crowd will be going to Seattle to promote the con. Last I e-corresponded with Graeme, the con had 158 pre-registrations, and I hope that number will swell before it's time for Yvonne and I to hop the plane to Vancouver. Also, the idea of the shooting location tours as part of the Seacouver Highlander convention sounds unique. We've been to too many cons where the actor GoH is far away on a riser or raised stage, distant and unreachable. Conventions where the guests mingle with the attendees seem more normal and natural, and certainly more like what we're used to with literary conventions.

As with Harry Warner, I find that it's been relatively easy to catch up with locating the fanzines coming in because there's been few to deal with over the past few months. I'll have to start writing to other fanzines and ask to receive them. TV Guide has lost circulation because back when there was just the VHF band of channels, 2 to 13, it was an affordable little magazine. Now, with the UHF band, and hundreds of specialty channels, the magazine is a small book, and not nearly as affordable. TV Guide in Canada is completely independent from the American version, and it was recently sold by its owner, TeleMedia, to Transcontinental Publishing, both of Toronto. I think one unannounced reason that TeleMedia sold it was that it wasn't profitable anymore, because it had to cover so many channels. I hope Transcontinental can make it work.

My letter...I'm writing this letter the day after Eeriecon 2, and as hoped, the producers of the documentary on fandom got about five hours of footage from the con, including 90 minutes of interview with me and Yvonne. A nice little con, with attendance of about 150. I didn't get the job through the interview with John Wyndham, by the way...

I've expounded on my views on SF and the media, and Garth Spencer used another example of how the media doesn't understand SF, and uses it to entertain, and thereby misinform, the watching/reading public. That example is the media's assumption that we all believe in UFOs, and are therefore a little strange or mad. I'm sure that a certain percentage of the general public claims to have seen UFOs, and the percentage is the same in fandom. Am I a believer? I'd like to know what's behind these sightings, so this jury member is still out on this question. It does make good reading for the curious on occasion.

End of zine. I'm really looking forward to our next major convention, VCon 25. I am regularly pestering Graeme with questions, and adding to his workload. We'll have a table at which to sell pre-supports to the Toronto in 2003 Worldcon bid, and we will be quite busy here and there, I'm sure. Bring it on, and we will have ourselves a time. See you then, and see you next issue.

*Yours, Lloyd Penney*



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**A Good  
Old-Fashioned  
Future,**  
Bruce Sterling  
(Bantam, June/99)

Not being a big fan of cyberpunk, I've managed to avoid Bruce Sterling for years. However, when a recent anthology of his stories appeared under my nose (thanks, Clint), I decided that I had better see what everybody has been raving about.

**A Good Old-Fashioned Future** contains seven stories set in the near future, all of which feature international settings, clever high tech detail and interesting ideas. Sterling certainly has a feel for globalization. In "The Littlest Jackel," for instance, Russian mafioso hire Bosnian mercenaries to help Finnish separatists stage a rebellion in the Aland islands, so the Russians can use the Alands as a handy site for various shady business ventures, such as laundering rubles in Japan via Finnish toys.

Sterling also has sharp observations to make about modern society. In "Bicycle Repairman", a bunch of political handlers are scrambling to cover up a big scandal, but they are so far out of touch with their constituency that they haven't realized the American public doesn't care.

The last story in the book, *Taklamakan*, was easily my favourite. Two extreme climbers, Katrinko and Spider Pete, are hired to find a hidden Chinese experimental base deep in the remote Taklamakan desert. As the story opens, the mission is going badly wrong. Then Katrinko and Spider find the rumoured base and things get much worse than either of them could have imagined.

The science in this story is some of Sterling's best, from the climbing gizmos to the extreme fringes of cyber technology at the Chinese base. Many people who try to look into the future just create a more-of-the-same-but-bigger-and-faster scenario, but Sterling has the imagination to conceive of massive, transforming \*qualitative\* change. This story is also closest to being a cohesive tale, rather than a lengthy anecdote.

Still, if you like decisive endings, Sterling is not for you. All his stories trail off, their conclusions vaguely implied; their characters' fates foreshadowed but not decided. When the smoke clears, the reader can see that the situation will remain much the same. It's very artsy and postmodern, but does not appeal to me as a reader.

Coming to Bruce Sterling right after Nina Kiriki Hoffman (**A Red Heart Of Memories**, reviewed last month) also made me acutely aware that Sterling's stories, although exceptionally well written, are emotionally shallow. His characters are all style and no substance, and consequently I found my interest in them waning quickly, despite the awesome special effects.

Sterling's stories are masterfully written, but they ultimately left me thinking "So, who cares?" Consequently, I won't be rushing back for more.



**Cavalcade,**  
Alison Sinclair  
(Millennium 1998)

*The [alien] message in all its forms was brief. They were representatives of a mixed community of sentient species who had been exploring the galaxy for hundreds of thousands of years. If any human wanted to join them, they would be welcome. They need only be standing within ten metres of the waterline of a body of salt water, at night, in twenty-*

*three day's time.*

As *Cavalcade* opens, the thousands of people who took up this alien invitation find they have been instantaneously transported to a vast, strange cavern. They are a huge, motley crowd consisting of those people who would risk anything to embark on this greatest human adventure and those—in great numbers—who had nothing on Earth left to lose. Some have brought their families, pets and cherished possessions; others have brought nothing but the clothes on their backs; still others are drunk and just coming to the appalled realization that this wasn't a hoax after all.

Stan Morgan, turbo geek, is part of a NASA team sent to make contact with the aliens and determine if they constitute a threat to Earth. It doesn't take Stan long to realize just how difficult this is going to be. Not only are there no aliens in sight, but every piece of electronic equipment the humans brought has quit working. Worse, he is in a huge crowd of displaced people who will soon need food, water, and some kind of organization to prevent violent chaos.

This is certainly an intriguing opening, and Alison Sinclair follows up with a solid novel. The tale is told primarily through the viewpoints of four Americans: Stan Morgan, Sophie Hemmingway (a pathologist), Stan's niece Hathaway (a pregnant, rebellious 17-year-old), and Stephen Cooper, an emotionally disturbed man on the run from a murder warrant.

Sinclair's protagonists are well portrayed and supported by a solid cast of secondary characters. (I was especially delighted with Marian, a tough-minded English octogenarian who fought in World War II and still carries a Walther PPK under her tweed skirt.) Sinclair also does a detailed and accurate job with the hard science background as her characters struggle to explore a completely alien environment with only a few old-fashioned tools and their ingenuity. Finally, her alien environment is satisfyingly strange and cryptic.

This is in some regards a formula 'disaster' novel (a cast of diverse characters bands together to survive the tornado/towering inferno/apocalypse/whatever) and I occasionally found characters or events to be just a little too pat; nonetheless it was a compelling and intelligent read, far above average for most SF. Tellingly, the praise quote on the jacket of this book is not from the literary press, but from **New Scientist** magazine.

Two thumbs up from this reviewer.  
Comments? Questions? Rebuttals?  
donna\_mcmahon@sunshine.net

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**P**ull out a glossy professional magazine. Don't look at it yet! No fair peeking! Now take a glance at it and take note of where your eyes wander over the page. Notice anything? See where your eye stops? Most people are unaware of it, but they have just been manipulated! They are staring at the most important element of the page! The designer wants you to be looking at this very thing. So how did they do it?

Every item on the page has a direction of flow acting as an arrow, directing the reader's eye towards a specific item, or as a barrier, bringing the eyes to a sudden stop. By utilizing these subtle pointers we can subliminally manoeuvre the eyes over the page to the desired location, be it a specific graphic, or even off the edge of a page.

The structure of the elements on a page guide the reader to a desired location. It can bring the reader to the start of an article or to the beginning of a section. We can encourage the browser to flip to the next page by

flying their eyes off the edge of the page. We can even use it to encourage a reader to glance at some advertising. Where you place the elements on a page will effect the way your reader treats the zine.

## Image is everything.

In order to attract a reader to your article, you must attempt to make them stop their browsing on your page. Using your knowledge of your readership, decide upon an element which you believe would be of the most interest to them. You have many different elements from which to choose from (*see last issue*) and each element has a specific effect on the reader depending on where and how they are used.

Looking at the same thing over and over again is boring. Books can look boring, but a magazine can not afford such a format. Magazines serve a specific purpose in our reading lives. There are certain places where magazines thrive, and books less so. Short trips, coffee shops, places where people want

a quick light read are perfect for magazines.

As a result, periodicals are designed to be easily read among all the distractions that surround the person. The look of the publication can be as busy as the environment in which it is read. Magazines expect to lose the battle for your attention so they use as many hooks as they can to bring you back. Scientific journals are not as fancy as entertainment magazines because the designer knows that the journal will be read in an office or at home where the reader can concentrate their attention on the articles. Music magazines, on the other hand, expect the reader to sneak glances at it during classes. The different layout styles of each the publications can easily be seen as one is almost all text with a few illustrations and the other full of colour and graphics giving visual clues to the reader as to where they left off.

With the basic text structure in place, we need to find a way in which to draw a reader's eyes in specific directions. There are two techniques used by layout designers to create visual hooks utilizing page furniture (see last issue) as visual guides. The specific effects of these elements are the Block and the Flow. Used individually or in combination with each other, they serve exclusively to make you look at a specific element on a page, or off the edge of the page.

## Balance

A reader's eyes has a natural flow over a page. Every element on that page has an effect on the direction in which your eyes

## Mag map

Even the article placement of a magazine is geared towards attracting a reader. A large magazine can be divided into six sections and careful consideration on what you put in these sections can effect your readership numbers. These sections are less important in a small magazine such as BCSFazine, but I still occasionally juggle the articles to fit the following formula:

The front section holds much of the second most important articles and illustrations which acts as a hook to attract new readers. This also includes all the necessary listings like the table of contents, mastheads, and publishing information. The masthead is the side-bar at the beginning of a magazine which will lists the names of the contributors, including illustrators and authors. Your contributors may be an important consideration for prospective readers so drawing attention to them in the masthead is important.

The second section holds the third most important articles in your publication. This contradiction in its order of value and importance is due to its visibility. It still has a chance of attracting a browser's eye, yet has less of a chance than the next section.

The third section encompasses the middle section of the magazine. This section is be more important than the front of the magazine for content because the magazine naturally opens up to this area. Here you will find the cover story and the prime articles in the zine.

Sections four and five are the back sections of the magazine. Their importance, however, are reversed as people tend to skip section four and flip to the back of the magazine in a fit of impatience.

Finally, section six is the last few pages of the magazine. This area is still considered prime real estate for advertising because they almost share the same prominence as the first section of the magazine due to their natural visibility. There is a thirty percent chance that anyone putting the zine back on the shelf will put it do it with the back cover facing out. The back cover is also on displayed whenever anyone holds the magazine up to read.

BCSFazine is a three section magazine. There is no real prominent sections other than the front page, and the back. Everything else can be considered a middle section. A small zine does not face the impatience factor that affect larger zines but keep in mind that the browser also spends less time looking at the pages and gives you less of an opportunity to attract and hold their interest.

## Follow the arrows!

Here is a step by step guide on how the elements of the next few pages are positioned to get you to look at a specific item on the next page.

As you look on this spread, (*Acrobat Readers should set the program to spreads*) your eyes will almost certainly fall on the STARTing location and be drawn to the largest item on the page which is the sidebar on the left. (1)

Your eye should then flow upwards and be drawn to the dropcap. (2) The triangle graphic, rules and sidebars then guide your eyes across the page and down toward the lower corner. (3-6)

As nothing stops our eyes from flowing off the edge (7) of the page, you get a subliminal nudge to turn to the next page where you will find yourself looking at the very item I wanted you to look at, the VCON ad!

travel. Take a glance at the pages of a book. You may notice that your eyes will hit the middle of the left page and move towards the right until it hits the far edge of the right hand page. As your eyes move across a page any item that looks different will draw attention to itself. These elements effect the flow of the reader.

In design work, the flow of a view is referred to as **The Balance**. A balanced page will force the eye to stay in the centre of the page. Any element which draws the eye away from the centre effects the balance of the page. Designers play with the balance of a page to draw your eyes to a specific location, like the beginning of an article, or off the edge of a page which motivates you to turn the page.

**Rules and bars** are the most elementary of directional indicators. If you encounter a horizontal rule, your eyes will naturally flow in the direction of reading. A column/vertical rule will guide you in an up/down direction depending on where you approach the line. A bar is just a thick version of a rule.

Even text blocks have a directional flow. This flow is affected by the justification otherwise known as the edge of the text blocks. There are primarily five different styles of justification or alignment.

**Justified** text is used throughout this magazine. This form of alignment is very easy to read because of the consistent nature of the margins which allows your eyes to move in a consistent and repetitive pattern. It is popular with many periodicals and books because it not only looks neat, allowing the reader to concentrate on a heavier subject matter, but also has the largest capacity for text in relation to the length of the column.

**Ragged Right-Justified/Flush Left**, as illustrated by this paragraph, is a popular form of justification in publications which require a more dynamic look and contain a more relaxed subject matter. The ragged edge of the text gives it a wind blown look and gives the suggestion of a flow towards

the left. The sudden inconsistent stop positions on the right hand side slow the reader down slightly giving the text an illusion of additional substance.

**Ragged left-Justified/Flushed Right** text on the other hand is even more difficult to read because the reader has to find the beginning of every line. A good use of this style of alignment is to use it to annotate an illustration on the right as this paragraph seems to be pointing in that direction.

**Hanging Indents** are good for lists like the last month's article. The justified left text emphasizes the beginning of the paragraph where a keyword can be used to draw a reader in. The right margin can be justified or ragged.

**Centred text**, like this block, is the most difficult of the alignments to read and is used almost exclusively for decorational purposes only as the reader has to reset the beginning and the end of every line in their mind as they read it. This makes the text very difficult to read and slows the reader down significantly unless you use short lines like I am here.

## Blocks

**Blocks** are elements on a page which cause the reader to pause, but is not necessarily a stopping point. A well balanced page will make you come to a stop on a specific block, however, these same elements can be used to adjust the direction of the eye's flow as well.

**White space** is an element which is difficult to understand. The areas of a page

## Columns and Paragraphs

Text columns are an important factor for the reader, and also one of the easiest elements to understand.

Books, like novels which require the reader to focus on the subject matter, are usually done with a wide single column. The fully justified text requires a bit of concentration to read and forces the reader to focus on the text. Paragraphs, as a result, can be as long as they needs to be to convey highly structured complex concepts.

Multi-column publications such as the newspapers and magazines know that they are primarily a light read and require a structure which allows for a highly distracted reader. The narrow columns have a more dynamic look to them and allows the reader more mental time to rest as they look up and check their surroundings. Short small paragraph blocks allow the publication to get their point across one at a time allowing the reader to quickly absorb the material in an uncomplicated manner.

Depending upon the intensity of the content of your zine, and the level of writing of the articles, you will need to judge exactly how long your paragraphs can be to allow the reader to comfortably absorb the subject matter. Just remember that the thinner the column, and the shorter the paragraphs, the easier it is to read.

which has nothing on it is called white space regardless of the colour of the paper or background. The shape of the area will suggest design elements such as sidebars and rules and have the same impact on the reader. As your eyes will flow over white space faster than all other elements, it is more effective as a pointer than all of the other elements on a page. The effective use of white space can enhance an element on a page by isolating it or by leading straight to it. There is one other highly effective property of white space has that the reader may not be aware of. The more white space used in a layout/ad/magazine, the more expensive it looks. (*Keep in mind that this is a purely western cultural perspective, and does not apply for all cultures.*)

**Callouts** are a few lines of text pulled from the article and given prominence usually in the middle of a page. (*see last issue.*) They are primarily used to fill out a page so that the end of an article does not finish with several inches left before the bottom of a page or a natural stopping point.

There is nothing that looks so bad to a designer as a graphic at the end of an article because it looks so much like filler. You may not notice it, but it is considered lazy by designers. Leaving it blank is also bad form unless you are effective use of **white space** in your design because there are so many remedies available for it.

Callouts can be useful where you have a spread of pages that are mostly text and

## Justifying Eye Flow

As you read this paragraph, your eyes move over the line starting and stopping at consistent points making it a repetitive process. The flow of the reading is relaxed and very easy to do. The straight edges of the paragraph is called Justified or Flushed text. The straight edge is referred to by the side on which they face. This paragraph for example is both flushed left and right. The justified text has a flow for the reader which when sustained can allow the writer to increase the impact of the content by suddenly changing the length of the next paragraph's lines which can be very jarring for a reader.

However, when only one edge of a document is justified, the reader still feels the impact of the uneven (called ragged) edge because they are used to the justified texts in the books that they have read as they go through school. The style gives the pages a more dynamic look and makes the text seem more interesting as a result.



**Robert Sawyer**



**Spider and Jeanne Robinson**



**Lloyd & Yvonne Penney**

**Other Guests include:** Mary Choo, Carolyn Clink, Michael Coney, Don H. DeBrandt, Alyx Dellamonica, Lynne Fahnestalk, Steve Fahnestalk, Donna Farley, Stan G. Hyde, Eileen Kernaghan, Angelo Loperfido, Donna McMahon, Syne Mitchell, Rebecca V. Neason, Warren Oddsson, Reah Rose and Marcie Tentchoff



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you lack the available graphic elements to assist you in illustrating the article. Adding a variation to monotonous layout helps to break up that page giving it a more dynamic look. The callout's distinctive look will be effective in drawing the eye to it and stopping as the browser will pause to read it.

**Headlines** are very similar to callouts but have to be even more effective in drawing the attention of a browser. Unlike callouts, the use of fancy fonts, which can be difficult to read, can be used for the headline to enhance the distinctiveness of the element. Additional methods of enhancement include the use of colours and/or an illustration. The headline, along with its smaller cousin the subhead is used to signal a beginning of a new subject, section or idea in an article.

**Drop/Raised Caps** help the reader to find a start. This is especially useful when a layout gets fancy and the beginning of an article is less than obvious. However, they can also be used to help break up a plain looking layout giving the reader a brief resting point allowing them to re-establish their interest in an article.

The reader's eyes are naturally drawn to an **illustration**. In a page full of text, a picture will seem to jump out at you and draw you in. If you choose carefully, that image may cause the browser to become interested in the contents of the text itself making them a reader. In a page full of illustrations, the largest image will garner the most attention.

However, this can offset by the most distinctive image. A colour image among black and white images or an image that looks out of place in a pattern will stand out. This is one of the most effective blocks available to a designer. However, this element is also an effective flow manager. For example, a photograph of a person looking right at the reader is an effective block. However, if the person looks to the side, then the reader will glance in the same direction making the photograph an effective pointer.

**Sidebars** are used to contain small articles related to the main article, but were either written by another author, or did not fit the original article's subject. They also employ a graphic element (usually a box) to contain them so as to separate them from the article surrounding it. Depending on the shape of the side-bar, they can also act as a block or pointer.

A horizontal side-bar, like a rule will stop the eye from flowing in an up/down direction and redirect it towards the right. (The right being a natural direction for reading.) Additional graphic elements must be employed in order to redirect the eye towards the left.

A vertical side-bar will direct an eye downwards if approached from the middle or top of a page and upwards if approached from the bottom of a page. The eye takes the path of least resistance, so additional elements including illustrations and graphic elements can be utilized to point the desired direction of the flow.

The balance of a layout effects the way we look at the page and how we perceive the content. Every element that draws our attention towards it can also act as a subliminal arrow pushing our eyes along or bouncing us back in the desired direction towards the hook. Every hook has the opportunity to generate enough interest in browser to change them into a readers. You just have to set the bait and gently point them in the right direction.

Next month...Fonts!

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I am going to Westercon in Hawaii. I booked a flight and hotel room. Sounds easy? It wasn't. I thought I would book the flight first. I phoned Canadian Airlines, and got the cheapest flight quoted at over \$1100. They told me that Air Canada did not fly to Hawaii. I phoned Alaska Airlines and could pay over \$1100 and go to San Francisco for four hours first then to Hawaii. I phoned Quantas—we don't go there from here anymore. Canada 2000 (or is that 3000) said I would have to spend more than two weeks there and I don't have enough spare cash at this time to do that. I phoned someone else but forget who. I finally phoned Air Canada anyway and they said they had a flight to Hawaii for \$800.00. I booked with them (this is several months in advance, but because it is over the July 4th long weekend there were no really cheap seats) and when they told me the flight number they said it was a Canadian Airlines flight. Canadian had sold all its cheap seats, but Air Canada still had the rights to a few cheaper Canadian seats. Does that make sense? It did save me \$300.00 though.

I then phoned the 1-800 number listed for the hotel. I was told they didn't have any of the \$130 US rooms, but they did have the \$155.00 rooms. I would be staying 8 nights so that would cost me \$200US plus tax more. I decided to tell them to stuff it and phoned the hotel. I was assured the hotel had the \$130.00 rooms but that I would have to book with them by 7:00 pm Pacific time. I phoned back the 1-800 number and was told they had sold all the rooms allocated to them and that they couldn't take my reservation. I did phone the next day and got a confirmed cheaper room. Total savings after taxes of more than \$600.00 Canadian. It pays to persevere.

VCON is just around the corner. I hope everyone comes out and supports our local convention. Is there a committee for next year yet? If you are going to bid get confirmed before this VCON then you can sell memberships at this years con and do a lot better than if you sell memberships based on there may be a VCON. You would even be able to set the rates to next years VCON to be sold at this years con.

FRED is still doing reasonably well. We get between 12 and 20 people over the night most weeks. It is never the same group twice which makes for some interesting conversations. Come join me for supper, I eat at FRED at 6:30, and go to the regular area just after 7:00 pm.

## DR. WHO BRIEF



**Radio Series:** LA's **Outpost Gallifrey** reports that an article in a British newspaper on March 27, indicated that writer Dan Freedman and Colin Meake of Radio 4's comedy series "*Loose Ends*" are working on the script of the new "*Dr. Who*" radio series. Freedman told *Dr. Who Magazine* that "This will not be a comedy. I'm keen to develop a new take, to bring forward darker aspects of '*The Doctor*' character." The paper also said that Sylvester McCoy is still considering the role, however the **BBC** will not promise the series just yet and even said "We don't want to build up fans' hopes."

**New Series:** The recent failure of "*Classic Dr. Who*" on **BBC2** up against the brand new sci-fi series the "*Lost World*" on **Channel 4**, have put the hope of the series return into question. Rumors say that the **BBC** is now waiting for an American backed, yet **BBC** friendly feature film or new series co-production deal to be reached with before making any decision on "*The Doctor's*" future know to fans.

Another rumor said that the proposed new series producers are considering 24 year old Johathan Rhys Meyers to play both the new "*Doctor*" and "*The Master*", to drawn younger viewers. Yet another rumor said that his "*Gormenghast*" co-star Neve McIntosh could play one of his companions. The producers have insured that their series (if it happens) will keep true to the original, even with the youngster "*Doctor*" yet and will not turn into "*Dawson's Creek* in Time and Space".

Be seeing you.

Ray "Dr. Media" Seredin [lungbarrow@aist.bc.ca](mailto:lungbarrow@aist.bc.ca)

## CUFF STILL CHUGGING ALONG

Garth reports that the Canadian Unity Fan Fund still has money in the bank, and is getting large boxes of donated fanzines and books for sale from Dale Speirs, and—most importantly—two Canadian fans are gathering nominations as we speak: Corinne Lewandowsky, of Fredericton, New Brunswick, and Sherry Neufeld, of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Both have been active in local societies. Corinne was in attendance at inCONsequential II, the last Convention (held in Fredericton last fall), and Sherry Neufeld has been active in a space-education society in her area.

So we should, I hope, have a CUFF voting ballot go out to Canadian fans, in time to assist one of these deserving fans to attend the next Convention. This will be Toronto Trek 2000 in July (see details in calendar, if we've done our job).

CUFF funds will be assisted by fanzines and books for benefit sale at the VCon 25 (May, 2000) fanzine lounge, also headed up by Garth Spencer. There you can see, read, buy, loc, and even donate fanzines for the delectation of refined connoisseurs. You can also ask Garth why he left CUFF nomination and voting deadlines so late for this year?

If you want to see what CUFF is about, check out the sale list already posted, or find out where to send Garth money, see [www.vcn.bc.ca/~hrothgar](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/~hrothgar). If you want to participate in the fanzine lounge, or just contact Garth with intrusive personal questions, email him at [hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca](mailto:hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca).

For more information about this year's Convention, see Garth's convention list, posted at [www.vcn.bc.ca/sig/rsn/fandom/cons2k.htm](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/sig/rsn/fandom/cons2k.htm), and scroll down to July 2000.

**Garth Spencer:**

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<http://www.vcn.bc.ca/sig/rsn>

## My reading habits in the past year

Along about 1983 or so, when I was still imprinting on Monty Python and that sort of thing, I discovered the Illuminatus! trilogy. Perhaps you've heard of this, and perhaps you understand why I became delighted with conspiracy theory as a form of entertainment. To this day I think Evil Sinister Mind Control Plots are funny. I hope I can share this kind of funny with you.

Of course conspiracy theory goes back a long way; people who express such theories are generally Dead Serious about them; and there are any number of claims of conspiracies, about almost any people or institutions you can name. Like science fiction, or lost-civilization stories, or contemporary cults, or UFO stories, conspiracy theories express some preoccupations that people tend to have, in a particular time and place. It might actually be constructive to survey contemporary conspiracy theories in that light, as warnings against some seductive mistakes in thinking.

### The usual mistakes of conspiracy theories

I told you all the foregoing in order to tell you this:

#### Mistake no. 1: *They ain't no One Big Plot anywhere.*

When the two Roberts teamed up and wrote the Illuminatus! trilogy, lampooning the wildest of the conspiracy theories they received, they made what I consider a cunning observation: that if all the conspiracy theories were true, then different arms of the same worldwide Illuminati organization periodically are at war with each other. It is far simpler, they implied, to suppose that there are a number of conspiratorial movements at any given time, at least some of which are aware of each other and working against each other.

#### Mistake no. 2: *Dramatizing a conspiracy theory with alleged lines of descent, supernatural powers, or allegedly religious issues does not strengthen a case.*

Dragging in your particular religion does not strengthen an essentially non-religious issue. Doesn't even make it important, really, to most audiences in a contemporary, multicultural environment. This is to say, the paranoid preoccupations of some conspiracy theorists in industrialized countries, most of whom come from Judeo-Christian backgrounds, must seem foreign or quaint to people from other backgrounds. Buddhist or Hindu or Shinto backgrounds, for instance; let alone animists in Africa and South America. I am speaking, of course, about the vast majority of humanity.

#### Mistake no. 3: *Do not attribute to cover-up what may just be institutional embarrassment.*

Has no-one else observed that, whatever else can be said about UFO encounters, their only consistency is that they don't really make sense?

### Better reasoning

My conclusions should be obvious by now, but let me summarize, just so it's all in plain English.

There are a few well-documented, carefully reasoned conspiracy theories. The various theories about the Kennedy assassinations are examples. But there are also badly-documented, ill-reasoned conspiracy theories. You have to wonder what motivates the people who conceive and purvey them.


- There is a right way and a wrong way to read historical evidence. Many conspiracy theorists do it the wrong way, which boils down essentially to jumping to conclusions. In a nutshell: You cannot leap from an unfounded speculation to a foregone conclusion; and, Not all groups working to a common purpose amount to conspiracies. Even when such groups meet and act in secrecy, as Bilderbergs, Davos, and World Trade Organization meetings do, they do not necessarily constitute a conspiracy (Although I will harbour questions about any group that does so).
- Stipulating for the sake of argument that there are conspiracies among us... even, according to Leary, the same dozen conspiracies, in any place and time... we can console ourselves with the thought that they mostly cancel each other out.
- There are dictionary, and legal, definitions of conspiracy. Many conspiracy theories do not meet those definitions.
- Conspiracy theories often lack a "smoking gun"; however circumstantial and well-researched, by criminal, legal, forensic and financial criteria ... they often lack hard evidence that will support a class-action suit. Which is what it would take, to bring actual powerful conspirators to book.
- Claiming that the lack of evidence proves there must be a conspiracy, hiding their tracks, doesn't impress anybody, and neither should it.
- Many of these theories are extreme dramas, like crank theories, lost-civilization histories, and UFO stories. But no amount of dramatic storytelling will serve in the place of conclusive, legally admissible evidence. In fact, it leads me to suspect the motives and reasoning of conspiracy theorists.
- World domination? One word: paperwork.

In the end, I suppose my sense of basic security is reassured by Michael Flynn's novel *In the Country of the Blind*. For reasons which apply to us all – the sheer passage of time, and consequent changes in a group's objects; the inherent limits on the size of groups with a unified, common purpose; the consequent limits to their power and influence; and the sheer cussedness of the universe, in which the effects of our actions may nothing to do with our intent – conspiracies will be short-lived, multiple, limited in the mark they can make, and working at cross-purposes.

Sort of like con running, isn't it?



# BASIC ADOBE ACROBAT INTERFACE

The hand tool is perfect for moving the page around without using the slider  the side of the screen.

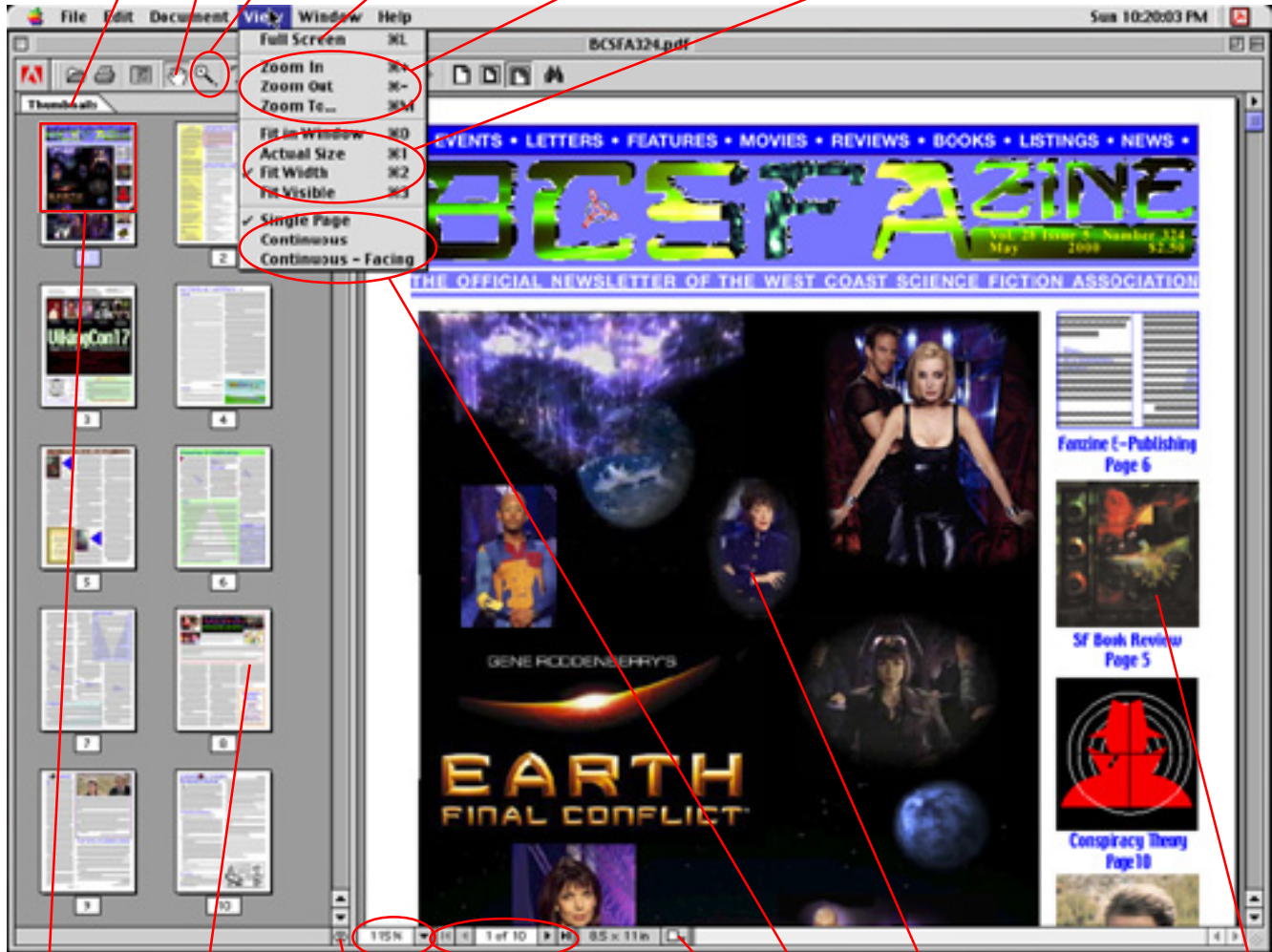
Thumbnail, Article, and Bookmark viewers can be placed here from the Window menu by clicking on this tab, and dragging them into this space.

Use the magnifying glass to zoom in on a specific area. The area you select will fill the screen.

To see the page without the Acrobat interface, use the Full Screen Mode. This will only display the entire page on the screen.

Zoom features allow you to magnify or reduce the visual size of the page on the screen.

Use these selections to quickly zoom to commonly used preset magnifications



Double clicking on a thumbnail image will open up that page in the main window on the left.

The box shown over the thumbnail is the visible area of the page in the left window. You can move this box to anywhere on the page or even to another page and the main window will change accordingly.

This control opens and shuts the side menu display where different page markers can be placed.

This gives you a choice of preset magnifications for displaying the page on the screen.

Clicking on these images will open your web browser and link to the web sites. There is one site per picture.

Clicking on these images will take you to that page in the document

Use these controls to select between Single page, Continuous page, and Continuous Spreads views

These control arrows along with a similar set on the tool bar above help you to move from page to page.