

# BCSFAzine

**Fanzine**

E-Publishing

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**VCON 26**  
**A SPACE ODDITY**

Check out the bid on Page 12!



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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST  
COAST SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION  
Vol. 28 Issue 6 • Number 325  
June 2000 / VCON 25 \$2.50



WCSFA

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New .....	\$26.00
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Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1J1

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For comments, subscriptions suggestions, and/or submissions, write to:

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

# WCSFAACTIVITIES

**Contributor's Deadline** - June 16th, July 14th, August 18th, Sept. 15th, Oct. 20th, Dec. 15th. 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 General Meeting.** May 27th, VCON. Come and vote on the next VCON bid. Check at Registration for room and time.

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

# UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

**SEACOUVER 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**

Featuring guided bus tours to locations with actors from the Highlander Series

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,  
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Toronto, ON M5J 1E6  
(416) 410-TCON

[tcon@icomm.ca](mailto:tcon@icomm.ca) [www.comm.ca/tcon/](http://www.comm.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, Candace Jane Dorsey  
CdnGoH, Julia Lacquement  
Artist Guest, Thor Osborn  
Science Guest, Michael McAdam

Toastmaster/FanGoH, Mike Dale  
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Check out our web site at WCSFA-On Line:

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

Check out our web site for all the information you need to be a local fan.

- Convention Listings • Ask Mr. Science • SF TV Listings • VCON Web Pages •
- Internet Links • Store Listings •


## BCSFAZINE

is available to subscribers in Adobe Acrobat format. Check out the zine in it's full colour glory with all the bells and whistles of instant web links and e-mail.

It is easy to change your subscription to this format. Go to the Adobe web site and download the free Acrobat Reader for you computer's operating system. (Make sure you get version 3 or higher).

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.

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Freeman Dyson



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Larry Niven



Art Guest  
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George Dyson



Fan Guest  
Paul Carpentier &  
Julie McGalliard

# VikingCon17

Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington.  
Viking Union 202 Box V-1 • Bellingham, WA 98225

## Memberships

\$20 US / \$25 CDN Until July 15 • \$30 US / \$40 CDN at the door.

Web Page: <http://www.sfnorthwest.org/vikingcon> • E-Mail: [vikingcon@sfnorthwest.org](mailto:vikingcon@sfnorthwest.org)

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## Dear John/Ken and BCSFans:

Issue 324 of BCSFAzine has arrived, and has been hardprinted so I could peruse it at my leisure. And so, here come some comments, also composed at my leisure. If I hurry, I can get it to you on time...

In the convention list, major guests have been announced for Toronto Trek...John deLancie (Q from various Star Treks) and Alexandra Tydings (Aphrodite from Hercules and Xena). This is John's second appearance at Toronto Trek, and we're looking forward to seeing him again.

In the Vikingcon ad...I'm sure someone's already said something, but \$20 US doesn't convert into \$225 Canadian. If it ever does, we're in trouble.

Harry Warner is correct...we can argue about paper fanzine versus e-zines and webzines all we like (and some certainly do), but the main thing we really want is to have a fandom in future years, and to have those future fans writing and communicating on paper, on the Web or in another medium that might replace everything else. The cheapest way is the best, but as technology improves and changes, that cheapest technology may change. There is also consideration to be given to the fastest way to distribute your publication to your readers. For that, the Web and e-mail may be the best way to do it.

Given the day I write this, I can now say that VCon is on later this month. We have our plane tickets, and our holidays are arranged at work. We just need to prepare for a bid table, and to get our luggage ready, and we will be there. With luck, the next issue will be out for VCon. We're looking forward to the con, and it'll be the first time back to British Columbia in nearly 20 years.

Publication design was one thing I learned at journalism school, and where the eyes went on the page or two-page spread. All I can say is that while the technology has changed, the reader hasn't, and the same rules apply to this day. The layout, and the use of colour always makes this zine pleasing to the eye, and that is the whole point of publication design. Fonts are the one part I enjoy the most about design, and there are any number of free font websites to explore and download interesting letter sets. With our new computer, Internet access and new printer, I've already had some fun with fonts, and I've downloaded a couple of hundred fonts, many with some SF connections.

With his website, Garth Spencer has

been doing a better job of selling zines for CUFF, but I also have a few boxes of fanzines to sell, with all proceeds going to CUFF. I've also got some books as well, plus back issues of Locus. For a list of what I have, contact me at penneys@netcom.ca and I'll send that list to you. Also for CUFF, and for VCon... I hope to have our 1998 CUFF trip report ready for sale at the con.

I don't know if the Time Meddlers of Vancouver still exist, but Doctor Who fandom still goes on in Toronto. Lisa Truant-Tan, head of the Eye of Harmony branch of the Doctor Who Information Network, will be holding another occasional Whocon, Eye of Orion 6, on May 13. This little one-day con, held in a church, drew over a hundred people last time, including fans from Toronto, Buffalo, Detroit, Kitchener, Peterborough, Montreal, and even Chicago. It's a concentrated dose of Dr. Who that makes the fans happy. I relay Ray Seredin's columns to Lisa when I remember, and I should do that this time, too.

Anyway, that's all for now. Instead of saying see you next issue, I hope to see you in person in just a few weeks. Be kind, for we'll be jet-lagged like crazy. At the end of this month, we'll have ourselves a time.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

## Dear John

The cover for the April issue of BCSFAzine puzzles me. It looks as if the lettering at the bottom of the picture is Wolf-Ferrari, a name familiar to me as a composer but not as an artist. The apparent copyright date of '87 wouldn't fit the composer's curative period in either the 18th or 19th century.

I'm happy to read about Catherine's successful writing for television. In an era when few fans are making the transition from fan to professional writer of books, maybe this is the natural substitute career. I assume Teletoon is a Canadian cable channel which naturally wouldn't be available this far south of the border, and I don't see the Disney channel because it's pay-extra in Hagerstown, even though it's part of the basic package in many cable systems. But I've seen So Weird in its TV Guide program listings, and within a few months, I should be in my second childhood which will justify my subscribing to that channel and having the ability to see Catherine's accomplishments.

I don't see why the "cover" of an eek-

mail "publication" should follow the pattern of news stand magazines. In the first years of fanzine fandom, many fanzines copied the custom of the prozines, putting not only the publication's title but also its price, month of publication, and a list of its principal contents on the cover. Finally they realized this was unnecessary for a periodical which went out by mail and didn't need to compete on a rack for a potential customer's attention. As for page makeup, I learned during tedious years at the newspapers that there are too many schools of thought on the topic to satisfy more than a small percentage of self-designated authorities. I worked under a succession of superiors when I was laying out the pages once a week. A page that one editor thought was fine for the way the areas of body type were broken up was condemned by another as too cluttered. One man would want several short items on the front page to increase the number of stories there and another would protest that any story important enough to be on the front page should be long. A photograph whose subject was looking towards the near margin on the page would go uncriticized by one school of thought, while another would contend that every reader would follow this person's gaze beyond the edge of the page and would probably never again look at a newspaper. There was one rule that no two story's headlines should be side by side in their position on the page but should be separated by a photograph while another rule said it was all right if one headline was in italics and the other wasn't. My own opinion consisted of the belief that we should try to squeeze much stuff into the newspaper no matter how it looked.

There should be a Welluminata organization for those of us who would prefer a healthier organization than the Illuminati. I've heard about these allegations that there were international conspiracies among the powerful to rule the planet as far back as the 18th century. But I've never seen an explanation of how they managed to have regular meetings and to act in world wide coordination at a time when there was no way to get information across the oceans to one another without a delay of weeks and weeks for travel.

Yrs., &c.,

Harry Warner, Jr.

# DR. WHO BRIEF.

## “Classic Dr. Who”

### Is “The TARDIS” Coming Bank To Canada?:

On April 11 Outpost Gallifrey's *Benjamin Elliott* reported that the **BBC** and **Toronto's Alliance Atlantis** productions submitted a bid to the **CRTC** to launch **BBC Canada**, a digital cable network. If approved, **BBC Canada** would try to launch in mid 2001. “The Doctor's” return to Canada is one possibility as **BBC America** already airs the *Tom Baker* era episodes.

Is that certain Police Box about to return our TVs again? As they “Stay Tuned”.

### 1996 TV Movie:

Outpost Gallifrey's *Benjamin Elliott* reports that **BBC America** has been unsuccessful in buying the US rights to the film. As of May 1st, 2000, when **FOX's** rights expired (not the previously rumored New Year's eve 1999) the movie belongs to **Studios USA** (formerly **Universal**.) Since **Studios USA's** owners *Barry Diller* and *Bill Gates* also owns the **USA Network** and the **Sci Fi Channel**, it's possible that it could turn up on one of those outlets.

The Canadian rights were sold to **Space: TIS** late last year.

### Who's Stephen Fry:

As I said a few months back that British actor and writer *Stephen Fry* could play “The Doctor” on the proposed new TV series. Now as it turns out that *Stephen* is rumored to play the same role on the proposed radio series. According to someone at **Norwescon 23** who worked with him, *Stephen* is a huge series fan and even said once if he got the part he would break *Tom Baker's* record (for playing the “Time Lord” the longest) by two years. However it remain to be seen if *Fry* can replace *Tom Baker* in the hearts of many WhoFans.

### Radio Series:

The series now has the working title of “**Doctor Who: Death Comes to Time**”. No word yet on who's going to be the new “Doctor's” companion(s). The series is still rumored for a February 2001 launch, IF the new powers that be at **BBC Radio 4** gives it the green light.

### New TV Series:

The same person who told me about *Stephen Fry* said that the **BBC** could start production of a new series in spring 2002. They are still looking for a American partner to bring the series up to par with today's science fantasy offerings in the FX department. Still with more networks in Europe signing on or interested in the series, the **BBC** may pull it off without the Americans help. North American WhoFans need not to worry about missing the “TARDIS”, the new series will have homes on **BBC America** (and MAYBE **BBC Canada**).

Besides *Stephen Fry* very likely being the ninth “Doctor”, here is what else is known on the proposed series.

At this time the series will have 12, 50 minute episodes or six stories each season. They hope for a run of at least five seasons. Actor *Jonathan Rhys Meyers* could take part in the series playing the evil “Master”, who returns once again in the first story.

Also returning sometime in the first season are the “Daleks”.

“The Doctor” will have two full time companions who at first can't get along, however over time become best friends. (As always with series, both are attractive female humanoids.) Two or three part time companions will join “The Doctor” and crew for a story or two a season.

“U.N.I.T.” (Now standing for “United Nations International Task force”.) is back. However “U.N.I.T.” is no longer top secret and is now know as a humanitarian, peace keeping and anti-terrorist organization. Yet “U.N.I.T.” has a super top secret “Special Forces” branch, whos job is to stop the scum of time and the space from taking over or destroying the Earth. Most stories set on “present day” Earth will take place after the year 2015.

Sorry the person was unable to tell me about what other enemies old or new are willing take on the good “Doctor” and friends in the new series.

So, to me, what I heard at **Norwescon 23** the new series, (when or IF it comes) could very likely live up to the “Classic” series.

*Correction: Harry Warnar Jr. is much mistaken thinking that A&E will lose it's music programming if the breakup happened. The only A&E programming moving over to the new service would have been the news magazine and documentary series. In fact the new A&E would have been 20% music, 30% comedy and 60% dramatic programming. The breakup still could happen however, it just will take place on January 1st, 2003 instead of 2002.*


Be seeing you.

Ray \*Dr. Media\* Seredin  
lungbarrow@aisl.bc.ca



*Is this the new Master (Stephen Fry) and Dr Who, (Jonathan Rhys Meyers)?*





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## Font Jargon

- **Typeface:** The name of a basic style of type including some variants.
- **Font:** A single set of characters within a typeface.
- **Weight:** Same as font, but referring to the thickness of the characters. The names of these weights from thinnest to thickest are: ultralight, light, roman, medium, semibold, bold, and black.
- **Expert Set:** A font which has all the basic letters in both upper and lower case as well as additional special characters.
- **Serif:** Small embellishments at the end of the strokes of letters to help with the recognition. Serifs also serve to guide the eye from one letter to another making this style of typeface very easy to read.
- **Slab Serif:** Developed in the 19th century where all strokes and serifs are of near uniform thickness.
- **Sans Serif:** Introduced in the 20th century, these are fonts which lacked all serifs. These fonts have a very modern look to them but are unsuitable for long passages. Ideal for use in sidebars.

In my experience, fanzines have been less than spectacular in their layout. Most are what I call school essay formats which are very dull to look at, and rarely attract the casual reader. The computer should have changed that, with its word processing and page layout programs. Even if you only have a very old and very basic computer system, you should be able to produce something more complex than a full page single column page. By using an old Commodore 64, and a word processing program called Paperclip, I am able to produce multi-column text pages on a dot matrix printer. Yet I find that the fanzine has not changed very much over the past fifteen years. I hope that this series of columns will change all that.

So far, I have looked at how mainstream publishing has changed with the introduction of the computer, why it is important to know your audience, page elements, and design considerations. This month, I explore an aspect of the most basic element of the fanzine, the text, and explain why a computer handles the letters the way it does.

## Understanding Fonts

There you are browsing at the local computer store when you come across that indispensable resource, the CD of Fonts! The CD says 10,000 fonts and you pick it up, sneering at the other CD which says 1000 typefaces, and take it home cackling with glee as you picture the thousands of different fancy styles of letters that are now available for your fanzine. You pop it into your computer, open up the directory, and find only two hundred font names. What is going on here? Why are they in different sizes and styles when my wordprocessor only needs one to make the others? Why do they supply Bitmap, Type 1, and True Type formats of these same fonts?

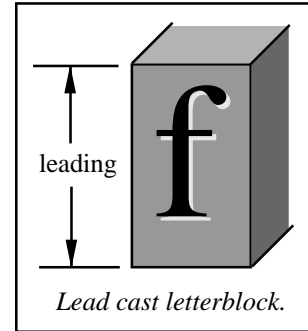
## Fonts Vs Typefaces

The problem is that people mix up the terms typeface and font. A typeface, such as *Times*, *Garamond*, or *Helvetica* is a distinct looking style of lettering. Fonts, on the other hand, are subsets of typefaces. Confused? It is very simple really. The best way to understand this is to explore the history of typefaces.

The printing press was first introduced in England in the 15th century. Entire pages were originally carved in hardwood blocks and then pressed onto sheets of paper. This was a time consuming and wasteful method of producing the printed page but was more efficient than having scribes hand write it one letter at a time. It

was Johannes Gutenberg who introduced moveable metal type with his press. (*The original moveable type was created in 1045 in China by Pi Sheng, but due to the number of characters in the Chinese language, the process was impractical.*)

The process of casting each letter was the job of the



typesetters who made molds of letter-blocks and poured lead into them. This is where we get the term leading which is the measurement of the distance between lines of text. Leading is the same as the height of the lead block. A page is put together by assembling

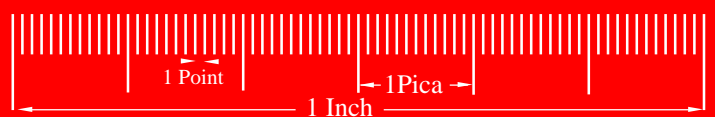
these letterblocks onto a template, layering them side by side like bricks.

The casting process takes place in the foundries which is where the sets of letters get their name as a fount. The term later became font because they wanted to shorten the word for the sake of brevity. (*Yes I know they only took out one letter. Go figure.*) As there are different sizes needed for each typeface, each one was referred to as a separate font. This is why, when you look at that CD, you find that the typeface of Times has many different fonts ranging in size from six points to the more common ten, twelve, fourteen point sizes and up.

## Getting to the Points

**F**or the most part, desktop publishing, wordprocessing and art programs measure the font size and leading in terms of points. But what is a point and where did it come from?

Printers measure things in terms of points and picas. Due to the nature of the size of type, the units needed to be tiny. In an attempt to standardize the type sizes, the point system was proposed in 1737 by Frenchman Pierre Simon Fournier (*Proposed one point equals 0.0137 inches*) and again twenty years later by Ambrose Didot (*Proposed one point equals 0.0148 inches*). It was not until American Nelson Hawks (*Proposed one point equals 0.0137 inches*) who lobbied during the 1860's and 70's that the American point system was finally put to use. His system of point sizes was adopted wholesale by the printing industry who liked having its own standard. It was in 1886 that the Association of Typesetters of the US that the American Point Standard was officially sanctioned.



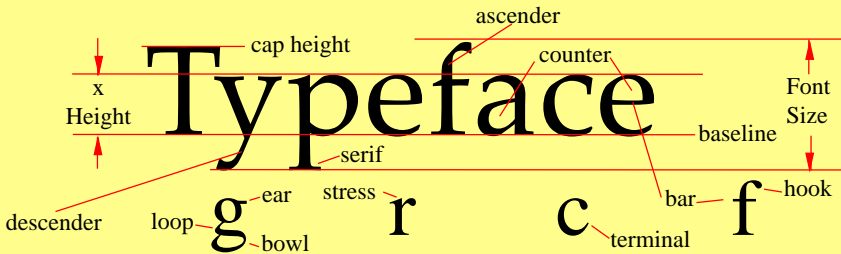
There are seventy two points in an inch. At the same time, the measurement of the page required a larger unit which is compatible with the point system. The pica, (12 points) is the measurement chosen for this purpose. There are six picas to an inch.



## Font Anatomy

How many times have you changed a typeface only to discover that the height of the font has changed too? Yet all indications in the toolbar show that the font size is the same. How can this be explained?

Like fonts and typefaces, people mistake font size for the body height which is the x-height plus the ascender. There is a distinction between the ascender and the cap(ital) height because most fonts have taller ascenders. The size of the font is measured from the lowest descender to the tallest ascender. This is an important value for a type setter who not wish to overlap letters when deciding on the leading. As a designer, I find the body height to be a more useful measurement, but as these are almost never provided, I make do with the font size.



As if this wasn't enough to inflate the number of fonts on the disk, different versions of a typeface are also referred to as a different font. Styles such as italics, roman, medium, black and bold are added to the makeup of a type face, each style having their own set of sizes. Suddenly, one typeface has several hundred font versions and your CD is starting to get crowded.

## Bold Roman and Italian Style

During the mid 1400's type-faces were created by copying the handwritten letters of the scribes. In 1458, French Master of the Royal Mint Nicholas Jensen, after learning for two years from Johannes Gutenberg emigrated to Venice to refine his printing and skills. In 1470 he introduced his classic roman style font which distinguishes him as one of the most significant people in type history.

In 1501, Italian Aldus Manutius invented the italic style of text. The style is credited for elevating the typeface from simple imitation of handwritten letters to a higher level of art. Italics was very popular with publishers because of its artistic handwritten look and the fact that it allowed more letters per line than any other style at the time. The italic style is named after the country in which it originated from, Italy. (*Aldus Manutius is also famous for introducing the portable book. Up until this time, books were huge and scaled to the point that it was difficult for a traveling scholar to handle.*)

The roman style typeface did not appear in North America for another 100 years when John Day introduced it in 1572. Unfortunately, his version lacked the quality of Jensen's font.

The first true type specialist was Frenchman Claude Garamond who's Jenson inspired font first appeared in 1530. He came up with the idea of providing other printers and publishers with type design, text punching, and foundry services making his the first pre-press production house.

In 1734, William Caslon issued his type sample sheet of fonts from his foundry. He is recognized as that century's foremost font designer and typefounder. (*The American Declaration of Independence is printed using the Caslon font. Ironic when you consider that William Caslon was British.*)

The father of modern roman type is Giambattista Bodoni. In the early 19th century, he refined the Baskerville style (*John Baskerville's fonts were designed after 1750 but were not widely used after his death. It was 150 years later that they came back into popularity in the 1920's.*) and brought about the thin straight contemporary serifs and thick strokes of fonts today.

It is from these oldstyle typefaces that many of the modern typefaces were inspired. Times New Roman, Palatino, and Perpetua are such fonts which are based on the classic styles. Copying the general style of the old fonts, the newer versions were refined to eliminate the uneven strokes and rough edges.

Over the last century, typefaces flourished under such designers as Frederic Goudy, Adrian Frutiger, Herman Zapf and Max Miedinger (*Max is the designer the most commonly seen font today, Helvetica.*). Look at your font collection. More than likely, you will recognize some of these names by the list in your font folder.

Modern typefaces come in an assortment of styles. At the same time, many programs will allow you to change a font style at a click of a button. Usually this is done by skewing the letters to create the italics style, or making a font bold by broadening all the strokes. Some graphic programs will even allow you to alter the individual parts of a font. So why do fonts packages include bold, italic and roman styles of one typeface?

The problem with changing the style of a typeface is that simple changes can alter the distinctive look of a typeface. A font designer will look at every part of a font when changing its style. Italic fonts are not simply skewed, but certain letters are significantly altered to maintain the distinctive balance of its strokes. Good font design keeps in mind every part of a character to maintain the look and feel of a typeface. Certain letters, for example when 'bolded' have parts that suddenly become joined when you use the bold style selector, but will remain separate when you chose the bold typeface that came on the disk. It is therefore advisable to use the actual style font than to have your program alter the style for you.

- **Old Style:** Fonts based on the ones designed in the 16th and 18th centuries. The serifs of these fonts are uneven due to the nature of the production processes of the time.
- **Gothic/Grotesque:** A modern style of sans-serif font characterized by uniform weight strokes.
- **Script Fonts:** A typeface which emulates handwriting.
- **Old English** A very fancy style of font which resembles the artistic scriptive style of the scribes who used copy books by hand.
- **Decorative Fonts:** Fonts which are designed more for their visual appearance than for their letter content.
- **Display Font:** A font designed mainly for headings or display.
- **Baseline:** An imaginary line on which type sits.
- **x-Height:** The height of a lower case x of a font.
- **Ascender:** The part of a letter which rises up from the x-height.
- **Descender:** The part of a letter which drops below the baseline.
- **Cap Height:** The height of the tallest capital letter.
- **Body:** The height of the x-height plus the ascender.
- **em space:** the space taken up by the letter "m".
- **en space:** the space taken up by the letter "n".
- **em/en dash:** different sizes of the hyphen that are available in expert font sets.

- **Counter:** The space enclosed by a letter.
- **Stress:** The apparent direction of the weight of a letter.
- **Terminal:** The sharp end of a rounded letter.
- **Hook:** The loop of an ascender which curls down.
- **Loop:** The fully enclosed curl of a descender.
- **Bowl:** The curl of a descender which curves back upwards.

## Bitmaps and Postscripts and True Types, oh my!

In the beginning, there were bitmapped fonts. These fonts are designed on a grid and were perfect for the dot matrix printers and the screen. Unfortunately, if you choose to make the letters large, you end up with the “jaggies” where the once smooth lines of the font become large square blocks. Specially designed large size fonts were created to fix this problem, but having a different font for every point size made collections huge and expensive, not only in the pocketbook, but in memory as well.

In 1985, Adobe introduced the postscript printer language and revolutionized digital output. With this came the concept of outline fonts. Postscript defines objects through vectors and points. The areas defined by these elements along with a technique called hinting allowed the resizing of an object without losing the crisp sharp edges like you would with a bitmap. Adobe Type 1 fonts are primarily found on the Macintosh (where digital typography began), and widely used on a professional level.

With the success of postscript, Microsoft developed their own outline font in 1989. Used mainly on the Windows platform, these fonts are computer based

instead of printer based and work for both the printer and the screen.

If you need to take your file to a professional for output, I suggest you use Type 1 fonts which are also available for the Windows platform today. Do not use a combination of True Type and Type 1 fonts if you can help it. Some places will refuse to print out files with True Type fonts because the results can be unpredictable, thereby expensive. If you are on a Windows machine, and only using your desktop printer, then by all means use the True Type fonts that come with your computer. If you are on the Macintosh, your computer is Postscript based so most of your fonts will be in the same format.

Depending on the font you use, the letters can look darker or lighter and will occupy a different amount of space. Modern font collections will offer condensed and expanded styles with weights ranging from ultra light to black and have styles from italic to oblique. For the most part collections will also offer these fonts in a variety of formats allowing you to choose the one that best suits you.



*Next month: Formatting Text.*

## Type Families

When you look at a series of fonts, you will begin to notice specific similarities between them and start grouping them together. You will come across terms such as old-style, modern, and grotesque in the font name. These terms identify the family or group in which they belong.

**Old Style** fonts, due to the fact that they were originally carved and cast, have rough edges in their strokes and serifs. They can also be identified by the high bar and tapered weights. This style of lettering has a very conservative look to them and give off a caring feel to them.

The next set of fonts to appear are the **slab serif** fonts. They were designed in an attempt to break away from the classical look of the old style fonts. Also called Egyptian fonts, this style of lettering can be identified by their low bar, smooth curves, and square serifs. The letters also feature a combination of uniform thin and thick strokes.

Drastic changes to typefaces came in the twentieth century when fonts which lacked all serifs were introduced. This family of typefaces was originally called **grotesque**, but was later renamed **sans-serif**. This font is very contemporary in its look and is great for headlines but is not as easy to read as serif style fonts.

The **Modern** family features sharp angles, low bars, thin slab serifs, and a sharp contrast between the thin and thick strokes. This style of font has a very creative riské and fashionable look to it.

There are a number of **Old English** typefaces in circulation. These letters are full of flourishes and serifs and look very much like the artistic lettering done by the early scribes. These fonts lend a touch of class and importance to a document. They are also very difficult to read and should not be used as the primary font in long documents.

The family of **Script** fonts all resemble a person’s handwriting. These fonts are great for less formal occasions when a more personal touch is needed.

With the computer becoming a part of the document production stream, typeface designers were no longer restricted in their artistic range. **Display** or **Fun** fonts are highly stylized and thematic in their makeup. They are designed more for their look than for the letter itself. These fonts can range in legability from very hard to easy.

tapered strokes

AE

ragged serifs

**Old Style**

flaired serifs

AE

**Old English**

smooth curves

AE

square serifs

**Slab Serif**

sharp angles

AE

high contrast strokes

**Modern**

sharp serifs

AE

high bar

**Roman**

AE

**Script**

uniform strokes

AE

**Sans-Serif**

AE

**Display**





# Kerning & Tracking

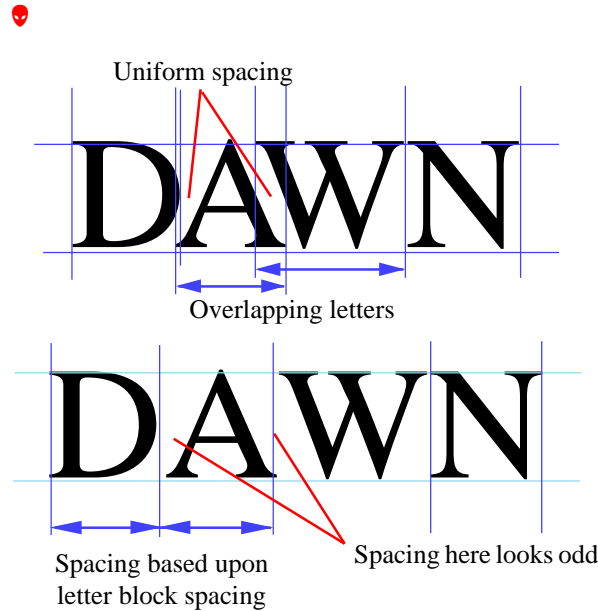
When the typewriter was first introduced, the spacing between every letter was exactly the same and the typeface used (slab serif) allowed the letters to look optically even. This was to allow the mechanism to move at simple even intervals. However, with the introduction of the modern typeface, it became necessary to space letters differently. Typewriters became more sophisticated allowing half space movement and the kerning of specific letters.

With the early computers, the letters of a typeface were designed on a bitmap grid and every letter once again took up the same amount of space. As the technology advanced, kerning values were given to letter pairs allowing the computer to use modern and unique typefaces.

Without allowing letters to overlap into each other's space, large gaps would appear between letters effecting legability as the reader must work harder when deciding where a cluster of letters started and ended.

Tracking, on the other hand is a measure of how all the **letters in a word** sit together. Loose tracking allows more space between letters and looks lighter, but takes up more space. Tight Tracking, on the other hand gives the text block a darker look, and takes up less space.

For the most part, body text needs very little adjustment and are generally tweaked more for the tracking than for the look of a word. Large type headlines, on the other hand, need special attention to the kerning as the gaps between certain letter pairs become very noticeable. Tracking is the spacing of letters in a word and not between words which can be effected by the justification (see last issue). Try adjusting the letterspacing if you need to squeeze a few extra lines onto a page.



- **Bar:** The straight horizontal lines of a font.
- **Ear:** A small decorative extension bar which extends outward from the top of a letter
- **Roman:** The style of upright lettering.
- **Italics:** A slanting script like style of lettering.
- **Bullets:** A special set of characters designed to draw attention to itself.
- **Kern:** The part of a letter that overhangs another to allow for even looking spacing.
- **Tracking:** A measure of how close letters of a word are arranged.



Steve 40

This is more for you who are reading your first BCSFAzine. I have been involved in this club registered as West Coast Science Fiction Association, but more commonly known as BCSFA (it's old name) since 1975. I found the first few times I went to a meeting it was hard to meet people, as people tend to hang out with people they know. After a meeting or so I met some of the most interesting people I have ever met. I soon became a regular at meetings, and started to participate in the various club functions. I learned to print using a Gestetner (the clubs newsletter was printed that way until the late 1980's I think), I got involved with the convention (VCON), and started to have meetings/parties at my place. I found that by getting involved this way I was able to really get to know a number of really good people. Many of these people are still very good friends 25 years later.

At the meetings we have had discussion groups, meet the local and sometimes farther away authors, we had video nights, dances, games nights (sometimes board games, sometimes a few years later it was computer games as well-even the odd role playing game), many

parties, we even had a Bellingham exchange where we went down there and partied (stayed the night as well) then later they came up here we showed them around and partied. We have had field trips to places such as Whistler and had groups of us go to other conventions all over the Northwest (Edmonton, Moscow Idaho, Portland, Seattle and a number of others in between). We even had a fair number go to a World Science Fiction Convention in Winnipeg. The club for many years had monthly meetings on the third Saturday of the month although it is not as much now. There is a group of fans that have met at a lounge every Friday night for over twenty years, mostly this clubs members, and it is called F.R.E.D. (Forget Reality Enjoy Drinking—it doesn't have to be alcoholic). Of course there is the long running BCSFAzine, it has been monthly without missing an issue for many years-this is part of your membership in the club. This club also has a Writer's Workshop for those who really like to get involved in the writing end. A number of our club members have been published since they got involved with this group. They still produce a

short story fan magazine called Fictions every few years, it is sponsored by the club and is free to all members. Who knows you may meet an up and coming author who gets to be well known. William (Bill) Gibson was just one of us fans who used to do art work for the newsletter in 1975, and now he is a well known author.

The club has changed character and focus many times over the years, when a number of new fans get involved they take the club in new directions until the next group comes in-this has made it much more interesting over the years. VCON is where we sometimes get these groups of new fans to join, so please if you are new to this, try and make a FRED to meet some of us, and if there is a meeting published in this months newsletter please come and join us there. FRED's location is listed in the calendar - things of interest to club members (FRED is independent of the club, just turn up and you are welcome-we will fill you in on the club/convention if you want to know about them.

Steve 40



By Palle Hoffstein

**H**i everyone. Sorry for being away for so long; my life has been a little crazy lately. There's lots to report on. This month I'll focus on some updates on film projects that we followed in past MovieManias, with some new stuff thrown in. Next month I'll have truck loads of new SF and Fantasy movie projects to tell you about.

\*\*\*

By now I'm sure that you've heard that Canadian actor **Hayden Christensen** has been cast as the teenage **Anakin** for **Star Wars Episode 2**. I'm glad they've gone with a relatively unknown rather than a superstar. Christensen comes across as rather wooden in everything I've seen of him, and a bit thick in interviews, but Lucas credits Christensen as having shown good chemistry with **Natalie Portman**. **Peter Meyhew** has confirmed that he's been hired to play **Chewbacca** in SWE2 and SWE3. I guess this means they won't "CG" the Wookies. Hurray! **Yoda** will be back in puppet form, however, I have heard that **Boba Fett** will be done as CG. What's the point of that? **Cylk Cozart** (Conspiracy Theory), **Gabriel Byrne** and martial arts actor **Makiya Yamaguchi** have been rumoured as SWE2's New Dark Sith Bad-Ass (the name "Darth Legion" keeps popping up). **Samuel L. Jackson** and Christensen have begun martial arts training for SWE2's fight sequences. Sony's new all-digital cameras will be used to photograph SWE2. The new Panavision Sony HDW-F900 cameras shoot at 24 frames per second, like film, and promise to reduce expenses in the post-production phase of the project as well as being nearly indistinguishable from traditional high-quality film resolutions (but hey, George, there is still colour loss). Meanwhile the film is still undergoing re-writes under the hand of **Jonathan Hales** (I believe his last work with Lucas was writing the rather stupid **Young Indiana Jones** series).

\*\*\*

**The Mummy Returns!** OK, maybe **The Mummy** wasn't high art, but I loved it and I'm looking forward to the sequel, now being filmed in London. **Universal Pictures** was very happy with how well the Mummy

performed at the box office, especially how well it competed with **The Phantom Menace**, and have coughed up big dough to bring back director **Stephen Sommers**, **Brendan Fraser** (Rick O'Connell), **Rachel Weisz** (Evelyn), **Arnold Vosloo** (Im-Ho-Tep), **John Hannah** (Jonathan Carnahan) and **Oded Fehr** (Ardeh Bay). WWF Wrestler **The Rock** has been added to play someone called **The Scorpion King**, half-man and half-scorpion. Of course! Set for release May 11, 2001. This time Im-Ho-Tep's mummy is shipped to London for a museum display, ten years after the original story. He breaks free and seeks revenge on Rick and Evelyn.

\*\*\*

As I previously reported **Stephen Spielberg** has temporarily shelved **Minority Report** to work on **A.I.** for **Warner Bros.**, the project **Stanley Kubrick** planned to film after **Eyes Wide Shut**. Kubrick got as far as a second-draft script and some production sketches for this SF epic, and apparently some sets were even built. Spielberg has been named to finish the script, based on a short story from **Brian Aldiss** called **Supertoys**, that follows the life of a computer, designed to help battle the greenhouse effect and rising oceans, which develops sentience of its own. Kubrick expressed a concern that most SF pictures, such as **Blade Runner** or his own **2001 A Space Odyssey** always present sentient computers as dangerous or menacing, and wanted to take a different approach. This will be Spielberg's first script since **Close Encounters**. Production begins July 10 and a tentative release date for the summer of 2001 has been set. Names set for the cast are **Haley Joel Osment** (the Sixth Sense), **Jude Law** (Gattaca), **Frances O'Connor** and **Jake Thomas** (The Cell). Filming of the Philip Dick story, **Minority Report** has been rescheduled for April 2001 with **Tom Cruise** to star.

\*\*\*

**Paul Verhoeven**, the man who gave us such winners as **Robocop** and such crap as **Showgirls** and **Starship Troopers** is directing **The Hollow Man** for **Columbia Pictures**. Cast: **Kevin Bacon**, **Elisabeth Shue**, **Josh Brolin** and **William Devane**. Veteran screenwriter **Andrew Marlowe** (End of Days, Apt Pupil, Air Force One) has penned the script about three scientists who discover invisibility. Not instant invisibility mind you: the scientist's bodies go invisible slowly, layer by layer, revealing their insides to onlookers. Apparently they become a little unhinged as well. **The Hollow Man** will be released July 28, 2000, but so far the press has been real quiet on this one. A trailer is available at the Sony homepage and it's impressive. The visuals for this look really, really cool. Verhoeven, whatever his faults, is a director who knows special effects.

\*\*\*

Some changes in the **Proteus** project from **Miramax**. **Darren Aranofsky**, who brought us the very cool **Pi**, is no longer directing but will stay on as a producer. In his place is **David Twohy** whose last flick was **Pitch Black**. Twohy is also re-writing the script. Billed as a thriller, **Proteus** follows a WWII submarine that encounters some sort of powerful undersea creature while pursuing Nazi ships and U-Boats.

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Aranofsky has stated that he plans for this film to be scary as hell, and psychologically, not effects, driven. As to why Aranofsky has stepped back; the rumour is that he's been offered the job to direct **Batman 5**. Hey, maybe we'll finally get a decent Batman flick.

\*\*\*

For a few weeks now the trailer for **The Fellowship of the Ring**, the first of Peter Jackson's massive **Lord of the Rings** trilogy, has been available for download, setting records for a movie trailer download (1.67 million in its first day). If you haven't seen it yet, check it out. The footage of thousands of Orcs charging over a field made my hair stand on end. Since I last gave you a cast list, **Uma Thurman** has resigned from the project without stating her reasons. The current cast list is: **Ian McKellen** as Gandalf, **Sean Bean** as Boromir, **Viggo Mortensen** as Aragorn, **Liv Tyler** as Arwen, **Ian Holm** as Bilbo Baggins, **Christopher Lee** as Saruman, **Elijah Wood** as Frodo, **Sean Astin** as Sam Gamgee, **Billy Boyd** as Pippin, **Cate Blanchett** as Galadriel, **Stuart Townsend** as Aragorn, **Orlando Bloom** as Legolas, **Brad Dourif** as Wormtongue, **Dominic Monaghan** as Merry, **John Rhys-Davies** as Gimli, **Miranda Otto** as Eowyn, **Hugo Weaving** as Elrond and **Bernard Hill** as Theoden. Two of those names are new since my last report: Hugo Weaving played evil Agent Smith in the Matrix and Mirando Otto, last seen in the Thin Red Line, has replaced Thurman. Jackson will continue his tradition of making a cameo, this time as a nasty Orc. The production is now in it's sixth month of shooting. Scenes requiring 15,000 extras to be borrowed from the New Zealand and Australian armed forces had to be rescheduled when the soldiers were sent to the conflict in East Timor! At the official New Line Cinemas web page a webcam has been set up to let viewers see bits of the filming. The producers have been slowly leaking a few photos to keep the hype up. Everyone and everything looks fantastic. The production sketches, the costumes, the make-up, the sets: everything just makes my jaw drop. Only 19 more months to go! Official Web Site: [www.lordoftherings.net](http://www.lordoftherings.net), Other sites: [www.TheOneRing.net](http://www.TheOneRing.net) (the best site out there), [www.TheOneRing.com](http://www.TheOneRing.com) (another good site), [www.Ringzone.net](http://www.Ringzone.net) and [www.Ringbearer.org](http://www.Ringbearer.org).

\*\*\*

Perhaps to get in on this whole classic Fantasy book thing, Universal has initiated an **Out of the Silent Planet** project based on the first of the famous **C.S. Lewis** trilogy. This is still in the script and development stage. I have to wonder if they're thinking "trilogy?"

\*\*\*

I have some casting news for **John Carpenter's Ghosts of Mars**, namely **Courtney Love**, **Ice Cube** (who plays someone named Desolation Williams) and **Jason Statham**. Needless to say I'm underwhelmed. Mind you, Love put in a good performance in Alex Cox's Sid and Nancy and Ice Cube was fine in Three Kings. Movie martial arts master **Yuen Wo Pin** (the Matrix) is rumoured to be working on this picture as the fight co-ordinator, that sounds cool. Shooting starts August 1. It seems the money problems that have plagued this picture have been finally resolved.

\*\*\*

Speaking of the Matrix II, Vancouverite **Carrie-Anne Moss** has officially signed up to reprise her role as Trinity and **Hugo Weaving** will reprise his role as Agent Smith, which shouldn't conflict too much with his filming Lord of the Rings in New Zealand; The Matrix II is being shot in Australia (in the same studio as Star Wars Episode 2).

\*\*\*

Carrie-Ann Moss' other SF project **Red Planet**, also starring **Val Kilmer** and **Terence Stamp**, has been pushed back to November 10, 2000 for release. Warner Bros. has wanted to keep this project distant from **Mission To Mars** and to keep the films from being confused in the public mind, plus this gives them four extra months of post-production. Everything I've

seen from this project looks much better than Mission to Mars. For one, it has the production design team from the Matrix. And where Mission to Mars shot its Martian landscape scenes in a South Delta landfill spray-painted red (I kid you not), Red Planet is filming in Iceland and the Australian desert. As a side note; Red Planet cannot take advantage of NASA's Space Act Agreement (where the agency lets moviemakers use the Kennedy Space Center, the NASA logo and receive astronaut consultation) because of scenes of two astronauts "getting physical." Hmm. Official Web Site: [www.wbmovies.com/redplanet](http://www.wbmovies.com/redplanet).

\*\*\*

Now some horror stuff. Someone recently showed me a graphic novel from the great **Alan Moore** and **Eddie Campbell** called **From Hell**. The story, which concerns a conspiracy behind the Jack the Ripper murders is remarkable for the vast amount of real research that was put into it, and which has been made available for study. New Line Cinema has been developing a film adaptation for some time that has now gone into production with brothers **Albert** and **Allen Hughes** directing for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox. **Johnny Depp**, **Heather Graham**, **Nigel Hawthorne** and **Robbie Coltrane** have signed up for the cast and, an interesting choice, **Trevor Jones** (Art of Noise, Buggles, Yes) will provide the musical score. Only marginally fantasy, but I know Alan Moore has a huge following in SF&F circles.

\*\*\*

Remember **The Lost Boys**? It was the best of a bunch of teen vampire picks that came out in 1987. Director/Producer **Joel Schumacher** is now developing a sequel called **Lost Girls**. More news as soon as it comes in.

\*\*\*

This one is high on my must-see list. **Shadow of the Vampire** is the first release from **Nicholas Cage's** independent production company, **Saturn Films**. The premise sounds just amazing: German silent film director **F.W. Murnau** is filming his vampire film **Nosferatu**. Then a series of unsettling events begin to plague the production: crew members begin to ail or die under mysterious circumstances, and others vanish without a trace. To make things worse the lead actor, Max Schreck, is beginning to act very strange! One of my all-time favourites, **John Malkovich** plays the famed director, **Willem Dafoe** is silent star **Max Schreck**, Also starring **Catherine McCormack**, **Cary Elwes**, **Udo Kier**, **Rowman Vibert**, **Eddie Izzard** and **Myriam Muller**. The Director is **E. Elias Merhige** (Begotten) and **Steven Katz** (American Gothic) is the screenwriter. **Shadow of the Vampire** will be in theatres sometime this autumn. Check out their web page at [www.saturnfilms.com](http://www.saturnfilms.com) to see some photos, production sketches and storyboards and to download the trailer. It looks great! (PS: If you've never seen the classic Nosferatu, you owe it to yourself to rectify this)



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*The Mad Ship*, Robin Hobb (Bantam, 1999)

in Brief:

*Godshome*, Robert Sheckley;

*First Evidence*, Ken Goddard;

*Millennium Rising*, Jane Jensen.

Guest Review:

*Idoru*, William Gibson (Berkley, 1997)

Reviewing the second book in a trilogy presents a special challenge, particularly when that book (**The Mad Ship**) is most definitely part 2 of 3, rather than a stand-alone novel. For example, I can't tell you whether the ultimate conclusion of Robin Hobb's story lives up to its beginning, as I didn't read either. I can't comment on overall structure. And summing up the complex, sprawling plot is a task which would probably take me three book review columns.

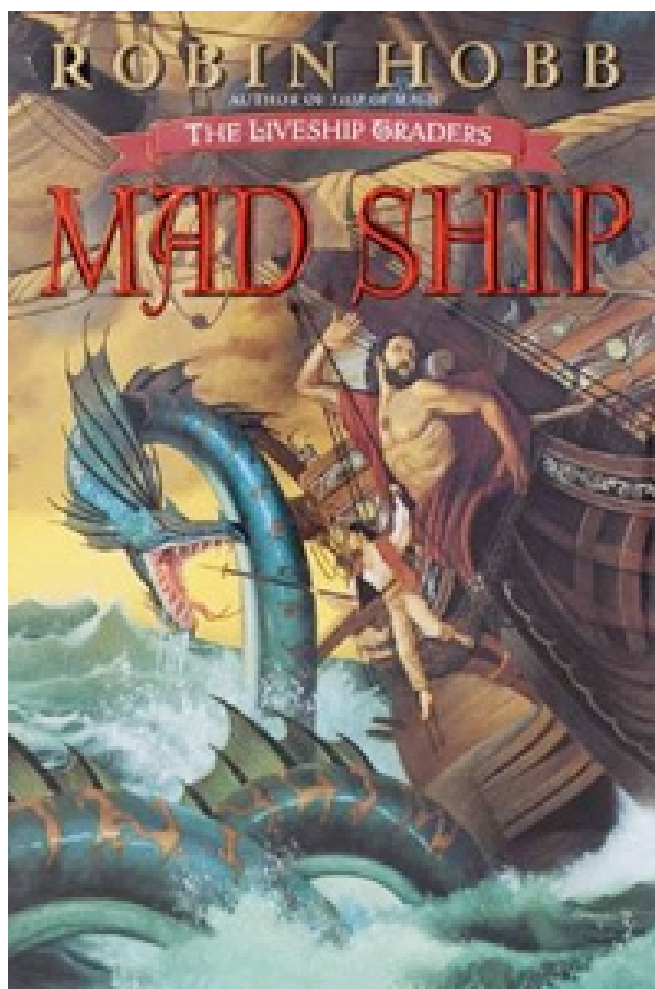
Still, the fact that I read and enjoyed **The Mad Ship**, in spite of joining the action after 400 pages, is a pretty good sign of skillful writing on the part of Robin Hobb (pen name for Seattle writer Megan Lindholm).

The mad ship of the title is Paragon, a sentient sailing ship built of magical "wizard wood" who became an out-cast after two of his crews mysteriously drowned. For 30 years Paragon has been stranded on a beach outside of Bingtown muttering and raving to himself, shunned by his owners and the townspeople. But two dispossessed younger members of Bingtown trading families are desperate enough to think of refitting him and taking him out to retrieve their failing fortunes.

Dozens of other characters are followed in this book, including a young, newly quickened liveship (Vivacia); the ruthless pirate Kennit who dreams of becoming king of the Pirate Islands; Wintrow, a boy torn away from his vocation as a monk and sent to sea; Cosgo, the corrupt Satrap whose decadence may bring

war; and Reyn Khuprus the Rain River man who hears the voice of the world's last dragon in his dreams, begging him to free her from her underground prison.

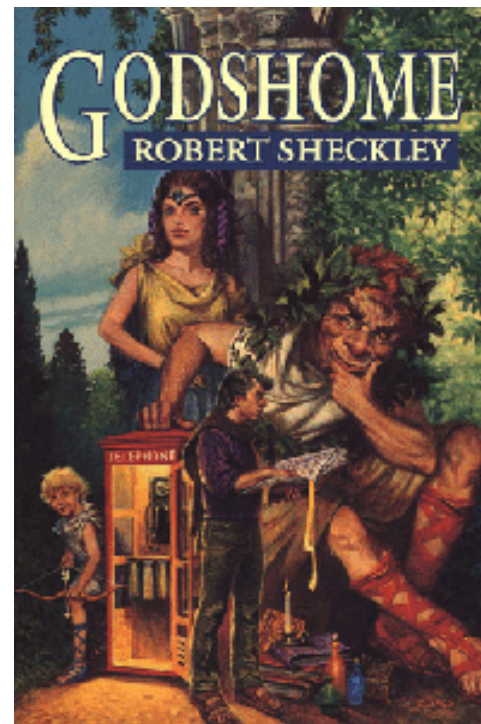
Despite the sheer size of the cast, Robin Hobb writes so deftly that I rarely had any trouble sorting out who was who, and I was quickly drawn into the action by their compelling personalities. Hobb's characterizations are exceptionally strong. I was particularly impressed by her handling of Davad Restart, a man who is pig-headed, avaricious, blind to his own motivations, and often cruel without even noticing, and yet shows just enough flashes of humanity to keep a few exasperated friends loyal to him.



I was also impressed to notice, when flipping back through the book, just how much exposition Hobbs manages to sandwich into this novel without losing her readers. Although there is plenty of action, characters also spend long periods of time contemplating their lives and problems--pages and pages,

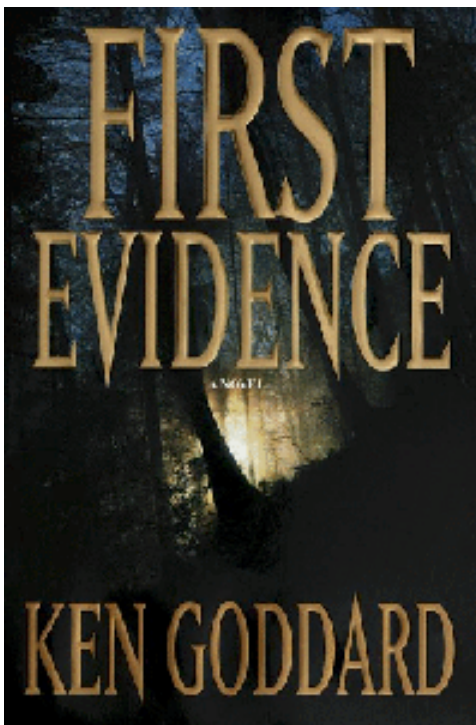
in fact. Nonetheless, I stayed glued to those pages right through to the cliffhanger ending of book 2, and I am now impatiently awaiting book 3.

## A FEW BRIEFS:

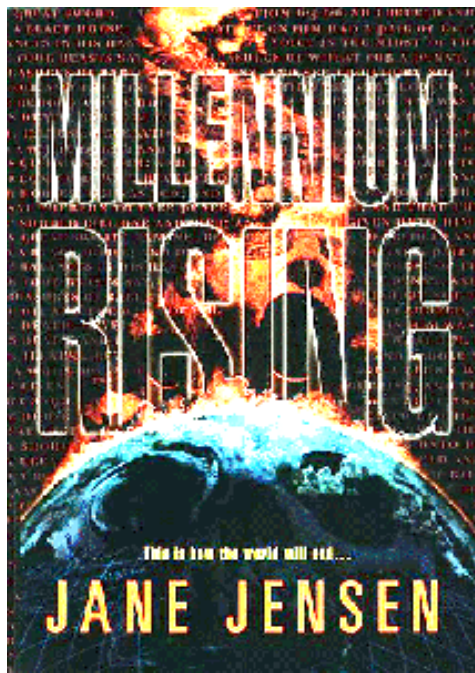


**Godshome** is the first Robert Sheckley novel I've picked up in many years, and although it is well written, I found this book fundamentally disappointing. Readers who get a kick out of Sheckley's comic style will probably enjoy **Godshome** (it even has references to such notorious West Coast jokes as the Vancouver Stock Exchange), but ultimately the novel goes nowhere. It is almost impossible for even a strong writer to generate dramatic tension in a fantasy setting where there are absolutely no rules- and anything at all can happen at any time.

**First Evidence** is a new mystery suspense novel with an SF twist by Oregon writer Ken Goddard. The protagonist, a pathologist, is drawn into a series of abductions in the southern part of Oregon, and finds himself investigating the murder of an old friend, a deserter from the NSA. Among the strengths of this novel are the setting and Goddard's detailed understanding of scene-of-the-crime procedures. Weaknesses include very poor writing in the first half of the book, a lot of shopworn UFO content that will make SF fans groan, and a "movie of the week" feel.



When I picked up **Millennium Rising** I expected a cash-in-on-the-year-2000 disaster novel, but author Jane Jensen does a considerably better job than that in her account of a global apocalypse apparently triggered by the wrath of God. A Vatican skeptic is Jensen's unlikely protagonist--a Catholic priest who is dispatched by the Pope to debunk reports of miracles. But in this case he isn't sure whether he's looking at the world's biggest fraud, or the genuine apocalypse. This is quite an engrossing book, although like many disaster novels it surges and crashes on just a bit too long, and events eventually



stretched my suspension of disbelief past the breaking point. (Please, would somebody write a global disaster novel that does NOT prominently feature the U.S. President?!)

Still, not a bad read, and interesting for some of its observations about religious zealotry.

### JUST RELEASED

Eileen Kernaghan's new fantasy novel **The Snow Queen** is just out. Look for it (and Eileen) at VCon!

Comments? Questions? Rebuttals?  
donna\_mcmahon@sunshine.net



## CANADIAN UNITY FAN FUND

Dear Guys,

A propos de rien, I have to report that I've been preoccupied with matters relating to the Canadian Unity Fan Fund. See my Web page on this SF fans' travel fund at <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/~hrothgar/cuff.htm>.

The story at hand is that there are two nominees for the fund this year, and there may be a voting ballot out in a few days. But if one of the nominees does not receive enough nominations, the fund will go by default to Sherry Neufeld of Saskatchewan, and she will attend TT2000, this year's Convention, in Toronto in July.

SCIFI, the Southern California Institute for Fannish Interests, sent me a \$500 check for receipt of my 1999 trip report. Ook ook.

Garth Spencer

Vancouver, B.C.

## Guest Review by Clint Budd

**Idoru**, William Gibson

**Idoru**, follows the stories of two characters: Colin Laney, a net researcher who is an intuitive fisher for the patterns of information that an individual leaves simply by going about the business of living, and Chia Pet McKenzie, a Seattle teenager who is a fan of the Lo/Rez rock band. The primary dilemma facing both Laney and Chia is mega rock star Rez's announcement of his marriage to Rei Toei, Japan's biggest media star. But Rei Toei - the **Idoru** - exists only in virtual reality. She is a computer simulation.

Gibson describes surfaces of objects and blocks of information in his stories as "densely layered." You could describe **Idoru** that way. It constantly switches between viewpoint characters, unfolding the complex background of their stories: Laney isn't originally interested in Rez - he's merely looking for work and Blackwell (Rez's security) is interested in Laney's innate talent to unravel the mystery of Rez's interest in Rei Toei. On the other hand, Chia is organized by her fellow fans into flying to Japan to find out the truth

about Rez almost before she knows it. Laney is trailed by dangerous problems arising from his former life and former employer. Chia picks up a deadly problem on the flight when her seatmate,

Maryalice, slips a package into Chia's carry-on to go through customs - which ultimately attracts the attention of the Russian Kombinat. In between, in a whirlwind of images and ideas, Gibson introduces us to the extremely illegal nanotechnology which rebuilt a major part of quake-battered Tokyo; to a Web equivalent of the Kowloon Walled City (a successful anarchy in both the real and virtual modes); to Blackwell, Rez's security - an enormous man who Gibson hangs on the knife-edge between horrifying menace and fascinating sympathy.

Readers of Gibson's earlier novel **Virtual Light** will recognize the character of Colin Laney and the world setting of **Idoru**, but this book is not part of a series. **Idoru** stands on its own.

Gibson's "dense layering" and extremely laconic style which inspires so many enthusi-

astic reviews in the mainstream press appears to put off some science-fiction genre readers; and it seems to have become fashionable for well-known (and evidently viciously jealous) science fiction and fantasy writers to publicly slag Gibson as merely being an overpaid cyber-punk hack. Meanwhile the mainstream press (such as the Washington Post, Village Voice, and Rolling Stone - names most of the aforementioned science-fiction authors would die to be reviewed by) compares Gibson to Hemingway, Elmore Leonard, Raymond Chandler, J. G. Ballard and Philip K. Dick.

But neither the smarmy insults nor the overblown praise are what counts. **Idoru** has to stand on its own. And it does. Gibson is first and foremost a top-notch story-teller who has produced in **Idoru** a real page-turner with a very satisfying payoff at the end. The immensely polished style and the huge load of new concepts (very well integrated into this story) are just wonderfully ornate frosting.





# 2001

# A

# Space Oddity VCON 26 BID

I would like to submit the following bid for the 2001 Vancouver Science Fiction Convention. I have assembled a list of convention committee members, guests, corporate sponsors, events, and a budget. The theme for this VCon will be 2001: A Space Oddity (Humour in Science Fiction). With this theme in mind I have tentatively invited Peter David and his wife, as well as Alan Dean Foster and his wife. Peter David is best known for his comic book series, as he writes both the Hulk Series, and the Supergirl series. He also is one of the most popular Star Trek Writers, and his New Frontiers series has the support of the fans for the new Star Trek TV series. Peter David has his own TV series, titled iSpace Cases, shown on Nickleodeon and soon The Space Channel. He has written popular episodes for

Babylon 5, and Star Trek: TNG. Alan Dean Foster has written more novels than can be recounted here, and is considered to be one of the worlds top 50 Science fiction authors. Both of these authors have expressed interest in attending VCon 26, but have not been able to confirm their attendance as yet. In an effort to avoid conflict with the myriad of conventions on the Memorial day holiday, I have moved the proposed convention date up two weeks. I have tentatively invited a broad range of other guests, including Julie Hoverson (Serendipities Circle publisher), Mad Pudding (Celtic inspired dance music), Andrew Migilore (Author and organiser of the HP Lovecraft film festival), Tom Braidwood (Freuhike from X-Files and Lone Gunmen), and Pat Turner (Cover artist for Baen Books). I am working with Eileen Kernaghan to make sure as many local SF authors as possible are invited to the convention. I have also contacted a variety of corporate sponsors, in the process of putting on this year's convention. The following companies have confirmed that they will sponsor VCon in 2001: Lego, BTG Staging, Commercial Electronics, Unique Events, Capricorn Multitech, Universal Miniatures, Imperial Hobbies, Taz Comics, Fa-

tion, showcasing games, books, movies, etc that are no longer available. With the donated items VCon already has, plus certain key auction items (like Graeme's Heavy Metal #1 through 60, and my Chainmail), I think the auction will not only raise a significant amount of money for the con, it will be a membership draw in itself. We are also hoping to shoot a movie at the convention, a short (6 minute or so) SF movie featuring Lego robots advancing on the hotel, and then blowing it up. Models will be used, and there will be a variety of inside shots of the convention attendees running in panic, etc. The organisation required to shoot the movie will be difficult, so it is only tentative until a suitable producer/director can be found.

I believe with the special events, website and mailing list, the core convention committee, and the advance notice and planning, this will be the most successful VCon to date.

Chris Sturges



mous Players Theatres, Firefighter's Social and Athletic Club, Charlie's Chocolate Factory, COKE, Granville Island Brewing Company, etc.

I am planning to host a variety of new events this year, many of which I would hope will become annual events. I am planning a virtual art show, showcasing digital and rendered 3d art. Pat Turner has already been in contact with many of his peers, and he is confident we will have material from many of North America's premier digital artists. Currently it is planned to be shown on a mix of slide projectors, large screen TVs, and projection systems, but a much better system exists for the show. Panasonic demonstrated a state of the art 3D projection system at E3 in Atlanta, and I am planning on approaching them to make that system available to us for this art show. If they agree, I believe this will be the first art show of its kind in North America. I am also planning an Out of Print auction, run on the same basis as the Art auc-

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