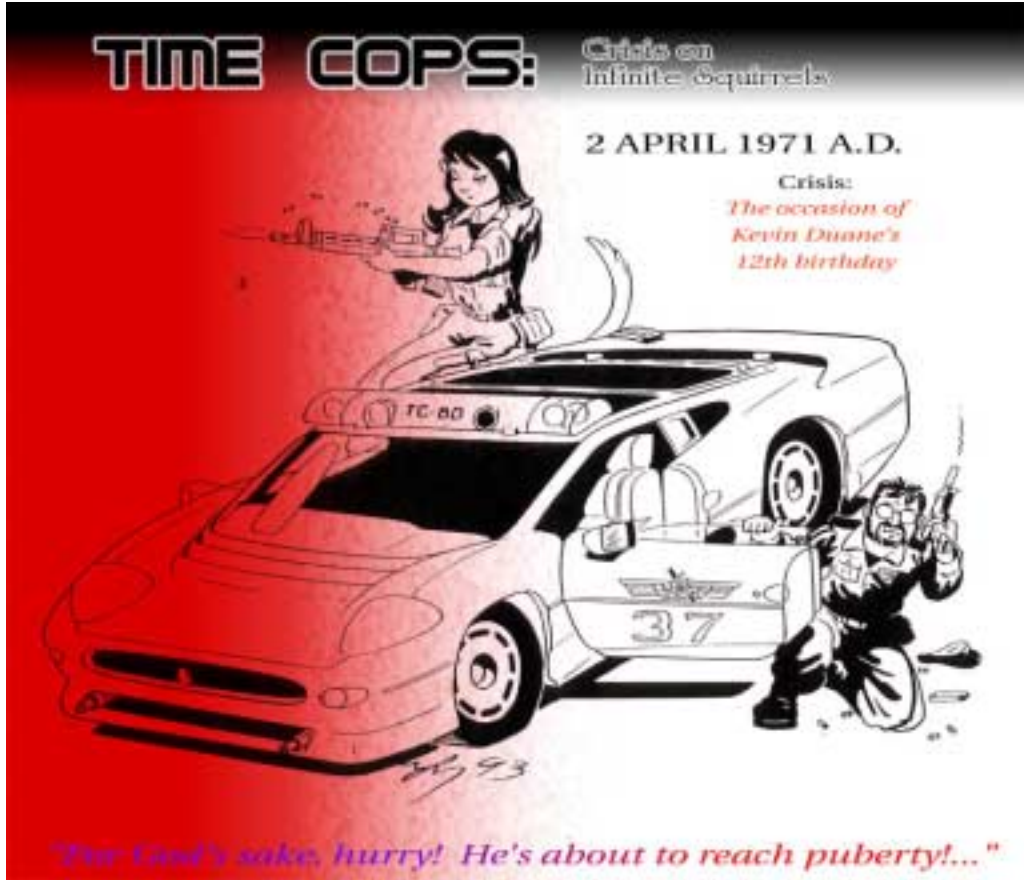


BCSFAzine #355

Vol. 30 No. 12

December, 2002



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- * MARKETS * AWARDS * MEDIA NEWS * RHYMES WITH ORANGE * OBITS *
- * FANZINE REVIEWS * INSIDE MEDIA REPORTS *
- * THE HIDEOUS FATE AWAITING THE BBC *

Colophon

BCSFAzine -- *Something to ~~offend~~ interest everyone!*

BCSFAzine © 2002, Volume 30, #12, Issue #355 is the club newsletter published by the B.C. Science Fiction Association, a social organization. Single copies \$3.00 each. For comments, subscriptions, suggestions, and/or submissions, write to: *BCSFAzine*, c/o Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1, or email hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca.

BCSFAzine is distributed monthly at WHITE DWARF BOOKS, 4368 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 2H7, tel. 604-228-8223; email whitedwarf@deadwrite.com

BCSFA's Web page may be viewed at <http://www3.telus.net/dh2/bcsfa/>

BCSFA's e-mail discussion list may be joined by emailing

BCSFA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To post a message, email BCSFA@yahoogroups.com

To contact the list owner, email BCSFA-owner@yahoogroups.com

To unsubscribe, email BCSFA-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

The shortcut URL to this list is <http://www.yahoo.com/community/BCSFA>

F.R.E.D., the weekly gathering of BCSFAns and all others interested in coming, **now happens every Friday at 8:00 p.m. at the Jolly Alderman Pub, 500 West 12th Avenue (entrance on Cambie Street, just south of 12th Avenue), in the ground floor of the Plaza 500 Hotel (diagonally across from Vancouver City Hall).**

The V-Con Society Web page may be viewed at <http://www3.telus.net/dh2/vconsociety/>

Vcon 27's Web page may be viewed at <http://www.v-con.ca>
(Webmistress: Lorna Appleby, lorna@shadowydreamer.com)

Graeme's **Canfancylopedia** page can be viewed at <http://members.shaw.ca/rgraeme/home.html>.

Andrew Murdoch's **Canfandom** page can be viewed at www.fandom.ca.

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subscribe to .PDF version by e-mail: \$15.00

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Above prices include subscription to *BCSFAzine*. Make cheques payable to WCSFA (West Coast Science Fiction Association), c/o 86 Warrick Street, Coquitlam, B.C. CANADA V3K 5L4.

BCSFAzine is also available by e-mail; please email the editor at hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca if you wish to receive our newsletter this way.

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Cover Art: Taral Wayne

p. 10 photo: Michael Morse

Plain Speaking

Nobody's asked me, so I might as well talk about the recent and forthcoming public holidays. They need a little explaining, don't they? So much that sometimes I'm embarrassed to be an Anglo.

The marketing of Hallowe'en is one thing I find embarrassing. The recent change of month, if you don't already know, started out as a religious holiday in remembrance of the dead. Unless I'm mistaken, November 1st is still known as the Fiesta de los Muertos in Spanish-speaking countries. But in English-speaking countries outside Europe, it's hard to tell what Hallowe'en is (or was) supposed to be about. You could explain today's associated costumes and movie images and TV show references as highly derivative elaborations from the original meaning of the season; but the point is, the derivations are pretty distant. You practically have to be a churchgoer to get a clue what the season was about.

Christmas and Easter are embarrassing for similar reasons, if you expect to have to explain them to people freshly arrived here from another culture.

(I should be clear and specific about generalizations like "culture". As a rule of thumb, I take "society" to mean a group of people, in a place and time, and "culture" to include a number of habitual social rituals they use for getting along with each other; "social norms", like common courtesies and traffic rules and the considerations you observe when you share a living space.)

If I travelled abroad, I would be embarrassed from time to time by the strange ideas that must be circulating about Americans and Canadians. (Example: a friend of mine was going to be hired for some kind of work by a German relative, but when he arrived, the German's face just fell – he was expecting some big husky Canadian boy who could do heavy labour, and here was this weedy skinny theatre graduate. Example: in the Czech Republic, I was told, coarse practical jokes are called "Canadian jokes", for some reason.)

There was a point at which my esteemed and unsanitary ancestors understood special times of the year, as they understood their whole world, in terms of an all-embracing system of stories and values; everything was part of an ongoing struggle between the force that served life, especially the life of the human soul, versus the force that destroyed lives. "Hallowe'en" was

originally "All Hallow's Eve(ning)", the eve of the Feast of All Saints, or Hallow's. "Christmas" was originally "Christ's Mass", and so on. That medieval world system broke down, of course, just as the words wore down.

Say what you will about a narrow, mind-numbing, exploitive and vicious society, you can perceive a kind of *congruence* in the worldview of medieval Europe that we don't have.

Now ... if I had to explain religious or civil holidays, I would have to acknowledge a lot of incongruity, between the ostensible meaning of the observance, and the folk traditions that were incorporated into it, and the way marketing has taken advantage of these occasions.

One of the perennial things that some overseas observers will say is that the mercantile, consumerist culture they see in industrialized countries is "corrupt" or "decadent". I don't wonder that they do, when you take a few minutes to consider the images we put into broadcast media, and the way they strike people in more traditional societies. They offer as distorted a picture of life in our society as, well, as American TV offers to Canadians. People who still have, or think they have a somehow congruent world are not all going to be impressed or attracted by an incongruent, disjoint, and often crass foreign culture.

Why do I think about these things? Partly because I keep seeing these ads on the bus, soliciting Canadians to join a program in which they greet new Canadians and sort of introduce them to "our culture". Only I *don't* understand "our culture", and I grew up here. Unless I understand my society to have been engulfed by its marketplace, like the fictitious Ferengi culture.

It might have occurred to you by now that I anticipate a not-very-fantastic future development, right here in Vancouver – a cultural clash, basically between our secular, individualist, largely market-driven society, and new Canadians from highly traditional, and particularly religious societies. Of course, that conflict has really been going on for decades. How often have you heard about the grown children of Hindu or Sikhs who get harassed, even killed, for resisting arranged marriages?

Maybe I should quit worrying, and watch Bollywood musicals to get some perspective. Or start my own new ethnic group.

LoCs

"Lloyd&Yvonne Penney" penneys@netcom.ca,
November 2, 2002

BCSFazine 354 is here in a hardprinted form, so I can enjoy the colour nuances of Taral's fine cover work. Nice kitty... I'll take a peek inside and make some comments, but first...

Taral may have already sent you his report on Ditto 15 in Toronto. There are a couple of details about us not being at the convention for most of it, and that's true. On the evening of the 18th, on our way home from the convention, we were in a two-car accident just a few minutes away from home. We were rushed to Etobicoke General Hospital with minor injuries, but because we were in a hospital, it took us the next 7 hours to get treatment. We got home by taxi at about 6:30 the next morning. Yvonne broke her wrist, and will be in a cast for the next month. Both my knees were badly bruised, but they are healing. Yvonne is off work right now, seeing how much she needs both hands to do her job. Her office has told her not to return until she is fully healed, and keeps in touch with her regularly. I was off work for two days because it was painful to walk, and I'm still not hearing the end of it. Our Suzuki station wagon is finally in the shop, and we'll soon learn how much our insurance rates are going to rise. We had plans to go to Rochester, New York for a convention this weekend, but we're at home, obviously, and the con is on right now. With some luck, life will be back to (relatively) normal within the month.

I would think fandom has a myriad of interests, some of which might be so esoteric as to not be connected to fandom in the opinions of some. I am interested in journalism, space advocacy, writing, fanhistory, fan psychology and collecting. I've always been a collector of something...hockey cards, paperbacks, coins, stamps, confirmation cards and letters from radio stations, buttons, you name it. I've read that being a collector could be classified as being a mild psychological disorder. Well, we've all been called worse than a bunch of sickos...

My letter and the CD launch party...we attended that party at one of the bar lounges in the downtown area, the Red Drink Boutique, and the affair never really got off the ground. The only other contributor to the disk in attendance was author Edo van Belkom, who was there to provide Book

Television with a few sound bites, and then he was gone. The price for the disk through the website is US\$19.90, which includes shipping and handling, and it's available through Paypal. All the details are at www.fearsforears.com. I purchased some disks in bulk from the producer, and I'm selling them to local fandom.

Looks like congratulations are due for the success of VCon 27. These days, breaking even is being successful, seeing how many opportunities there are to lose money. I'd like to come back and say hello at a future VCon; perhaps WestJet or JetsGo can give us a much better fare than what Air Canada provided when we were guests.

Looks like this won't be much of a loc this time around. You can understand we've had a lot of other things on our minds lately. Take care, and see you next issue.

Michael Morse / BCSFazine 1:3.354,
Nov. 2002

Wow! Colour!
"Plain Speaking": So what did all that mean?

(That I should maybe think about changing my meds.)

*"I'm getting more politicized
... I'm entering a frame of
mind in which I can't take
seriously most of the things
people spend time on -
sports, or religious, or the
arts ..."*

This happens. Noam Chomsky once said that it's a good thing for the establishment that people don't channel the intensity and the intelligence with which they watch and study sports into politics.

(Like, there's a difference??)

Some days it's refreshing to be reminded of the big picture, and other days it's better to try to bypass this paradigm shift and escape back into the opiate of your choice before the realization of what you're up against starts making you feel suicidal.

I like Brian "Godzilla" Salmi. His article on David Icke (which was printed in *The Georgia Straight*) was fair and balanced.

Why did you use my drawing of Anakin Skywalker again? It's not *that* great a drawing - his lips look weird - and it's appeared in a previous *BCSFazine*. ©

(Oops. Guess I have to make an index of available illustrations and check off things once they're used.)

"Alternatively, what cartoon characters do we identify with?"

Ah, now *that's* a hard question, at least for as big a fan of cartoons as I am. I'll start with the given categories: "From Hanna-Barbera ..." Velma from *Scooby-Doo* - in the original sense of a portly, intelligent, gentle crime-fighter with thick glasses, not in the present-day sense of a bitter closet lesbian.

(Say what? Man, I am so not with it. Personally I always liked the brainy sidekicks, like Velma and Willow and the computer-expert blonde on V.I.P., whose name I never catch. Zaftig is just an added attraction.)

"... Sometime in the 1960s. Maybe the world ended back then, but nobody noticed ..."

Funnily enough, that was the subject of an article in the issue of the zine *Challenger* that Guy H. Lillian sent me.

To Lloyd Penney: Great idea! I'll ask Garth if I can use his copy of Adobe Acrobat to create the .PDF of *Hero of the Beach*. Meanwhile, if you'd like to see the small amount of content I've prepared so far, I'm keeping it in Web-site format at <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/~morbius/hero.html>. Thanks again for the encouragement.

"Fanzines": "... the joys of the Internet's LiveJournal": My experience so far with LiveJournals has been negative. I first discovered them when I was notified of what was being said about my friends and me in the LiveJournals of certain people (against whom I had nothing until that point). It was strange that these people behaved normally in person but said such horrible things about us behind our backs, but even stranger was that when I then began producing my own LiveJournal entries with my comebacks to their insults and corrections to their factual errors, their responses actually sounded like they felt *betrayed* by me - as if I had no right to hold them accountable for what they'd written publicly. ... (Update, Thursday 7 November 2002: One of them just apologized.)

(If the Goths you mention merely did something on the order of teasing, then their reaction would make sense. If they went beyond teasing, and didn't understand when they crossed the line ... that would be the sort of cognitive failure I've seen several

times, in fandom and elsewhere. Examples: A writer named Seward wrote of modern Japanese that if you said, "I understand but I don't agree", to contemporary Japanese, you would get baffled smiles. Friends have described a former member of BCSFA as confusing people who disagreed with him, with Incarnations of Evil. Neil Stephenson's Cryptonomicon describes some Gen-X males as mistaking any positive declarative statements for a form of aggression.)

"Book Reviews": "The Disappeared combines three distinct subgenres: space opera, the detective novel and the cop partner story":

This idea of multi-layering seems to be a good way to prevent stories from becoming tiresome.

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Our Calendar of Events

December 2002

Dec. 6-8: **Smof Diego / Smofcon 20** at the Hacienda Hotel, Old Town, San Diego, CA, USA. the original conrunners' convention, at least in North America. The Smof Diego theme is Networking. Please contact us if you have ideas or topics you'd like to see discussed. Room rates: \$89 single/double, \$10 per extra person, plus 10.5% tax. (A \$3 energy surcharge may also still be in effect.). The con rate is available from the Monday before thru the Wednesday after. The hotel has free parking for guests. Memberships: up there. Write: Smof Diego, 3118 Via Valesco, Escondido, CA 92029 USA, or email: smofdiego@fopaws.com

Dec. 13: *Star Trek: Nemesis* opens in movie theatres.

Dec. 18: *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* opens in movie theatres.

January 2003

Jan. 10-12: **Rustycon 20** at the DoubleTree Hotel, Bellevue, Washington; a large general SF convention. Writer GoH: Dave Duncan, Artist GoH: Gail Butler, Fan GoH: The KnightHawks, Special Media Guest: Larry Bagby, Fan Group GoH: KnightHawks. Membership Rates: at the door rates \$55 full weekend, \$25 Friday only, \$35 Saturday only, \$20 Sunday; Children under 6 Free; Children 6 to 12 are 1/2 the current rate. Rustycon 20, P.O. Box 84291, Seattle, WA 98124-5591, USA. See www.rustycon.com

Jan. 17-19: **Pandemonium 20**, Inn on the Park, Toronto, ON. Gaming convention. Memberships: Can\$30 pre-registration, Can\$40 at the door. For more information, see www.realmsquest.org .

February 2003

Feb. 14-16: **Radcon 3C** in Pasco, Washington; a general SF convention, with a gaming emphasis. GoH: tentatively R.A. Salvatore; guest, NeNe Thomas. Radcon 3C is sponsoring a Westercon 52 bailout fund. See www.radcon.org.

Feb. 21-23: **RingCon** at the Inn at Gig Harbor, Washington; Advance registration at Norwescon and Washington RenFaire;

Memberships \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, \$15/day; for more information, see www.ringcon.com.

Feb. 28-Mar. 2: **CreationCon** in Seattle, WA.

March 2003

March 21-23: **Anime Oasis 2003**, an anime con in Boise, Idaho. at <http://www.animeoasis.org>.

March 21-24: **Ad Astra XXII**, Toronto Colony Hotel, Toronto, ON. SF convention. Guests: Michael Moorcock, Robert Gould, Alan Lee. Memberships: C\$40 to December 31, 2002, C\$45 to March 7, 2003, Can\$50 at the door. For more information, see www.ad-astra.org.

March 28-30: **FilKONtario 13**, Four Points Sheraton Toronto Airport Hotel, Mississauga, ON. Filking convention. Guests: Cynthia McQuillan, Dr. Jane Robinson, Mark Bernstein, Robert Cooke. Memberships: TBA. For more information, www.bserv.com/community/fkoa.htm.

April 2003

April 4 - 6: **Sakura Con** - SeaTac (The Pre-eminent anime convention in the Puget Sound area) at the Seattle Airport Hilton and Conference Center. Memberships: \$50. We recently discovered that the Sakura-Con Postal address had an error! The corrected address is as follows (changed from 4th Ave to 5th Ave): Sakura-Con, 800 5th Ave, Box 142, Seattle, WA 98104, U.S.A.

April 17-20: **Norwescon 23** in SeaTac, Washington; a VERY large general SF convention. Location TBA. This year's theme: "Dragons, Drakes and Wyrms". Writer GoH: Jane Yolen. Artist GoH: Jim Burns. Science GoH: Geoffrey Landis. Spotlighted publisher: Del Rey. (Memberships?) There is a \$5 (US) discount for NWSFS members. A preregistration form is available online. Write Norwescon 25, P.O. Box 68547, Seattle, WA 98168-0547, U.S.A., or email info@norwescon.org.

April 26-27: **Dak-Kon VIII**, a gaming event at the Lower Native Sons Hall in Courtenay, BC, on Vancouver Island. Memberships: one-day = \$10, both days = \$15, c/o Peter Dryden, #112 - 680 Murrelet Drive, Comox, BC V9M 3P2.

May 2003

MAY 16-18: **Keycon 20**, Radisson Winnipeg Downtown, Winnipeg, MB. SF literary convention. Guests: Robert J. Sawyer, Carolyn Clink, Jolly Blackburn. Memberships: Can\$30 until December 31, Can\$40 until April 30, Can\$50 thereafter and at the door. Children's rates also available. For more information, keycon2003.tripod.com.

May 23-25: **MisCon 17**, "MisCon-spiracy" at Ruby's Inn and Convention Center in Missoula, Montana. Guests of Honor so far are: Authors) David Gerrold, Samuel R. Delany; (Media) Jennifer Blanc; (Artist) Chuck Bordell. Room reservations: write Ruby's Inn and Convention Center, 4825 North Reserve, Missoula, Montana 59808, tel. (800) 221-2057. Memberships: Before May 1: \$20; At the door: \$25; Family Rate: \$50. Write: MisCon, P.O. Box 7721, Missoula, MT 59807, U.S.A.

July 2003

July 3-6: **Westercon 56** in the SeaTac Doubletree, otherwise known as the Seattle Airport Doubletree Hotel. in SeaTac, Washington. Writer Guest of Honor: Bruce Sterling; Fan Guest of Honor: Saul Jaffe. ArtGoH: Lisa Snellings. Editor GoH: Claire Eddy. Science GoH: Dr. Michio Kaku. TM: Connie Willis. Attending Membership: Adult \$55, Child \$30, 5 years and under free. Write Westercon 56, P.O.Box 1066, Seattle, WA 98111, U.S.A. Phone: (206) 723-9906, FAX: (206) 374-2188, Email: info@wester56.org. Also see www.wester56.org

July 11-13: **Toronto Trek 17** in Toronto, ON. GoHs include James Marsters ("Spike" on Buffy: The Vampire Slayer). GoHs: J. Caitlin Brown ("Na'Toth" on Babylon 5); Erin Gray ("Col. Deering" on Buck Rogers in the 25th Century); Gil Gerard ("Buck Rogers" Buck Rogers in the 25th Century); More guests including a TREK guest TBA. See URL www.iComm.ca

July 12-13: **Animethon** in Edmonton, AB.

July 19-20: **Spacecon 17** at the Radisson Hotel in Portland, Oregon. Full Memberships \$100 to Dec. 31, 2002, payable to Stone Hill, P.O. Box 2213, Plant City, FL 33565, U.S.A.

August 2003

Aug. 28 – Sept. 1: **TorCon 3** in Toronto, ON, Metro Convention Centre, North Building. Hotels: Royal York (location of TorCon 2), Crown Plaza, and Renaissance Toronto Hotel at Sky Dome. 61st World Science Fiction Convention. GoHs: George R.R. Martin, Frank Kelly Freas; Fan Goh: Mike Glyer; Toastmaster: Spider Robinson. Membership: (Attending) Present rate: *. For more info: write TorCon 3, P.O. Box 3, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1A2; email info@torcon3.on.ca or visit their web site at www.torcon3.on.ca.

September 2003

Sept 19-21: **Foolscap V** at the Bellevue Hilton in Bellevue, Washington. Guests of Honor: Greg Bear and Sergio Aragones. A Flat Stuff convention. Memberships C\$64/US\$40 to April 15, 2003; C\$72/US\$45 to Sept. 1, 2003; C\$80/US\$50 at the door. See www.foolscap.org. Make checks payable to Little Cat Z; send payment to Foolscap V, c/o Little Cat Z, P.O. Box 2461, Seattle, WA 98111-2461, U.S.A.

October 2003

Oct. 30 – Nov. 2: **World Fantasy Con 29**, “A Capitol Idea”, Celebrating 75 years of Writing, in the Hyatt Regency Washington in Washington, DC. Author Guests of Honor: Brian Lumley, Jack Williamson by taped interview, Publisher Guest of Honor: W. Paul Ganley, Master of Ceremonies: Douglas E. Winter. Other Guests and Program Participants To Be Announced. For reservations contact Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, 400 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20001 USA, Room Rates To Be Announced. Membership rates for the 29th World Fantasy Convention will be announced later in 2002. We plan a two-track program, which will explore the darker side of fantasy, plus a track of readings and other small group activities. Our program items will be designed to highlight the talents of our Guests of Honor and other program participants.

Autumn, 2004

BOUCHERCON 35, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, ON. World mystery convention. More details to come later.

2005

July

July 1 – 4: **Calgary bid for Westercon 58** – In 2005, the Stampede will be delayed, and the bid has an opportunity to book the Westin Calgary. Pre-supporting memberships: C\$15, US\$10; Friend of the Bid, C\$75, US\$50. Write to Calgary in 2005, P.O. Box 43078, DVPO, Calgary, AB T2J 7A7. See www.calgaryin2005.org.

September 2-5: **Seattle bid for NASFiC** – To be bid upon at Torcon 2003. Pre-supporting memberships US\$15, Pre-opposing US\$30, Friends US\$70. Write Northwest NASFiC, P.O. Box 1066, Seattle, WA 98111.

News

Complete and Utter Shash

ANDRE NORTON has been ‘gravely ill’ in hospital after surgery, and though now improving needs cheering up. Cards or flowers can be sent to her c/o 114 Eventide Drive, Murfreesboro, TN 37130, USA.

Ansible #184 (Nov 02), various listservs, and my email

Charles Sheffield, “67, a physicist and science fiction writer who was a recipient of the prestigious Nebula and Hugo awards for his 1993 novelette “Georgia on My Mind,” died of brain cancer Nov. 2 at Casey House Hospice in Rockville.

“Dr. Sheffield, former chief scientist of Earth Satellite Corp., a Bethesda-based raw data analysis company, also won the 1991 Japanese Seiun Award for science fiction for “The McAndrew Chronicles” and the 1992 John W. Campbell Memorial Award for best science fiction novel for *Brother to Dragons*. ...

“Dr. Sheffield was a prolific writer, with nonfiction books, short stories, collections and anthologies to his credit. He also wrote more than 100 technical papers on astronomy, large-scale computer systems, image processing, space travel, earth resources, gravitational field analysis, nuclear physics and general relativity. ...

“According to autobiographical sketches posted on his Web site, he began to explore creative writing at age 40 after discovering a dearth of well-written, scientifically accurate science fiction novels..

"His early manuscripts of 10,000 words or less generated a stack of rejection slips from publishers until 1977, when "What Song the Sirens Sang" was published in *Galaxy* magazine.

"As a scientist, he was an advisor to the congressional Office of Technology Assessment and principal investigator and consultant for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, for which he analyzed the moon's gravitational field on the motion of a spacecraft in the 1960s.

"He then served as chief scientist and board member of Earth Satellite Corp. before he turned to writing full time in the late 1980s. He reviewed science books and novels for *New Scientist*, the *World & I* and *The Washington Post*.

"He attended science fiction conventions, where he was known as an erudite, witty speaker who provided encouraging words to new writers. Dr. Sheffield, a Silver Spring resident, was born in England and graduated from Cambridge University's St. John's College with double first-class honours in mathematics and physics. He received a doctorate in theoretical physics from American University in Washington.

"He was past president of Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America as well as the American Astronomical Society. He was a fellow of both the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the British Interplanetary Society."

SF Northwest listserv, Nov. 3, 2002

Jonathan Harris (1920-2002), US actor famed in sf circles as Dr Zachary Smith in *Lost in Space* (CBS 1965-8; 'Oh, the pain ...'), died on 3 November aged 81.

Ansible #184 (Nov 02)

SF Author Sohl Dies

SF author Jerry Sohl, who also wrote scripts for the original *Star Trek* and *The Twilight Zone*, died Nov. 4 at a hospital in Thousand Oaks, Calif., of undisclosed causes, the Associated Press reported. He was 88.

Los-Angeles born Sohl wrote the SF books *The Transcendent Man* and *The Altered Ego*, the AP reported. Sohl dropped out of college for a career in journalism. He worked as a photographer, police reporter, critic and reviewer for several Midwest papers after World War II. During the war, he served in the Army Air Forces.

"*Michael Morbius*" *SCIFIWIRE*
November 11, 2002

BBC Keeps Tardis Rights

The London Metropolitan Police have lost an appeal for the rights to Doctor Who's famous time-traveling police box, Tardis, the BBC Online reported. The BBC retained the copyright to the blue box, which became the subject of a legal wrangle between the police and the network.

(Oct. 24, 2002, from SciFiWire
via Michael Morse)

Richard Harris (1930-2002), Oscar-nominated Irish actor who did little genre work but played Dumbledore in the first two Harry Potter films, died from cancer on 25 October; he was 72.

Ansible #184 (Nov 02)
Monster Attack Team Newsletter #19,
October 31, 2002

Lee to Become Dumbledore?

According to ZENtertainment, Actor Christopher Lee is tipped to take over Richard Harris's role of Professor Dumbledore in the next HARRY POTTER films. The DRACULA star, 80, is a "strong favourite" to replace Harris who died last Friday aged 72. Executives said Lee "a Bond villain in THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN" "fits the bill of Dumbledore perfectly". Lee was originally asked to be Dumbledore but refused because he was too busy. Harris stand-in Harry Robinson is also in the running to land the role for the third film PRISONER OF AZKABAN, filmed next spring. Warner Bros will make announcement later this week.

SOURCE: <http://www.zentertainment.com/>,
Monster Attack Team Newsletter #19,
October 31, 2002

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER was the subject of a whole academic conference at the University of East Anglia on 19-20 October: 'Blood, Text and Fears: Reading around *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'. ...

Ansible #184 (Nov 02)

Fears For Ears "is a spoken-word CD with an anthology of five horror stories, all written by some of Canada's best-known horror writers. This CD goes beyond a simple book on tape, but is a broadcast-quality audio collection of horror stories, reminiscent of popular old-style radio dramas, and created with the most modern technology, music and sound effects. Three hundred hours of recording and editing, more than 20 actors, scores of sound effects and lots of fabulous, creepy music make for

one chilling disk, guaranteed to send that shiver up your spine.

"The five stories on the CD are: 'Manifestations' by David Nickle; 'Underground' by Tanya Huff; 'The Witches' Tree' by Shirley Meier; 'The Vampires Next Door' by Peter Sellers; 'The Rug' by Edo van Belkom.

"Fears For Ears is a unique form of horror fiction entertainment with five delightfully frightening audio stories. Light up some candles, grab a blanket and a hot drink, turn the lights down and enjoy.

"To order your own copy of Fears For Ears, check out the website www.fearsforears.com. This unique disk is US\$17.95, plus \$1.95 administrative fee, and is available through PayPal."

From Lloyd Penney
(one of the voice actors on the disk!)

Tommy Ferguson 'finally got married to Leslie Carol Altic at a civil ceremony in Belfast on 29 September 2002 followed by a wonderful honeymoon in Crete. Everything went without a hitch, despite the cream of Belfast fandom being there.' What, in Crete?

Ansible #184 (Nov 02)

C.O.A.s

Forrest J. Ackerman, 4511 Russell Ave,
Hollywood, CA 90027, USA.

Jim Caughran, 43 Dingwall Ave, Toronto,
Ontario, M4J 1C4, Canada.

Eileen Gunn & John D. Berry, 525 19th Ave
East, Seattle, WA 98112, USA

Andrew & Suzanne Murdoch, 9211
Glendower Dr,
Richmond, British Columbia, V7A 2Y4,
Canada.

Hal & Ulrika O'Brien, 18540 NE 58th Ct,
Redmond, WA 98052, USA.

Ansible #184 (Nov 02)

U. Of Winnipeg Sells SF Books

Canada's University of Winnipeg is selling one of that country's largest collections of SF books to open up space in the university's library, according to a report on the CBC Manitoba Web site.

The collection includes more than 30,000 books and periodicals and was willed to the university in the late 1990s by Winnipeg resident Robert Stimpson, the site reported.

University librarian Mark Leggott told the site that the collection had been assessed at \$250,000 Canadian. It sold last month to American book dealer L.W. Curry for \$140,000 Canadian. The university had been storing the collection in a basement

storage room at the Greyhound bus terminal, because it didn't have space in its climate-controlled book room, the site reported.

"Leggott said that most of the classic items in the collection can still be found in the university's library, including Frank Herbert's Dune books and works by Isaac Asimov and Edgar Rice Burroughs."

(Nov. 7, 2002, from SciFiWire
via Michael Morse)

AS OTHERS SEE US.

When the BBC acquired Steven Spielberg's new *sf* series *Taken* (dealing with 'extra-terrestrial experiences' in the form of good old alien abductions), their head of programme acquisition Sophie Turner Laing was quick to explain its staggering innovativeness, unheard-of in mere science fiction: '*Taken* is designed to have a wider appeal than just to fans of sci-fi, as it tells the stories of individuals and their interactions over many years.' (*Independent*, 23 October) [DB]

Ansible #184 (Nov 02)

A BIT OF MARKET NEWS

City Slab, Urban Tales of the Grotesque-City Slab Publications, 1705 Summit Ave., #105, Seattle WA 98122. Editor: Dave Lindschmidt. Quarterly. Update.

Fiction: "*City Slab*, *Urban Tales of the Grotesque*, wants to publish and promote stories that are taut, multi-leveled, and well thought out. There is a uniqueness to life lived in an urban setting. Show me the grit and the contrast of the homeless masses with the well-to-do. Tell me a story about humanity's quest for sex or success or peace or bread. Keep at all times in mind that *City Slab* is a horror magazine and as such will lean toward tales with a definite supernatural element. Horror can be done without it; however, I see far too many of these. Stay away from the first person point of view. Omniscient or third person POVs better lend themselves to the rich narrative style that will grab and hold our attention."

"We see far too many stories that are not remotely urban. If your tale starts out in a cornfield or a strip mall, I can tell it probably isn't going to be urban. This doesn't mean that only stories with heavy scenery of buildings and alleys are considered urban here. Paul Bates does a wonderful job in issue #1 of telling a story set in one room that has a fantastic urban feel to it.

"If you're serious about landing a story at *City Slab*, you'll buy a copy and read it to see just what we're printing. By doing so,

you'll not only increase your chances of landing a story through knowledge of the market, but help support the presses and be entertained in the bargain. I'm amazed at the number of writers who've bombarded me with story after story, but neither bothered to read the Web site's sample nor order a copy of issue #1."

Artists: "Send in samples of work. Query for assignments. Cover art will be solicited, and prices negotiated. Interior illos pay at flat rate. I would like to see photographic art, images of architecture, gargoyles, etc. Must be copyrighted by submitter. Query with images that are horrific in nature."

Nonfiction: "We've accepted a couple of interviews for City Slab, but would also like to consider other types of journalistic work-stories that would be of interest to horror readers."

5000 words maximum; pays negotiated rate (feature fiction; will be solicited), 1-5¢/word (regular fiction). "I would rather not see reprint submissions, but may, if the story warrants it, consider the piece at the lower end of the pay scale."

Snail mail or E-mail submissions (in the body of the E-mail) ok; no attachments. No simultaneous submissions. [E-mail: Dave@CitySlab.com; www.CitySlab.com]. RT-"These will vary depending on where I am in the publishing cycle. They will usually be between one and six weeks. We'll do our best not to leave you hanging."

Gila Queen Guide to Markets #110,
Oct. 30, 2002

MORE MARKET NEWS

Lingering Dementia-2159 16th St., North Bend OR 97459. Editor: Marc Sanchez. Anthology. To be published by 3F Publications. "There will be a few slots opened up for unsolicited submissions to this anthology. *Lingering Dementia* will debut at Horrorfind 2004. Manuscripts selected will join those modern masters who will be sending in their finest original tales of surreal horror, including: Douglas E. Winter {writing introduction}, Ramsey Campbell, F. Paul Wilson, P.D. Cacek, Tim Lebbon, Al Sarrantonio, Hugh B. Cave, Caitlin R. Kiernan, Thomas Monteleone, Mort Castle, Kim Newman, D.F. Lewis, Tom Piccirilli, Brian A. Hopkins, Michael Oliveri, Gemma Files, Brian Keene, Joseph M. Nassise, Teri A. Jacobs, and Edo Van Belkom, among other up and coming modern masters of horror."

"Foggy, gummy, hazy, tilted, dark, unforgettable: these are the settings for *Lingering Dementia*."

"Bizarre, twisted, shocking, mesmerizing, dark, unforgettable: these are the tales woven within these settings."

"Crazed, paranoid, dangerous, unreliable, dark, unforgettable: these are the characters that dwell in these tales."

"In the 999 anthology, Al Sarrantonio said, in his introduction to Bentley Little's *The Theater*, that the tale contained a 'Dreamlike quality underpinned with feelings of lurking dread.' This is a good description of the kinds of tales that I am seeking."

"A dreamlike quality underpinned with feelings of lurking dread. Dark and unforgettable."

"The writings of this anthology may resemble Poe on acid, Lovecraft on a meth binge, Dr. Seuss on absinthe, or Lewis Carroll clean and sober. Not gibberish, but intellectual tales of surreal horror."

"Imagine a more macabre and surreal world on the other side of Carroll's looking glass. Imagine our normal world, through the eyes of a surreal and more macabre character, or characters. Imagine normal characters in our normal world, encountering a surreal and macabre hole in the wall, or neighbourhood. Imagine darker and more surreal."

"Imagine a story with a dreamlike quality underpinned with feelings of lurking dread. Imagine dark and unforgettable."

5000 words maximum; pays 5¢/word, on acceptance. Query for longer.

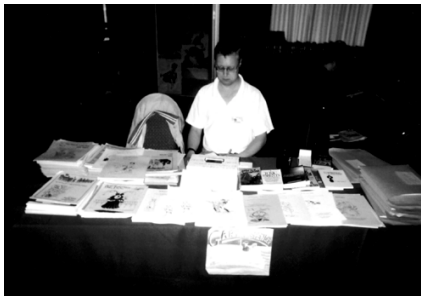
No E-mail submissions. [E-mail: lingeringdementia@hotmail.com; www.3fpublications.com]. Opens: May 1, 2003. Deadline: June 1, 2003. "Any and all manuscripts arriving before or after these dates will be placed in the round file."

Gila Queen Guide to Markets #110,
Oct. 30, 2002

Convention-Running News:

John Bartley brought to my attention an online article pointing out what computer programmers could learn for their conventions from science fiction conventions ("Conventions at Light Speed: What Hackers Can Learn From SF Fandom",). Also, Isaac Alexander mentioned to the members of the SF Northwest/Northwest Con League listserv a somewhat laudatory article about Worldcon ("The Science Of Unconventional Planning", by Marshall Krantz) in the convention-industry journal *Meeting News* (Nov. 7, 2002).

Garth Spencer, November 2002



(Garth at his zine table)

Fanzines

by Ted White

Fanzines are a basic part of science fiction fandom, having been in existence as long as fandom itself – the past 70 years. Fanzines are a reflection of many fans' interest in the printed word and amateur publishing. The publication you are reading this in is a fanzine, but a specialized one. A variety of other fanzines are also available – many of them by request – and this column will cover some of them each issue.

All fanzines are published as a hobby and lose money. Their editors appreciate money to defray their expenses and sometimes list single-copy or subscription prices, but they appreciate even more your written response – a Letter of Comment, or LoC. Feedback – better known in fandom as “egoboo” – is what fanzine publishing is all about.

Check out the fanzine below and broaden your participation in fandom.

::

THEY MADE US DO IT #2, Autumn 2002 (Max, editor & publisher; probably available for “the usual” (letters of comment, contributions, or fanzines in trade) or send \$1 for a sample copy; 20 Bakers Lane, Woodston, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE2 9QW, England)

Max (who uses that name alone) is one of the brightest new lights in UK fandom, and won this year's FAAN Award as Best New Fan. *They Made Us Do It* (subtitled “A genzine by Max”) is the successor to Max's “perzine” (personal zine, written entirely by the editor), *They Made Me Do It*. “Some work really is crying out to be committed to paper, no matter how happy it is sitting there on the internet. This zine grew legs, but it's definitely still the same fanzine. I think there

will be more. I might even relent on the artwork and LoC [letters of comment] Column stance. They're not here this time but next time, who knows?”

What *is* here this time is content, in an austere but attractively simple package: Ten pages of single-columned type with wide margins, without art or gimmicks. I'm reminded of the simple, straightforward, all-typing mimeographed fanzines of several decades ago. Hardly anyone uses a mimeograph any more and Max is no exception. The pages are computer-typeset and printed/copied on canary paper. But there is a warmth which belies the simplicity of presentation.

There are four pieces in addition to the short inside-cover editorial from which I've quoted. Simon Bradshaw's “Watching Falling Stars” describes watching the Perseid meteor showers with contrasting sections (in italics) which provide an objective description of the history of one dust particle in that shower. Ang Rosin provides in “Gathering Rain” what was once called a “mood piece” in one page, its perfect length. Max's own “July 4th, Kenwood Beach” is the longest piece, a detailed narrative about swimming in the Chesapeake Bay at midnight (and, not surprisingly, getting stung by what we always called “sea nettles” – jellyfish), while visiting Nic and Bobbi Farey. And the final piece, “Life Without Anne” is by Douglas Spencer, whose wife died one year earlier. It's heartfelt but free of sentimentality.

None of these pieces discusses science fiction, or, for that matter, fandom. Yet each is permeated with fandom in its own way: each is a personal communication from fans to fandom, a product of the *community* of fandom.

This is the innermost circle of fannish fanzines: writing about one's personal experiences and concerns for one's friends. It can be done well or poorly, depending on who is doing it. In this case it is done well. Max listed no price, but I'd suggest sending at least a dollar to help pay the postage.

—Ted White

Media News

by Ray Seredin

As you may or may not have heard, in late August the BBC turned down the proposal from Universal Television to transform "Dr Who" into a "Buffy: The Vampire Slayer" rip-off for the studio-owned Sci-Fi Channel. Since then, however, there have been a number of believable rumours saying that the BBC and HBO are planning on starting production on the new series sometime within the next two years. These rumours went into overdrive when the BBC got the rights to the TARDIS' principal external shell (the Police Box) for £64,000 (approx. Cdn. \$151,040) from the London Metropolitan Police.

On October 30, 2002, the BBC issued a press release stating that the broadcaster is looking into doing the new series with a number of international partners (whom they didn't name). However, there are a number of barriers to clear before giving it the green light.

1) The American Rights to the Name "Dr. Who"

In North America, Universal Television owns the broadcasting rights to any new series titled "Dr. Who"; however, not the rights to any of the characters' names, locations' names, and props. Initially, after the Universal proposal fell through, the studio wanted to sell the rights for U.S. \$24 million, and receive 10% of all profits the series and related merchandise would create in North America. The studio has since backed down after finding out the BBC owned rights to everything else, and may part with the rights to the name for the cost of the 1996 TV movie (about U.S. \$8 million). Universal could very likely produce their own series with the North American title "Time Lord: The Chronicles of the Doctor".

2) Regina v. the BBC

A number of documentary filmmakers have taken the plans to transform BBC1 and BBC2 from a publicly-owned/ publicly-funded broadcaster into a publicly-owned/ commercially-driven broadcaster to the British Supreme Court. They state that under this plan, documentaries on topics like the German industries' support of the Iraqi nuclear weapons program will not bring in the advertising revenue the broadcaster needs to pay their production

cost, and for this reason, would be unlikely to fund them. They say this infringes on the civil liberties established in the Magna Carta, because the broadcaster is still owned by the British public, which has the right to know. Since this legal action was launched, the BBC has caved in and will give BBC2 two hours a week for "access" to these kinds of documentaries as long as the funding is from outside the network's structure. So far a number of well-backed endowment groups have been set up to fund them. Still, a few filmmakers still want the BBC to remain a publicly-funded broadcaster. A "Hearing of Examination" was held on the week of November 4, and a decision on whether or not to go to a full trial should be reached by the end of the month.

3) The War with Iraq

When (or if) this war gets going, any funding to dramatic series in pre-production (like Dr. Who) would be suspended, in order to provide the news division with the funds needed to cover it justly. Since the BBC is the very last totally publicly-funded national broadcaster, they will have to provide the information that the British public needs to know.

The press release ended with the BBC saying that "The Doctor" could likely return to the air sometime in the near future and plans to air a 40th anniversary series retrospective is still going ahead.

As for rumours, here are some in a nutshell:

- the role of the "9th doctor" is now a choice between Anthony Stewart Head (Giles, on "Buffy") or Robert Llewellyn (Kryten on "Red Dwarf").
- Lisa Bonet is out as "Compassion", the TARDIS' living unit / backup exterior shell / Doctor's companion. The part is yet to be recast.
- Tim Curry has been approached to play "The Master" in the pilot episode(s). In the future, however, Curry may be replaced by an as-yet-unnamed actor, whose character's past is romantically linked to "The Doctor's" yet-to-be-named female human companion.
- Word leaked out from the BBC that there will be three companions: "Compassion", the yet-unnamed female human, and a male human, likely to be from a non-European

ancestry. (Question: when did "Dr. Who" change into "Star Trek"?)

The heck with these rumours, and the press release. It looks like the BBC is actually serious about bringing back the series. Let's hope the wait is not too long.

Full Circle -- Ditto 15, Back in T.O.

By Taral Wayne, 21 Oct/1 Nov '02

At first I thought it was going to be a bummer. I arrived the first day around 5, and there were only a handful of people there, four of them involved in running the con. Others arrived slowly 'till there were Dick & Leah Smith, Mike Glicksohn, Hope Leibowitz, Charles Levi, and Andy Porter. ... then all went out to dinner together. I sat looking at the Penneys sitting behind the registration desk, presiding over a box of nametags they had designed, each with a unique bit of fan art. Next to them, Henry Welch of *The Knarly Knews* who I've not met before. Ethiopian the others went out for. Hope said it wasn't expensive but \$12 or \$13 per meal for two or three nights was more than I cared to spend. Around 7:00 though, when people began returning from dinner, or arriving from out of town, things began to pick up considerably.

Art Widner was there, unexpected by me. He wasn't listed among the members in the PR but I was glad to see him. *Yhos* had always been a favourite, friendly sort of zine, and Art a good guy. I gradually reacquainted myself with Greg Trend as well, a fellow artist of unnecessarily humble opinion of himself. Jim Caughran I wasn't sure about. I thought he was the guy I knew from some years ago with a giant pet cockroach who lived in his kitchen. I was relieved to find out Jim was someone else entirely, and had far more common sense. Later than evening, to my slight surprise I butted into a very interesting conversation with Leah and Glicksohn about children's literature. Leah had read it all, when she was supposed to. Mike had read hardly any because he grew up first. I occupied the middle ground by having read a lot, but while too old. To make a long story short, by around 9 I didn't regret being there one bit.

One highlight -- trying to remember the Astral Pole trick. I was one of the few people who could do it when we were all a lot younger and thinner, and it would have

been nice to know I could still do it. But no-one, not even I, could quite remember how it was supposed to go. Catharine and I tried it again and again, but always bogged down at the same spot, where the pole was to the front with our wrists turned outwards and backwards, and one leg hooked inside the loop. It seemed impossible to go any further. But if that wasn't the trick, what was? Nobody knew.

Once I got home that night I looked it up in one of my old zines. (*DNQ* if you must look it up yourself.) I *think* I've rediscovered the secret. Apparently so has Catharine, since she was evidently doing the Pole trick all Sunday afternoon whenever she could get somebody to look. I was worried that description may not be accurate -- the diagram I drew to accompany it was never meant to be. Without a pole and some room to use it, possibly I'll never know. Since Catharine was pulling it off, likely the secret was accurately imparted to the twiltone after all.

A certain cynical friend of mine observed that I was probably only going to Ditto to eat the lavish spread in the con suite. I said, fie, oh dubious one. There would be little that would alone tempt me. Salty carbohydrates there would be, but if that was all I wanted, the 7-11 was a lot closer than the Daze Inn Downtown. I was pretty much spot on too. Enough carrot sticks, celery, chopped green and red peppers, and guacamole to unconstipate an elephant, as I said somewhat overloudly in the consuite. But no cheesecake, sliced salami, chili, chocolate covered coffee beans or strawberries, lox 'n bagels, or pizza... the sort of *quality* junkfood that makes it *worth* a trip downtown for no other reason. Fortunately, I wasn't at Ditto just to overeat. And the junk food was augmented by a couple of bags of President's Choice chocolate chip cookies, which are first rate. Next night there was a decent spread of cheeses as well. And did those re-filled plastic Coke bottles contain *Coke*, or home brew? The later if I know the odds.

Saturday I overslept. I was supposed to give a talk at 2. Usually I have no trouble getting up when I'm supposed to, but naturally because people were waiting on me I was still asleep when I got a call at 2.10. I phoned the hotel first thing of course, and informed them of a slight hitch in the program, in case they hadn't noticed. They'd noticed -- but not to worry. I heard later that Art Widner filled in with a number of increasingly conspiratorial theories about the Washington Sniper. Fans always cope. Not always well, but what the hell, that's

mimeo-ink under our fingernails, not grease paint.

I got there, a friend in tow, around 3 or 3.30. Now, it must be understood that it was Murray's idea that I give a talk on Toronto fandom. Time was I used to believe that comprehensive and unbiased fan history was possible, but that was a long time ago. Since then I've come to the conclusion that fan history is like a tangle skein of alternate time-lines, and that everyone experiences a different thread. My fan history of Toronto fandom wasn't going to be anyone else's. For another thing, I don't recall public speaking being on my resume.

Still, I owed Murray a Big One, and agreed to give it a shot. But no thought, I confess. Even as I pulled out the chair and sat in front of what must have been pretty much the attendance of the con, I had no idea what I was going to say. So I just rambled. The talk I gave was just an impromptu, non-linear, anecdotal account of the early days of the (New) Toronto Derelicts, circa 1972 to about 1975. There was no attempt to include much of what had gone on before, nor what happened in circles outside of my own. Better to have those people talk about those things, I think. At that, there didn't seem to be any difficulty going on for about an hour, and it seemed to keep the audience in their seats at least. Just about as I got to Patrick Hayden arriving in time, Murray handed me a note. I had run out of time and would never get to 1976.

No time to explain Victoria's gaffiation, or talk about the Woman's Apa, or introduce the improbable Henry Argasinski, or map the break-up of OSFiC, or go over the family tree of local conventions, or bring up any of about a hundred other things. Maybe it was just as well. If the early 70's were mostly good times, the later 70's was something of a minefield. The talk, incomplete though it was, had gone over well so far as I could tell -- and that was a hell of a surprise to me. It was just a bunch of old stories, whoppers, and bad jokes, and no doubt everyone in the audience could tell as many. I think, though, that fans enjoy sharing their experiences, re-affirming them as common touchstones.

Following me, a well-meaning Greg Trend spoke about preserving paper. While a subject every fan should be well versed in, it was not particularly gripping and much of the audience took a break. Andy Porter livened the talk up a little by illustrating Greg's points on an easel. "Enemies of Paper" headed the sheet. When Greg said

"One. Air," Andy wrote a big number 1. and "Temperature". Then "Two. Light". "Three. Humidity". And so on. When Greg ran out of numbers, he and the audience swapped views on how well ditto kept relative to hecto, moved on to tapes, and even CD's. I was left feeling it was pretty much a lost cause, given a few thousand years. Will historians someday debate whether the first moon-landing was in the 21st. century or the 17th? Barring some new technology, perhaps.

People began to trickle back, in time for the auction. As is traditional, the money to be raised would go to the usual motley crew of fan funds, and naturally to help defray the costs of the con. Glicksohn went to bat first, with a number of king-size zip-loc bags of 70's Brit-zines. With some astonishment he discovered that there were actually several copies of each issue in each bag, not a larger number of sole copies as he expected. This was a little bit harder to auction, but he was game. Dick Smith was next up. He had a rather nice assortment of 50's WorldCon program books from Bob Tucker, and these raised serious money. Dick took great pains to describe each item in detail -- he didn't miss a membership receipt or scribbled room number in a single one, as far as I could tell. Colin Hinz was slower still. He seemed to have a very large pile of pop-cult zines and marginalia, as well as a stack of *Locus* from a couple of years ago. Bidding dragged at around a buck. The next items were another matter. Robert J. Sawyer offered to use the name of the highest bidder in his next novel. To match him, so did Robert Wilson. The bidding was lively, and rose quickly to eighty or a hundred dollars each author. Andy Porter will be *somebody* in Rob's next book. Colin Hinz in Bob's.

A dinner party was forming and this time I wanted in. Swiss Chalet is my idea of affordable, and it was a pretty fine looking crowd. I had the chicken quesadillas if you care to know.

After dinner, the dirty pros just went home. No doubt to rest up for another gruelling day producing their quota thousand words. Us mere fans were free, however, to be as irresponsible as we like, and returned to the hotel. If the ice had been broken Friday night, Saturday night I spend plumbing deeper waters. I discovered to my delight that older fans -- and this bunch aged up to the mid 80's -- seem a lot more pinko than fans in their 20's or 30's. They all seemed to think that things were pretty much all going to hell in a hand-basket

politically and economically. Nothing like doom and gloom to liven up my conversation. As well as the cheese, there was one other addition to the con-suite that night. A lot of leftover booze had been brought in. I don't drink whiskey or vodka, but I have a sweet tooth for liqueurs like Bailey's Amaretto, and Grand Marnier, and showed them no mercy. I figured it was time to stop when I saw Phil Paine stroll into the con-suite. But no. it wasn't the Bailey's; Phil was briefly there.

One person I had really hoped to spend a little time with was Kurt Erichson. I saw Kurt come in late Friday night, but he hung out at one end of the con-suite and I at the other. I thought there was always Saturday. But I slept in Saturday, remember, and missed *his* talk entirely. I wondered vainly what he'd had to say for 48 hours. Lucky for me the miracle of e-mail. I asked him and was spared ignorance. Kurt had shown about 90 slides, he said, to an audience of five. Most of the attendance was at lunch, or touring downtown, he figured. He talked about technologies, how fandom had begun with the emphasis on cheap and universal, and how today it was increasingly digital. His own work, he said, was entirely computer done.

(Me, I'm still in the 20th century, and hardly use the computer for anything but a glorified delivery service.)

That night too, I left the con about 1. I had intended to return on Sunday, but on the way home I wasn't if I would or not. I was *tired*. It hadn't been just the con. The week leading up to it had made unusual demands on my usual reclusiveness -- a birthday, thanksgiving with the family, a trip to the shopping mall, then on top of all that *two whole days of partying*. It would take a superman, or Hope Leibowitz, to keep up the breakneck pace! Of course, I hated to miss the dead-dog. It had been officially announced even. Yet I gauged attendance would be slender. Of the 30 or so people at Ditto 15, about half were from out of town, and most would likely be on the road Sunday afternoon or evening. I only was only sure of Andy staying until Monday. Later I found out that Dick and Leah had stayed also. According to Murray it was a relaxed dead dog with a half dozen or so there.

I never did reach an actual decision about going. I really slept in this time, then puttered around until I figured everyone left was at dinner. Then I let myself be mesmerized by the boob tube until it was obvious I'd only be at the dead dog a couple

of hours before having to go home again. Looked at the time and figured everyone who was left was at dinner. Dead-dogs at very small conventions tend to end early.

Two people I didn't see after Friday were the Penneys. I didn't learn until later that Lloyd and Yvonne had been in a collision on the way home the first night -- Lloyd had a couple of sore ribs I was told, but Yvonne had broken her wrist.

One other mishap. Murray had planned to have a collection of my old fan-writing and a sample of art for the con. (*Old Toys* was the title I chose.) He'd have Xeroxed the whole thing, but Catherine volunteered to mimeo the zine, persuading him that it would be more fannish. It must have been a minute-after-last-minute decision, because she and Colin were unable to finish in time. I spotted Colin through an open door next to the con-suite, heroically mimeoing from a stack of electrostencils. I didn't count, but there looked to be two dozen still to go. And the art pages hadn't even been started. Since that was Saturday night, obviously *Old Toys* wouldn't be available at Ditto after all. I wonder if I can resist e-mailing them every day or two until it's done...

Last things last. Next Ditto it seems will be in the Seattle area. Alan Rosenthal and Janice Murray have expressed interest in holding Ditto 16 in Eugene, if they can.

On the whole, well done Ditto 15.

Colin Hinz" asfi@eol.ca, October 23, 2002 adds:

Fortunately, Ditto was a rip-roaring success for fundraising. I raised a pitiable amount at the fanzine auction (which was composed entirely of duplicates and other cast-offs from Dale Speirs), e.g. 50 cents for a huge stack of back issues of *Locus*. Ho-hum. We did manage to raise \$90 from two Tuckerizations, as both Robert Charles Wilson and Robert J. Sawyer were in attendance. The heavy-duty fundraiser was the small box of fmz which the Smiths brought (just a few of the leftovers from last year's auction of Tucker material)...something like \$400 or \$500 worth (I was one of the auctioneers. Murray was keeping track of the bids and the cash).

Technically, Ditto was the recipient of the funds, but since it looks like the convention finances are solidly in the black (thanks in a big way to Catherine Crockett's very astute consuite running) all the funds go to CUFF.

Questions about Cons ...

by Garth Spencer

May I ask you all some questions about conventions? Have you ever questioned how we run SF conventions? Or, for that matter, *why* we do so? Please don't take them as rhetorical questions. Could you think of responses, please, to submit here?

What Are Conventions, Anyway?

How different are science fiction conventions from mundane conventions? How necessary might it be to brief the hotel staff? Would it be a good idea to brief first-time congoers, too?

Fans have been holding science fiction conventions for the better part of 60 years. By now, SF cons have gone through a lot of changes, incorporated peculiar institutions, and have diversified into many different kinds; they are not what the hotel industry means by the word "convention". I put it to you that a number of problems flow from the way SF cons have developed.

What do we imagine science fiction conventions are, above all? An occasion for gaming, or costuming, or singing, or buying and selling goods, or exhibiting and buying art, or panel programming, or partying ... or sort of an indoor fair, with all of these features and more?

If you have just started attending conventions, what strikes you most? The sense of fun and entertainment, or the range of souvenir goods, or the whole variety of things to see and do? If you have attended conventions for some time, what strikes you most: the way you can meet and talk to professional writers, and artists, and editors? The reunion of old friends, and the chance to meet new ones, whom you can actually talk to about things like science fiction? Is it room parties that appeal to you, or filk sessions, or maybe hot tubbing? Or the opportunity to buy, or sell, or make useful contacts?

There are some well-known problems any convention committee has to overcome, whether they take on a long-established convention or start up a new one, and whether they work on a small local convention, a large regional, or one of the travelling, international conventions. What would you say the problems are?

There are well-established solutions for choosing a date, picking a venue,

negotiating a hotel contract, and inviting and dealing with guests of honour. There are particular problems, as well, specific to times, places, new convention starts, the largest cons, or to changes in the hotel industry. How obvious, or how obscure, are the basics of conrunning?

There are also some recurring problems; I mean mistaken judgments and actions by the committee itself *or even the chair*, and *persisted in* by some conrunners, which will damage or cancel a convention. Are these rare things, would you say?

How well-known are the conrunning guides that fans have produced, since 1964? (Or how obscure?)

Publicity is key for conventions, but newspapers and other media are famous for misrepresenting cons with "look at the funny people" coverage. This can be overcome, as Richard Brandt has described in detail; *but* his program for press relations requires a fair amount of care and attention.

If a convention committee only has so much time to spare, or just so much ability to sustain their attention to all details over twelve months, should we expect *any* convention to exceed their attention, in some respects?

Are some events "real" conventions, as opposed to local, or regional conventions? Is that because most annual conventions, held in the same city each year, are smaller than 5000 members, or don't advertise TV and film actors as guests; or because they're not focused on writing, publishing, workshops and market news; or because they're not focused on the gaming industry, or the comics industry, or your segment of fandom?

At the conventions you attend, do you see the same program, in the same venue, catering to the same subfandoms, year after year? Have you made suggestions about more places to advertise, other places or times to hold the con, different programming or guests, only to see them ignored? Have you expressed an interest in joining the concom, but received no response? Have you volunteered, only to find yourself assigned to joe-jobs?

Are You Part of the Programming?

If you have ever been a Guest of Honour, have you ever been treated particularly well by some committees? What are standard, and what are exceptional things for a convention committee to do for Guests of Honour? Have you ever been treated

negligently, or worse, by a convention committee? What are common oversights and omissions by GoH Liaisons?

Are You Part of the Committee?

If you work on conventions, what strikes you as most important – both for good and for ill: is it the way that the attendance level depends on advertised guests, when they may have *nothing* to do with your gaming, anime or costuming interests? Do you keep getting suggestions to do things with the convention that your group simply *can't* do – with your budget, or in your town, or with the kind of congoers you get? Do you consistently get half the volunteers you need – or committee members who put in half the work and half the attention their position deserves? Do you get some concom members who agree to take a position, then *do nothing*? Do some complaints appear at the Sunday bitch panel, *no matter what you did, right or wrong*, leading you to think you have to rely solely on your own judgment? Is it helpful, or useless, or actually harmful to have written guidelines for running your convention?

What kind of changes in the economy, or in the hotel industry, have you observed over the last ten or twenty years? How do they affect the congoing attendance level, and the viability of the convention?

How much space would you expect an artshow or dealers' room to take? How many tables would you expect to see, given the size of a convention? Is there a standard or recommended ratio of congoers per table? Should the committee advise dealers when special guests will be present, so they can make relevant merchandise available?

What kind of insurance coverage should conventions allocate for? (Has this line item ever occurred to you?)

What kind of information for cross-border congoers should Canadian (or American) conventions supply? Does this depend on whether the congoer is just attending, or is an artist, or is a dealer, or is an author or other professional?

Would you expect a convention oversight committee, such as the V-Con Society, to have complete financial reports going back to their first convention? Would you expect them to have complete reports from all departments, describing policies used and

how they worked out? (Has none of this occurred to you before?)

Would it be helpful for the V-Con Society to compare the VCon conrunning guidelines with similar works from other conventions? (Were you unaware these guidelines existed?)

Would it be helpful for VCon committee members, past and present, to attend gatherings such as ConComCon? Should Vancouver host this gathering for Pacific Northwest conrunners, at some point in the future? Could we (should we) bid to host SMOFCon?

Disclaimer

When you see an article on any department of conventions, or a whole book on conrunning, or even *questions* about conrunning, do you imagine you're being dictated to?

The following ought to be a non-issue, but I have to clear it out of the way: several times I've gotten putdowns for expressing an opinion, or even asking a question, apparently because someone thought I was pretending to be an expert. Evidently I kept offending a widespread insecurity. Is it because fans who get into conrunning want to do *their own thing, their own way*? Are there conrunners who misread words on paper that mention conrunning as an attempt to *dictate* to them?

A Reading List

(note: I'm still in the process of updating and double-checking this preliminary bibliography of resources; let me know what holes you can fill in, or what outdated information you can update ...)

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Ansible, the British fan newszine, from: David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks. RG1 5AU, U.K. E-mail ansible@cix.co.uk. Available for SAE.

Anderson, Janet Wilson, ed. *The Masquerade Handbook: The Art of Running the Mid-Sized Masquerade*. Last published in 1991. Copies are available for \$9.00 shipped 4th class book rate, or \$12.00 for, priority mail, from, Janet Wilson Anderson, 3216 Villa Knolls Drive, Pasadena, CA 91107, anetanderson@earthlink.net. "more information than the Kennedy book,"

- [see 'Further Reading' below], "and has many sample forms. ... Janet reports she currently has 3 copies for sale, though she'll be assembling more copies 'eventually'."
(Keith Johnson <kj@gmnameplate.com> to nwfandom@forwriters.com, 10 Feb 2000)
- Baden, Chaz. Webmaster of a large Web site offering, *inter alia*, a lot of useful convention-related information. Email: hazel@boston-baden.com. URL: <http://www.boston-baden.com>
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