

## Colophon

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To post a message, email [BCSFA@yahogroups.com](mailto:BCSFA@yahogroups.com)

The shortcut URL to this list is <http://www.yahogroups.com/community/BCSFA> (or <http://www.yahogroups.com/group/BCSFA> - I have to check on this)

**F.R.E.D.**, the weekly gathering of BCSFAns and all others interested in coming, has been meeting at the Denny's on Davie at Thurlow.

**BCSFA's Web page** may now be viewed at <http://bcsfa.bcgreen.com>

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

**VCon 29's Web page** may be viewed at <http://www.v-con.ca>

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### BCSFA membership rates:

email version: \$15.00

New member: \$26.00

Renewal: \$25.00

New Family (2 votes): \$32.00

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

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#377

\$3.00

October 2004



### A FEW WORDS TO FIRST-TIME VCON MEMBERS (Editorial Section)

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pp. 11, 25, 45.....	Taral

## October Events

Date	Event & Location	
Oct. 2	<b>BCSFA Goes Bowling!</b> Meet up in Commodore Lanes & Billiards (838 Granville) at 2 p.m.; at a rate of \$30/lane/hour, and a maximum 6 people/lane, we can play for two hours there at just \$10 a head. (Billiard tables are \$12/hour.) Then, about five-ish, the plan is to truck over to Taco del Mar, three blocks north at 545 Granville. Later, we can head out to a movie theatre, preferably a second-run theatre like Hollywood or the Ridge if something Sinal is running. (At the Hollywood Theatre, 3123 West Broadway, <i>The Clearing</i> and <i>I, Robot</i> are playing on Oct. 2 and 3.) Barb Dryer (604-267-7973) seems to be organizing all this.	
Oct. 8-10	<b>VCON 29!!</b>	What can I say?
Oct. 15	<b>BCSFAzine</b> deadline	At FRED (the Denny's on Davie at Thurlow)
Oct. 16	<b>BCSFA meeting/party</b>	7:00 p.m. at the home of Philip and Kathleen Moore-Freeman, 7064 No. 1 Road, Richmond, BC. Phone 604-277-0845 for directions.
Oct. 24	<b>Feeding Frenzy</b>	@ 7pm at the Balkan House, 7530 Edmonds Street, Burnaby, BC.
Oct. 28	<b>Book discussion</b>	"There will be a meeting in October for the BCSFA Book Discussion Group. Should you require the meeting date, time, location and book to be discussed, contact Doug Finnerty at (604) 526-5621 or Darthbuddy2000@yahoo.ca".
Oct. 29	<b>BCSFAzine</b> production	See Garth and Doug at FRED.
Oct. 30	<b>Kaffeeklatsch</b> - a Brainstorming Party -	7 pm on at Garth Spencer's, 82 East 40 <sup>th</sup> Ave., Vancouver. Phone 604-325-7314 for directions.

## Welcome to VCon 29

- Some notes to first-time congoers -

Some of our members this year must be new to VCon, and some may even be attending their first science fiction convention, at all. There are two or three things to know, which might not be in the program book.

### “What’s a science fiction convention?”

*If this is your first convention*, so many things going on all at once can overwhelm you. Maybe we should say, you don’t have to try and see everything, in fact you *can’t*. The convention is a smorgasbord; just make a selection of things that interest you. The original purpose of a program book was to list the schedule of daytime program panels, and the films in the video room, opening and closing times for the Dealers’ Room, Art Show and Hospitality Suite, and other events. (“Other events” include opening and closing ceremonies, and OUR SPECIAL FEATURE, the Elron Awards Ceremony.)

You may not realize that the convention carries on at night: some members hold room parties, to promote clubs or other conventions or, at some conventions, book and film launches. Like other conventions in the Pacific Northwest, VCon holds a dance on Friday and/or Saturday night. (VCon is reputed to have started dances at conventions.) Like other SF conventions, after the official closing ceremonies, we have a “dead dog” party on Sunday night for everyone who lasted through the whole weekend.

### “Why don’t you sell tickets on PayPal?”

Because they’re *not* tickets you bought, they’re memberships; hence our emphasis on volunteering.

### “What’s this ‘volunteering’ thing I heard about?”

The realm of science fiction fans started out as a do-it-yourself, volunteer, amateur deal, and many conventions still show signs of this origin; “membership” means you didn’t just pay to see a show, you’re part of something. VCon is much more of a social event you participate in, than just a show we put on.

Maybe this makes more sense when I tell you, conventions never made money until about 1970 or 1971; and conventions still often *lose* money, even the cons intended to be run for profit. Professional associations usually charge you for conference membership *and* accommodations *and* transportation *and* meals, all in one go. This is why a lot of the people at the convention are “volunteers”; they paid to be here **and** they’re helping out at the event, so that such an event remains affordable to us.

Helping to lift and carry stuff, or to check badges at the Art Show and Dealers’ Room doors, is considered Good Form, and you might think about scheduling some of your time this way.

## **Send Me a Postcard, Drop Me a Line**

(letters from our correspondents)

Lloyd&Yvonne Penney [penneys@allstream.net](mailto:penneys@allstream.net), 1706-24 Eva Rd.,  
Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2, September 14, 2004

I'll repeat myself here from some e-mails sent to Garth...Yvonne will be coming out to Vancouver October 2, arriving in Van around 10am. This is an update to our first report that appeared in this zine... Her first convention is the Space Generation Conference at the Pan Pacific Hotel downtown for the weekend. Next is the International Astronautical Congress, also at the Pan Pacific Hotel, for the full week, Monday to Friday. After that, she plans to come to VCon 29 and do some space and science panels based on what she picked up at the first two conventions. She might be able to show up on the Friday of VCon as well, depending on how late the IAC goes. I wish I could come out, but work and money demands won't allow for it. I've got to get myself flush again. Yvonne had some money, and she is doing all of this on the ultracheap.

I saw the new Aurora ballot...very Toronto-centric. Once again, there's lots of people from IDIC/USS Hudson's Bay, and the Toronto Trek Message Board. I used to think they were stuffing the ballot box, but not any more. They get their candidates on the ballot because they're the only ones participating any more. Most people have written off the Auroras, or just don't care. Maybe if clubs like BCSFA or MonSFFA or OSFS could organize their members to nominate and vote, the ballot would be more representative of the entire country. Instead, the ballot is full of Toronto mediafans. That's not fair to Canadian fandom, not fair to the Toronto mediafans who may catch some grief over this, and not fair to the spirit of the Auroras. Dennis Mullin is the main Aurora organizer, and he is a good fellow fan who could use regular updates of contacts so he can get the ballots out as much as possible to the people in Canadian fandom. Each club could possibly use an Aurora liaison so all club members can find out when the nominations and votes are due. FOR 2005, everyone, could you please participate in the Auroras? There should be people from Vancouver and Calgary and Winnipeg and Toronto and Ottawa and Montreal and everywhere else on the ballot, but this diversity of location has just not happened.

*(Readers may wonder what we're talking about: the Aurora Awards are Canada's annual fan-voted national SF and fantasy awards, with categories for fan achievement as well as award-winning professional published writing. I think they've generally been under-advertised, and now many of our pros and fans are unrepresented, and I think it's only because each year's committee – and the majority of fans across Canada – are unaware of each other.*

*(Dennis Mullin in Ontario has been maintaining the Auroras website, updating the chronology, and issuing nominating & voting ballots for years.*

*(BCSFA is our local club, and contact details are in the colophon of this fanzine. MonSFFA and OSFS are just two of the several clubs in Canada with which we trade publications.*

*(Information on this year's Convention, meaning the con currently hosting the Auroras, is listed in this issue's con calendar.*

*(Information on resources for Canadian genre writers, including how to contact the national SF association, SF Canada, should appear in the next issue of BCSFAzine.)*

Also, Garth, I hope you received the list of conventions I recently created and sent out. If you got it, great. If not, I'll send it again. I have added to this list a number of conventions in the Seattle-Tacoma area, and I must assume that Vancouver fans can easily drive down there to go to those conventions.

*(Got it, and some of the information is incorporated in this issue's con calendar.)*

You are right, Garth, there are many subfandoms that do not communicate with each other, and locally, we have tried to bridge those gaps. However, we have finally given up on it, and have decided that we've done our bit over the past 20 years, and if people don't want to talk to one another, you can't make them. As fandom as grown since the 50s and 60s, each fannish interest has become its own fandom, and as its feeling of self-importance has grown, each of those interests demanded of the general SF convention in town more time, more space, more money and more advertising to promote it within the convention. We all know there's only so much of each to go around, so many of those fandom made the decision that if the general convention cannot give us what we want, then we'll go out and do it ourselves, and have a full weekend devoted to exactly what we like. So goes filkcons, Trekcons, costuming cons and further. It indicates a growth in fandom, but is also indicates a division, which is unfortunate.

*(Didn't we thrash out this same issue a good twenty years ago? Back then, we struggled with the unawareness of the larger fandom that many Trek and Star Wars and Galactica fans had. Today, they struggle with the unawareness of their fandoms that anime and gaming and costuming and filking fans may have.*

*(The real issue at hand, I think, is what I call the "horizon of communication": as the fannish universe expands, the more of it extends beyond any fan's natural limit of awareness. The only answer I perceive is to harness the same force that expands the fannish universe:*

**MARKETING!)**

Every so often, Christina Carr and Martin Hunger send out reports about their own lives, and they are working hard to make it in the entertainment industry. They moved from Toronto to Vancouver to find

fresh opportunities, and while it has been a little better, it's still not great.

Garth, if you are still on the job hunt, I could relay to you my jobhunting list. I keep a sizable list of websites to check out every day to see what's happening and find out what jobs are available. I'm sure you check the regulars, like Workopolis and Monster, but if you're into writing and editorial work, check out JeffGaulin.com, MarketingMag.com, MastheadOnline.com and MediaJobSearchCanada.com. Also, CharityVillage.com might help, and they are Vancouver-based. (Jeff Gaulin lives in Victoria.)

*((Excellent! Truly All Knowledge Is Contained in Fanzines.))*

Only 90% of everything is crap? These cynical days, I'd have to say that Ted Sturgeon was an optimist. I think the percentage is heading dangerously close to 100%.

*((The upper management of our military-entertainment complex is increasingly unaware of anything but crap, in the first place. The "horizon of communication" strikes again.*

*((Industrial civilization is falling due to a combination of pollutants and plastic in our diet, which leads to depressed intelligence, rising cancer rates and insanity in our upper management.*

*((The Roman Empire fell due to a combination of malaria, venereal disease, and the cumulative lead poisoning that led to depressed intelligence and insanity in their upper management.))*

The schoolteacher arrested for being part of the dangerous Al-Gebra movement...reality is becoming close to fantasy, with the report on CNN the other day about how a mother made lunches for her son, and when the son opened his lunch, he found mould on some of the bread. The school officials found out about this, over-reacted, and called the police. The parents have now been charged with reckless endangerment of their son's life. More evidence that we live just north of the largest insane asylum in the world...

*((Note to our American friends: For some reason the industry definition of "news" makes the Lower 48 look this way. I guess this is what happens when people only hear the broadcast/published news.*

*((Nobody outside the Royal Swiss Navy seems to have grasped the truth, which is that we're all insane; the United States just happens to be, in effect, a colony of Germany. In fact Canada is secretly a colony of Scotland. Same difference.))*

Time to go and get on with the rest of the day. Take care, and see you next issue.

*((Remember to wax and polish the cats, as Michael Skeet said.))*

Randy Barnhart, Ottawa, ON, [randy\\_barnhart@hotmail.com](mailto:randy_barnhart@hotmail.com), 9/13/04

Another great effort in #376 and, to settle the question as to whether the Readership gives you enough positive feedback for essentially ruining your life by slaving over *BCSFAzine*, let it be proclaimed throughout the land: Garth Spencer is a god! Those who disagree are to be considered heretics and punished by being forced to explain why *The Lion King* is actually *Hamlet* at the next VCon.

*((Well, yeah, but I didn't want to make a big thing out of it. Like, who goes around in Canada claiming to be a duke, or a count, or some other pogue who can't work for a living? The suburbs are stiff with the displaced nobility of half of Europe, but they're not about to come out of the closet and bring down property values. Same difference, I'm not going to go around claiming to be a deity when I don't have any authority here, or a local job assignment from the Dispatcher, or even some two-bit magic tricks. All I can do is teach cats to bark. Heck, even my status as a refugee from another dimension is still pending.))*

Quick question, Garth: how do you go about picking the cover colours for the zine? Does it depend on how you feel or whatever Staples has on sale?

*((On the stars, and my gut feeling, and which way the wind is blowing that day, and my fuzzy impression of what colours are appropriate to the season.))*

Starting a new political party to discern the lengths you go for a good giggle is completely unnecessary. I looked over the list of actual registered BC political parties and, besides the usual, we have:

Unity Party: Let's all hang together!

Annexation Party: Let's join the US!

BC Allegiance: Let's use the government to get rid of the government!

BC Labour Party: Let's not go overboard here!

British Columbia Moderate Democratic Movement: Let's vote for the "Middle"!

British Columbia Marijuana Party: Let's vote for Dave, man!

British Columbia Party: Let like BC!

And so on. Some of these parties are so desperate for members, I'd wager if you showed up at a meeting, they'd elect you Leader.

*((I'm still going to promote the New Rhinoceros Party.))*

Ottawa's weather continues to be odd, with damp and cool weather. However, what is truly odd is the family of skunks that seem to have taken up residence in our neighbourhood. One evening last week, I opened the front door to find the granddaddy of all skunks (about ten pounds) standing on our front step, eating our flowers. I somehow managed to slowly step backwards and shut the door with nary of whiff of ugliness. My landlord does nothing; guess he's into animal rights.



*((We keep getting reports of cougars and bears encroaching on our 'burbs, and just the other night I nearly got sprayed by a skunk. Guess the bush is getting as empty of food as I feared.))*

I don't know about declaring the Sasquatch a protected species, but I do remember a rather concerted effort a few years ago to have the Ogopogo declared protected. Of course, that was being done by the Lake Okanagan Tourist Board to beef up tourism, rather like Roswell declaring itself an Intergalactic Spaceport, and Vulcan, Alberta proclaiming itself the home of Spock. Nothing makes people embrace true weirdness like the prospect of big bucks.

Noreascon 4: Was...tremendous. Lloyd, although you & Yvonne could not attend, you both were remembered with a huge (and I mean gigantic!) photo in the Fan Foto Gallery. A couple of folks did ask me if the Penneys would be attending and when I tendered your regrets, there was real sadness. They love you both, Lloyd, what else can I say?

Anyway, no matter what one may say about Our Friends to the South, they are organizational geni. Noreascon went off as slick as D-Day and was tons of fun for the whole family. There was even one lovely bit of business I recommend to all cons: First Night. After the opening ceremonies, most cons (no names, no pack drill) pretty much wrap it up until the next day, when programming begins in earnest (and why would it begin inside some guy names Ernest?). Not Noreascon. They brought in street magicians, belly dancers, face painters, fortunetellers, games, you name it. I, of course, wowed them all with my abilities at knocking over cups employing a length of chain (misspent youth) and netting fish. Anyway, Barb and I had a grand time, and so, it appears, did everyone else who attended.

Felicity: Regarding magic, I would recommend *The Atrocity Archives* by Charles Stross to you if I may. Stross posits a most interesting basis for magic in the real world using the really outer limits of Information Theory. Most theories of magic I've read are little more than fanwanking, but Stross appears to have introduced something truly unique. Besides, Information Theory is so out there, who could prove him wrong?

I'm currently struggling with *Metaplanetary* by Tony Daniel. It is really, really dense, which is a polite way of saying: "Danger! Pompous Writer with Thesaurus Approaching!" Still, Daniel does manage to work in some very interesting ideas among all the other "Gosh, ain't I signifying now!" stuff and, if nothing else, the title is better than "Meat Puppets Go Venetian!"

*((If we were all wrestling fans as well as SF fans, we would joke about Expository Lump, the nearly-undefeated champion who vanquishes almost all writers.))*

I was all for checking out *Thunderbirds* when it was released, but Barb, who was brought up on the Supermarionation version, absolutely refused to soil beloved childhood memories with Bill Paxton playing Jeff Tracy. She argued the marionette is a much better actor than Paxton, and those who have seen *Twister* and *Aliens* will probably agree.

Sorry for throwing people for a loop with the usage of phrases like Hanlon's Razor and Sturgeon's Law. Am I now officially an Old Fart? Do I get discounts? Will the young fans avoid me? I mean for reasons other than why they avoid me now?

*((Everybody knows something that not everybody else knows. That's all there is to it.))*

Quite right about *The Punisher* being out, and it will undoubtedly be up for the Golden Razzie as worst movie of the year. Still, Barb and I watched it during a recent Saturday Afternoon DVD Bust, along with *Jersey Girl*, *Once Upon a Time in the Midlands* and *The Lost Skeleton of Cadavera*. The first two stank so bad, we almost had to fumigate the house, so *Lost Skeleton* and *Punisher* were proclaimed the winners by comparison.

*((Don't suppose you could have submitted these titles as nominations for the Elron Awards, could you?))*

And, oh yes, my birthday is in August as well.

Lloyd: Yes, I know what you mean. Fandom is becoming buried under an almost insurmountable pile of other stuff. I supposed it all started with the First Fans, who seemed to take a very catholic view about what constituted SF&F. I supposed it's a little late to pull another Exclusion Act and, although I like nothing better than a good fan feud, I suppose we'll have to put up with it until something hugely destructive comes along to the dross and once again make it "the few, the proud, the fen."

Oh, and my most hearty congratulations on your good news. Well, that's all for now. See you at VCon.

Steve Vernon <stevevernon@eastlink.ca>, 06 Sep 2004

Well, this isn't exactly science fiction news, but as Nova Scotia's only practising horror writer (or at least the only Nova Scotian member of the Horror Writers Association), I thought I'd pass along the news of my upcoming novella - *Long Horn, Big Shaggy*. It's due out from Black Death Books this Halloween.

What's it about? Back-from-the-dead mountain men, time travelling mad scientists, and zombified buffalo, for starters.

*((Oh, I have GOT to check this out! -GS))*

All preorders will be entered into a draw to win your very own zombified buffalo. For contest info and a photograph of the zombified buffalo you can go to

<http://users.eastlink.ca/~stevevernon/contest.html>

Take care of those Rockies. Haven't been out there for a decade or so. Do they still stand as tall?

*((I left them just the way I found them. -GS))*

BCSFazinezine (Felicity Walker), Vol. 1 no. 25/376, Aug. 27/04

Cover: It's good to see the art I scanned. The grey specks in it puzzle me.

September Events – BCSFA meeting/party: Did Kathleen and Philip not want their address and phone number published?

*((I just forgot to put them in, that issue.))*

Even Yet More Plain Speaking: "I hope I haven't started a fanfeud." No, it had already started.

I didn't understand the phrase "refugee Aphasians whose culture and language were embattled by the forces of melting-pot assimilation". At first I thought you meant that science fiction fans were brain-damaged and language-impaired, but in that case you would have said *aphasians*, and not capitalized the word. I must conclude that there *was* an Aphasia ...

*((As we discussed at FRED, I perceive a resemblance between the way fans herded together and the way refugees or ethnic minorities herd together – under a perceived predator pressure. I took the word "Aphasians" to stand for any foreign country without indicating any particular place. But I picked "Aphasia" because I remembered it from the novel Silverlock.))*

I also hadn't heard the expression "pure quill" until today, but had more success looking it up.

"Does this subject strike a bell with you, or a dull thud?" A bell, since I too feel that it is unfortunate that "*SF fandom ... is necessarily transient: something that can't carry on as a unit for generations.*" Reading this, I experience the same sense of loss as when a comic company heaves fifty years of continuity to re-start a classic character from day one.

Letters from Our Correspondents – BCSFazinezine: Oops. I didn't mean that *you* had to use Times New Roman, only that *I* would use it instead of the comic-lettering font I created – my comic-lettering font has no italics, so in last month's LOC I didn't use italics, and that created extra work for you.

*"((What is the proper work of a popular representative? Do people expect favours, deals, or simply the opportunity to pursue their own business without too much bureaucratic interference? How often does a representative have to sit and listen to some constituent's bellyaching?))"*

A representative represents the interests of his constituents; in theory, this is based on a flat numerical majority of the constituency rather than giving representation proportional to a constituent's wealth or power. A representative may need a staff to listen to incoming bellyaches in order to have time left to *act* on his constituency's interests; this is acceptable as long as the representative *cares*.

It's not clear to me how running for the Rhinos or Anarcho-Surrealist Party connects to this job description.

*((It doesn't, particularly. Just because you run for an elected position on a given platform has no bearing on how you perform in that position.))*

Made Up Stuph – "Snup" (Ch. 2): Thanks to the Richmond Writers' Group for help in clarifying the events of this chapter.

Not Made Up Stuph – Fran Skene's V-Con Panels list: Am I reading this correctly? Is she asking fans to *be on panels*, as opposed to *attend*? I'll send her the list of ones I'd attend, and ones on which I'd be; no point in listing them in this loc ...

This article reminds me that I need to plan how I'm going to get enough people to play trivia. Unfortunately, regular FREDgoers are my last choice, since they've encountered the year's accumulated questions once already, and this would give them an unfair advantage (or disadvantage, if I asked them not to answer questions they wrote or answered correctly at FRED).

New V Cancelled: I would have deleted the greater-than chevrons if I'd realized they were going to be reprinted ...

*((Oh. I'll do that in future.))*

Media News – Rocky Horror Review: I should have made it clearer that the opening paragraph ("If you include it ...") was a note to you, and not part of the review. My fault for submitting the review 12 hours after the deadline.

*((Actually I have to apologize, I left that paragraph in by mistake. I'm not as strict about deadlines as I might be, partly because there can be late-breaking news and stuph.))*

WAHF: Sheryl Birkhead

## **All the Good Little Boys and Girls**

(BCSFA members' birthdays this month)

**3: Cecilia Griffith** is a BCSFA member about whom we know practically nothing.

**con hiebner** is a chocolatier, a fan of Bloom County, a former Vcon co-chair, and completely out of touch with BCSFA these days.



**4: Harry Andruschak** is, or was, a member of LASFS, a former employee of the U.S. space program, a postal employee, and pretty much gafiated these days. I think he is also a member of FAPA or LASFAPA or something.

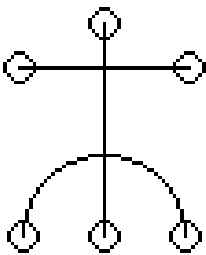
**4: Darryl Huber** is, or was, a member of the VCon 29 committee and a renewed BCSFA member. Also he moved recently.



**7: Murray Moore** is an out-of-province subscriber to BCSFA, a former Canadian Unity Fan Fund delegate, a fanzine editor and contributor to several apas. Some people perceived in him a resemblance to Ben Stein, so he started doing “Win Murray’s Money” fundraising panels at cons.



**10: Doug Finnerty** is a former BCSFA treasurer, our current Vice-President, a postal employee, the mastermind behind Feeding Frenzies and book discussions, shorter and rounder than I am, and not involved with yuki witherspoon-li.



**14: yuki witherspoon-li** is (I think) an arts student at Emily Carr, owned by two cats, enamoured of neon-coloured hair, and not provably biological, given the amount of junk food in her diet. She may be the only fan outside my Royal Swiss Navy personality cult who understands the point of my Bavarian Illuminati jokes.



**7: Philip Freeman** is an academic, a father, and the husband of the famous Kathleen Moore-Freeman. I don’t think he *always* wears gumboots in summer, but I’ve seen him do it before. A former Nobel Prize contender in mathematics, he may be the only actual inventor of off-colour equations.

**17: Alan R. Betz** is a former techie, former VCon committee member, former *BCSFazine* columnist, former Justice League of America member, former Pulitzer Prize winner, and former Rhodes scholarship winner. He is also pretty much gaffiated these days.



**25: Jim Miyashita** is known mainly as the consort of Debbie Miyashita. Practically nothing is known for certain about this shadowy, enigmatic figure, but of course there are rumours ... You can believe pretty much what you want to.



**21: Vicki Oates** was a freelance housecleaner and part-time coffeehouse musician when she joined the “Leather Goddesses of Phobos” entourage in the late 1980s. She kept up the Leather Goddesses’ advice column in *BCSFazine* long after most of us remembered the joke.



cool seventies  
sci-fi fan

**25: Luanne Robinson** is the offspring of Spider and Jeanne Robinson. I know nothing against this person.

**26: Bruce Hawick** used to show up and volunteer at Vcons, until he somehow browned off both Jackie Barclay and Vicki Oates. For some reason he used to greet me with “Honey!” and grab me in a bear hug. I never did figure out how that joke originated, or what was the point to it.



**26: Dominique Kops** is one of the newest members of the FRED-going gang, which includes Ryan Hawe, Michael “Fruvous” Bertrand, and several Richmond, furry and former UBCSFS members. Dominique’s motto is “Been there, done that.” We are afraid to ask what “that” was.



## Words from Our Advertisers

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## Clubs We Know Of

*Alternate Realities Club* - The anime club run out of Simon Fraser University, who put on Anime Evolution at SFU in the summer. See <http://www.sfu.ca/ar-club/>.

ANCEA stands for the "Asia Northwest Cultural Education Association" and is the sponsoring organization of Sakura Con. It consists of five board members and a general membership. See [www.ancea.org](http://www.ancea.org).

*The Con-Version SF Society* usually holds Con-Version in Calgary (formerly in July, but now in August). However, in July 2005, Calgary fans are holding Westercon. The Con-Version Web site URL is <http://www.con-version.org/>.

*The Friends of the Merril Collection of SF, Speculation and Fantasy* is a support group for the Merril Collection, the special SF library collection in Toronto. The club newsletter, *Sol Rising*, features interviews & books printed in the last & upcoming year. Write to The Friends of the Merril Collection, c/o The Merril Collection of SF, 239 College Street, 3rd floor, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R5. Membership in the Friends is now \$30 / year.

*The Greater Portland Area Costumers' Guild*, aka "the Robe Warriors" (URL <http://www.robewarriors.com/>; address PO Box 3985, Portland OR 97208- 3985) are "a group of people (mostly hobbyists although many of us strive for professional quality work) who enjoy dreaming up, designing, engineering, and creating costumes. Some of us work only on historical stuff, some strictly on fantasy, others just do science fiction. Some work only with fabric, others do electronics, and some get into latex or leather. Most of us, though, do a variety of things with just about any kind of material or supplies we can get our hands on. Please visit our webpage." (B. Sharp)

*The Klingon Imperial Diplomatic Corps* in Montreal has an interesting Web site at <http://www.klingon.org/>; you can also e-mail founder Capucine Plourde at [klingon@klingon.org](mailto:klingon@klingon.org).

*The Monster Attack Team - Canada* is a club of "semi-professional and professional" Science Fiction and Fantasy modellers, but anyone with an interest in sculpting, model-building, and "monster-stuff" is welcome to attend meetings. (Members have worked on such shows as *X-Files*, *The Outer Limits*, *The New Addams Family*, *Big and Hairy*, and others.) Many are sculptors who sell their own original creations as model kits. Others have appeared in magazines like *Hobby Japan*, *Kitbuilders*, *Amazing Figure Modeler*, *Modeler's Resource*, *Fine Scale Modeler*, either as writers or featured in articles. The club has an e-newszine, simply called *The Monster Attack Team - Canada Newsletter*, which reviews news about



Vancouver science fiction and monster events, toy and model news, new film and TV news, DVD and home video news; simply email shyde@axionet.com. Our meeting contact is Dennis Kristos (#8 8700 Forest Grove Drive - home: 436-4099 internet: speek1@vcn.bc.ca) The meeting is held in the Common Room - #40 - 8700 Forest Grove Drive (Off Underhill if you're coming by the Lougheed Highway)." (S. Hyde)

*The Northern Society for Creative Anachronism* is B.C.'s branch of the Society for Creative Anachronism. The Barony of Lionsgate members pursue a number of medieval-recreation activities: period costume construction, medieval dancing, calligraphy, medieval fighting practice, banquets, archery, arts and crafts. The Lionsgate Web page is <http://www.lionsgate.antir.sca.org/>. To find out about their regular annual events, write for a copy of *The North Wind*.

*The Northwest Science Fiction Society* (NWSFS) are responsible for the monthly newsletter *Westwind* (which is coming out Real Soon Now) and the large annual spring SF convention, Norwescon (listed in the calendar below). See their website ([www.nwsfs.org](http://www.nwsfs.org)), or write them at POBox 24207, Seattle, WA 98124-0207, U.S.A.

*The Ottawa SF Society* has published a bimonthly clubzine, the *Ottawa SF Statement*, and held conventions in Ottawa for a few decades now. See their website (<http://osfs.ncf.ca>), or write them at 18 Norice St., Ottawa, ON K2G 2X5.

*The Portland Science Fiction Society* (PorSFis) are responsible for the newsletter *Pulsar* (which is coming out Real Soon Now) and the annual convention Orycon (listed in the calendar below). See their website ([www.porsfis.org](http://www.porsfis.org)).



*The Royal Swiss Navy* is a complicated joke disguised as a science fiction club, or a club disguised as a complicated joke, started by Garth Spencer. In his vivid imagination he proposes to get his friends to do street-theatre routines – sort of like the Yippies, the Python gang, the League of Dynamic Discord, the Canadian TV and radio comedians, and the Cacophony Society – largely to send up self-important institutions at home and abroad, such as governments and corporations and terrorists ... while wearing brightly-coloured camo-pattern “uniforms” that clash with any conceivable background. A website with a lot of broken links is hosted at the Vancouver CommunityNet ([www.vcn.bc.ca/sig/rsn](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/sig/rsn)). At irregular intervals he distributes *The Royal Swiss Navy Gazette*, from the same address as *BCSFazine* (POBox 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, BC CANADA V6B 5B1).

*The Trumpeter Tabletop Gaming Society* is a gaming club in operation since 1964. game nights are held 6:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., one Friday every month, at the Bonsor Community Centre in Burnaby at Metrotown. Contacts include their president (Steve Allen, 899-4970, [big\\_dog@telus.net](mailto:big_dog@telus.net)), their treasurer (Kelly Jones, 988-9884, [VaubanEnt@aol.com](mailto:VaubanEnt@aol.com)), their editor-in-chief (Eric Hotz, 619- 6925, [erichotz@direct.ca](mailto:erichotz@direct.ca)), and their Games Master (Terry Sawchenko, 942-6166, [gamesmaster@shaw.ca](mailto:gamesmaster@shaw.ca)).

*The UBC Science Fiction Society* is, in one incarnation or another, the oldest extant SF club in Vancouver. UBCSFFEN was founded in the 60s by UBC students, and later formed the foundation of BCSFA. UBCSFS used to publish Horizons SF, a biannual fiction magazine which emerged as a semi-professional SF market in the late 80s/early 90s, winning an Aurora (Canadian SF and Fantasy Award) for its editor at that time, David New. Write to UBC AMS Science Fiction Society, Box 75, Student Union Bldg., 6138 SUB Blvd., University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Y4.

*The Undiscovered Province Science Fiction Inc.* is or was at P.O. Box 7563 Saskatoon, SK S7K 4L4 club.

*The USS Hudson Bay* ([www.idic.ca](http://www.idic.ca)) is a Star Trek club in Toronto, which publishes the online periodical *Voyageur* and supports Toronto Trek. My contact is [Lyndia.Ciaschini@rogers.com](mailto:Lyndia.Ciaschini@rogers.com).

VJAS, *The Vancouver Japanese Anime Society*, is the anime club run from Douglas College by president Will Chow and Chad Ma. Will Chow also runs one of the few anime stores in the Lower Mainland, Anime Jynai. VJAS has about 300 or 400 members; their Web page is at <http://www.vjas.org/>.

VSWAT, *The Vancouver Sleep is for Wimps Anime Team*, (<http://users.uniserve.com/~ryanm6/vswat/>) is run out of Port Coquitlam by Ryan Matheuszik ([ryanm6@uniserve.com](mailto:ryanm6@uniserve.com)).

*The Western Fandom Illuminati* is a watchdog group instituted by someone named Hrothgar Weems, dedicated to the proposition that Garth Spencer leads an Evil Sinister Plot to subvert and undermine fandom on behalf of the Bavarian Illuminati military-entertainment complex and their wholly-owned subsidiary, the Paramount Fox Alliance. A website at the Vancouver CommunityNet is in development.

More comprehensive information on Northwest SF clubs, and many other SF resources, can be found at <http://www.sfnorthwest.org/>.

## Conventions and Other Events

(NOTE: This calendar draws on a variety of sources, including fanzines we receive in trade, the Northwest SF Resources website ([www.sfnorthwest.org](http://www.sfnorthwest.org)) and Lloyd Penney's Canadian conventions list, linked to the Made in Canada website ([www.geocities.com/~canadian\\_sf/](http://www.geocities.com/~canadian_sf/)). -GS)

### October 2004

Oct. 1-2: **Sci Fan**, apparently held at Galaxy Hobby in Lynnwood, Washington, billed as a Premiere Science Fiction Modeling Convention. For more information email [info@galaxyhobby.com](mailto:info@galaxyhobby.com).

Oct. 1: Release date for *Warriors of Heaven and Earth* (kung-fu epic); and, only in Toronto, *The Yes Men* (activists impersonate WTO members, infiltrate, and then ...!)

Oct. 3 - **Pop Culture Fair**, Edmonton Aviation Heritage Centre, Edmonton, AB. Comics & collectibles show. Guest: Cary Nord. Admission: \$3, children free. For more information, [www.popculturefair.com](http://www.popculturefair.com).

Oct. 8: Release of *A Sound of Thunder* (time-travel epic based on Ray Bradbury's short story; Ben Kingsley, Edward Burns)

Oct. 8-10 - **Chibicon 2K4**, Holiday Inn Winnipeg South, Winnipeg, MB. Anime and gaming convention. Memberships: \$25 until September 30, \$30 at the door. For more information, see [www.chibicon.ca](http://www.chibicon.ca).

Oct. 8-10: **VCon 29**, Vancouver's longest-running SF, fantasy and gaming convention, will be held at the Hilton Vancouver Metrotown. Writer Guest of Honour will be Dave Duncan (author of *West of January*, *A Man of His Word* and *The Seventh Sword*); Artist Guest of Honour will be Todd Lockwood (designer for Dungeons & Dragons 3rd edition, winner of eight Chesley Awards and two World Fantasy Art Show awards); Science Guest will be Dr. Jaymie Matthews (teacher at the University of British Columbia's Department of Physics and Astronomy, and head of the science team for Microvariability and Oscillations of Stars [MOST], Canada's first space telescope); and Special Guest will be Lisa Smedman (local SF/fantasy writer and game designer, co-founder of *Adventures Unlimited* magazine, author of eight novels including the *New York Times* bestseller *Extinction*).

If you are interested in volunteering, signing up for the writer's workshop, booking space in the artshow or dealers' room, or advertising in the program book, please contact the appropriate concon member as listed at [www.v-con.ca](http://www.v-con.ca). In the short term, please contact Chair Marie-Louise Beesley at [beesleybabe@yahoo.com](mailto:beesleybabe@yahoo.com).

The Hilton Vancouver Metrotown (6083 McKay Avenue, Burnaby, BC, CANADA V5H 2W7) is next door to the Metrotown Mall, a major shopping centre at a principal public transit nexus. Under the Hilton is a separate mall with its own food court. Room rates are \$105 for a room with a single king-size or two queen-size beds. Rooms may be reserved by phoning 1-604-438-1200, or faxing 1-604-4310-7782, and quoting convention code "VCO" when booking your room; the VCon website [www.v-con.ca](http://www.v-con.ca) also accommodates room bookings.

Memberships \$50 at the door. One-day memberships are CDN \$20 on Friday, \$25 on Saturday, \$15 on Sunday. A membership form is available online at [www.v-con.ca](http://www.v-con.ca), asking your name, badge name and address, telephone and email information. The completed form can be mailed with cheque, money order or completed Visa information; the address is VCon 29, c/o #209 - 2166 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, CANADA V6K 2A4.

Oct. 8-14: *Shrek 2* and *The Terminal* play at the Hollywood Theatre (3123 West Broadway); see [www.hollywoodtheatre.ca](http://www.hollywoodtheatre.ca).

Oct. 15: release of *Team America: World Police*.

Oct. 15 (Toronto), Oct. 29 (other cities): Release of *The Machinist*, in which a man who hasn't slept for a year finds his life turning into a nightmare.

Oct. 15-17 - **Hero's Gambit**, St. Joseph's Hall, Saskatoon, SK. Gaming convention. Memberships: \$18/weekend, other rates available. For more information, [www.herosgambit.com](http://www.herosgambit.com).

Oct. 15-17: **Anglicon XVII**, the annual British Media Convention, at the Radisson Hotel SeaTac in SeaTac, Washington. Guest: Virginia Hey. Rooms are \$79 per room night; contact Radisson Hotel SeaTac, 17001 Pacific Highway South, SeaTac, Washington 98188 at (206) 244-6000. Memberships are \$50 (adult) to Oct. 14; children 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult member - children's memberships (ages 3 to 15) are \$25; children under 3 are free. Write Anglicon 17, P.O. Box 95536, Seattle, WA 98175-0536; email [anglicon@rocketmail.com](mailto:anglicon@rocketmail.com); or telephone (206) 789-BRIT.

Oct. 22: Release of *Seed of Chucky* and *The Grudge* (cursed-haunted-house story, based on a Japanese original).

October 22-24: **InCon 2004** at the Mirabeau Park Hotel in Spokane, Washington. A General SF convention. Rooms are \$62/night for 1-2 people, \$72/night for 3-4; write Mirabeau Park Hotel, 1100 North Sullivan Road, Spokane, WA 99037, or phone (509) 924-9000; TELL the hotel you're attending the con. Artist Guest Robert Daniels, Author Guest Kay Kenyon, Media Guest Dragon Dronet. Memberships \$25 up to the door. Write Incon 2004, P.O. Box 9267, Spokane, WA 99209.

Oct. 29-30: **Howloween 2004**, a furry convention at the Best Western Convention Centre, Coquitlam, BC. Furry convention. Guests: TBA. Memberships: \$35 pre-registration, \$40 at the door. For more information, see [www.howloween.org](http://www.howloween.org).

Oct. 29-30: **Journey to Mordor** (exploring the dark side of Middle Earth ...) in Seattle, WA. A costume event for all ages. "Advance tickets" (!?) available at Sonic Boom Records outlets in Seattle (206-568-BOOM, 206-547-BOOM, or 206-297-BOOM), and through TicketWeb (1-866-468-7623). See also [www.middleearth.com](http://www.middleearth.com).

Oct. 29-31: **RingCon** (another Lord of the Rings con) at the DoubleTree Hotel in SeaTac, WA. Guests: Royd Tolkien; Bruce Hopkins (Gamling); Cat & Judy (alleycatscratch.com); Greg Wright ("Peter Jackson: In Perspective"). Room rates not listed; write DoubleTree Hotel, 18740 Pacific Hwy. S., SeaTac, WA 98188, P# (206) 246-8600, F# (206) 431-8687. Look up RingCon's website – contact information is not at all clear.

Oct. 29-31: **Convention 2004** at Boréal (the only Canadian convention to be primarily French-speaking) at the Days Inn Midtown Hotel (1005 Guy Street) in Montréal, Québec. GoHs: Karl Schroeder (tentative); Schroeder was the 2003 winner of the English-language Long-Form Aurora Award. "On the French side, our line-up of guests will include most of Québec's active or professional science fiction and fantasy authors." Convention: "Christian Sauvé will be our designated liaison with the current Aurora Awards volunteers. Advice and oversight will be provided as needed by Jean-Louis Trudel. Both have past experience with Aurora procedures." Write Boréal c/o Jean-Louis Trudel, 103-4570 Queen Mary Rd, Montreal, QC H3W 1W6; email [jltrudel@yahoo.ca](mailto:jltrudel@yahoo.ca). See: <http://congresboreal.ca> for more information.

Other films released in October will include *The Final Cut*, in which Robin Williams plays an editor of people's recorded lives; and *Immortal*, featuring New York in 2095, a giant pyramid hovering over New York, and ancient Egyptian gods in the pyramid. (*High concept* -GS.)

## November 2004

Nov. 5: Release of *Birth*, in which a widow (Nicole Kidman) is faced by a little boy claiming to be her husband's reincarnation; and *The Incredibles*, in which a family of superheroes tries and fails to retire to the suburbs.

Nov. 5-7: **Orycon 26** at the DoubleTree Hotel in Portland, Oregon. Writer Guest Jerry Olton; Artist Mark Roland; Editor Jennifer Heddle. General SF, and the largest SF convention in Oregon. Rooms \$95/night (plus tax) for 1-4 people, \$15/extra occupants. Phone (503) 283-2111. NOTE: the Interstate Wing is the "party wing". Memberships: \$50 to October 20, 2004; \$55 at the door; Children (6 to 12), half-price. Write Orycon 26,

P.O. Box 5464, Portland, OR 97228-5464; email [mel-content@comcast.net](mailto:mel-content@comcast.net); URL [www.orycon.org/orycon26](http://www.orycon.org/orycon26).

Nov. 10: Release of *Seed of Chucky* (*no comment* -GS)

Nov. 13 @ 7pm: **Feeding Frenzy** at Samba Brazilian Steakhouse, 1122 Alborni Street, Vancouver. "All you can eat for carnivores, although they also have a nice little salad bar. Rumour has it that Saturday nights here are party central. Sort of the Brazilian beer commercial you'll never see, yes?" -D.F.

Nov. 14 - **Vancouver Comicon**, Heritage Hall, Vancouver, BC. Comics convention. Guests: TBA. Admission: \$3. For more information, see [users.uniserve.com/~lswong/comicon.html](http://users.uniserve.com/~lswong/comicon.html).

Nov. 20 (negotiable): **VCon 29 post-mortem party**. To be held at Garth Spencer's place, 82 East 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, BC; phone 604-325-7314 for directions.

Nov. 28 @ 7pm: **Another Feeding Frenzy** at Nyala Ethiopian Restaurant, 2930 West 4th Ave, Vancouver. "For those of you who missed September's Feeding Frenzy, this is your chance to get acquainted with this place. The food here is excellent if you don't mind sharing. Please note there is no Feeding Frenzy in December owing to the traditional BCSFA Christmas Dinner." -D.F.

## December 2004

Dec. 3-5: **SMOFCon 22**, the original conrunners' convention, at the Wyndham Washington in Washington D.C. Rooms US \$119 for single or double, \$139 for triple or quad occupancy, plus tax; mention SMOFCon and the group code, 1202648SM. Phone 1-877-999-3223. Memberships US\$60 to October 31, \$70 at the door, \$25 supporting; checks to WSFA, Inc. Write WSFA/SMOFCon 22, 7113 Wayne Drive, Annandale, VA 22003-1734, [www.smofcon22.org](http://www.smofcon22.org).

Dec. 10: Release of *Blade: Trinity*, Blade's final bow.

Dec. 31, 2004 to Jan. 1, 2005: **Fest of Rohan**, a costume event for over-21's. "Advance tickets" (!?) available at Sonic Boom Records outlets in Seattle (206-568-BOOM, 206-547-BOOM, or 206-297-BOOM), and through TicketWeb (1-866-468-7623). See also [www.middleearth.com](http://www.middleearth.com).

Other film releases in Dec. 2004: *Man-Thing*, a 7-foot-tall green ooze pile crawls from a Louisiana swamp. (*Presumably looking for love, understanding and civil rights.*)

## January 2005

Jan. 14-16: **Rustycon 22** at SeaTac Radisson Airport Hotel in SeaTac, Washington. A General SF convention. Writer Guest: To Be Determined. Artist: R. Stephen Adams. FanGoH: IKV T'Mar (a Klingon costuming group). Room rates To Be Determined (last year's was \$94/night); Phone SeaTac Radisson at (206) 244-6000 (800-333-3333). Group rate expires by December 21, 2004. Memberships \$40 to December 1, 2004; \$49.50 at the door. Write Rustycon 22, P.O. Box 27075, Seattle, WA 98165-1475. URL: [www.rustycon.com](http://www.rustycon.com).

## February 2005

Feb. 18-20: **RadCon 4A** at the Red Lion Hotel, Pasco, WA. GoHs to be announced. Room \$74/night for 1 to 4 (mention Radcon to get con rate); phone (509) 547-0701, or write Red Lion Hotel, 2525 North 20th, Pasco, WA 99301. Memberships \$30 for a full weekend, \$15 for Friday only, \$20 for Saturday only, \$5 for Sunday only; Children ten and under free with adult member. See [www.radcon.org](http://www.radcon.org). (NOTE: at the end of August 2004 this website only listed emails for the committee, and no postal address.)

## March 2005

Mar. 11-13: **Trumpeter Salute 2005**, Bonsor Community Complex, Burnaby, BC. Gaming convention. Memberships: \$18, one-day memberships available. For more information, see [www.trumpeterclub.com](http://www.trumpeterclub.com).

Mar. 24-27: **Norwescon 28** at the Doubletree SeaTac Hotel in SeaTac, WA. (*Do I see a trend here?* -GS) GoHs: Writer Guest of Honor: Michael Bishop; Artist Guest of Honor: John Howe; Science Guest of Honor: Suzette Haden Elgin; Spotlitged Publisher: TOR Books featuring Tom Doherty; Special Guest of Honor: Alan Dean Foster. Norwescon is the host of the Philip K. Dick Award. (I *think* it is still the single largest annual convention in the Pacific Northwest, but anime conventions have been reaching, or even exceeding Norwescon's 2000 to 3000-member attendance levels.) Rooms: \$99/night for 1-5; phone (206) 246-8600, or fax (206) 431-8687; the DoubleTree SeaTac Hotel is at 18740 International Boulevard, SeaTac, WA. Membership rate after Sept. 15 to be announced. Phone (206) 270-7850 or write Norwescon 28 Pre-Registration, P.O. Box 68547, Seattle, WA 98168-0547.

Mar. 25-27: **GameStorm** at the Doubletree Columbia River in Portland, Oregon. See <http://www.gamestorm.org>. (Only *online* registration appears to be possible -GS.)

## April 2005

Apr. 8-10: **SakuraCon 8** at the Seattle Airport Hilton and Conference Center AND Marriott Hotel, SeaTac, WA. An anime and gaming convention hosted by ANCEA. Guests TBA. Memberships: \$40 to January 1, 2005. phone 1-877-873-3317 or write Sakura-Con, 3702 South Fife St., Suite k02, PB 78, Tacoma, WA 98409. (NOTE: Anime fans do things differently; the SakuraCon website lists "staff positions" and even has a page for "Job Openings". [!?] )

## May 2005

May 19: release of *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith*

May 20-23: **Keycon 22**, Radisson Hotel Downtown, Winnipeg, MB. SF convention. Guests: TBA. Memberships: \$35 until January 1, 2005. For more information, see [www.keycon.org](http://www.keycon.org).

## June 2005

June 2005 - **C-Cubed**: "Michael and Becky Citrak will be running the 2005 C<sup>3</sup>. They plan on having a Tech theme." Michael Citrak @ [mcitrak@comcast.net](mailto:mcitrak@comcast.net); Becky Citrak @ 360-456-7441 or [adonno@aol.com](mailto:adonno@aol.com).

## July 2005

July 1-4: **Westercon 58 "Due North"** at the Westin Calgary Hotel in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. A traveling general SF and major regional SF Convention. Author GoH: S.M. Stirling. Canadian Author Guest: David Duncan. Publisher guest: Tom Doherty (TOR Books). Editor guest: David Hartwell (TOR). Science Guest: Dr. Phil Currie (archaeologist). Artist guest: Mark Ferrari. Fan Guests: Cliff Samuels & Eileen Capes. Rooms C\$120 + tax per night; contact 1-800-937-8461. Memberships range up to C\$80 (adult). Write Calgary in 2005, P.O. Box 43078, DVPO, Calgary, AB T2J 7A7, or email [info@calgaryin2005.org](mailto:info@calgaryin2005.org).

## August 2005

Aug. 19-21: **Anime Evolution**, Hotel TBA, Vancouver, BC. Anime convention. Guests & memberships: TBA. For more information, see [www.animeevolution.com](http://www.animeevolution.com).

## September 2005

Sept. 1-5: **CascadiaCon 2005**, the 2005 NasFic, at the SeaTac Hilton & Conference Center in Seatac, Washington. (The General SF convention

North Americans hold when Worldcon goes overseas.) Writer GoH: Fred Saberhagen. Artist GoH: Liz Danforth. Editor GoH: Toni Weisskopf (Baen). Fan GoH: Kevin Standlee (chair of Con Jose). Scientist GoH: Marc Abrahams (founder of the *Journal of Improbable Research* and the Ig Nobel Awards). Rooms \$109/night for 1-4 people; phone (206) 244-4800. Memberships: \$85 (full adult). Write Seattle NASFiC, Box 1066, Seattle, WA 98111.

## Creative Typing

(a new faanfic & fanart section)

### Transaction Declined

by Garth Spencer

Hrothgar Weems normally worked days, but the temp. agency had given him an emergency evening assignment at a time when he really couldn't pass it up. After a gruelling six hours of transcription and word-processing corrections, and struggling with the client's unique brand of English, Hrothgar was exhausted and low-spirited; wending his way home at nearly midnight did not lighten his mood, and he was brooding about the debts he still couldn't cover, as he stepped out of the rapid transit terminal.

When a municipal clock struck the hour, a tall, dark figure stepped into his path. Hrothgar trucked over to one side, mumbling "Scuse me".

The dark figure moved with him, and stepped into his space.

"Hey!"

Two hands clapped onto Hrothgar's shoulders, and pulled him forward. Hrothgar, startled, raised his forearms and pushed off the hands, with difficulty.

"Hey, back off! I don't want –"

One hand shot out, clasped itself around Hrothgar's throat, and pulled him off his feet. The fanged mouth approached.

"Oh, what the hell," Hrothgar thought, so he went limp.

The dark figure paused, and in the faint street light he saw a frown on the distorted face. "What the hell is *wrong* with you?" the stranger asked.

Hrothgar found he was standing on his own again, and his throat was free. He scratched it. "You're a vampire, aren't you?" he said thinly. "Or are you just one of these Goth wannabes?"

The dark eyes widened as the faced frowned more deeply. "Goth wannabes?"

Hrothgar sighed. "Guess you're the real deal. Uh, some people actually *want* to be vampires. Not my party, but not many things are." He straightened up and lifted his chin. "So, do you just need a blood donation, or do you have to take my life, when you feed?"

The vampire moved away a little, looking slightly repulsed. "Whatever is the *matter* with you?" he asked. "This is the third time this year my prey hasn't run, or screamed, hasn't even *resisted* the bloodletting!"

Hrothgar took a long look at the taller man. "Oh, I see," he said. "You want an answer before you give me one. Good enough. My deal is, I'm just fed up. I don't get a lot out of life, and I've given up expecting anything more. If I live, if I die, it's all the same to me, right now. Maybe you're just meeting other people who feel the same way, but this year is your first time. What do you think?"

"But *why*?" the vampire burst out. "How can you live, and draw breath, and ... and ..." Just at the moment, he looked a lot like Hrothgar's maternal uncle, when he was also baffled and offended. Also by something Hrothgar said, now that he thought about it.

Hrothgar shrugged wearily. "I dunno. Maybe I'm in the wrong line of work. Maybe there's just too much plastic in my diet. Maybe I'm not making the right effort, to get any satisfaction." He looked squarely at the dark, taller man.

The vampire looked squarely at Hrothgar.

After a moment the taller man stepped back. And again. Turning, he started running.

Hrothgar watched the figure retreat, slowly realizing that he had freaked out a blood-sucking monster. Then he went to see if he could catch the last bus home.

## "Snup" Chapter 3

by Felicity Walker

Rob Funslup loved his job—which is why his boss hated him.

Getting into uniform was, all by itself, obscenely pleasurable for Rob. He slithered into his shiny, white coveralls. He zipped them up slowly, savouring the way they tightened around his crotch and buttocks when he bent over to put on his boots. His fingers wriggled with excitement as he slipped them into his thin white rubber gloves.



ROB  
FUNSLUP

But he really trembled with exquisite anticipation as he left the locker room and headed for his department: quality control at the



whipped cream dispenser company. Halfway there his only friend in the department, Julia Spiggyspaggy, intercepted him and warned him that Boughle was waiting for him.



Gudge Boughle had enough problems—thinning hair, high cholesterol, a 1976 Ford Gran Torino that had seemed cool back in college, but for which he was paying dearly now. He didn't need more stress, and that's what Funslup was.

"Freeze," he snapped as soon as Funslup got in. "Listen good: you're here to do your job, not to horse around. Smarten up."

Rob was vaguely aware of murmuring submissively to get his boss to leave, and of his boss stalking away and slamming the door, but in his mind he was already testing the dispensers, pushing the spring-loaded tips of the nozzles, making the cream shoot out in big foamy puffs and slide heavily through his gloved fingers.

Julia worked beside him almost all morning recording the results of the tests on her clipboard, which is why he lasted until just before noon without getting fired. She left at eleven to do the data entry of their notes, and by the time Boughle came to check on Rob, it was too late. The room and everything in it were coated in whipped cream and Rob was lying on the floor in sensuous spasms.

Boughle roared furiously, punched a hole in the wall, told Funslup he was fired, found Spiggyspaggy and chewed her out for leaving Funslup unattended, and stomped back to his office to chug shots of maximum-strength pink liquid to soothe his stomach.

Rob was enraged. Julia knelt beside him and tried to be comforting. "Don't feel bad. You'll find another job. Give Boughle a day or two to calm down and I can ask him to at least give you a good reference." At first, this didn't make Rob feel any better, but then he realized that if he could use Julia to get back into the building later, he could...

Rob Funslup grinned heartily at Julia Spiggyspaggy.

## "On The Run" part 3

by Taral Wayne



## Fanzines We Received

*Ansible* 206, Sept. 2004, From DAVE LANGFORD, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU. <http://ansible.co.uk>. Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816 (print) 1740-942X (online). Available for SAE, freans, nurks, or flying snolls.

*DASFAX*, Vol. 36, # 8, August 2004, from the Denver Area SF Association; now c/o The Editors, 741 King St., Denver, CO 80204, or [editor1@dasfa.org](mailto:editor1@dasfa.org). Short book reviews, local club doings, graced with fanart from around North America.

*De Profundis* #380, Sept. '04, c/o Los Angeles SF Society, 11513 Burbank Blvd., N. Hollywood, CA 91601. A monthly club newsletter distinguished not only by famous fanartists but by funny club minutes.

*File 770* #143, July '04, from Mike Glycer (705 Valley View Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016). Now an annual digest of the previous year's fan news.

*Opuntia* #55, August '04, c/o Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, AB T2P 2E7, a personalzine and fanhistoryzine. Dale's interests range from native cacti, stamp collecting, cychlid fanciers, and alternative history. In this issue: A Con-Version 2003 report; an article on archaeo-astronautics, and evidence that the Earth has had short-lived rings.

*Warp* Vo. 18, no. 3, summer 2004, from MonSFFA/the Montreal SF and Fantasy Association (P.O. Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, PQ H2W 2P4). This issue's cover is made up as "Warps Illustrated", and contents include media SF reviews, con reports, the club's last year in retrospect, with photos.

## ***Fan News, or Something Sort of Like It***

### *Our Fandom*

#### *Upcoming Food Fan Gatherings*

"Here is the lowdown on the Feeding Frenzies for October and November. Not sure about the need for a handover ceremony at this point since I don't think anyone else wants this job. It has, however been a long time since I had a decent banana pudding.

"Details follow:

Sunday October 24 @ 7pm  
Balkan House  
7530 Edmonds Street, Burnaby

"Although I was advised NOT to post a Feeding Frenzy so soon after V-Con, I've gone and done it anyway. If V-Con has wiped out the finances of most attendees, the worst is yet to come due to the approach of Halloween and Christmas. Try to think of this as a nice Christmas dinner the week before *Van Helsing the Repossessor* shows up. I believe they have an all you can eat buffet that night too.

Saturday November 13 @ 7pm  
Samba Brazilian Steakhouse  
1122 Alberni Street, Vancouver

"All you can eat for carnivores, although they also have a nice little salad bar. Rumour has it that Saturday nights here are party central. Sort of the Brazilian beer commercial you'll never see, yes?"

Sunday November 28 @ 7pm  
Nyala Ethiopian Restaurant  
2930 West 4th Ave, Vancouver

"For those of you who missed September's Feeding Frenzy, this is your chance to get acquainted with this place. The food here is excellent if you don't mind sharing.

"Please note there is no Feeding Frenzy in December owing to the traditional BCSFA Christmas Dinner."

(Doug Finnerty, Sept. 13, 2004)

#### *Orycon 26 Pocket Program deadline*

"The official deadline for content for the Pocket Program is Oct 15. Email data to [lakem@comcast.net](mailto:lakem@comcast.net). Note that I reserve the right to edit and cut pieces in order to fit into the size of the guide. ;)"

Blade Hamilton - [lakem@comcast.net](mailto:lakem@comcast.net), August 30, 2004  
<http://www.backtable.org/~blade/>

#### *New Feature at SF Northwest Resources website*

"Just wanted to mention that sometime in the next couple of weeks I will be adding a phpbb bulletin board for Northwest fandom on [sfnorthwest.org](http://sfnorthwest.org). If you are not aware of how this works, you can take a look at a separate bbs I have created for aspiring and established writers located at <http://www.sfnorthwest.org/notebook/>

"I will have to work out the details on piggy backing a second bbs off of a mysql server, but look forward to seeing this up and running post Worldcon."

Jack Beslanwitch, Aug. 31, 2004

#### *Hiroaki Inoue to be Special Anime Guest of Honor at Cascadia Con*

"Cascadia Con is honored to announce our Special Anime Guest of Honor Hiroaki Inoue.

"Hiroaki Inoue has been selected to be a part of the special Japanese cultural and Anime programming which will take place at Cascadia Con, September 1-5, 2005 in Seattle Washington.

"Hiroaki Inoue after leaving Texuka Productions, co-founded Gainax. In 1989 he established Oniro Co., Ltd. and produced numerous animation movies. His credits include:

- \* *AD Police* (TV) : Producer
- \* *Armitage III* (OAV) : Producer
- \* *Blue Gender* (TV) : Producer
- \* *Blue Gender: The Warrior* (movie) : Producer
- \* *Bubblegum Crisis: Tokyo 2040* (TV) : Producer

- \* *Catnapped! The Movie* : Producer
- \* *De:vadasy* (OAV) : Producer
- \* *Great Dangaioh* (TV) : Producer
- \* *Hyper Doll* (OAV) : Producer
- \* *Macross II* (OAV) : Producer
- \* *Moldiver* (OAV) : Producer
- \* *Now and Then, Here and There* (TV) : General Producer
- \* *Oni-Tensei* (OAV) : Executive producer
- \* *Perfect Blue* (movie) : Producer
- \* *Royal Space Force: The Wings Of Honneamise* (1987)
- \* *Sex Demon Queen* (OAV) : Producer
- \* *Tenchi Muyo! Mihoshi Special* : Producer
- \* *The Legend of Black Heaven* (TV) : Producer
- \* *The Wings of Honneamise* (movie) : Producer
- \* *Virgin Fleet* (OAV) : Producer (AIC)

“Hiroaki Inoue will participate with Cascadia Con in exploring Science Fiction and Fantasy in Japanese literature, Manga and film. There is a close tie that frequently goes unmentioned between Science Fiction, Fantasy and Anime, with thousands of great pieces going largely ignored by the American Science Fiction and Fantasy communities.

“Cascadia Con is the 8th North American Science Fiction Convention (NASFiC) in 30 years. A NASFiC is only held when the Worldcon for that year is outside of North America. In 2005 the Worldcon will be in Scotland and Seattle will host the NASFiC. Cascadia Con will be host to a number of Japanese cultural events such as; a Japanese tea ceremony, Martial Arts Demos, Anime Music Dance and Anime Music Video, 24 hour viewing rooms, panels exploring the history of SF in Japan, Current Japanese Pop Culture items, and current trends in Anime style games and gaming. Cascadia Con is a 100% volunteer run organization and a fully qualified 501c3 company.

“Cascadia Con 2005, the North American Science Fiction Convention (NASFiC), is September 1-5, 2005 at the SeaTac Airport Hilton, Seattle WA. Write the 2005 North American Science Fiction Convention (NASFiC) At Seattle NASFiC, Box 1066, Seattle, WA 98111, or see [www.CascadiaCon.org](http://www.CascadiaCon.org), or email [info@cascadiacon.org](mailto:info@cascadiacon.org). Join our list at: [Seattle\\_in\\_05-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Seattle_in_05-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).”

Bobbie DuFault, Sept. 7, 2004

*Calls for Submission to  
Cascadia Anthology – Deadline 1 November 2004*

“Cascadia Con is proud to announce that it is working with Windstorm Creative and editor Cris DiMarco to offer a special view of Cascadia to premier at Cascadia Con in 2005

Anthology Working Title: *Northwest Passages: A Cascadian Odyssey*  
Editor: Cris DiMarco  
Hosting Organization: Cascadia Con

Deadline for submissions: 1 November 2004

Payment: \$0.05 cents per word if accepted, paid upon publication

“Projected publication date: September 2005, premiering at Cascadia Con, the 8th North American Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention in 30 years.

“Two centuries ago, the Lewis and Clark expedition ventured into the unknown to connect the new American nation to the Pacific Northwest, an area now known as Cascadia. They encountered many surprises along the way, and these changed their view of the world.

“Today we celebrate humanity's explorations of many new frontiers: space, technology, the environment and the human condition and experience. How will we forge ahead? What will occur when nature meets machine? When humanity is faced with choices such as shedding corporeal form to become part of living technology or something as ethereal as pure energy? How will we learn to balance our curiosity with the needs of a living planet? The desire to reach beyond what we know?

“Authors are invited to submit stories to the Cascadia anthology. To be considered for publications, stories must fit the following criteria:

- The story will be set in whole or in part, in the Pacific Northwest (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Northern California, British Columbia, or Alberta).
- The story will be written in one of the speculative fiction genres (science fiction, fantasy, horror, or alternate history).
- The story will include elements or thematically explore the relationship between technology and invention and either man, nature, or the environment. An example of this might be a story set in world similar to the ShadowRun® game or a cyberpunk setting where you explore how competition with thinking computers has caused the degradation of humanity and society.
- We welcome stories with a geographical theme. These may or may not be set in a utopian or dystopian universe. Humorous stories also welcome. Cultural commentary is fine, but political satire should be avoided. Clichés should be avoided. Examples of some clichés to be avoided:
  - Post-cataclysmic rag-tag armies struggle to survive against gangs of bandits, mutants, cyborgs, cyberpunks, etc. and/or try to win back their territory in the same old ways as every other film or book.
  - An entire society is run by a computer. Maybe it goes berserk.
- A society [that] consists of:
  - A handful of ultra-powerful ultra-rich;
  - Police whose only principle of operation is maintenance of the status quo;
  - Hordes of poor people starving in the streets;
  - Absolutely no middle class exist whatsoever. Nonetheless, the society manages to remain at a high technological level.

- o Societies where all technology has been destroyed except automobiles and their equivalents, which are still running yet there are no mechanics, workshops, or gas stations.
- o Alternative Earths where society is just like some society of the past, with technology added.

“The above examples and many more can be found at The Grand List of Overused Science Fiction Clichés.

“Story length: 250 to 10,000 words. Stories between 4,000 and 10,000 words preferred. For stories longer than 10,000 words, please query first with a synopsis of the story, previous publications credits and SASE for reply. We prefer original work, but will consider previously published work.

1. Manuscripts (Mss) must be on clean, white paper.
  2. Mss must be typed, double-spaced on one side only.
  3. Mss pages must be numbered.
  4. Author's name must appear on every page
  5. Story must be accompanied by a page with the following information: Author's name, author's nom de plume (if applicable), author's permanent address, author's email address (required), author's phone number and an accurate story word count. Author biography--200 word maximum. If any of this information is not supplied, submission will be discarded.
  6. A business sized envelope with first class postage for response.
  7. Manuscripts will not be returned.
  8. No email submissions will be accepted.
  9. Do not send submissions signature required or certified. Use delivery confirmation forms if author desires to see whether or not submission has been received.
  10. Submissions should be sent to: Cascadia Anthology, Windstorm Creative Ltd., Post Office Box 28, Port Orchard WA 98366, U.S.A.”
- Bill Marles <bmarles53 @ yahoo.com> To Richmond Writers <richmondwriters @ groups.msn.com>, 8 September 2004

#### *You're Soaking In It:*

“Britain's Environment Agency is concerned that the anti-depression drug Prozac is being taken in such large quantities in the U.K. that traces are not only showing up in wastewater, but also in rivers and wells used for drinking water. "We need to determine the effects of this low-level, almost continuous discharge," says agency spokesman Dr. Andy Croxford. (*London Observer*) ...Yet when informed of the contamination, affected residents just didn't seem to care.”

(*This Is True*, August 8, 2004)

(*I had to laugh at this ... for a few years now I've been saying the difference between Canada and the States must be that Prozac is in Canadian water supplies. A cartoon in the Georgia Straight of September 2<sup>nd</sup> appeared to be based on news saying the same thing! - GS*)

#### *Something Felicity Found While Looking For Other Things*

PSYCLONE: "Charles F. Shelton gives the reader a rip-roaring ride in his sci-fi thriller *Psyclone*. A virtual pyrotechnic display bristling with action, the story is cleverly constructed to keep the reader in suspense. With visceral writing, realistic detail and interesting characters who are tossed back and forth from terror to tenderness, *Psyclone* is an explosive chess game of victims and victors, love and betrayal, life and death."

– John Jacobson, VP New Media, Hollywood Network

“STOLEN: An artificial organism that repairs & recombines wounded human flesh, rendering drugs and diseases obsolete. Clues are hidden in the strategy of an ancient game known as Tamerlane's Chess.

“RECRUITED: Gene Collins, aging warrior with a chip on his shoulder.

“PROBLEM: The organism is mutating into an indestructible humanoid with a pliant, programmable mind.

“COMPLICATION: Unknown to Gene, he is a product of the same genetic experimentation. He must capture and kill the prototype of himself.

“Paperback edition includes plans and instructions for actual play of Tamerlane's Chess.

Download Chapter 1 (Adobe 5.0)

<http://www.filmwizards.com/psyclone-ch01.pdf>

From: "Felicity Walker" <[morbius@vcn.bc.ca](mailto:morbius@vcn.bc.ca)>, 8 Sep 2004

*Goth House Newsletter*, 13 August 2004, Vol. 3 Issue 19

“This fortnight: a one-shot spin through the cemeteries of my life...

<http://www.gothhouse.org/>

“Which concludes the whole leaving-goth-house storyline. (note: I have now decided that you can tell whether I am referring to *Goth House* the comic, or goth house the place where the characters live(d), because the comic is capitalized.) In the afterword I talk a little bit about where the series is going after this. It's going all over the place. Back in time\*, across the country, all sorts of fun stuff. (\*to high school. Not the Paleolithic. Although, now that I think about it, the middle ages might be entertaining...)

Julie McGalliard, August 13, 2004

*Goth House Newsletter*, 10 September 2004, Vol. 3 Issue 21

“This fortnight: my Comic-Con writeup, plus pictures!

<http://www.gothhouse.org/>

“... a big congrats to David Levine (<http://www.spiritone.com/~dlevine/>) for his first opportunity to attend the Hugo Losers' Party at Worldcon as a *bona fide* Hugo loser! (We missed each other at the party itself. And in case it isn't obvious, what that means is, he was NOMINATED for a Hugo.)



“October is still comics month in Bellingham, featuring the debut of the \*\*WOO! Fifth Goth House collection!\*\*\*\*\* And a show of artists at The Black Drop downtown coffee shop.”

– Julie McGalliard, Sept. 10, 2004

### Outer Fandom

#### *Worldcon 2007 in Japan*

“The votes are in, and it's official: Yokohama, Japan will be the site of the 65th World Science Fiction Convention. The exact dates will be August 29-September 3, 2007, and will be an interesting chance to see how the Japanese look at science-fiction - particularly in anime. ^\_^

“Hiroaki Inoue, the noted anime producer, was chair for the Nippon 2007 bid and is now chair of the upcoming convention. His professional anime credits include work on *AD Police Files*, *Macross II* and *Wings of Honneamise*.

“Inoue-san will likely be making several appearances in the U.S. over the next three years to improve support for the Nippon 2007 convention. He's already agreed to attend CascadiaCon, in the Seattle area over Labor Day weekend in 2005, as a guest of honor.

“Congratulations to the Nippon 2007 bid team on their win! For all of us who've been interested in attending a Japanese convention, but didn't get a chance to make *AX-Tokyo*, this is another great opportunity, and something to pay attention to over the next three years.

“For more information, visit [www.nippon2007.org](http://www.nippon2007.org).”

Isaac Alexander, SF Northwest, Sept. 6, 2004

#### *And More ...*

“JAPAN won the 2007 Worldcon bidding with 935 votes to 692 for Columbus, Ohio – more below. A two-year bid period is now in effect, so 2008 will be voted at L.A.Con IV in 2006, and there will be no site selection at Glasgow next year (but both Interaction and L.A.con members can vote on 2008; one fan, one vote). Future Worldcon bids include Chicago and Denver for 2008, Kansas City and Montreal for 2009, and (now a year old) Australia for 2010. Washington DC is a 2011 possibility, if hotels are built near the convention centre.”

*Ansible* 206, September 2004

#### *eFanzines report*

The most recent publications posted at eFanzines.com include:

Marty Cantor's *No Award*, number 15 for Summer 2004

Jim Caughran's *A Propos de Rien*

Bob Tucker's 1955 classic *Neo-Fan's Guide*

Rob Jackson's (1976) *Little Dictionary of Terms used by SF Fans*

Ron Clarke's latest *Watt's Out* (August 2004)

And the latest mailing of e-APA (#5, September 2004).

See <http://efanzines.com> .

#### *SciFi Science*

“I thought you might be interested in my Ph.D dissertation at the University of Texas at Austin, called “The Technical, Academic, Political, and Spiritual Challenges of Manned Exploration of Deep Space.” I have an elaborate website set up with all this research, plus several free books, free software, and lots more. Here are some highlights:

“- Mars Pathfinder 1.0 and 2.0 for windows; free computer simulations of the Earth to Mars trajectory that find a faster, safer, more efficient mission to Mars than anything else on the books.

“- “The Conceptual Design of a Constellation Class Starship,” one major section of a 220 page dissertation titled, “A New Dynamic Model of the Solar System.” The spaceship design is based on the Three Body Problem of Celestial Mechanics, which has some compelling applications!

“- A series of papers on the Osireion at Abydos, which I show was written by the people described in the Book of Job in the Old Testament. This 10,000 year old underground “temple” in Egypt may have been part of a massive aqueduct to a long lost civilization in central Africa, using advanced engineering skills not equalled until around 100 AD when some of Rome's best aqueducts were constructed. Where did these people get their skills . . . and was Leviathan for real?

“- A political satire called “The Pelican's Briefs” with 101 important issues that no politician will ever say in public. Kind of makes it look like the so-called vast right wing conspiracy. The theme is energy conservation, featuring my textbooks from McGraw-Hill, free energy conservation software - and other things to take the influence away from Big Oil and Bad Arabs, and to give it back to the People. Naturally, freeing funds for space exploration in the process!

“Everything is nicely illustrated, and easily accessible. The website is carefully crafted on the theme of “The Texas X Files” and the URL is <http://celestialmechanics.org>. I hope you have a chance to visit!”

(W.H. Clark, Sept. 11, 2004)

#### *Trekkies 2*

*Trekkies 2* was released on August 31, 2004, straight to video. Don Glover writes, “As funny, and as painful, as the *Trekkies*, this 'sequel' focuses on international Trek fandom with a couple visits to the US and follow ups on several of the people featured in the first *Trekkies*.” See <http://www.trekkies2.com>

Don Glover, to sfnorthwest listserv, Sept. 1, 2004

#### *Must be British Sarcasm ...?*

“ADAM ROBERTS marvels: “The workload of my summer has magically lightened. I had planned to spend it writing a new novel for Gollancz, to be called *Gradisil*. I had thought that this novel was not yet half completed. But checking the French Amazon site amazon.fr I discover that it has verily been finished, published and indeed sold out.”

*Ansible* 206, September 2004



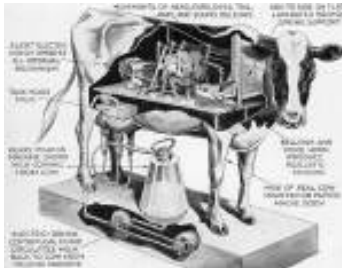
*Kumoricon 2004: View from the Chair*

(posted on NWConLeague listserv, Sept. 8/04)

"Now that I've woken up a bit, after taking a few hours of nap to catch up on the sleep I lacked at the convention, I think I'm coherent enough to do the post-con report. Being Kumoricon's 2nd year, this was a very critical year, and I would have to say it was an outstanding success. Some of the quick facts and figures, the official attendance of Kumoricon 2004 (dealer's room only passes excluded) is 1251 attendees. The attendance of Kumoricon 2003 was 419, so we essentially tripled our attendance this year. We actually had to turn a lot of people away Saturday and Sunday, a rough estimate is a few hundred people were not able to get in to the convention. A lot of credit for the huge push of interest in the convention was due to our article in the *Oregonian*. Being that it was on the front page of the living section of the paper (This is the major metropolitan paper that is circulated state-wide) a lot of people found out about our convention. Our guests this year, Brad DeMoss, Dr. Antonia Levi, PMBQ, Jeannie Lee, and the Bakazoku cosplay troupe, were all very entertaining, and had an awesome time. As far as incidents at the convention, there were very few, and most of them happened either Friday night, or Saturday, so I was able to spend some time with the attendees on Sunday and Monday to get a reaction on what they thought of this year. Also, we held our Rant & Rave panel Monday, where almost every single comment was positive, and the only rants were on things that were out of our control, like having more guests (including Japanese ones), the elevators being slow when it was crowded, and the limitations of our function space. We only had a couple of events get delayed, and several actually finished or started on time, and the AMV contest/show actually started early with a pre-show. ...

"Because of the outstanding growth of our convention this year, we're trying to re-evaluate our plans for next year. Hopefully we'll be announcing our date and hotel information in the following weeks. If anyone has any questions about the convention, I'll be glad to answer them. For now, I think I'm going to try and get some more sleep."

-Sean Larson, Sept. 7, 2004  
Kumoricon 2004 Convention Chair

*Writerly Stuph*

*Sunburst Award Announces 2004 Winner of Its \$1,000 Literary Prize*

Toronto (Sept. 1, 2004): "The Sunburst Award Committee is pleased to announce that the winner of its 2004 award is author Cory Doctorow, for his short story collection *A Place So Foreign and 8 More* (Four Walls Eight Windows Press).

"The Sunburst Award for Canadian Literature of the Fantastic is a prized and juried award that is presented annually. It is based on excellence of writing, and awarded to a Canadian writer who has published a speculative fiction novel or book-length collection any time during the previous calendar year. Named after the novel by Phyllis Gotlieb, one of the first published authors of contemporary Canadian speculative fiction, the award consists of a cash award of \$1,000 and a hand-crafted medallion, which incorporates a "Sunburst" logo, designed by Marcel Gagne.

"The Sunburst jury said, "*A Place So Foreign and 8 More* opens with Cory Doctorow's signature piece, "Craphound," which perfectly showcases the qualities that so impressed us: an energetic narrative drive; an infectious love of storytelling; intriguingly imagined outcast characters; unusual ideas explored with verve and intelligence; a charming wit; a desire to take chances rather than to retreat safe ground; and a generous amount of chutzpah. This collection of nine stories is an excellent example of science fiction pushing forward and evolving, while casting a critically pertinent eye towards the past, the present, and the future."

"Cory Doctorow currently lives in London, England, where he works for the civil liberties group Electronic Frontier Foundation. He is the author of two novels, *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*, and *Eastern Standard Tribe*.

"The other short-listed works for the 2004 award were:

*The Bone House*, Luanne Armstrong (New Star Books);  
*Oryx and Crake*, Margaret Atwood (McClelland & Stewart);  
*Initiation*, Virginia Frances Schwartz (Fitzhenry & Whiteside);  
*Blind Lake*, Robert Charles Wilson (Tor Books).

"There will be an award ceremony held on September 23, 2004 at 7:00 pm in the Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy, at the Lillian H Smith Branch of the Toronto Public Library, 239 College Street. The event is open to the public and free of charge. All five nominees will be honoured.

"Jurors for the 2004 Sunburst Award were Caterina Edwards, Claude Lalumière, Yves Meynard, Lyle Weis, and Michelle Sagara West. They selected five short-listed works as representing the finest of Canadian fantastic literature published during the 2003 calendar year. However, this year's jury requested that the following additional books be listed because they felt very strongly that they merit special attention:

*Struck* by Geoffrey Bromhead (Anvil) 1895636531  
*The Mermaid of Paris* by Cary Fagan (Key Porter) 1552632326  
*The Salt Roads* by Nalo Hopkinson (Warner) 0446533025

*A Telling of Stars* by Caitlin Sweet (Viking) 0141007400  
*The Assassins of Tamurin* by S.D. Tower (HarperCollins) 000224568X  
 “The 2005 Award jurors will be Deirdre Baker, Nancy Baker, Aritha van Herk, Nicholas Ruddick, and Rodger Turner. For additional information about the Sunburst Award, the nominees and jurors, as well as previous awards, eligibility and the selection process, please visit the web site at <http://www.sunburstaward.org>.

“For interviews or more information, contact John Rose at: [john@sunburstaward.org](mailto:john@sunburstaward.org) or the Award Secretary at: [mici@sunburstaward.org](mailto:mici@sunburstaward.org).  
 (The Sunburst Award, 2 Farm Greenway, Toronto, Ontario M3A 3M2;  
[www.sunburstaward.org](http://www.sunburstaward.org))

John Rose, Sept. 1, 2004

#### *In Typo Veritas*

“It didn't take him long to decide that Terran was the ideal language for the Blue Demons, despite the fact that the structure of their mouths and the shape of their tongues made it impossible for them to utter explosives.” (Mike Resnick, ‘Cobbling Together A Solution’, *Amazing Stories* #604, 2004) [JdV]

*Ansible* 206, September 2004

#### *The Only Horror Writer Appearing in the Maritimes*

“Here it is. The ultimate autumnal beach book. Sand, camels and severed heads. Coming out just in time for Halloween. My brand new novella - *Long Horn, Big Shaggy*. A dark, campy, fun filled romp through the wild weird west.

“What's it about? Back from the dead mountain men, time travelling mad scientists, a green ghost spirit and zombified buffalo. If Louis Lamour and Steve King collaborated; if Fulci and Sergio Leone ever gave birth to a mutant voodoo lovechild it would look like this:

“Who am I? I'm Nova Scotia's only professional horror writer. I've had tales printed in *The Horror Show*, *Cemetery Dance*, *Karl Edward Wagner's Year's Best Horror*, *Horror Garage*, *Edge Detector*, *Zygote* and many more markets. You can read a bit more about me at my website. While you're at it you might also want to have a look at my latest collection of 25 stories - *Nightmare Dreams* - published by Cyber Pulp of Houston. (<http://users.eastlink.ca/~stevevernon>)

“My novella's due out by the end of next month. I'm hoping to see it in bookstores by Halloween.

“Please e-mail me if you have any further questions.

*Long Horn, Big Shaggy* - A New Release  
 by STEVE VERNON

THERE'S THINGS OUT THERE THAT YOU AIN'T DREAMED OF, Like back-from-the-dead mountain men, green ghost rock spirits, carrion

stallions, time traveling mad scientists and zombified buffalo, for starters.

“Get ready for a bone-creaking romp through an antique fun house. A wild western horror novella that starts at a gallop and gathers momentum faster than a stampeding avalanche.

“You will never look at a severed head the same way again.

#### WHAT FOLKS ARE SAYING ABOUT STEVE VERNON:

“If Lucio Fulci decided to make a spaghetti western, the results would be something like Steve Vernon's *Long Horn, Big Shaggy*. A wild, totally unconventional pulp horror western that totally guts genre conventions, strips them raw and rebuilds them from the bones up. Laced with sardonic wit, visceral imagery, and dialogue that will have you laughing out loud, this is the Old West as seen through Hell's left eye...and don't forget that crawling head.” – Tim Curran, author of *Skin Medicine*

“Steve Vernon is a rare breed among the horror fiction writers of today. He's got a voice. Steve Vernon's got the goods.” – C. Dennis Moore, author of *Safe At Home*

“Steve Vernon is a quintessential gifted storyteller. I am a dedicated fan of his splendid writing talent.” – Diana Barron, author of the Stoker nominated novel *Phantom Feast*

“*Long Horn, Big Shaggy* is absolutely brilliant. A wonderful twisted tale that's perfect for campfires and stormy nights. Steve Vernon has excelled as a writer and is one of the finest new talents of horror and dark fiction.” – Owl Goingback, Bram Stoker Award Winning author of *Crota*.

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#### *2004 Hugo Awards Presented at Noreascon*

“DragonMagic writes, ‘The Hugo Awards for 2003 have been handed out at the WorldCon at Noreascon in Boston.’ The winners are below.

Best Novel: *Paladin of Souls*, Lois McMaster Bujold

Novella: *The Cookie Monster*, Vernor Vinge

Novellette: *Legions in Time*, Michael Swanwick

Short Story: *A Study in Emerald*, Neil Gaiman

Related Book: *The Chesley Awards for Science Fiction and Fantasy*

*Art: A Retrospective*, John Grant, Elizabeth L. Humphrey, and Pamela D. Scoville

Professional Editor: Gardner Dozois

Professional Artist: Bob Eggleton and Pamela D. Scoville

Dramatic Presentation, Long Form: *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*

Dramatic Presentation, Short Form: Gollum's Acceptance Speech at the

2003 MTV Movie Awards

Semiprozine: *Locus*

Fanzine: *Emerald City*

Fan Writer: Dave Langford

Fan Artist: Frank Wu

Campbell Award: Jay Lake

Special Noreascon Four Committee Award: Erwin Strauss, aka Filthy Pierre

>From <http://slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=04/09/05/1718256> (SFNorthwest listserv, Sept. 2004)

### *One More Tempest ...*

After the foregoing news came out, an altercation ensued over the Fanzine Hugo choice, on the FMZFe and Timebinders listservs. The little I understand of this is that somebody objected to the choice of Cheryl Morgan's fanzine. Now was that Ted White, or rich brown, aka Dr. Gafia? Whichever of them writes the longest unreadable diatribe, anyway. (GS)

### *Paris Underground*

"On August 23, Paris police discovered (some say only after being tipped off) a fully equipped subterranean cinema - complete with projector, screen, banks of seats carved from the stone, and a bar - 60 feet beneath the surface of the Trocadero in the plush 16th arrondissement. The discovery has given rise to further discussion of 'cataphiles' - people who use the catacombs the tunnels that run under the city of Paris for a number of purposes. Despite laws set up in the 1950s that put the 300km network of 18th-century passages and medieval quarries - underground below sewers, the Metro, car parks, and the air-raid shelters - off-limits, cataphiles started breaking into the system in large numbers about 30 years ago. The network of passageways and artificial caverns began in the 12th century as quarries to provide the limestone for Notre Dame cathedral, the Louvre, and other buildings in Paris. At the end of the 18th century, the overcrowding and putrefaction of mediaeval cemeteries around Paris's churches led the removal of all corpses to the old quarries, medieval cemeteries around the city's churches. A 1.6km stretch of the tunnels was turned into an ossuary, which to this day stores six million skeletons (including Jean Racine and many victims of the Revolutionary terror of the 1790s, including Robespierre, Marat and Charlotte Corday). In the late 18th century, streets started to collapse into the forgotten voids below and a system of inspection tunnels and bulwarks was constructed deep under the city. Unofficial exploration of the "secret catacombs" began in the early 19th century and there have always been rumors of satanic or criminal or unseemly sexual activity underground. French Resistance

forces used the tunnels in 1944 and in 1968 by students hiding from the riot police. Now, the vast majority of cataphiles (supposedly a core of about 300-500) are young, mostly male and often students. One clandestine group, La Mexicaine de la Perforation, considers members as 'urban explorers' with a mission to 'reclaim and transform disused city spaces for the creation of zones of expression for free and independent art'.

"<http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/story.jsp?story=561191>  
<http://www.sundayherald.com/44740>  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/france/story/0,11882,1302249,00.html>"

"DarkEcho #38, Sept. 13, 2004

((Editor comments: I seem to recall a French comedy film set in these tunnels, titled "Les Gaspards". Anyone else remember it? -GS))

## **Media File**

By Cosmic Ray Sereidin

Looks like the *Babylon 5* movie will be a go, except for Dr. Franklin, whose part will not be recast. The rest of the cast of all three series could be showing up in the future. Filming will take place in London, England, with the first day of production likely taking place before the end of the year. Paramount has also approached J. Michael Straczynski about taking over the reins of *Star Trek*. So far there's been no comment from Mr. Straczynski.

Work on season five of *Andromeda* began in early June after two months of rumours that the series was no longer in production. Its Canadian producer, Global, as well as its American distributor, scrapped together enough money to resume production. It's unclear which members of the show will be back. However, Trance Gemini may be a returning member—when I visited Port Moody (Laura Bertram's adopted home town) and joked with the counter-person at McDonald's "Seen any purple aliens around here lately?" he replied by saying, "Yes, she just walked down the street just yesterday morning, while I was opening up."

There were all kinds of crazy rumours that William Shatner would be showing up this year on *Star Trek: Enterprise*. William Shatner himself has said, put an end to the rumour (unless he sees a truckload of money), so don't look for William Shatner on *Star Trek: Enterprise*—although Brent Spiner will be showing up as Data's creator, Dr. Soong.

Production is going well on the new *Doctor Who* series over in Wales. The Dalek story will be the fourth story in the series' running order. Also joining the series cast is Captain Jack, the outer space equivalent to the British literary character Uncle Silas. However, this time his big mouth keeps getting him into deeper and deeper trouble, so I guess he would be glad to jump onto the TARDIS. (Sorry; I mistook Captain Jack as a

member of UNIT. I wasn't the only that made that mistake—it was also on several other *Doctor Who* information boards.)

As for new series this fall, there's not too much in the science fiction vein. I haven't seen the new *TV Guide*—and I'm not about to pay \$2.95 to do so. I'll wait a few weeks and see what they say in the copies at the Burnaby public library.

As you may have heard, the TV industry in the United States has persuaded the FCC *not* to cut down infomercials to 14 hours a week. The FCC is willing to double the allotment to 28 hours a week. However, the TV stations are demanding either 36 or 48 hours a week, stating that 33% of their income (or one-third) comes from infomercials. This was corroborated by a documentary report I saw on PBS: a small city with a population of about 38,000 people can support a UPN-affiliated station that runs about 56 hours of infomercials a week. Most of this revenue is used to produce local programming, such as news, coverage of the local high school football games, and a show on hunting and fishing. If the infomercials were cut back to even 36 hours a week, the station would likely be taken over by a larger UPN affiliate, or in the event of the United Paramount Network going under, become a repeater station for the CBS affiliate in a larger city. For its local viewers, this means no local news, no local sports, no hunting and fishing show. For science fiction fans, it could mean the difference between keeping a show like *Andromeda* airing on the station or having it replaced with 50-year-old reruns of *I Love Lucy*. Hopefully, a compromise can be reached—we hate infomercials, but the American TV stations need them, especially the small ones.

That's all for now, I wish you the very best and I'll be seeing you.

#### *Postscript to Media File*

Ray Seredin was not kidding in his most recent Media File: there are very few new genre shows this season. Here are the only three (wording taken directly from *TV Guide*, for those keeping track of copyright):

*Father of the Pride*: CGI cartoon about a family of white lions who work as performers in the Las Vegas act of illusionists Siegfried & Roy.

*Lost*: A group of castaways are stranded on a deserted isle following a plane crash, and are spooked by the horrible things which may (or may not) inhabit the island.

*The Collector*: For fun, the devil gives his soul collector, an immortal former 14th century monk who sold his own soul, permission to try to redeem the souls of others in just 48 hours.

(Felicity Walker, Sept. 9, 2004)

## **Book Reviews**

by Donna McMahon

*THE CHILD GODDESS*, Louise Marley (Ace, May/04)

*WINTER ON THE PLAIN OF GHOSTS*, Eileen Kernaghan (Flying Monkey Press/04)

When ExtraSolar Corporation begins building a hydrogen retrieval facility on the planet Virimund, it seems an ideal site – a planet almost entirely covered in ocean and uninhabited. So hydro workers exploring some islands are taken completely by surprise when they're attacked by a group of stick and rock-wielding children – apparently the descendants of a lost Sikassa colony that left Earth three centuries before.

The workers retrieve a wounded girl (Oa) and transport her to Earth, where she unwittingly becomes the centre of a controversy. Should her people be considered indigenous and thus owners of Virimund? At stake is ExtraSolar's hugely expensive power facility, critical to human expansion in that part of the galaxy.

Mother Isabel Burke, Catholic priest and anthropologist, is selected as an impartial guardian for the girl. Isabel's own goals are clear – she intends to learn about Oa and her culture, and advocate for the lone child. But from the very first moment, Isabel comes under huge pressure to make decisions against Oa's interests, especially as it becomes clear that the girl's blood carries an alien virus which could change the future of humanity.

*The Child Goddess* is another very strong novel from Seattle musician and writer, Louise Marley, whose previous novel, *The Glass Harmonica*, shared the 2001 Endeavour Award with *The Telling*, by Ursula K. LeGuin. Marley's greatest strength as a writer is in exploring the human dimension of technology and change, and once again she excels in this.

Isabel Burke is an unusual protagonist for an SF novel, being both a scientist and a Catholic priest sworn to celibacy. She's no cardboard saint, either, but rather a flawed human, struggling to maintain her faith and her vows despite having fallen in love with Dr. Simon Edwards, a colleague and political ally whom she can't avoid. Through her eyes, Oa's, and several other viewpoint characters, Marley explores questions of faith, life, death, and the nature of love.

Less successful than the characterization is the single, somewhat simplistic story thread. Marley maintains the mystery of Oa's background until almost the end of the novel, but at the cost of making Isabel a poor anthropologist and the others characters pretty dim-witted. Readers will have figured out the virus and its vector long before the protagonist gets there; nonetheless there is plenty of emotional tension to keep the story moving.

Overall, this is another very strong novel, and a probable contender for the 2004 Endeavour Award.

*Winter On The Plain Of Ghosts* may be the only historical fantasy novel that's ever been written about the ancient city of Mohenjo-daro (in what is now Pakistan). This strange, atmospheric setting with its unfamiliar culture makes an entirely fascinating backdrop to a strong narrative.

The account of Rujik's remarkable life starts in a small rural village in the ancient Indus Valley, where he grows up as one of the Chosen Ones – foster children pampered by the villagers. It seems an idyllic existence, until at age 12 he discovers that what the Chosen Ones are "chosen" for is to be human sacrifices to the Goddess, and this year is his turn.

Along with a Chosen girl named Bima, Rujik decides to choose his own fate and flees the village, embarking on an arduous journey to the City of the Tiger, Mohenjo-daro. But life there is hard, too. The city teems with poor, desperate people, dominated by an arrogant caste of priests who will do nothing to stem the disintegration of their civilization, even though the very bricks of the city are crumbling into the river, and drought and famine are destroying the surrounding farmland.

As a penniless orphan alone on the streets, Rujik has only his wits, his good luck, and his magic amulet to defend him from the human and supernatural perils.

*Winter On The Plain Of Ghosts* reminded me more than a little of Dave Duncan's *West Of January*. Both novels use a man's memoirs as a focal point for telling the larger story of a civilization in decline, and both convey a terrific sense of scope and depth. Of course, Duncan's world was entirely fictional, whereas Kernaghan's Mohenjo-daro of 2000 BC is based on archaeological evidence, but Kernaghan has also added appropriate magical elements such as alchemy, demons and spells, which heighten the drama in the book and give a sense of gravity to the peoples' beliefs.

Rujik is a solid protagonist, and Kernaghan also populates her narrative with a large cast of secondary characters, including some strong and very independent women who are nonetheless credible in their setting and culture. This crowd of extras is large, but not unwieldy, and Kernaghan makes her individuals so distinctive that the reader can easily keep track of them.

The only small flaw in my enjoyment of WINTER was a slight sense of anticlimax at the end where the focus of dramatic tension is on Rujik's survival, but we already know that Rujik will live and that the city is ultimately doomed.

Eileen Kernaghan is also a poet, and the title of this book is taken from a wonderfully eerie poem. It begins:

The salt earth is bleached  
and brittle as old bone, in winter  
on the plain of ghosts.  
Shrill and thin down the grey  
millennia, the spirit voices  
cry on the parched wind.

*Winter* is an unusual novel that doesn't fit into a clear subgenre or niche, and Kernaghan, despite her track record of five successful Fantasy books, suffered a stream of contradictory rejections (for instance, a fantasy publisher rejected the book because it was "a historical novel" and a mainstream house rejected it because it was "fantasy"). After twelve years of frustration, she went ahead and published it herself through Flying Monkey Press. Readers can order *Winter On The Plain Of Ghosts* from amazon.com (not amazon.ca) or direct from Neville Books: lonewolf@portal.ca.

### ***Kaffeeklatsch at Garth's***

(an all-purpose brainstorming party that I invented – GS)

Saturday, August 28, 2004 *chez* Garth. *Attending:* Garth, Joe, Felicity, Doug, Ray. (Julian showed up briefly about 10:00 p.m.) We began at 8:50 p.m., realizing no-one else could attend.

#1: *What is the worst new trend most likely to afflict us for the next fifty years?*

We had various suggestions: Netspeak, or "leetspeak", replacing common English; multiculturalism evolving into excessive inclusionism; wars over power sources, or perhaps over sources of clean water; the global consumer/conformist culture engulfing and devouring independent, local businesses, as for instance the demise of local cuisine outlets due to the invasion of big-chain food outlets. Garth mentioned Michael Skeet's fanzine article about "The Paprika Curtain".

#2: *Why didn't everyone I knew in university TELL me they thought I was a homosexual psychotic stalker, and get my side of the story, instead of just avoiding me for TEN YEARS?*

Felicity/Michael explained that he/she was placed in this false position at university, after a series of misunderstandings. (Garth related a vaguely similar experience at high school, and another after Westercon 44.) Some of us said that certain people are always picked on, and are made easier targets for misunderstandings or outright character assassination.

It appears easier for people to go along with someone's negative characterization than to risk being tainted by association, and getting the subject's side of the story.

#3: *I immediately mistrust any religion, politics, literature, or other propaganda that claims suffering is inevitable, necessary, and good and that compassion is misguided because it makes people lazy.*



Joe wrote “such belief systems are elitist and Not Nice.” (Garth thinks people with more money than good sense have *always* been making up self-justifying myths. But they’re not the only ones.)

#4: *If you were going to attempt a Secular Humanist Cult, what historical figures would you set up as “saints” or icons? What living persons would you set up? (Answer alternately as if you were to do this as a serious enterprise, or as a surrealist joke.)*

Suggestions included: Noam Chomsky, David Lynch, Wilfred Blake, FCC Chairman Newton Minnow (who said “TV is a vast wasteland”), Isaac Asimov, Carl Sagan, Stephen Jay Gould, Marx Brothers, Mark Twain, Thomas Henry Huxley, John Stuart Mill, Bob Marley, Michael Moore, Emperor Joshua Norton, Orscon Scott Card, John Stewart, Edison Carter, Max Headroom, Ed Wood ... Members of a Hall of Shame could include Perfect Fools, such as Homer Simpson, William Vander Zalm, Gerald Ford, Dan Quayle, George Bush Jr., Ronald Reagan Sr., Anne Coulter, Ayn Rand, Henry Kissinger, Jamie Kelne (the Fox TV executive who thinks if we don’t watch ads, then we’re “stealing TV”), and Lord Conrad Black. (Somehow we completely missed the similar list of paragons in the online Royal Swiss Navy Handbook. –GS)

#5: *Maybe we could write Royal Swiss Navy secret messages on paper money; Is this legal?*

Garth thought it was illegal. Someone else said, “Only if you’re caught.” Felicity and Garth respectively talked about using the Masonic code, or Norse runes. The sense of the meeting was that it was probably better not to put the RSN website on bills.

#6: *Should we compare the terrorists of today to the brave Resistance fighters in World War Two? So that, this time around, our neighbours to the south are just on the wrong side of the reaction called terrorism?*

Despite Garth going on again about his International Humorist Conspiracy proposal, the discourse of the meeting settled on clichés such as “One man’s treason is another man’s revolution” and “History is written by the victors”.

#7: *Whose duty is it to provide jobs?*

Governments seem to think it is theirs (or we seem to think it’s the government’s job), but is it really in their power to do so? Denmark tried full employment, but this resulted in Europe’s highest tax rate, and many odd jobs like “elevator operators”.



## ***Thunderbirds Are... No Go!***

Some notes on Supermarionation  
Tara Wayne

The *Thunderbirds* Movie is coming.  
Be afraaaaid!

Actually, I was never that all that fond of *Thunderbirds*. The hour-long format allowed puppet master Gerry Anderson to pander to his weaknesses, but didn't add to his strengths in any way. Instead of better stories or characterizations, we just got to watch tiny remote control mecha crawl over unconvincing plaster landscapes for longer stretches. Given half a chance, I like to make fun of the typical action scene from *Thunderbirds*. Substituting a toy tank or Dinky Toy for one of the Thunderbirds, I push it along my coffee-table at about one inch a second, rocking it back and forth, carolling "dat da da dah! dat da da da daah! dat da da da etc." for about two minutes, until finally getting to the edge, and letting the toy fall over. But that's about as much respect as I had for that sort of nonsense. Special effects are great, but won't stand by themselves.

The other thing about the *Thunderbirds* were the Mickey Mouse costumes. Here we have this secret organization of pseudo-fascist rescue agents all dressed up like gas-station attendants! In powder blue yet. Q: which *Thunderbirds* guy is gay? A: Which of them is *not*? Equally questionable – how does even a multi-millionaire invent all this stuff, which is clearly far in advance of the technological achievements of the world's many thousands of scientists and engineers? Typically the first mission to Venus will get in trouble eight weeks after launch in some way

even an idiot would have foreseen – like a giant flaming meteor belt you could see from Alpha Centauri, or a reactor motor comes loose from the two staples holding to a wall. Brains will say, "I was afraid that would happen" – not that he considered for one moment telling anyone that it might, apparently. Then the cloned family of Thunderbirds will slide down nifty ramps into their super-rockets, and catch up with the faltering Venus ship in a couple of hours. How'd they do *that*? And can't anyone track them back to their base with radar, and confiscate all those neat super-science gizmos so the rest of us can use them? At least to ensure that the next Venus mission won't be an equal botch?

Now I know it's only a show for kids and simplistic, but at that time Anderson was trying to develop a more "serious" style of puppeteering. I found that the storylines and premises just didn't live up to more serious treatment. Better he stuck to Fireball XL5 or Stingray, which were so obviously cartoons that you didn't ask questions. (Like how come an explosion on another planet can be seen at Fireball HQ, Space City? Or how you can walk on a planet whose gravity is so powerful it yanks the Moon out of Earth's orbit.)

Oh well, at least Thunderbirds wasn't as ponderous as some later shows, like *Captain Scarlet & The Mysterions*. Or as wooden as *Space 1999*. Still, I thought the earlier Supermarionation puppet shows – *Supercar*, *Stingray*, and *Fireball XL5* worked better, precisely because they were more cartoony. Even Anderson seemed to recognize this when he said something about how his "big head" puppets seemed more popular than the marginally more realistic puppets of later shows like *Captain Scarlet*. I think we can accept absurdities easier when there's no pretence of being serious, and can set aside our critical faculties willingly.

But to make a live action film of such material? It would make the *Scooby-Doo* movie stand out as a paragon of mature content.

*Fireball XL5* was my first favourite SF show. Before Will Robinson and Captain Kirk there was Steve Zodiac! I taped all 39 episodes from TV a few years ago, and still find myself going back to them from time to time. I've even devised later marks of Fireballs, the XS's and XT's. My secret ambition is to direct *Fireball: The New Generation*. Computer animation maybe, rather than puppets – like *Jimmy Neutron*, but not so Art Clokey retro.

*Stingray* was pretty good too. I always thought they failed to give any sense of the ocean being a big place, though. It seemed like the submarine base (with its HQ buildings that sank into the ground on a gigantic elevator) and the secret lair for the bad guys, were in a pool about the size of a Hollywood swimming pool. Which come to think of it, was likely the case. In one very surreal episode, the submarine Stingray actually sailed through a mysterious tunnel to surface in someone's living room fish tank!

But of course *Fireball* had similar problems coping with reality. My guess is that *Fireball's* is not our universe, but one in which "planets" are

actually planetons... flat, floating islands like those in Roger Dean paintings, that drift in space like a huge south seas island archipelago. That way it made perfect sense to patrol space as if it were two-dimensional, had no gravitational influences, and all distances were on a scale convenient for rocketing back and forth. The XL5 had a patrol route in Sector 25, just as though a spaceship were a Spitfire patrolling the English Channel. This is *not* space as we know it.

If Ralph Bakshi can be given millions of dollars to produce films anyone in their right mind would know in advance would bomb, why not me? Perhaps with the right pitch, and a dot.com investor who can be convinced any pop cult item is potential box-office, and I too can realize a dream.

PS – I can do a mean imitation of Steve Zodiac walking, so I might want to star as well as write, produce and direct.

"Fire main boosters, Robert!"

"Unnnnderrrrrrstooooood."