

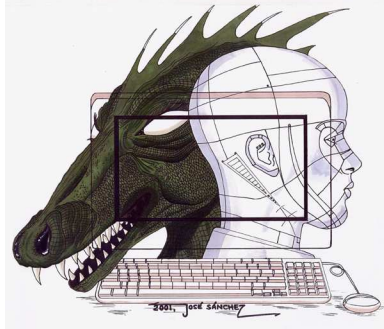
BCSFA Zine

B.C. Science Fiction Association's Monthly Newsletter

#390

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February 2006



Contents

As I Sink Slowly (editorial, by Garth Spencer)	1
Epistolarian Art (Locs)	2
Another Day Older (birthdays)	8
Vanity Fair (ads)	9
Your Feast Days (calendar)	9
The Peaches of Immortality (Fandom Classic news)	22
Mushrooms (BCSFA news)	25
A Suffusion of Yellow (Market news)	30
Plus ç'est la même chose (Fandom Lite news)	36
Bywords and Hissings (Media File, by Ray Seredin)	40
Jade Gate (book reviews, by Donna McMahon)	44
Vanitas Vanitatem (movie review, by Ryan Have)	50
Unmentionables (more ads)	54

Masthead

BCSFAzine © February 2006, Volume 34, #2, Issue #393 is the monthly club newsletter published by the British Columbia Science Fiction Association, a *social* organization. An e-mail membership (including email delivery of the newsletter in PDF or TXT format) is \$15.00 per year; new memberships are \$26.00 per year; membership renewals are \$25.00 per year; a New Family membership (including 2 votes in WCSFA meetings) is \$32.00. These prices include subscription to *BCSFAzine*. Make cheques payable to WCSFA (West Coast Science Fiction Association). (NOTE: The *West Coast* Science Fiction Association is a separate, officially registered society.) For comments, subscriptions, suggestions, and/or submissions, write to: *BCSFAzine*, c/o Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, BC, CANADA V6B 5B1, or email garthspencer@shaw.ca.

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Our email list: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bc_scifi_assoc/

BCSFA's events this month

FRED tries out Jester's Grill	Feb. 3 rd only – see BCSFA news
BCSFAzine deadline:	Fri. Feb. 10 at FRED
Feeding Frenzy:	Sat. Feb. 11, 7 p.m. at Modern Club Japanese Restaurant (3446 Dunbar Street, Vancouver, 604-739-0170). "I see that it's listed in a couple of 'best of' sites for its okonomoyaki. I have set up next month's Feeding Frenzy as a Meetup event for Fancouver (http://scifi.meetup.com/278/)."— G. Slade
BCSFA meeting/party:	Sat. Feb. 18, 7 p.m., at Kathleen Moore-Freeman's, 7064 No. 1 Road, Richmond; phone 604-277-0845 for directions.
Book discussion:	Thu. Feb. 23, 7 p.m., at Our Town Café, 245 East Broadway, Vancouver; book for discussion will be <i>The Trouble With Lichen</i> , by John Wyndham
BCSFAzine production:	Fri. Feb. 24, early distribution at FRED
Kaffeeklatsch:	Sat. Feb. 25, 7 p.m. at Garth Spencer's place, 82 East 40 th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. BRING IDEAS. Be original.

And Now, As I Sink Slowly Into The West

Maybe I've been unfair to *BCSFAzine* readers; certainly I've been severely depressed for no particular reason this winter – not simply at the low level of members' participation, even of your comprehension.

If this were the kind of club I expected, some of you would be writing "Hobbits in Space" pastiches, or scripting live-action "DaVinci's CSI: VCon" skits. This isn't that kind of club, and there's no reason it should be, but that's what I came looking for. Seventeen years ago, that is.

So maybe I'll demonstrate the kind of fandom that *doesn't* depress me. Here are just some of the fanzines I've received, and part of the reviews going into my next personalzine. I hope this inspires some fannish minds to write back to this address.

Banana Wings #22, May 2005 (U.K.)

For the May 2005 edition of this award-winning genzine, Claire Brialey editorializes on the impact conventions have on fannish energy; for her, they are one more motivation for fanwriting, beyond her wish to "sort out British fandom once and for all." Mark Plummer does a pastiche on the Monty Python "Two Yorkshiremen" sketch, in which two senior fans are bragging how hard they had it, and how soft neofans have it now. Other entertaining fanarticles, reviews, and letters conclude with Claire pulling together descriptions of fanwriting and of conventions, illustrating how the issues facing fan institutions – including fan funds – tend to be eternal issues; and how neofans keep discovering belatedly the personalities and the arguments and the whole context of previous fandom.

A Bear Went Over the Mountain #2, Feb/Mar 2005 (U.S.)

Chaz Boston Baden writes at length about the Boston Badens' wide-ranging congoing (with pictures); Lynn Boston Baden supplies numerous short book reviews (with covers). What makes this fanzine different is apparently a cooking column, contributed this time by Mark Poliner, and "the weird dream channel", contributed by Allison Lonsdale. (This sounded at first like one of my worst workdays.) Also, the back cover is basically an anime-style cartoon page.

Best of MOZ #1-6, Feb 2004 – Aug 2005 (Canada)

BCSFA member and CUFF delegate Murray Moore has a very dry humour, as witness his account his wife driving while he reads Hugo-nominated short stories; or his review of Stephen King's *On Writing*, or the article "Grokking Charlie Chaplin". Murray also supplies news – it

was from this collection that I learned Bakka-Phoenix Science Fiction Books had reopened in Toronto.

Chunga #10, June 2005 (U.S.)

Editorial teams produce a number of the best-known genzines, as witness *Banana Wings*, *Chunga* and *Steam Engine Time*. Come to think of it, these are the kind of fanzines that get nominated for Hugo Awards in recent years.

Chunga does interesting things with layout; the outside margins are wide enough for marginal notes, and there are amusing footer comments on every page. We could all emulate Rich Coad's witty pastiche on fanzine reviews, Corflu and Homeland Security ("Let's Hear It for the Vague Blur"), or Andy Hooper's critique of *Enterprise* in terms of resolving Star Trek discontinuities ("The Journal of Federation Studies: The Titanium Incident?"), with a picture of Andy pointing at T'Pol and saying "J'accuse!"

But we won't.

Perfect quotation from Andy Hooper:

"I thought that was how fans ought to be, really: educated about science fiction, even unfashionable bits like Tanith Lee and *Battlestar Galactica* (version 1.0), but sufficiently jaundiced on the subject to tell me to shut up when I've talked about it for more than five minutes."

Chunga #11 features a lot of Worldcon-report information, and Andy Hooper's report on the Science Fiction Museum in Seattle, and continues Ulrika O'Brien's fan news column, "Rain City Tangler".

Have I said anything to interest you yet?

Epistolarian Art

Ray Seregin, 12 Jan 2006

Being at that BCSFA meeting, I understand how you feel about that. However, Lexi had all the attention and all of us were quite interested in what she was saying.

((O basta là. [That's a quote from Foucault's Pendulum. Do you know what I'm saying?!])

What I felt should have happened is you could have gone up to Kathleen or gone up to the centre of the group, tapped a glass with a knife or something, and just say "How many of you want to have the Kaffeeklatsch now?" We could have had a vote. But I feel the way the conversation was

going between Lexi and us, she would have likely won, but at least it would be more democratic.

((Now, why didn't I think of that? ... Maybe I just felt fundamentally fed up with being where I was. [Can you place that fannish quote?]))

As for starting another group in Vancouver, I welcome that idea. WCSFA has been kind of caught in a rut over the last few years, and with groups like FANS and Monster Attack Team Canada and the anime and SCA groups going like gangbusters, I seriously think it's time for BCSFA to either invent itself [*vici*] or just go off in a corner and die. Maybe BCSFA can be reborn by taking in a number of ideas from the other groups being a general umbrella organisation for all the local SF, anime fans and SCAers, and perhaps under a new name, maybe something more catching, like Fancouver or something.

((I have been trying to make other ideas for activities available to BCSFAns. For several years, even. I guess the other ideas just didn't interest anyone.))

As for FREDs, I'm trying to make it to a few of them a month but the way FANS are going you won't be seeing me at FREDs that often. People at FANS are more friendlier [*vici*], they like to show videos, and the group is generally more upbeat than the people at FREDs. I have nothing against the people at FREDs, in fact many of them are my friends, but I think that FREDs should look at being held in a different venue and become more like FANS, or slowly face the same fate as BCSFA will. I'm sure that the FANS will greatly appreciate FREDs' trivia moving to their event.

((There's a vital courtesy we have to learn first. It's called "taking turns." I once pointed out the need for this to Chris Sturges, then demonstrated it for him by interrupting and talking over others. I don't think he got what I meant.))

Greg Slade <grga@bluebottle.com>, 02 Jan 2006

Thanks for the latest; but please remember to send it to *this* address from now on.

Also, thanks for including the notice about FANS in the "advertising" section; but could you please delete the word "horror" from now on? (In other words, the sentence should now read, "Are you an anime, comic, fantasy, gaming, or science fiction fan?")

Comments:

Per the discussion about FRED, my judgement about the food at the Davie [Street] Denny's is not based on bad experiences at other Denny's.

On the contrary, the food I had at the Davie Denny's was significantly worse than what I have had at any other Denny's. Thus, in my opinion, even moving FRED a few blocks away, to the Denny's at Burrard near Smithe, would be a significant improvement. It distresses me to think that FRED might end up dying out because those few who still attend refuse to listen to the rest of us when we say that the Davie Denny's is not a good venue.

((Hey, I don't refuse to move, I'm waiting for a move to be announced; and I think everyone else is, too. Maybe I should just arbitrarily announce a move somewhere, like the Jester's Grill that Ryan suggested. It isn't like anyone else is sticking his neck out.))

Regarding your plans to start a new [fan] group: I think that's probably a good thing. Reading over your editorials in the past few issues, you seem to getting more and more depressed, and it has seemed to me that much of your frustration seems to be stemming from an unvoiced expectation that fandom is about (or should be about) something more than simply having fun getting together and chatting with others who share similar tastes in our choice of entertainment.

((In point of fact, I was led to expect fans to show a certain education and intelligence level, but don't find it in our contemporary, local fandom. The term "bait and switch" won't leave my mind.

(Maybe I've just become a reactionary old phart.))

In my experience, FANS is working precisely because we don't have any expectation beyond getting together and having some fun, and we have made that agenda (such as it is) clear from the beginning. Therefore, if you are seeking serious discussion of public policy issues, and are frustrated by the lack of that discussion in existing groups, then it only makes sense to start a new group, with that agenda made explicit from the outset, rather than attempting to impose change upon some existing group.

((Actually, I wanted to play mental Tinker-Toys with words and notions and interesting people. All I lack is the people.))

Ray Seredin's "Media File" was a tremendous disappointment to me this month. No, let me rephrase that. I found it offensive, on several levels. First, I found the gratuitous bashing of paid programming somewhat arrogant. Nobody enjoys paid programming, whether it's infomercials selling dubiously effective personal care products, hucksters offering to teach people how to get rich, or, in this case, religious programming, but the way Ray writes, it almost seems as if he expects that everything shown on TV must meet with his personal approval, which I find breathtakingly

arrogant. Second, I find his implied assumption that anything having to do with religion must be, by definition, "mundane" (or, to put it another way, Christians can't be fans) to be something of a betrayal of the notion that science fiction is the literature of ideas. In fact, Ray seemed to be urging Space to do everything it could to deny that any such holiday as Christmas even existed. So much for "Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations."

((Do what I do: just don't read his column. – Oops, what a giveaway!))

((I think Ray's point is that his favourite programming is likely to be pre-empted for poor and insufficient reasons, like broadcasters making half-assed kowtows to interest groups such as "Christian" productions.

((Let's face it, any religious persuasion is liable to be seen in terms of its lowest common denominator, by some people, some of the time. Life has been like that for almost a century. Just accept it. Or better yet, just wait: the pendulum will swing again in, oh, fifty years or less.))

Personally, I think that, rather than bemoaning the fact that Christmas has to be mentioned on Space at all, it would be better to urge Space to broadcast Christmas fare which is at least fannish, like *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* (which is astoundingly bad, and thus perfect for B-movie fans, or maybe it would be more accurate to describe it as a "C-" movie), or *The Aliens' First Christmas* or the *Pac-Man Christmas Special*, or even *Jingle All the Way*, starring the Governor.

((You don't quite know what "fannish" means, do you? I'll have to buy you a membership in Potlatch.))

And finally, for somebody who is supposed to be reporting on the media, I find Ray's ignorance of the way broadcasting works more than a little surprising. Contrary to his assumption, World Vision specials are not broadcast as a "tax write-off." Rather World Vision, or Billy Graham, or anybody else who wants to put out their own programming, buys the time on the station, just the same way that infomercial makers do. In other words, when Space shows World Vision specials, it is not so much a deliberate programming choice, as evidence that their normal programming choices aren't up to snuff, and therefore they can get more money from a charity than they can from normal advertisers. Therefore, the appropriate rant is not to complain about World Vision specials, but to complain that Space can't be bothered to show stuff good enough that World Vision (or anybody else) wouldn't be able to afford to buy the air time.

((Ray's job is to show us what fans descend to, these days.

Everyone has a job in life; this is his. Like any job, it costs you something. Bear in mind what this job costs him.

((What is your job and what does it cost you?))

((I am still trying to define my own job in life; apparently it has something to do with embarrassing myself and others in public, or teaching cats to bark, or something.))

*Lloyd & Yvonne Penney 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2,
<penneys@allstream.net>, 12 Jan 2006*

I saw your reminder on the BCSFAlister this morning, and realized I'd forgotten to get a loc to you in a timely manner. What else is new, hm? Here's some quick comments on *BCSFAzine* 392. (It says 391 all over the front pages.)

((Oops. My bad.))

Your editorial...as a journalism student, I have long been disillusioned with the way news organizations have reduced the importance of the news they print, and increased the importance of the advertising that fits between the columns. (Sometimes, it's the other way around. Some pages in Toronto papers are full of ads, with columns of news to fill the gaps, if any.) The papers' focus seems to be to promote themselves and make more money, and the news is a sideline. Besides the four dailies here, there are two free entertainment papers, one free alternative paper, two free subway papers and any number of regional papers that service a particular area of the city. And, all of them depend on far too many ads.

((I don't think I entertained any illusions about news media; our world runs on money, and news media run on ads, and that's how it works.

((I'm just irritated that I don't find, or make, alternatives.))

A science fiction club has various foci, like discussing SF, networking, discovering more about SF and fandom, and socializing, among other things. If you want to tackle more pertinent issues like the environment, terrorism, land use in the Lower Mainland and the effect of the upcoming Winter Olympics, you may have to find a group with much wider foci, and much greater goals. If you've been tired of fandom, you may have to find those groups with the higher goals, and get involved with them. There may be more fulfillment for you there.

*((* Sigh * Your local fandom may have varied interests.*

((What I'm actually trying to do, as I said, is to encourage readers to juggle ideas and alternatives. Any ideas, whether mundane, or science-fictional, or Pythonesque, or just plain dumb.

This has little if anything to do with public-interest issues per se; they just turned up among the examples I happened to use.

((Just recently I alienated the new editor of Westwind by claiming that media SF series show no imagination. By my standards, that's precisely correct.))

How many members does the S.A.F.E. have now, Garth? (I'll bet just one.)

((Well, yeah, that's the point of my joke; that I am probably entirely on my own. Same as the Royal Swiss Navy point, originally. But then others started to join ...))

Poor Paul Hellyer...he really should some medical attention to deal with his delusions. I think Hellyer used to live in Etobicoke. Some time ago, he tried setting up his own political party, and I think he tried that several times, each time to no avail. Now, he just sounds like a tired old man.

((Jeez, I thought he was putting us all on?))

Any reviews of the Namia movie? Yvonne went to see if a couple of weeks ago, and it was great. The book it's based on is fairly thin in comparison to the three volumes of LotR, so it couldn't help but be faithful to the book. The opening of the movie gives four squabbling children, and ends with four princes and princesses. Yes, there are many Christian overtones, but with C.S. Lewis also being the author of *The Screwtape Letters* and various books defending Christianity, it's to be expected. It eventually defeated That Big Monkey at the box office, so all I can say is bring on *Prince Caspian*, and we can hope that the appeal of Narnia can continue.

((Let me be heretical for a minute, and possibly even original: what if Lewis' Narnia books, and for that matter the LOTR cycle, are an Evil Insidious Brainwashing Plot to undermine democracy and egalitarianism, and restore absolute monarchy? I never quite felt right about some of the values and cultural assumptions these works convey. Finally I realized why the SCA just didn't work for me: I've never known an official authority I could trust or respect, let alone a completely arbitrary one. It was too hard to suspend my disbelief.))

We had our First Thursday at the Foxes' Den on Thursday, January 5. Bar maid Margo had our usual area ready for us, and specials were laid on for us to enjoy. Twenty-five of us showed up for the event, and we are hoping more will come next month. It's great to come home.

I will fold up and get this off to you. I am going to a downtown hotel to examine the function space for Gaylaxicon...I'm running the dealers'

room, and need to know how much space I have to work with. I may fill the room, or I may sell none, depending on how adventurous American dealers are when it comes to crossing an international boundary. Take care, and see you next issue.

BCSFAZINEzine Volume 1, Number 41.392, Tuesday 24 January 2006
BCSFAZINEzine is from Felicity Walker, #209-3851 Francis Road,
Richmond, British Columbia, V7C 1J6, felicity4711@hotmail.com.

Not much to say this month, and a couple of weeks late, too. It's been a busy month, and I put off this LOC for too long. For what it's worth, I did get a lot out of the January issue – I'm still percolating on the questions asked in "Why Don't We Think and Talk About...", and I enjoyed all the other segments of the zine; I just didn't have anything to say in response this time.

News: Welcome, Dale! Come check out FRED (see back cover)!

Media File: "Remember that foolish 'V' miniseries?" Yes, but I didn't think it was foolish.

Another Day Older

9: Paula Johanson and her twins, Ben and Lily

13: Lisa Girling

14: Donna McMahan

15: Chris Bell

17: Grandee Engelhart

24: Jason Harris

28: Rajiv Witherspoon-Li

Vanity Fair

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F.A.N.S.

(Fannish Activity on the North Shore)
Play trivia, watch videos, and generally
hang out every Friday night from 7:00
p.m. until closing at: Eighties Restaurant,
110 West 14th Street, North Vancouver.
See <http://www.eightiesrestaurant.com> for
more details.

Your Feast Days

February 2006

Feb. 2: Philosopher's Café at Kwantlen TALK Café, to discuss: "In an ageing society, what do seniors want?"

Friday, February 3rd: **FANS** – "to inaugurate our new series of "Post-Paying the Rent Laughs", I plan to bring out my shiny new copy of *The High Crusade*, a low-budget and somewhat slapstick film based (somewhat loosely, I'm afraid) on Poul Anderson's tongue-in-cheek novel about aliens trying to conquer Earth during the Crusades." (Greg Slade)

FANS, or "Fannish Activity on the North Shore" happens every Friday from 6:30 p.m. until closing at the Eighties Restaurant (www.eightiesrestaurant.com), 110 West 14th Street (at Lonsdale) in North

Vancouver. To keep in touch with any changes, please check the FANS website at: <http://www.angelfire.com/scifi2/fans/>

Feb. 3-4: The first annual **Science Fiction Short Film Festival**, co-presented by the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame and the Seattle International Film Festival, will take place in Seattle, WA at the Cinerama Theatre and the JBL Theatre at Experience Music Project.

Feb. 3-5: **WicCon** at the Shilo Inn Suites Hotel Portland Airport, 11707 NE Airport Way, Portland, OR 97220-1075. Featured Guest: Silverstar Red Crow (Red Witch Tradition). Musical Guest: Heather Alexander. Rooms \$99 + tax for single or double occupancy, \$109/3, \$119/4; mention Wiccon when you phone (503) 252-7500. While this is not strictly fandom, its pagan focus is relevant to certain elements of fandom and it is also a northwest convention. Memberships \$40 up to the door, payable to Magical Winter Weekend, Box 8246, Portland, OR 97207-8246, or see www.wiccon.org

Feb. 4: **The First Annual Science Fiction Short Film Festival** at Cinerama, 2100 Fourth Avenue, Seattle. The Science Fiction Museum & Hall of Fame and the Seattle International Film Festival invite you to attend the first annual Science Fiction Short Film Festival. Come see twenty of the most original, cutting-edge, funny and spectacular science fiction short films from around the world. Many of the filmmakers will be on hand for the show. Be there as twenty finalists compete for the 2006 SFSFF Award! Films 1 through 10: 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (afternoon session); Films 11 through 20: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. (evening session). Awards ceremony will follow evening session. Tickets: \$7/single session (10 short films, either afternoon or evening session) \$10/both sessions (all 20 short films) and awards ceremony. For more information visit sfhomeworld.org.

Feb. 6: Philosopher's Café at the Vancouver Art Gallery: "Public Space/Private Lives"

Feb. 8: Philosopher's Café at White Rock Central Library: "Is 'The Clash of Civilizations' inevitable?"

Friday, February 10th: **FANS** - "Fabulous Flicks" continues with *Troops* (the fanfilm) and *The Iron Giant*, the Warner Brothers feature-length animated film which was nominated for a Hugo Award. Besides the fun

story, and the general feel-good impact of the film, I was blown away by the quality of the animation.” (Greg Slade)

Feb. 12: Philosopher’s Café at Wolf and Hound in Kitsilano: “Are there any reasons to think that consciousness can expand beyond the body?”

Feb. 13: Philosopher’s Café at Spill the Beans Coffee Shoppe, Fort Langley: “What does it take to change a culture?”

Feb. 14: Philosopher’s Café at the Dogwood Pavilion, Coquitlam: “What is this thing called ‘love?’”

Feb. 14: Philosopher’s Café at the ABC Country Restaurant, Surrey-Newton: “Blink or sink: how fast do you think?”

Feb. 15: Philosopher’s Café at La Zuppa, North Vancouver: “Paradigms of truth”

Feb. 16: Philosopher’s Café at Kwantlen TALK Café, Surrey: “The right to die: is assisted suicide in our future?”

Feb. 16-18 (Thurs-Sat): **Life, the Universe & Everything** at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Writer GoHs: Kevin J. Anderson, Rebecca Moesta; poetry guest, Michael R. Collings; artist, Stephanie Pui-Mun Lau. Venue: 3rd Floor, Wilkinson Student Center, Brigham Young University. An academic symposium on all aspects of science fiction and fantasy: writing, media, worldbuilding (Create Your Own World), art, anime. Academic papers. Art show, charity auction and more. You register at the door, but admission is free. See <http://ltue.org>

Feb. 17: Philosopher’s Café at Unitarian Centre, Oakridge: “Will democracy survive?”

Friday, February 17th : **FANS** - FireflyFest concludes with "The Message" and "Heart of Gold."

Feb. 17-19: **Radcon 4B** at the Red Lion Inn, Pasco, WA. Writer GoHs: Jay Lake, Dean Wesley Smith & Kristine Kathryn Rusch; Artist GoH: Frank Wu, Science GoH: Dr. Thomas Hopp, Editor GoH: Anne Sowards, FanGoH: Dave Hirzel, Special GoH: Heather Alexander. Memberships: \$25 to Feb. 2, \$30 at the door. Write Radcon, PMB #162, 2527 W Kennewick Ave., Kennewick, WA 99336-3126, or see www.radcon.org .

Feb. 17-20: **Conquest NW**, Seattle Marriott Sea-Tac Airport Hotel, Seattle, WA. Gaming convention. Guests: Nicole Lindroos, Chris Pramas, James Ernest, Pater Adkison. Memberships: US\$45 at the door. For more information, www.avalonconventions.com/conquestnw/

Feb. 22: Philosopher’s Café at Jabez Coffee Bar, Surrey-Central: “How can we make government more accountable?”

Feb. 23: Philosopher’s Café at Pebbles Café in Maple Ridge: “What are poets for? (or what is vision in a time of darkness?)”

Feb 24th : **FANS** – The "Ed Wood Memorial B-Movie Film Festival" continues with the 1925 version of *The Wizard of Oz*. (No, not the version with Judy Garland. Graham warns that this version is "particularly bad" and "must be seen to be disbelieved.")

Feb. 24-26: **Potlatch 15** at the Best Western Executive Inn, Seattle, WA. Emphasis on writing. Reservations: write The Best Western Executive Inn, 200 Taylor Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, Phone: 206-448-9444, Fax: 206-441-7929, Toll Free Reservations: 800-351-9444, <http://www.bwexec-inn.com/>, info@bwexec-inn.com. All rooms are now non-smoking. Potlatch rates are: \$79.00/single or double occupancy; \$99.00/triple or quad plus tax. do not use Best Western's on-line reservation service or national "800 #" to make your hotel reservations. ... If you have questions about the hotels or need help with a travel-related problem, please email Suzanne Tompkins at hotel@potlatch-sf.org. Memberships: \$45/more at the door. Potlatch 15, c/o S. Tompkins, PO Box 25075, Seattle, WA 98165; or see <http://www.potlatch-sf.org/>.

Feb. 24-26: **Kei-Kon IV: A New Hope**, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC. Anime convention. Admission: \$15, \$13 student. For more information, www.geocities.com/uvicanime/staff4.html.

Feb. 25: Philosopher’s Café at Dunbar Community Centre, Dunbar: “A Red Light district for Vancouver?”

Feb. 26: Philosopher’s Café at la Fontana Café in Burnaby: “Why do we elect unethical politicians?”

Feb. 28: Philosopher’s Café at West Vancouver Memorial Library, West Vancouver: “British Irish and American poets of the early 20th century”

Feb. 28: Philosopher's Café at Lifetime Learning Centre in Mission: "What is love?"

March 2006

March 2: Philosopher's Café at Kwantlen TALK Café, Richmond: "Have we, the voters, the right to expect integrity from our politicians?"

March 6: Philosopher's Café at Vancouver Art Gallery, Downtown Vancouver: "Public Space/Private Lives"

March 6: **Portland Comic Book Show** in Portland, Oregon (reportedly Oregon's largest Comic Book Convention. Held twice a year in Portland, Oregon)

March 8: Philosopher's Café at White Rock Central Library, White Rock: "Is fiction worth reading?"

March 10-12: **Trumpeter Salute**, Bonsor Community Complex, Burnaby, BC. Gaming convention. Memberships: \$15, one-day memberships available. For more information, www.trumpeterclub.com .

March 12: Philosopher's Café at Wolf and Hound, Kitsilano: "What creative role does our intention play and how can it work?"

March 13: Philosopher's Café at Spill the Beans Coffee Shoppe, Fort Langley: "What is the right balance between commitment and objectivity?"

March 14: Philosopher's Café at Dogwood Pavilion, Coquitlam: "Does money serve us well?"

March 14: Philosopher's Café at ABC Country Restaurant, Surrey-Newton: "Do computers build community relations and services or detract from them?"

March 15: Philosopher's Café at La Zuppa, North Vancouver: "Economic circles: is economic thinking circular?"

March 15: Philosopher's Café at West Point Grey Community Centre, West Point Grey: "Modernism or postmodernism? (focus on 20th century art history)"

March 16: Philosopher's Café at Kwantlen TALK Café, Surrey: "How can drug dealers and pushers be effectively controlled and punished?"

March 17: Philosopher's Café at Unitarian Centre, Oakridge: "Blink or sink: how fast do you think?"

March 17-19: **Anime Oasis V** at the Boise Airport Holiday Inn in Boise, ID. Room reservations \$69/nite via (208) 343-4900; mention Anime Oasis. Memberships: Adult 3-day, \$25 payable to Jeremy Lopett via PayPal, or before Feb. 11/06 to 3 Harvestview S., Apt. H, Mount Joy, PA 17522.

March 19: **Vancouver Comicon** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email ls Wong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~ls Wong/Comicon.html>

March 22: Philosopher's Café at West Point Grey Community Centre, West Point Grey: "Beauty or ugliness? (focus on the 'aesthetic'"

March 24-26: **Official Stargate SG-1 & Stargate Atlantis Convention**, Hilton Vancouver Metrotown, Burnaby, BC. Media SF convention. Guests: Michael Shanks, Joe Flanigan, Cliff Simon, Martin Gero, Gary Jones, James Bamford. Memberships: [US funds, see website](#). For more information, www.creationent.com .

March 24-26: **Gamestorm 8** at the Red Lion at the Quay, Vancouver, WA. GoHs: TBA. Reservations: Red Lion at the Quay, 100 Columbia St., Vancouver, WA 98660; tel (360) 694-8341, rooms \$74 single/double. Memberships \$30 at the door. GameStorm, POBox 764, Portland, OR 97207, email chair@gamestorm.org, or see www.gamestorm.org.

March 24-26: **Sakura-Con 9** at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center in Seattle, WA. Sakura-Con is the premier Pacific Northwest Anime Convention devoted to East Asian Culture, with a particular focus on Japanese animation (anime), Japanese Comics (manga), and video gaming. Guests TBA. Memberships \$45 to Feb. 28, \$60 at the door. Sakura-Con, 3702 South Fife St., Suite K-2, PMB 78, Tacoma, WA 98409, tel 877-873-3317, email chair@sakuracon.org, or see www.sakuracon.org.

March 25: Philosopher's Café at Dunbar Community Centre, Dunbar: "What would the 'end of the automobile' mean for our civilization?"

March 26: Philosopher's Café at La Fontana Café, Burnaby: "Parents, children and sports. What is it all about?"

March 31 - Apr. 2: **Ad Astra 2006** in Toronto, ON. Hotel TBA. Author GoH: Terry Brooks and Peter David. Editor GoH: Del Rey Books with Betsy Mitchell. Memberships \$60 to Feb. 28 and at the door. Ad Astra 2006, POBox 7276, Stn. A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X9, email info@ad-astra.org, or see www.ad-astra.org.

March 31: deadline for **Canadian Unity Fan Fund 2006** delegate nominations from Western Canada. Prospective nominees must be Canadian citizens, or permanent residents of Canada; submit a written document outlining their fannish history, and their reason(s) for wishing to be the CUFF delegate. The submission must be dated and contain full contact information; Provide signed nomination letters from six Canadian fans; three fans from Eastern Canada and three from Western Canada; Agree to assume the duties and responsibilities of the position of CUFF Administrator – attend the next CanVention (Toronto Trek 20, in summer 2006), financial administration, fund raising, and CUFF race and election running. Please direct any questions to Brian A. Davis, 45 Charm Court, Fredericton, NB E3B 7J6, Email: badavis@rogers.com. An official CUFF website is online as of December 2005, and each previous delegate/administrator will have their own Web page there.

April 2006

April 1-2: **4th Annual Emerald City ComicCon** at the Qwest Field Exhibition Center in Seattle, WA. A comics-related convention which drew 6000 in April 2005. Multiple comic artist guests. Hotel is Springhill Suites Seattle by Marriott. Tickets through Ticketmaster, available in 2006. See www.emeraldcitycomiccon.com.

April 1: **Nishikaze II** (a spring anime festival) at the University of Lethbridge (Anderson Hall), Lethbridge, AB. Guests: TBA. Memberships: \$2 or non-perishable food donation. See <http://www.nishikaze.org/> for more information.

April 9: **Seattle Game Con v2.1**, Seattle Centre, Seattle, WA. Gaming convention. Guests and memberships: TBA. For more information, see www.seattlegamecon.com.

April 13-16: **Norwescon 29** at the Doubletree Seattle Airport Hotel. Writer GoH: Lois McMaster Bujold, Artist GoH: Donato Giancola, TM: Robert J. Sawyer, Featured Publisher: DAW Books with Betsy Wollheim & Sheila Gilbert. Theme: "Journeys, Adventures and Quests of Fantastic Fiction." Rooms: 18740 International Blvd., Seattle, WA 98188, (206) 246-8600, rooms \$102 quad occupancy. Memberships TBA. Norwescon 29, POBox 68547, Seattle, WA 98168-0547, (206) 270-7850, email info@norwescon.org, or see www.norwescon.org.

April 14 and 15: **Gamefest Spokane** in Spokane, Washington. See <http://www.gamefestspokane.net/> for more information.

April 30: **Vancouver Comicon** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email lswong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

May 2006

May 5-7: **Corflu 23** in Toronto, ON. The original fanzine fans' convention. Memberships C\$60, US\$50, UK25. Cheques to Colin Hinz at 148 Howland Avenue, Toronto, ON CANADA M5R 3B5. Contacts: Colin Hinz, asfi@eol.ca, (416) 516-8686; Catherine Crockett, crockett@eol.ca, (416) 516-3571.

May 7: **Calgary Comic & Entertainment Expo**, Calgary Stampede Grounds, Calgary, AB. Guests & memberships: TBA. For more information, www.calgaryexpo.com.

May 19-21: **Keycon 23**, Radisson Winnipeg Downtown, Winnipeg, MB. SF convention. Guests: Jaqueline Carey, Ruth Thompson, Barron Vangor Toth. Memberships: \$35. For more information, www.keycon.org.

May 20: **Olympia Comics Festival in Olympia, WA**. Guests: Jessica Abel, Matt Madden, more TBA. See <http://www.olympiacomicsfestival.org>

May 19-21: **Flatland Fantasy Games Convention**, Hotel TBA, Regina, SK. Memberships: TBA. For more information, www.reginagamers.com.

May 19-22: **Cangames 2006**, Rideau Curling Club, Ottawa, ON. Gaming convention. Guests: TBA. Memberships: \$25 until April 30, \$30 at the door. For more information, www.cangames.ca.

May 20 & 21: **Otafest 06**, Hotel TBA, Calgary, AB. Anime convention. Guests & memberships: TBA. For more information, www.otafest.com.

May 26: **Calgary Comic & Toy Expo**, McMahon Stadium, Calgary, AB. Guests: Pop Mhan, Norm Breyfogle, Ken Steacy, Cary Nord. Admission: \$5. For more information, www.comicandtoy.com.

May 26-29: **Miscon 20** at Ruby's Inn & Convention Center in Missoula, MT. Writer GoH: Jerry Oltion, Artist GoH: Frank Wu, Special GoH: Dragon Dronet. Reservations: 4825 N. Reserve St., Missoula, MT 59808, (406) 541-7829. Rooms \$79 single, \$89 double, with complimentary breakfast buffet. For more hotel information see <http://www.miscon.org/Hotel/hotel.html>. Memberships: \$25 to April 31. Miscon, POBox 7721, Missoula, MT 59807, (406) 251-9463, email chair@miscon.org, or see www.miscon.org.

June 2006

June 2-4: **ConComCon 13** at the Cascade Mountain Inn in Cle Elum, WA. The Northwest's conrunner's con. Focus for 2006: "sharing of information". The organizers from the North American SF Convention aka Cascadia Con will share stuff. A CD and handouts will be provided. For rooms, write the Cascade Mountain Inn, 906 E. 1st St., Cle Elum, WA 98922, phone (509) 674-2380, or fax (509) 674-7099. C-cubed room rate is \$55 - \$75 depending on the room - it would be good to have more room reservations made so that the hotel feels more secure since they are small and not use to professional conferences in this little town. The toll-free number for reservations is 1-888-674-3975. Preregistration: \$25 to May 31, 2006, then \$35, to ConComCon [12?], POBox 1066, Seattle, WA 98111. Contact the Ccubed 13 chairman Bobbie DuFault at Chairman@cascadiacon.org or visit the Ccubed Website at www.swoc.org/ccubed/.

June 4: **Vancouver Comicon** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email ls Wong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~ls Wong/Comicon.html>

July 2006

July 1-4: **Westercon 59/Conzilla** at the San Diego Marriott Mission Valley in San Diego, CA. GoH: Walter Jon Williams, Artist GoH: Bob Eggleton, FanGoH: Bobbi Armbruster, TM: Kevin J Anderson. Reservations: 8757 Rio San Diego Dr., San Diego, CA 92108, (619) 692-3800, rooms \$139 quad occupancy. Memberships: \$70 to June 15, \$80 at the door. Conzilla, POBox 845, Ramona, CA 92065, email info@conzilla.info, or see www.conzilla.info.

July 7-9: **TT20/Convention 26** at the DoubleTree International Plaza Hotel, Toronto, Ont. Guests include: Amber Benson, played Tara on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Michael Shanks, plays Dr. Daniel Jackson on *Stargate SG-1* (Sunday Only). MC Larry Stewart. New additions: LEXA DOIG (*Andromeda*, *Stargate SG1* and *The 4400*) and RICHARD HATCH (*Battlestar Galactica*, both versions). TT20 once again hosts the Prix Aurora Awards for contributions to Canadian SF and fandom. Rooms are at the DoubleTree International Plaza Hotel: 655 Dixon Road, Toronto, Ont. You can now call the DoubleTree International Plaza to book your hotel room at: (416) 244-1711 or 800-222-8733. Don't forget to mention you are booking for Toronto Trek to get the convention rate of \$129. OR you can book online and use the conference code of TNO. Visit our web page at <http://www.tcon.ca> for links and information. Rates are only guaranteed until June 5, 2006 and while rooms are still available in our room block. Pre-Registration Fee: Adult full weekend, \$60; deadline is May 26, 2006. Notes: All prices are subject to change. Enclose a cheque or money order payable to: Toronto Trek OR if you wish to pay by credit card: (You will be billed in CDN dollars) and send to: TT20 P.O. Box 7097, Station A Toronto, ON M5W 1X7 Contact: Information Line: (416) 410-TCON (8266) E-MAIL: tt-info@tcon.ca; WEB: <http://www.tcon.ca>.

July 8 & 9: **Animethon 13**, Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton, AB. Anime convention. Memberships: Various levels, see website. For more information, www.animethon.org.

July 31 – August 6: **Timeless Destinations** at Best Western Richmond Inn, Richmond, BC. Guests include a honkin' long list of *Battlestar Galactica*, *Earth Final Conflict*, *Stargate SG-1*, *The Collector*, *Smallville*, *Poltergeist*, *Farscape*, *Lexx*, *Xena*, *Andromeda* actors. This grew out of the Gatecon that used to be held in Vancouver. The website (www.timelessdestinations.com) bears links for dealers' registration, and for hotel reservations, but I found no registration page, and no postal

address anywhere; I note that the dates span a *week*, and the registration fee is quoted as \$250 "for a full convention *ticket*" (*sic*), including a T-shirt. (This con was pointed out to me by Felicity Walker on Jan. 17, 2006.)

August 2006

Aug. 11-13: **Con-Version 22** in Calgary, AB ([Hotel & rates TBA](#)). GoHs: David Weber, Larry Niven. Canadian GoH: R. Scott Bakker. FanGoH: John Hertz. Memberships C\$40 to April 1. Write to Calgary SF & Fantasy Society, P.O. Box 20098, Calgary Place RPO, Calgary, AB T2P 4J2; more information at www.con-version.org.

Aug. 18-20: **Anime Evolution**, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC. Anime convention. Guests and memberships: TBA. For more information, see www.animeevolution.com.

Aug 23-27: **Worldcon 64/LACon IV** at the Hilton Anaheim, Anaheim Marriott and Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA. Writer GoH: Connie Willis, Artist GoH: James Gurney, FanGoH: Howard Devore, Special Guest: Frankie Thomas. Reservations: (Hilton) 714-750-4321, (Marriott) 714-750-8000, rooms \$99 single/double. Memberships \$175 to July 1. LACon IV, c/o S.C.I.F.I. Inc., POBox 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409; email info@laconiv.org, or see www.laconiv.com.

August 25-27: **Penny Arcade Expo (PAX)** at Meydenbauer Convention Center, Bellevue, Washington. See: <http://www.pennyarcadeexpo.com>

August 27: **Comix & Stories** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email lswong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

September 2006

Sept. 10: **Vancouver Comicon** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email lswong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

Sept. 22-24: **Foolsap VIII** at the Bellevue Sheraton in Bellevue, WA. GoH: C.J. Cherryh. A flat-paper-stuff convention, featuring artshow, dealers' room, programming, a banquet at \$26 a head. Room rates TBA, about \$85/nite; contact Bellevue Sheraton, 100 112th Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004-5817; tel (425) 455-3330; fax (425) 451-2473. Memberships: \$45 to April 1st, \$50 to September 21, \$60 at the door to Foolsap, c/o Little Cat Z, POBox 2461, Seattle, WA 98111-2461, or via PayPal to treasurer@foolscapcon.org; URL www.foolscapcon.org.

Sept. 22-24: **Rimcon Victoria**, "First Annual Science Fiction Convention". Guests: To be announced [Should be confirmed by Nov. 15/05]. To be held at the Holiday Inn, 3020 Blanshard Street, Victoria, BC, tel. (250) 382-4400. Discussion panels, Guest autographing sessions, Dealers Hall and Art Show and much more. MEMBERSHIP RATES: Adult Child (Must be accompanied by an adult); until Dec. 31/05, \$20.00 \$12.00; Jan 06 to May 06 \$25.00 \$15.00; Jun 06 to Sep 06 \$30.00 \$18.00; At Door - three days \$35.00 \$20.00; At Door - Day Passes \$20.00 \$12.00; Children 5 years and under are free when accompanied by an Adult. "Supporting Membership" (?) \$ 9.00 (upgradeable to Attending at the rate at the time of upgrade); "Friend of RimCon" \$50.00. (Payment by Money Order payable to RimCon Victoria. All funds listed in Canadian dollars). For more information: go on-line at: www.rimconvictoria.org, or inquire by mail to: Registration, RimCon Victoria, PO Box 32108, Victoria, BC V8P 4H0.

October 2006

Oct. 6-8: **VCon 31** at the Executive Airport Plaza Hotel, Richmond, B.C. GoHs: Writer GoH Barbara Hambly; ArtGoH, Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk; FanGoH: Randy McCharles. Chair: Clint Budd. Dealers' Liaison: Greg Slade. Adult memberships: until April 15, \$40; until Sept. 15, \$50; at the door, \$60. Child in Tow rates TBA; Tot in Tow, free. Daily Memberships: Friday only, \$30; Saturday, \$35; Sunday, \$25. Registrar: Howard Cherniack, #302 - 1330 Graveley Street, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5L 3A2, tel. (604) 255-0796, email cherns@compuserve.com.

Oct. 22: **Model, Toy and Collectables Show** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email lswong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

November 2006

Nov. 2-5: **World Fantasy Con 2006** at the Renaissance Hotel at the Arboretum, Austin, TX. GoHs: Glen Cook and Dave Duncan, TM: Bradley Denton, Editor GoH: Glenn Lord, Artist GoHs: John Jude Palencar, Gary Gianni. Reservations: 9721 Arboretum Blvd., Austin, TX 78759, (512) 343-2626. Memberships TBA??. World Fantasy, c/o FACT Inc., POBox 27277, Austin, TX 78755, email wfcinfo@fact.org, or see www.fact.org/wfc2006/

Nov. 5: **Vancouver Comicon** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email ls Wong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~ls Wong/Comicon.html>

Nov. 17-19: **Orycon 28** at the Portland Marriott Waterfront, Portland, Oregon. Guests of Honor: Editor: [Ellen Datlow](#) ; Writer: [Cory Doctorow](#) Registration rates are: \$35 July 15; \$45 to Oct. 31; \$55 thereafter and at the door. Children age 6-12 are half price. Children 5 and under are free. Children must be accompanied by an adult with a membership. To transfer a membership, send a signed letter to the convention PO box (below) with the new member's name and address. [Registration Form](#) (for download in MS Word format). Mail registration to: Orycon 28 PO Box 5464 Portland, OR 97228-5464, USA. URL: www.orycon.org

The Peaches of Immortality

(Fandom Classic)

OBITUARIES

Robert Sheckley:

"I just read that one of VCON 17's GOHs passed away in New York. Robert Sheckley was a S.F. humorist with a large body of S.F. out there. He wrote for some TV shows as well as having a large number of novels and short stories published. He was one of my all time favourite authors and I am greatly saddened to hear he is gone."

Steve Forty, 09 Dec 2005, to: BCSFA@yahoo.com

"*Robert Sheckley* (1928-2005), US author famous as a pioneer of intelligently humorous and satirical SF, died on 9 December. He was 77.

After surviving critical respiratory illness in Spring 2005 and heart surgery in June, he suffered a brain aneurysm on 10 November and failed to recover; his last days were spent in coma. Bob Sheckley entered the SF scene with a blizzard of 1950s/1960s short stories that ranged from engaging nonsense (he had a gift for silly names), through clever gadgetry and twist endings worthy of Saki or O. Henry, to dark satires whose comedy verged on nihilism. 'Voltaire-and-soda,' wrote Brian Aldiss. The short 'Seventh Victim' (1953) was notoriously filmed as *The Tenth Victim*, with Ursula Andress in a deadly, double-barrelled bra. His best novels, *Journey Beyond Tomorrow* (1962), *Mindswap* (1966; my favourite), and *Dimension of Miracles* (1968), are crammed with anarchic humour and increasingly unreliable realities. *Mindswap's* climactic duel in the 'Twisted World' where logic breaks down is a tour-de-force of sustained, surreal and outright silly invention. Many readers reckoned that he was, to say the least, a powerful influence on the humour of Douglas Adams's *Hitch-Hiker* novels. In person Bob Sheckley was genial, soft-spoken and unfailingly witty, a popular convention guest. Though his finest work appeared in decades when humour was sadly underrated, he received several honours from the sf community – including three Hugo nominations – and was much loved."

Ansible 222, January 2006

"'Big-Hearted' *Howard DeVore* (1925-2005), long-time US fan, con organizer, book dealer, and editor of many editions of *History of the Hugo, Nebula and International [later World] Fantasy Awards*, died on 31 December aged 80. The 2006 Worldcon chose him as its fan guest of honour. A memoir by Curt Phillips appears in this *Ansible's* on-line supplement.

"*J.N. (Jerry) Williamson* (1932-2005), prolific US horror author and editor of the 'Masques' original anthologies (1984-1991), died on 8 December aged 73. The first of his 30+ novels was *The Ritual* (1979). He received a 2003 Horror Writers of America Lifetime Achievement Award. [SG]"

selected from *Ansible* 222, January 2006

THOG'S MASTERCLASS

Time & Motion Dept. 'The first step is to put the fleet on one-hour-alert status instead of twenty-four. ... It'll take about six hours to bring us up to one-hour readiness.' (Lois McMaster Bujold, *The Vor Game*, 1990) [TMCD] (*Garth and Felicity ask "ub, what's wrong here?"*)

Dept of Nose Noises. 'But the younger man had a nose for trouble which Acevedo had learned to trust, or at least listen very carefully to.' (David Weber in *Changer of Worlds*, 2001) [NR]

'He whispered under his nose.' (Greg Vilk, *Golem*, 2005) [PB]
True Romance Dept (or, Precursors of Gor). 'I looked at Miellyn, took her slender unmanacled hand in mine, and smiled as we walked through the gates of the city. Now, after all my years on Wolf, I understood the desire to keep their women under lock and key that was its ancient custom. I vowed to myself as we went that I should waste no time finding a fetter shop and having forged therein the perfect steel chains that should bind my love's wrists to my key forever.' (Marion Zimmer Bradley, *The Door Through Space*, 1961) [TMcD]

Dept of Complex Mapping. 'However erroneous the theory upon which the cartographers evolved their maps, mine were not entirely useless; though they required considerable mental mathematical gymnastics to translate them into usable information ... the actual and the apparent measurements of distance can be reconciled by multiplying each by the square root of minus one!' (Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Escape on Venus*, 1946) [BA]

Ansible 222, January 2006

GOTH HOUSE NEWSLETTER: 13 JANUARY 2006

"Alex in Punditland" – on <http://www.gothhouse.org/>

"Because this is done in the same style as 'The Christmas Truce,' and is similarly long, some of you might think it's a trend. It's not meant to be. Because, honestly, it's taken me HOURS AND HOURS to do this one and I simply can't keep up that sort of pace."

Julie McGalliard <julie@gothouse.org>, 14 Jan 2006

ENERGUMEN GOING ONLINE

Taral Wayne in Toronto writes:

"It looks as though I've embarked on a new idea. For some time the possibility has lain largely unexploited, though inevitably digital technology ought to make it possible for a fan to collect old zines in virtual form. So far, for the most part only contemporary zines have been available, and only on-line.

"A little while ago an idea formed in my head and sat around taking up valuable space. It seemed the only way to get rid of it was to act on the idea that *old* zines need to be scanned and made available even more than today's. After consulting a few people, I've begun digitally archiving the entire run of Mike Glicksohn's *Energumen*.

"Why *Energumen*? Why not. It was one of the best zines of its day, won a Hugo, it's co-editor Susan Wood also won a Hugo, it's Canadian, and I've got all the issues. Last year I acquired a new, high speed, good

quality scanner that makes the work easy. Just to prove it, today I scanned all of *Energumen* 1.

"There were 16 issues in all. Later issues were more than twice the length, but it seems to me that even if I scan a few pages every couple of days, I can complete the entire 16 issues in under six months. If I'm zealous, it can be done much sooner, but I'm assuming I'll goof-off quite a bit and let myself be distracted by petty annoyances such as the need to make a living.

"I've contacted Bill Burns, who runs [efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com/) (<http://www.efanzines.com/>) to post the issues. Bill currently plans to take my PDF's (linked Adobe Acrobat documents) and run them through an Optical Character Recognition program to reduce the size of the files. This will force him also to insert the art in the appropriate empty white spaces he's hopefully left in the text, and try as best he can to match the original type faces and sizes. The posted issues will not be archival though, they'll be reproductions.

"I intend to make actual archival copies available as well, on CD-Rom. I'm thinking that the cost of disk, jewel case, some sort of "cover" insert and postage should run to five bucks or less. Mike also liked the suggestion that anyone who bought one of the *Energumen* runs would be invited to contribute to TAFF or DUFF in his name.

"... Don't dash to your checkbook and make out \$5 right away. When the entire 16 issues are ready to burn to disk, and my plans finalized, I'll trumpet the news and wait for the applause and three or four checks likely to flood in...

"Looking further ahead, what next? Victoria Vayne has already assented to a complete *Simulacrum*. Doubtless I'll pick a half dozen issues of my own many zines for archiving. And then? Not *Boowatt*. (Obscure joke). Not necessarily Canadian either. At the moment I have no candidates in mind, but if I haven't grown tired of the whole idea by then, there are plenty to choose from."

Taral Wayne, Jan. 19, 2006

MUSHROOMS

(BCSFA news)

ALYX MAKES GOOD

"Very pleased to announce my wife Alyx's novel *A Strange Place In Time: The Recalling Of John Arrowsmith* (book one of a trilogy) will be published in June 2006 by Pelican Bookworks of Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Pelican is not a vanity press, but rather a limited edition specialty house which caters to book collectors who want unusual books printed and bound with old-fashioned quality techniques, such as hand-sewing and binding.

“Three illustrations, one by S.H. Desjardins and two by Alyx, will be done throughout the text using polymer plate, colour lino-cut and black & white lino-cut.

“Depending on demand, 75 to 150 signed and numbered copies will be printed. Five copies will be leather-bound in Nigerian red leather goatskin with leather onlays featuring silver-tooled designs.

“The case-bound copies will retail for \$100 U.S., and the leather just over \$500 U.S. The edition is designed to last for centuries, if kept in proper conditions.

“Needless to say, Alyx and I are quite excited about the impending publication.”

R. Graeme Cameron, *Fearless Leader*, Nov. 9, 2005

VCON 30 UPDATE

“First, the news:

“Our big news is our writer guest of honour is **Barbara Hambly**.

“We're returning to the same hotel, same weekend for 2006. New Chair Clint Budd and his partner, pro and Treasurer Donna McMahon, tried and failed to find an alternate hotel that gave the same good deal (which is important for us since we're always on the edge financially) as the Executive Plaza in Richmond. We're adjusting the programming and room block so that most of the program will be in the west building. That way, there will be less running around and getting lost - and no more need for elevator keys!

“And, we're adding a special day of master writing classes in fantasy and SF on Friday, with their own entrance fees and advertised in additional markets (inspiration for this is the Surrey Writers Festival), plus programming generally will start Friday morning (2 panels per hour) at 10 AM. The latter was done at VCON 20 and it worked out well, with some people arriving Thurs eve. On Saturday and Sunday, there will be three, not five, panels per hour except for a few specials.

“**To all panellists at VCON 30:** I hope you had a great holiday and that 2006 has started off well. I will be your contact again for VCon 31. You can contact me, Barbara Scutt, <barbie-doll64@shaw.ca> or Fran Skene <fskene@shaw.ca>. If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas, please cc the other so that things don't get lost.

“Thanks so much for your participation in VCON 30 (remember way back when, early in October...). This is both a questionnaire about VCON

30 and an invitation to be a panelist in VCON 31; we are hoping you are willing to volunteer again for VCON 31.

“Would you like to take part again next year? Do let us know - thanks.”

Barbara Scutt, Jan. 2006



SCIENCE FICTION SHORT FILM FESTIVAL (SEATTLE, FEB 4)

“For those of you who have been wanting updates on screenings of *Super-Anon*, it has been chosen as one of 20 finalists in the Science Fiction Short Film Festival in Seattle, which is scheduled for February 4th at the Cinerama Theatre, 2100 Fourth Avenue, Seattle. There are two sessions of 10 films each, from 4-6 and 7-9, with the awards ceremony to follow the second set. More details are available through the SF Museum site at: <http://www.sfhomeworld.org/>

“There are actually several Canadian productions in the Festival this year, so here's hoping the Canucks will do well, eh?” (Greg Slade)

(*I thought we just said No to sports references here. —GS*)

VOICE OF AUTHORITY

Stan Hyde, known to BCSFA and VCon members as our world-famous Godzilla (etc.) expert, was profiled on CBC Radio's "Out Front" first-person series on January 11, 2006.

THE DIRECTORY

Ready or not, the BCSFA members' directory for 2006 (as reconstructed by your editor) has probably come out by the time you read this. I say "ready or not" because a few former, or indeed current, members remain unlocatable, and I just gave up trying to track the last twenty or forty people down. A list of their names appears at the end of this document; so do lists of current regional conventions, local clubs, advertisers, and fanzines that BCSFA trades with.

FANS CHANGING IDENTITY:

"... something we need to fix about FANS, namely, the name. Far too many people are confusing "FANS: Fannish Activity on the North Shore" with "Fancouver: the Vancouver Science Fiction and Fantasy Meetup Group" (scifi.meetup.com/278/), probably because they both start with "fan." (Besides which, there's already a group with the acronym FANS: the Fund for the Arts on the North Shore.) Therefore, I'm thinking that we need to pick a new name for FANS. And, to encourage you to contribute ideas, we will hold a contest: the person who suggests the best name (as voted on at FANS next Friday) will have dinner on me the next time they come. The rules are as follows:

"1. The acronym can only have four letters (you can have more than four words in the name, and drop things like articles and conjunctions out of the acronym, but suggesting a name which rivals *War and Peace* for length – the novel, not the title – and dropping all but four letters from the acronym is just not on. 2. The acronym must be a personal name. (Following the model of FRED.) 3. The word in the full name must at least hint at fannish content. 4. The words in the full name must contain some kind of geographical hint that the group meets on the North Shore. To enter the contest, send me an E-mail offlist, or else come to FANS next Friday and bring up your idea then."

Greg Slade, Jan. 19, 2006

((This went to a vote on Jan. 27, 2006. –GS))

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY BLUES

If you elect to produce a fanzine, sooner or later the National Library of Canada – now under a new name – will track you down and require two

copies of each edition. If you're like me, you will then receive irregular dunning letters, asking you for back issues that you already sent.

BCSFAzine has been receiving such letters for a few years now. The odd thing is that we've been *sending* our zine faithfully to 395 Wellington Street in Ottawa, but the NatLib keeps on not getting them.

(This isn't the first time Canada Post branches have failed in the delivery of their services – the fans in Winnipeg had some kind of problem, in the lead-up to ConAdian. Question: Is Canada Post in Ottawa an "equal-opportunity employer"? That is a snide little joke, in case you didn't get it.)

So in December I gathered up a bunch of *BCSFAzine* archive disks and ran off new copies of back issues they asked for and sent them a whole big package.

The fact that the receiving departments, and even the whole library, have changed names might have something to do with it. Somehow, though, I don't think that's enough reason for the library not to get the mail we send them!

The current complete/correct address for Canada's national library is

Serials Records Unit / CLAIMS
Legal Deposit Division
Library and Archives Canada
395 WELLINGTON ST.
OTTAWA, ON K1A 0N4
CANADA



A Suffusion of Yellow

(Market News)

FROM BURNABY WRITERS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Flash Alternate History Contest

For this contest, write an alternate history tale short enough to qualify as "flash fiction" (1500 words max).

The story must be alternate history (not secret history, historical fiction, parallel world; see the definition at the Uchronia website). The story can be set in any time period on Earth, but in a timeline where some historical event turned out differently than in our history, and impacts on subsequent history. Your story should reveal the point of divergence, with enough historical information to provide context, but it should tell a story, not only develop the setting.

Submissions should adhere to standard manuscript format (see *Paradox* submission guidelines if necessary), and clearly indicate on title pages that they are contest entries. Submissions should be original, previously unpublished. Multiple submissions are acceptable; simultaneous submissions (also sent to other markets) are not.

Mail your submission to Flash Alternate History Contest, *Paradox Magazine*, P.O. Box 22897, Brooklyn, NY 11202-2897; entries must be postmarked no later than June 15, 2006. Only paper submissions will be accepted. No reply envelope necessary.

Stories will be judged by Christopher M. Cevasco, editor/publisher of *Paradox*

Prize: \$300 and publication in *Paradox*

Winner announced on *Paradox* website: August 31, 2006

Burnaby Writers' Society Newsletter, Jan/Feb 2006

FROM GILA QUEEN'S GUIDE TO MARKETS

Aeon Speculative Fiction – 202 North 39th St., Seattle WA 98103. Editors: Marti McKenna and Bridget McKenna. "*Aeon* publishes speculative fiction of all kinds: science fiction, fantasy, dark fantasy, horror, magic realism, and everything in between."

Fiction: "Our guidelines are simple: Your story needs to be speculative in nature, and it needs to kick our (collective) ass. We are looking primarily for stories 7500 words and under, but will consider longer works also. We will use a minimum of six fiction pieces per issue."

"Please do not query for fiction, but send the entire manuscript to the address above. If you do not wish the manuscript to be returned you may

mark the manuscript 'Recycle' and include a business-size SASE for our reply, with appropriate postage or IRCs."

"We do not accept simultaneous or electronic submissions (EXCEPTIONS BELOW), and we prefer to see no more than one submission at a time from any one writer."

"PLEASE NOTE: If you are on Aeon's list of professional writers with track records, a.k.a The List – and the guilty parties know who they are – you have been cleared for electronic submissions. We prefer .DOC or .RTF attachments over stories pasted into E-mail, and electronic submissions should be in standard manuscript format."

"If you are NOT on the list but feel you qualify, please send the Aeon editors a brief summary of your relevant qualifications. If you believe we already know your qualifications and you are not on The List, it's possible our invitation E-mail did not reach you, or that we did not have an E-mail address for you at the time we issued our initial invitation."

Nonfiction: "We are looking for well-written nonfiction of interest to readers of science fiction and fantasy."

General: Pays 3¢/word, on publication, for first world serial rights. [E-mail: editors@aeonmagazine.com; <http://www.aeonmagazine.com>].

Dark Discoveries – 142 Woodside Dr., Longview WA 98632 Editor: James R. Beach.

Fiction: "Stories in the horror/dark fantasy and dark mystery veins (no straight science fiction or mystery and no sword and sorcery). Looking for original ideas and new twists on old conventions, especially stories that examine the darker side of the human condition. Looking for new writers as well as established ones." To 5000 words; pays \$25 (new story) + 2 copies, \$15 (reprint) + 2 copies; on acceptance. Query for longer. "I'm pretty picky on the reprints – I'm usually looking for rarer ones that weren't widely seen and are a little older. Definitely not ones still in print."

Simultaneous submissions okay – "just let us know about it." Send only one story/time. "Please wait to send another story until your current one has been responded to as we get a huge amount of subs at this point." RT – about 3 months.

Interviews/Nonfiction: "Looking for interviews with established and newer writers with at least a book or two and/or a number of short stories published in the HDF field. Also looking for nonfiction articles on writing, publishing, collecting horror by new and established writers." To 5000 words; pays \$15 + 2 copies; on acceptance. Query for longer. "Authors interested in being interviewed by us will receive either an ad for participation plus one copy or four contributors copies instead." Simultaneous submissions okay; send only one sub/time.

Reviews: "Looking for book reviews in the same HDF vein from well known to newer authors. Anthologies also okay." To 500 words; pays \$5 + 1 copy; on acceptance. Query for longer. See Fiction for info on simultaneous and multiple subs.

Artwork: "Looking for original art in the same style as above." Pays \$5 (interior art), \$20 (cover piece) + 1 copy; on acceptance. Simultaneous subs OK. "Will look at multiple art subs, but please query first before sending to make sure it's okay. Rights revert to artist upon publication."

Submissions: Snail mail or E-mail subs [to E-mail address below] ok. "Include in body of E-mail or as .RTF attachment. Please include your E-mail and address on the attachment or in the body of an E-mail."

[E-mail address: darkdiscoveries@msn.com;
<http://www.darkdiscoveries.com>].

Jim Baen's Universe – See Web site. Editor: Eric Flint. "*Jim Baen's Universe* is a professional science fiction magazine which will be published online bimonthly beginning in June of 2006."

"We look for science fiction and fantasy stories with a solid plot and good character development, aimed at the popular market. We also publish science fact articles of various sorts. We do not publish poetry or book reviews."

Format: "All submissions are electronic. Please submit a cover letter with your story. Simply tell us what other stories you've had published and your contact information. Stories should be composed in Courier New size 12 font and saved as an .RTF. Your manuscript should follow standardized format. The exact format you use is not critical, so long as it remains consistent throughout the story. Please include your contact information at the top of the manuscript as well as in your cover letter."

"At least two slots in each issue will be reserved to introduce new writers. Submissions wanting consideration for the 'Introducing' new writers slot in each issue must be submitted via the Universe Slush conference on Baen's Bar. There are no exceptions."

"New writers may submit directly to the 'regular' slush pile at [E-mail address below], if they choose. However, those stories will not be considered for the 'Introducing' slot and are competing against everything else in slush. We recommend that new writers submit their stories through the Baen's Universe Slush conference in Baen's Bar. You can reach that conference by going to <http://www.baen.com>, then selecting 'Baen's Bar' from the menu at the top. You will need to fill out a very short registration form the first time you go there. Once into the Bar, select the conferences titled 'Baen's Universe Facts,' 'Baen's Universe Slush,' or 'Baen's Universe Slush Comments.' The first conference is for general discussion about the

magazine. The 'Baen's Universe Slush' conference is where you should post your story. (Or portion of a story – some writers put up their story while they're still writing it. That's fine, if you choose to do so.) Having posted your story, then please put up a short announcement that you've done so in 'Baen's Universe Slush Comments.' All discussion of the stories should take place in that conference."

"The editorial staff of the magazine participates in and monitors the discussion. Those which they consider the best stories are then sent to the editor for a final decision."

Payment rates: "If we commission a story from you, our pay rates are as follows:"

To 5000 words, pays 25¢/word (to \$1250); 5000–10,000 words, 15¢/word (\$750–2000); 10,000–20,000 words, 10¢/word (\$1000–3000); 20,000–40,000 words, 8¢/word (\$1600–4600). "Anything longer than that, we'll pay 6¢/word."

"At the moment, we are only commissioning stories from authors who either have a very well-established track record or with whom we have experience, categories which often overlap. Our rates are lower for stories that we buy from unsolicited manuscripts, whether submitted through the submissions address or the BUS conference in Baen's Web site. Stories published in the 'Introducing' section of the magazine are paid 6¢/word. Other stories are paid between 8–15¢/word, depending on various factors."

[E-mail: submissions@baensuniverse.com; (new writers)
<http://bar.baen.com>; <http://www.baensastoundingstories.com/>].

The foregoing regional and pro markets are selected from
Gila Queen's Guide to Markets #136, Kathy Ptacek ed.
<GilaQueen@worldnet.att.net>, 15 Dec 2005

THE WORLDWIDE ROBERT SAWYER CONSPIRACY™

"MINDSCAN PAPERBACK NOW OUT

"The mass-market paperback of my latest novel *Mindscan* is now out from Tor.

"*Mindscan* sample chapters, review excerpts, and other information:

" <http://www.sfwriter.com/exmi.htm>

"(*Mindscan* by Robert J. Sawyer. Tor Books, New York. ISBN 0-765-34975-2. US\$6.99 / Cdn\$9.99)

"HUGO REMINDER

"Just a polite reminder that nominations are now open for the Hugo Awards. If you had a membership in last year's World Science Fiction Convention in Glasgow or this year's World Science Fiction Convention in

Los Angeles, you're entitled to nominate.

"The works I have hopes for:

* In the Novel category: Sawyer, Robert J. *Mindscan* (Tor Books)

* In the Novella category: Sawyer, Robert J. "Identity Theft" (from *Down These Dark Spaceways*)

"Identity Theft" has already won Spain's 6,000-euro Premio UPC de Ciencia Ficción, and is a finalist for the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America's Nebula Award. *Down These Dark Spaceways* was an original anthology from the Science Fiction Book Club, edited by Mike Resnick.

"If you're a Hugo nominator or a SFWA member, you'll find the full text of "Identity Theft" here as a Word document (so you can format it whatever way you like for reading, or synch it to your PDA):

<http://sfwriter.com/identity.doc>

And "Identity Theft" is here as an Adobe PDF file:

<http://sfwriter.com/identity.pdf>

NEW TRADE-PAPERBACK EDITIONS

Tor recently released handsome trade paperback (large-format paperback) editions of two of my older novels: the Hugo Award-finalist (and Seiun Award-winner) *Frameshift*, and *Foreigner*, the final volume of my "Quintaglio Ascension" trilogy.

Information on *Frameshift*:

<http://www.sfwriter.com/exfr.htm>

(*Frameshift* by Robert J. Sawyer. Tor Books, New York. Trade paperback. November 2005. ISBN 0-765-31316-2.)

Information on *Foreigner*. Volume 3 of the Quintaglio Ascension:

<http://www.sfwriter.com/exq3.htm>

(*Foreigner* by Robert J. Sawyer. Tor Books, New York. Trade paperback. August 2005. ISBN 0-765-30972-6.)

AUTOGRAPHED COPIES

Looking for an autographed copy of the *Mindscan* paperback, or any of my other books? Ordering information is here:

<http://www.sfwriter.com/autograp.htm>

I've got an eBay store, and I take PayPal!

WRITING WORKSHOPS

I'll be Writer-in-Residence at Odyssey, a six-week-long science-fiction and fantasy writing workshop in New Hampshire being held June 12 through July 21, 2006.

And I'll be facilitating my usual week-long SF&F workshop at the Banff Centre for the Arts September 18-23, 2006.

Information on both workshops is here:

<http://www.sfwriter.com/workshop.htm>

"[Also] Just a reminder that I edit a line of science-fiction books for Canada's Red Deer Press; the imprint is called "Robert J. Sawyer Books." We've got four titles out, and our fifth – Nick DiChario's *A Small and Remarkable Life* (with an introduction by Mike Resnick) – is coming in April:

<http://www.robertjsawyerbooks.com>

In theory, the current (15 January 2006) issue of *American Way*, the in-flight magazine of American Airlines, has an article about my line of books. I won't be flying American this month, but if you are, I'd be very grateful if you could pick up a copy or two of *American Way* for me. My address is:

Robert J. Sawyer 100 City Centre Drive PO Box 2065 Mississauga, Ontario Canada L5B 3C6

Many thanks!

BLOG, DISCUSSION GROUP, AND WEBSITE

I've got an all-new blog. Check it out at:

<http://www.sfwriter.com/blog.htm>

Meanwhile, my RJS online discussion group just passed 1,000 members. Please feel free to join us at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/robertjsawyer/>

And, of course, don't forget to visit my web site, which now has over one million words of material: <http://www.sfwriter.com/>

Robert Sawyer, Jan. 18/06

THIS IS TRUE:

THIS WEEK'S HONORARY UNSUBSCRIBE goes to Bradford Cannon. A plastic surgeon, Cannon helped care for the survivors of a fire at Boston's Coconut Grove nightclub in 1942, where nearly 500 people were killed. Cannon and another doctor devised a way to treat burns on the survivors, which was so effective that it became standard treatment in burn cases, most notably for soldiers in World War II. "Plastic surgery nowadays is seen as simply cosmetic nip-tuck kind of work," said Dr. Atul Gawande of the Harvard School of Public Health. "But [Cannon] was a pioneer in the under-recognized and incredibly challenging field of reconstructive surgery – in particular for burn victims." He put his skills to work during the war, performing more than 15,000 restorative surgeries on casualties. He died at his daughter's home on December 20 from pneumonia. He was 98.

– Honorary Unsubscribe archive: <http://www.HonoraryUnsubscribe.com>

THIS IS TRUE for 25 December 2005

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 Berkshire, RG1 5AU. URL: <http://ansible.co.uk>. Available for SAE or
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 (Message body text irrelevant.) Please send a corresponding `unsubscribe'
 to resign from this list if you weary of it or plan to change e-addresses. You
 can also manage your subscription details at the following URL – updated
 August 2004. <https://mr1.dcs.gla.ac.uk/mailman/listinfo/ansible>



Plus c'est la Meme chose

(Fandom Lite)

CONQUEST NW OFFERS CONRUNNING SEMINARS

"We have an opportunity to offer some seminars for local convention
 organizers on convention operations at our upcoming ConQuest NW
 game convention coming February 17-20 at the Seattle Marriott Seatac
 Airport Hotel. To secure his appearance, I need to get an idea of how
 many organizations would like to send someone to attend these seminars.

"Anthony Gallela, the Executive Director of GAMA, the game
 industry trade organization that runs both the Origins International Game
 Expo in Columbus Ohio, as well as the GAMA Trade Show in Las Vegas
 each year, has offered to give seminars in the following areas (He is also
 willing to offer other types of seminars if there is a specific call
 for them.):

"Starting Your First Convention or Game Day

"For anyone who has just started or is looking to start a new game or
 hobby convention, this seminar covers the basics of convention
 management, including: choosing a location and date, basic space
 negotiations, finding game masters, setting up your schedule, working
 with volunteers, registration and data management, and advertising to
 your local hobby circles.

"Advanced Convention Operations – Ops

"You've run a small convention already, or perhaps a game day. Your
 event has grown a bit, and is starting to get more complex. This
 session will focus on the Operations Department of your team – how it
 works, what they do, and why you need one. Topics to include: advanced
 hotel negotiations, data management and registration functions, travel
 and rooming logistics, Web site functions, food and beverage, and
 dealing with multiple hotels.

"Advanced Convention Operations - Programs

"You've run a small convention already, or perhaps a game day. Your
 event has grown a bit, and is starting to get more complex. This
 session will focus on the Programs Department of your team – how it
 works, what they do, and why you need a large one. Topics to include:
 GM recruiting, timing difficulties, event solicitation, balancing your
 schedule, working with demo teams, and keeping your schedule current
 and exciting.

"For more information about ConQuest NW, please check the
 website at www.conquestnw.com or you can email me directly at thebard
 at avalongamecon dot com.

"Thanks for your consideration, and for supporting our new gaming
 convention in the Northwest."

Gabriel "Mondo" Vega
 Producer - ConQuest NW
 To NWConleague, Jan. 21, 2006

INEVITABLE DR. WHO COMMENTS

"I just saw a opening from the upcoming *Doctor Who* Christmas
 Invasion episode. I have one word for it. Wow! If you want to see for

yourself just log onto
http://www.bbc.co.uk/pudsey/appealnight/doctor_who_special.shtml
 and watch.”

Ray Seredin, BCSFA list, Nov. 19, 2005

Cult show The Prisoner returns

“Cult classic *The Prisoner* is set to return almost 40 years after it first hit TV screens

“Sky One is in talks to bring back the adventure series, which starred Patrick McGoochan as Prisoner Number 6.

“The series, which made its debut 1967, is today credited by its fans as being ahead of its time.

“Featuring McGoochan as a former secret agent trapped in an isolated seaside village, it was shown in more than 60 countries.

“The new version will not be placed in the original setting, the north Wales village of Portmeirion, or have the arty, "pop" feel of the original, according to the magazine *Broadcast*.

“Damien Timmer, who has been lined up to executive produce the show, told the television and radio industry magazine that the new series "takes liberties with the original".

“He said: "Although it will be a radical reinvention, it will still be a heightened show with themes such as paranoia, conspiracy and identity crisis."

“The original show, which ran on ITV for 17 episodes, has been the subject of university courses.

“American-born McGoochan, who was also its co-creator, denied that it contained any hidden meanings.

“The new version will be remade by Granada and is currently being written by Bill Gallagher, the writer of *Conviction*.

“Sky One is in talks about an initial eight-part series next year.

“European and US networks could also be involved in a co-production deal.”

from This is London, 18/11/05

Ray Seredin, Nov. 20, 2005

“Looks like our American neighbours will be able to enjoy season one of the new *Doctor Who* series after all, as its DVD set is hit the stores up here and down in the US on February 14, 2005. The new series has let to air on any American media outlets, meaning that series fans in the States will likely buy (or rent) a lot of the DVD sets and in doing so get a media outlet to purchasing the series US transmission rights, (Most likely BBC

America who is just waiting to show its American share holders that the new series can make it down there.)

“The cost of the DVD set of season one is \$99.98 US or \$117.65 Canadian, (That's \$134.10 with GTS/PST if you live in BC.), however it breaks down to \$10.32 (with GST/PST) an episode, then you have the ton of DVD extras to go a long with. That to me [is] a great deal and since [I'll] likely return to work in the early New Year I can afford it. So save our pennies.”

Ray Seredin, Nov. 30, 2005

THIS IS RUMOUR CONTROL

“BBC America' is expecting to make an official announcement sometime in the next few weeks, that it's picking both the classic *Doctor Who* series (Note: The episodes made between 1963 and 1989) and the new series of the show for broadcast in the US. This is after research revealed that the series still has a good following in the states and the reason it fell out of flavor [*sic*] with PBS stations was the rising cost and the fact there was no new episodes of over 15 years (Note: Except for the 1996 FOX TV Movie with the Pertwee logo).

“It's likely the *Doctor Who* will starting airing on the cable station soon after the "BBC World US" (a 24 hour news station ran by the BBC and in some part by PBS.) hits the air Mat 1st. 2006. It's unclear what classic episodes will air first (rumours say it's the Tom Bakers.) or what time it will air (Rumours say Monday-Friday at 8:00 PM Eastern and Pacific for the Classic episodes with the series airing at same time on Saturday, with the good Doctor taking Sundays off, however there is now word getting the net that "BBC World News" could remain on the station for a time until "BBC World US" builds up an audiences.)”

Ray Seredin, BCSFA email list, Dec. 2, 2005

ABOUT "THE ISLAND"

“... we've got a couple of bits of Universal-related news. First, a follow up on that problem with the Canadian release of *The Island* missing its English Dolby Digital 5.1 track. Here's the message that Canadian customers have been receiving via e-mail upon registering their complaints about the disc with the studio:

“... We are aware of the current issue with *The Island* DVD, and are offering replacements. If you wish to receive a replacement please provide your full name and mailing address and a prepaid envelope will be sent to you ASAP. Please use this prepaid envelope to return only the disc (not packaging). Replacement discs are scheduled to be available in late February/March 2006, at which time we will be sending you your

replacement copy. However, if discs are available sooner we will be sure to advise you. We appreciate your patronage and hope that you will continue to enjoy this and other Universal releases.

'Kindest regards, Customer Service

'Universal Studios/Alliance Atlantis Video'

"Canadian readers can use this customer service e-mail address to contact the studio and arrange your exchange:
universalcanadahomevideo@nbcuni.com

from Universal Studios via Dennis Kristos
via Greg Slade, Jan. 2, 2006



We're on a mission from
"Bob"

Bywords and Hissings

("Media File")
Ray Seredin

This month a good part of "Media File" comes from Powell River and the home of Cosmic Ray's mom.

Pilot season is in full swing in all the major production centres of North America, including Vancouver. Two rumoured science fiction shows going into production are new pilots of old favourites, *The Time Tunnel* and *Lost in Space*. They stand a better chance of being picked up this time because both of them have been ordered by the Sci-Fi Channel.

In movie news, production starts next week (the 15th) on the second *X-Files* movie, with about 90% of the production being done here in the Lower Mainland. Just David Duchovny's luck to turn up in Vancouver during the rainiest period since 1953!

Also coming up later this year is *Fantastic Four 2* which producers promise will be a lot better than *Fantastic Four*, with more time to build the tension up between the evildoers (not confirmed, but rumoured to be the Moleman) and the Four.

There may be some bad news if the provincial government gets its way. It could be cutting the tax write-off considerably to the film industry, just as it was about to get back on its feet. Hopefully the provincial government, realising that this year they're going to make several billion dollars in taxes from the booming mining and energy industries in British Columbia, will reconsider their actions.

Joss Whedon is quite impressed by the DVD sales of the *Serenity* movie and may be encouraged to do a direct-to-DVD sequel. The other possibility is that the sequel could be done as anime, as the live-action series did a lot better in the ratings in Japan than it did in North America.

Here we go with my rant. I'm kind of upset with the FCC in the United States, which as of January 1st, 2006, allows individual TV stations to replace regular programming with charitable programming. This means if a network is showing the second episode of a science fiction show that got low ratings in the first broadcast, a station has all the rights to replace it with a charitable program that, technically, through tax write-offs and the like, will bring in slightly more revenue for the station. I use the example of a science fiction program because science fiction is generally the most expensive and has the smallest audience compared to other types of TV programs. Meaning that in the next few years, it will be slightly harder for science fiction programs to succeed on network television. So please keep your cable connected.

Note: The CRTC is considering doing the same up here in Canada. As many of us can remember, the CRTC allowed charitable programming to air during prime-time during the 1980s to mid-1990s. However, to promote Canadian content, they stopped stations from doing that practice in 1995. Canadian stations may now decide to substitute charitable broadcasts for low-rated American series.

Over to the UK now.

As with most fans, I was quite happy with *Doctor Who: Christmas Invasion* that aired on the CBC December 26th, 2005. Though the Tenth Doctor is out of it for a good part of the story (building quite a bit of suspense), he sprang into action as soon as he smelled the tea. (Note: This is very British.) His battle with the Sycorax leader was an excellent cross of the Jon Pertwee-era Doctor and a *Star Wars* Jedi Knight. I also liked when Rose used Shadow Declaration from *Babylon 5* to fool the Sycorax into abandoning their plans and when they showed hundreds of people waiting

to jump off the top of Toronto's 79-story TD Center with the CN Tower standing in the background. (Sorry, no shot of the Lions' Gate Bridge.)

The actions between the Tenth Doctor and British Prime Minister Harriet Jones at end of the episode took me back to the series' golden age. The Doctor killed the Sycorax leader because he was a direct threat to him, while Harriet Jones blew up the Sycorax ship for revenge for them killing members of her staff. This is the kind of storytelling that I liked in the first three seasons of the Jon Pertwee era when the Doctor was very often at loggerheads with Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart. I hope that they will keep up this friction in the upcoming seasons. Also since 1/3 of the world's population were involved in the Christmas Invasion they can no longer keep UNIT a secret and from now on the Intelligence Taskforce will become very well-known on *Doctor Who* universe's Earth. (Note: Brigadier will become Sir Lethbridge-Stewart and I can make a fan-film called *UNIT* at VCon 31.)

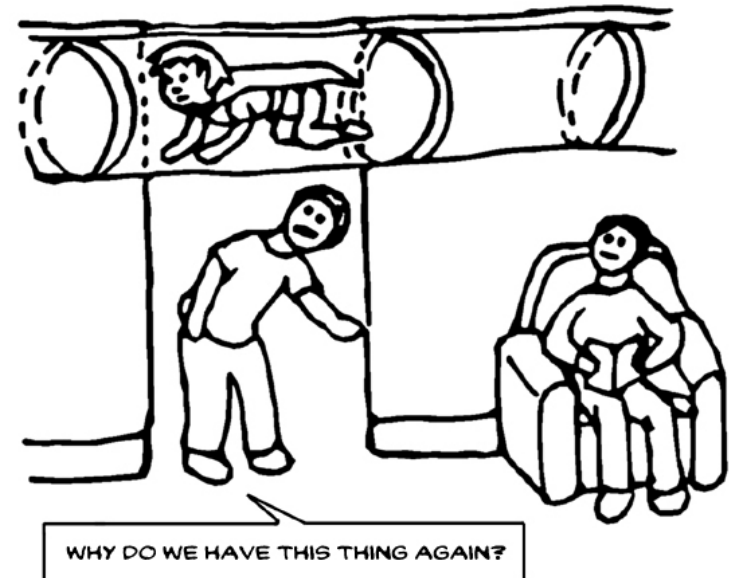
As for the killer Father Christmas and Christmas tree I really don't feel we've seen that last of their kind this season. The Doctor has made a lot of enemies over the last thousand years, meaning that someone or something is always out to get him.

As for the all-important ratings, *The Christmas Invasion* came in number three in the British overnights. The number one show for that night by the way was BBC1's own soap series *Eastenders* that was the lead-in to *The Christmas Invasion*.

Series viewers with BBC Digital also got a chance to play The Doctor's companion in an interactive episode called "Attack of the Graske" just by pressing a red button on their receiver after the airing of *The Christmas Invasion*. The BBC itself put it as "the chance to track down an evil alien life form by flying the TARDIS and completing a series of challenges set by the Doctor himself." (Note to the CBC: Please, please, please bring this to us Canadian series fans to play it on CBC Digital.)

As for the new spin-off series *Torchwood*, as I said above, with UNIT now out in the open it will fall on top-secret Torchwood division to keep track of evil aliens from when the Doctor is not around. I'm sure that Captain Jack, Harriet Jones, and their team can prevent any aliens' plan for Earth. The core of *Torchwood* stories should be that Captain Jack is stuck in the early 21st Century and has to work for UNIT for living. Hopefully the Doctor and Rose can take some time off from their adventures in time and space to help the Torchwood. (Note: I know that *Doctor Who* is a "family show" while *Torchwood* will be a more "adult-oriented" series. However, I say let there be a cross-over story; we are not mixing *Little House on the Prairie* with *South Park* here.)

I got some bad news for people waiting for the North American release of the *Doctor Who* new series season one DVD. Warner Video has delayed the release indefinitely. The release date was originally February 14th, however, with a number of high-profile DVDs being released the same day, Time Warner felt it would give *Doctor Who* a better chance by releasing it later in the year. Stay tuned to Media File for the release date. I'm kind of angry at what they're delaying it for. I doubt a person going to buy *Doctor Who* on February 14th will even bother to pick up a copy of *Gone with the Wind* or *Little House on the Prairie: Romance on the Prairie*. *Doctor Who* fans will likely just go to the video store to pick up *Doctor Who* new series season one.



THE HOBBITRAIL

Jade Gate

Book reviews by Donna McMahon

The Secrets of Jin-Shei, Alma Alexander (Harper Collins, 04)
Singer in the Snow, Louise Marley (Viking, Oct/05)
The Gist Hunter & Other Stories, Matthew Hughes (Night Shade, 05)
Pure, Karen Krossing (Second Story Press, 05)
Stealing Magic, Tanya Huff (Edge, 05)

The Secrets of Jin-Shei, Alma Alexander (Harper Collins, 04)

Although *The Secrets of Jin-Shei* is a Fantasy novel with a fictionalized medieval setting, you won't find it on the SF/F shelves because it's being marketed as mainstream "chick lit." For this reason, many genre readers may miss the book, which would be a shame.

With so many Fantasy novels using European-derived settings and mythology, ancient China makes a refreshing change. Alexander's landscape is tantalizingly exotic and yet familiar enough to feel very real, and she uses magic sparingly, in ways appropriate to her society. This and the intricate detail she's put into her backdrop makes *The Secrets of Jin-Shei* feel very much like historical fiction.

At the core of the story is the concept of jin shei – a special oath of lifelong friendship and sisterhood sworn between women. The women also share their own secret written language, Jin-ashu, which is taught and used by women in all walks of life. These bonds create vital links between women who live in an otherwise stratified and rigidly controlled society where women wield little direct power.

The novel centres around Tai, daughter of one of the Imperial Court's seamstresses, who exchanges a jin shei vow with Princess Antian. When an earthquake destroys the Summer Palace, Antian's dying wish is for Tai to take care of her difficult and unpopular younger sister, Liudan who is now successor to the throne. Tai later swears jin shei with Liudan, drawing together a group of young women in a web of jin shei bonds that will influence their lives and the future of the Empire.

The jin shei sisters range in rank from Khailin, daughter of the Court Chronicler, who dreads being married and drawn into formal Court life because she will no longer be free to pursue her studies, to Xaforn, a foundling raised by the Palace Guard, who is driven to be the youngest and best inductee into the Imperial Corps. Others include Qiaan, daughter of a Guard captain; Nhia, a poor girl with a withered leg whose unusual wisdom and devotion begin to draw attention at Temple; and Yuet, an apprentice healer.

Eight protagonists (plus all their associated secondary characters) is many, and even though they are all well drawn and distinctive people, I found myself losing track from time to time. Also, the author appears to set out without a clear direction and flounder around for a long time in search of a plot. Eventually the story gels around an evil alchemist and his attempts to manipulate the Empire, but it does feel a little perfunctory, as if added as an afterthought.

Nonetheless, this is an absorbing and fascinating read, well written, atmospheric and with moments of wrenching intensity. It's also a novel that because of its complexity and large cast, will probably merit several enjoyable re-reads. And I hope that guys aren't scared off by the flowers on the cover because this is no sappy romance – it's a compelling tale of Palace intrigue and a ruthless quest for immortality.

Singer in the Snow, Louise Marley (Viking, Oct/05)

Singer in the Snow is the first young adult novel by Seattle writer Louise Marley. In it, Marley has returned to the world she created for her first three novels: *Sing The Light*, *Sing The Warmth* and *Receive The Gift*.

Marley's career as a singer was the inspiration for Nevya, an ice planet where energy is created psychically through music. People with the "Gift" are trained as cantors and cantrixes, to provide heat and light to small communities scattered across the hostile terrain. Singers train for years at the Conservatory, then at the end of their training they are assigned to a "House" where they may remain for much of the rest of their lives.

Emle is a girl who was sent to the Conservatory at a young age to study and wants to make her family proud. But there's something wrong. Although Emle is clearly Gifted and can sing and play beautifully, no matter how hard she tries she can't generate quiru – warmth and light.

When Emle cannot pass her final exams, she is sent along with Mreen, the most powerful Cantrix of her generation, to her first posting at the House of Tarus. Mreen is unprecedented – she is entirely mute and generates psi with her playing alone. She can speak telepathically with other Gifted, but she must use Sign to talk to normal people, and her nervousness makes her seem aloof and arrogant. Hence, friendly Emle is an ideal companion and intermediary.

At the House of Tarus the two young women meet Luke, an awkward, tongue-tied teenager who tends hruss (pack horses) under his stepfather, Axl, the House hrussmaster. Luke and his younger sister, Gwim, are held captive by bonds of secrecy and love for their mother, a gentle, weak woman who will not leave her husband, how matter how much he beats

her. Luke, Emle and Mreen are all drawn into trying to help Gwim, who is hiding her newly discovered Gift from her violent stepfather.

As with all of Marley's novels, *Singer in the Snow* revolves around strongly drawn characters and their problems. All the protagonists in this book are compelling and realistic and it's easy to get swept into their stories. And Marley's love of music gives a real depth to her depiction of the cantrixes, their training, and the sacrifices they're expected to make for their art.

I also enjoyed the depiction of the summer that only comes every four years when Nevya's second sun appears over the horizon, melting the snow for a few brief weeks.

Truthfully, the plot of *Singer in the Snow* is on the thin side and the ultimate outcome is obvious, but the intensity of the characters and their personal problems, as well as the thoughtfully developed setting, largely make up for that. This is a young adult book but it's very readable for an adult audience as well.

The Gist Hunter & Other Stories, Matthew Hughes (Night Shade, 05)

People who are familiar with Matt Hughes' clever, sardonic prose have probably already snatched up *The Gist Hunter & Other Stories*, his first collection, just published by Night Shade Books. For others, this will make a good introduction to his work.

Hughes is being compared to Jack Vance these days, but personally I like Hughes a great deal more. His ornate turns of phrase and droll, sardonic humour are something to be savoured and revisited. And like Hughes' novels *Fools Errant*, *Fool Me Twice*, and *Black Brillion*, most of the stories in this collection are set in a whimsical far future Earth.

Six tales feature Henghis Hapthorn, foremost freelance discriminator in the city of Olkney in the penultimate age of Old Earth. Hapthorn, the most brilliant citizen in the city (and he does not hesitate to say so) solves problems that nobody else can solve by "uncovering facts and relationships so ingeniously hidden or disguised as to baffle the best agents of the Archonate's Bureau of Scrutiny."

In "Mastermindless", Hapthorn is working on a problem when he suddenly discovers that he can no longer think clearly, and a glance in his reflector reveals that his face has become disfigured and covered in warts. He discusses the problem with his "integrator", a powerful AI.

My cerebral apparatus was powerful and highly tuned. Yet now it was as if some gummy substance had been poured over gears that had always spun without friction.

Something is wrong," I said. "Moments ago I was a highly intelligent and eminently attractive man in the prime of life. Now I am ugly and dull."

"I dispute the 'eminently attractive'. You were, however, presentable. Now, persons who came upon you unexpectedly would be startled."

And when Hapthorn discovers his bank account has been reduced to 32 hepts and 14 grimlets, he has no choice but to go forward armed only with a fragment of his usual intellect, to discover and stop the perpetrator.

Three other stories feature Guth Bandar, a noönaut, or explorer of the "Commons" – the human collective unconscious. The first of these tales, "A Little Learning," recounts Bandar's apprenticeship at the Institute for Historical Inquiry, where he learns to travel among a multitude of archetypal Events, Landscape and Situations. Bandar's unconventional approach to the noösphere both irritates the institute and puts him at risk of getting lost or merging with one of the primal entities that roam the "shared basement of the human mind."

The final four stories in this collection are quite different – two very short, punchy SF tales, a longer SF story called "Go Tell the Phonecians" (which reminded me of the classic Eric Frank Russell story, "And Then There Were None") and finally, a mainstream coming of age story "Bearing Up" about a teenager in Comox, BC. They are all good, but I liked the last one best, which is a fine note on which to end a collection.

Gist Hunter is in hardcover right now, with the likelihood of a trade paperback some time next year. That's hard on readers with limited budgets, but it is a handsome volume with a delightful Escheresque cover illustration by Jason Van Hollander. For the hard-core collector there's also a limited edition of only 125 copies, signed and including an extra story, "Osfeo Tales".

Pure, Karen Crossing (Second Story Press, 05)

Lenni is a teenager living in Dawn, a planned settlement in the "New Canadian North" populated only by healthy people who are genetically unaltered. The corporation "Purity" runs the town and constantly polices people's genomes to make sure they aren't making illegal DNA alterations. They are preserving the purity of the race.

Lenni knows that she's lucky not to live in the dangerous, chaotic Beyond, and fortunate to attend the elite Academy of Intelligence. But she feels stifled by all the rules and the uniformity and longs to spend her time focusing on her artwork and her odd, burgeoning talent for seeing inside people.

She instinctively keeps her talent secret; still, she is taken by surprise when the Purity police arrest her on suspicion that she is a dangerous genetic construct.

This is a good set-up for a novel, but follow-through is lacking, and the single biggest problem is plotting. Throughout *Pure*, characters walk from one stagy conversation to another with little plausible reason, and take actions that make no sense. For instance, the novel opens with Lenni selling portraits in the park, despite the acute danger and embarrassment involved, because she saw herself doing it in a dream. That might be plausible either if Lenni seemed flaky enough to act out dreams, or if we eventually discovered some plot-forwarding reasons behind the dream, but neither is the case.

In this book, conversations are staged in public or private or overheard entirely according to the needs of the author rather than any kind of story logic. For instance, the Purity police are supposed to be menacing and oppressive, but they don't notice that Lenni is turning up music in her hospital room and whispering to visitors to evade audio surveillance. And Lenni is so dense she can't even think of typing important information on her "slate" (laptop computer), showing it to somebody and erasing it, rather than talking. Argh! (This must seem especially lame to the text messaging generation.)

Further, Lenni doesn't move the plot. In fact, except for wrestling with her unique healing gift, she spends the whole book reacting to things that are done to her. This might be plausible, but it doesn't make for a good YA story. And I found her reactions sometimes subdued for a fifteen year old. If my mother had had my boyfriend expelled from school for the crime of kissing me on a park bench, I would have done more than shout a bit.

There are curious omissions in this book, too. Lenni is never physically described, her status in the ruthless hierarchy of high school is unclear, and she doesn't appear to worry about exams or do any homework even though the school is extremely competitive and her parents are pushing her to succeed.

Genetics is a key part of the story, but other SF elements are largely perfunctory and poorly thought out. Examples of climate change struck me as improbable – for instance, if the weather in Northern Canada became as hot as described, there wouldn't be a boreal forest left. I couldn't see any reason for shortages of power to run people's "slates" given technology that's already available now. And the examples of genetic engineering appear to be didactically motivated rather than researched for any kind of plausibility.

Which brings me to the preachiness. There are a lot of well meaning speeches in this book that struck me as more likely to appeal to parents than teenagers. The author doesn't seem to trust her readers to "get it" so she does a lot of telling where she should simply show.

An SFnal element that works and demonstrates how this could have been a stronger novel is "lifewort", a plant engineered to produce oil for biodegradable plastics. Lifewort is resistant to salt, drought, heat, freezing, insects, viruses, and so forth, so when it starts invading and destroying ecosystems, it's remarkably difficult to eradicate. And Lenni's father, who designed it, doesn't question whether it's a good thing – he just views the damage it's causing as a technical challenge.

That's a far better example of genetic engineering gone bad than silliness like a "squog", a cross between a squirrel and a dog "designed to hunt for nuts, shell them, and return them to their owners." (sigh)

On the bright side, I liked some of the characters in this book, especially Lenni's whiney, manipulative mother. Crossing makes an effort to build characters who are not what they first seem, and who embody contradictory elements.

I'm not surprised that librarians and mainstream reviewers are praising *Pure*, but as a long time SF reader who started out in my school library reading YAs, I wasn't much impressed, nor do I think most young readers will be.

Stealing Magic, Tanya Huff (Edge, 05)

Tanya Huff fans will want this book, plain and simple. Not only are the stories good, the packaging is brilliant. *Stealing Magic* is bound like an old Ace double – one side for the Terazin stories, and one for the Magdalene stories – making for a great bi-directional read, with double cover art by David Willicome that's both handsome and suitable to the stories.

For those who don't already know Huff's work, she's a talented Fantasy writer whose books are a great way to kick back on a rainy day. Novels like *The Fire's Stone* (1990) set a delightful new gender-bending standard for living happily ever after, and her Toronto vampire books (*Blood Price*, *Blood Trail*, *Blood Lines*, and *Blood Pact*) were a kick.

The stories in *Stealing Magic* are republished from various magazines and anthologies. Some have been reprinted before, but they've never been gathered together in one volume, which is clearly where they belong.

The larger side of this book consists of seven exploits of Magdalene, the most powerful wizard in the world. In "The Last Lesson", a fourteen-year-old Magdalene is apprenticed to Adar, the king's wizard. She hasn't

realized that she is already more powerful than Adar, and that he is planning to steal her powers and kill her.

Of course she triumphs – she always does – but the fun is in the details and the characterization of this self-indulgent, lustful, yet very practical woman. For instance, when she finds a village where she wants to build her home ("Mirror, Mirror, On the Lam") she has to convince the villagers to accept her.

"I can be your defenses," Magdalene insisted.

Yolanda's teeth ground against her pipe stem. "You could use your power to enslave us."

"I could... but why would I bother?"

She sounded so sincerely puzzled that Carlos began to laugh. "She's right," he cackled. "The only thing she'd rather do than lie in the sun is..." Just what exactly Magdalene would rather do than lie in the sun got lost in a violent coughing fit, but more than one stupid grin was hastily hidden.

The flip side of *Stealing Magic* has four stories featuring Terazin, possibly the world's best thief. She is introduced in "Swan's Braid" trying to gain admission to the Thieves Guild – literally, since the first test is breaking into their building without getting caught. When she succeeds brilliantly, they set her a second test – bringing them the braid of Swan, local hero and leader of a band of mercenaries that has just saved the town from a gang of marauding bandits.

Trouble is, Swan is also a beautiful woman, and Terazin has an intense crush on her. Getting close enough to steal her braid may involve perils far beyond the usual risks of the business...

It's all good fun – well written, clever, vastly entertaining, and leaving the reader wanting lots more.

Vanitas Vanitatem

Movie Review: *Æon Flux*

By Ryan Hawe

Within science fiction and fantasy filmmaking, there are many films that receive critical drubbings, or which fail to find an initial audience amongst theatregoers, fannish or no. There can be many reasons for this, sometimes the film is genuinely bad, sometimes misunderstood, sometimes mishandled by its producers. But as any cinephile who has scoured the



direct-to-video rental selections can tell you, there are undiscovered gems amid the dross, exceptions that prove Sturgeon's infamous rule. *Æon Flux* is one such gem.

A bit of history: Back in the early 1990s when MTV was interesting to watch, they would show animated shorts under the "Liquid Television" segment banner (which MuchMusic got the Canadian rights to, and showed up north). Peter Chung provided both a linked series of shorts with dialogue and a plot (the rarely seen "first season"), as well as

unconnected stories seemingly set up to parody the sci-fi-action tropes of the day, both starring a vinyl-clad operative named *Æon Flux*. Her exploits were a monster hit, whether due to her hyper-kinetic comic-book heroine figure or her surrealistic exploits that tended to end with her frequent demise, or both. A series was commissioned, and while it did provide an overarching mythology (in which *Æon* was pitted against Trevor Goodchild, scientist-politician ruling the city-state of Bregna), it was also rich in ambiguity, metaphor, labyrinthine plots, and backstory that was mostly hints (obviously Trevor and *Æon* have some sort of past, for neither seem able to kill the other, but what?).

And that was it for a good long time, as *Æon's* role in pop-culture seemed to be taken up by such similarly styled fighters as Trinity from the *Matrix* films or Selene from *Underworld*. So the revelation that *Æon Flux: The Movie* was coming out in December 2005 seemed most surprising. And for many fans, a little disconcerting: it was live-action, starred Charlize Theron (Not a natural brunette), clothed her much more conservatively than her animated counterpart, and – for many this was most telling – was not prescreened to critics (often in Hollywood a sign that somewhere up the chain had lost faith in the production). Reviews trickled in suggesting the film was a dud – though for odd reasons. "Why is this sci-fi actioner so damn talky?" said one, not realizing that such was a hallmark of Chung's earlier work (though he didn't write the screenplay for this film, according to its credits).

Intrigued by what might actually be going on, and emboldened by the video game trailer (where somebody did their homework, putting the Theron model through a plot lifted from the old Liquid Television days), I went with my friend Garrett, who got me into the *Æon Flux* phenomenon

back in the day. And we were both greatly impressed.

First off, let me assure fans of the original that all the classic Flux elements are there. The plot takes several twists, issues of identity and order vs. chaos are very much at the fore, and the city-state of Bregna is still well-defended and run by Dr. Goodchild (seemingly impossibly, as he also cured a plague in 2011, and the film is set in 2417). It *is* told in a different visual style than the animated series (which for at least a few fans, will be an unforgivable sin), and while there are enough differences in plot details to consider the movie its own continuityⁱ, there is no reason to give it any less weight, for it has a few answers to some of the plaguing questions of the cartoon. Just wait until you learn what the connection between Trevor and Æon actually is...

Charlize Theron demonstrates just again just why she's an Academy Award winning actress, creating a very believable Æon. Indeed, you find it hard to believe she was dyed for the part, such is her skill at bringing the character to the fore. And, yet, for all her undeniable martial prowess, her arsenal of tricks (from ocular implants that enable her to examine drinks to whistle-controlled ball-bearing bombs) and her devotion to free will, we finally get to see a vulnerable core underneath: *she doesn't know who she really is*. The image of Æon has overtaken the reality, and this seems both in-keeping character development as well as mild meta-critique.

Marton Csokas has the part of Trevor Goodchild, and it just wouldn't be a proper film if he didn't have his own complexity to unravel. This is something of a challenge, as the animated-series character was essentially split in two, with the order-and-control obsession (and the blonde hair and blue clothing) being passed onto his younger brother, Oren (played with intensity by Jonny Lee Miller). Csokas (playing Trevor as a brown-haired man in a brown sportcoat) molds what is left (his scientific genius and political savvy) into his own package. His rule is absolute, and shut off from the populace as he is by layers of security, councillors, and traps (including literal "blades" of grass surrounding the government buildings), it's hard to believe his claims that he has the best interests of humanity at heart. The thing of it is, he may actually be right...

Overall, I found this film to be a top notch adaptation of the original source, with all the classic intrigues, body modifications, evasion-of-defenses scenes, concerns over identity and liberty, hallucinatory visions, and strange new tech to make this very much *Æon Flux: The Definitive Movie*. I know that some, equally true-Æon-fen will not agree, holding the look to be as important as the feel. (And Peter Chung is still working, having recently done a *Chronicles of Riddick* animated feature.) I urge them – and you – to ignore the film's slender classic-media promotion (which makes the film seem simplistic, or worse, incoherent)ⁱⁱ and see this film. For the

answer to "Can a live-action, PG-13 film carry over all the metaphorical weirdness of a barely linear MTV cartoon?", appears to be "Damn straight!", if director Karyn Kusama (*Girlfight*) and screenwriters Phil Hay and Matt Manfredi have anything to say about it.

And that's "getting it right" in the most important way.

Footnotes:

ⁱ Promotional text claims that the videogame will, among other things, bridge the animated series with the movie. Your Mileage May Vary.

ⁱⁱ By contrast, www.aeonflux.com is a rich tapestry of promotional material for the Movie, the newly repackaged Animated Series DVD collection, and the video game.

Art Credits

Sheryl Birkhead..... title logo
 Joe Devoy 29, 36, 40, 43
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- | | |
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| ___ Big ups to Garth on his new fonts. | nonsense. |