

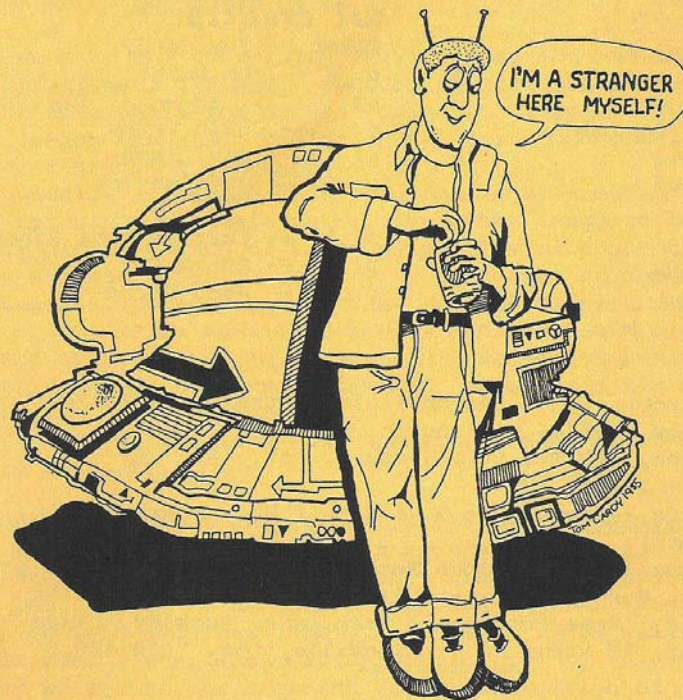
AURORAN LIGHTS

The Fannish E-zine of the Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy Association
Dedicated to Promoting the Prix Aurora Awards and the history of Canadian Fandom

#2

Mar 2011

The World According To Garth



#14

April 1986

Fan-Editor: Garth Spencer. Cover art by Tom Cardy.

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Kenneth Simons: 5 (upper left)

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Taral Wayne: 16

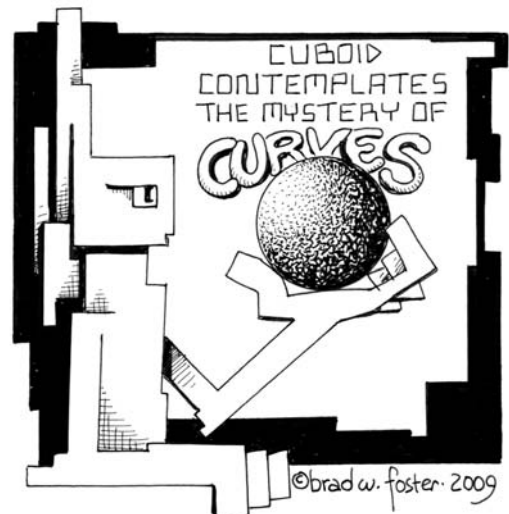
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Note: All opinions expressed in the articles are the opinions of the contributing authors (and those of the editor) and do NOT reflect the 'official' views of the CSFFA Board of Directors.

EDITORIAL:

At last I have completed this issue of AURORAN LIGHTS. I originally intended to publish it on the first of the month. That I am a few days late doesn't really matter of course, except that I want to have the next issue of WCSFAzine out this month as well, and the next issue of AL ready by April 1st. And then there's my personal zine SPACE CADET. And numerous research projects. It's a good thing I'm retired as otherwise I wouldn't have the time to do all this.

I've known Garth Spencer for more than a quarter of a century so it gives me great pleasure to feature a retrospective of his more than three decades of fanac (fan activity). As the very FIRST winner of a CSFFA fan award and a major contributor to the living heritage of Canadian fandom he more than deserves this tribute. I only wish it were better, but I did the best I could within the constraints of my own style and approach. You'll note, for instance, that I interject personal comments. This is not so much because I'm a megalomaniac (am I?) but because I want to illustrate the 'flavour' of truly fannish publications, how they tend to function as a dialogue among peers, and in particular demonstrate Garth's knack for stimulating such response. Likewise my frequent quotations from other fan's reviews and letters of comment, not to mention demonstrations of his own strong editorial presence. All in order to convey what it's like to READ Garth's publications. What it's like to take part in them.

I am also very pleased to reprint on the back page of this issue John Bell's NOTES ON THE CANADIAN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY AWARD (CSFFA) written in December 1980, subsequent to the first award, which explains how the CSFFA award (the Coeurl') is to be handed out in the future. There have been a few changes since then. Multiple awards are given now, and they are officially titled 'Aurora' awards rather than 'Coeurl' or the later 'Casper'. This document gives us an opportunity to look back in time to see how the originators of the award envisioned it would evolve.

Cheers! R. Graeme Cameron

My thanks to Bill Burns for hosting this and previous issues at < <http://efanzines.com/Auroran/index.htm> >

Feedback and letters of comment welcome! Contact me at < [rgraeme\[at\]shaw.ca](mailto:rgraeme[at]shaw.ca) >

CSFFA NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

AURORA NOMINATIONS STILL OPEN

Final nominations must be received

no later than

midnight PST April 30, 2011

THREE SIMPLE STEPS TO NOMINATE!

STEP ONE: ELIGIBILITY

Go to < <http://www.canadiansf.com> > where eligibility lists are maintained. Look at the main menu on the left side of the screen and, to see who's listed already, click on either 'SF WIKI' (professional categories) or 'FAN WIKI'.

STEP TWO: NOMINATE

Once you have made up your mind whom or what you want to nominate, go to the official CSFFA site at < <http://www.prixaurorawards.ca> > and follow instructions.

STEP THREE: VOTE

Instructions will be provided at an appropriate time in the future.

FALLACIOUS FANNISH HISTORY ARTICLES

GARTH SPENCER: A FENAISSANCE FAN

By The Graeme

Note: Lines in **dark red** are comments by Garth on this article.

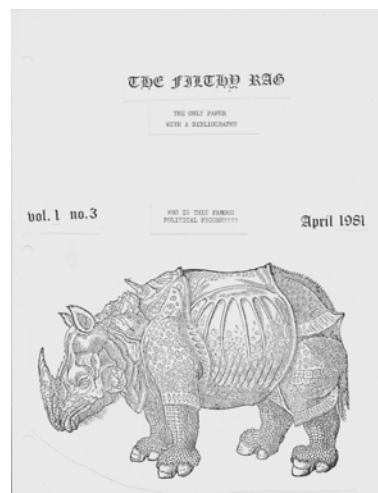
BCSFazine #429 (February 2009) was Garth Spencer's last issue as editor. He stepped down, handing BCSFazine over to the new editor, Felicity. Let me tell you about Garth's fanac BEFORE he became editor of BCSFazine.

Born in 1957, he entered fandom circa late 1970s through joining SFAV, the Science Fiction Association of Victoria, which was founded in 1975 and lasted till the mid-eighties. Club publications began with two issues of UP THE TUBES edited by Stan G. Hyde in 1978, followed by two zines, PHOENIX and FROM THE ASHES under various editors, which were combined under the title PHOENIX & FTA in February 1982. Garth became editor in June of 1982. He remained editor when the name changed again to FTA/PHOENIX in December 1982, and hung on till the last issue in December 1983.

However, it should be noted that Garth's first publication was his personal zine SCUTTLEBUTT which ran for 8 issues in 1981 and possibly longer. Occasional subtitles included 'THE BLACK MARXIST LESBIAN QUARTERLY', 'THE PERFECT PAPER', 'THE RUMOUR RAG', 'THE FILTHY RAG', & such. Described as an "exterior to frame of reference humourzine".

Bernie Klassen, writing in 1985, commented: SCUTTLE BUTT "ran news & views mostly of interest to Discordians & conspiracy freaks. Not a bad fanzine, just one that was rather opaque to non-Discordian/conspiracy freaks. SCUTTLE BUTT was simply & cleanly laid out, & for lack of art, Garth discovered the copy-right free illustration books at the local library. It became interesting to see 18th century woodcuts surrounded by bizarro text or titles."

In the first issue Garth commented "SCUTTLEBUTT is published irregularly in Victoria by a small group of Pythonists for their own amusement and that of their friends." The key word is 'Pythonist'. Garth seems to have been inspired by the Monty Python comedy TV series.



...and by SFAV's fanzine library, and by "Beyond the Fringe", and by student humour and pranks, which resembled the faanish humour I found in SFAV's fanzine library. A lot of the archived fanzines came from the 1970s efflorescence of fanpublishing in Winnipeg and Edmonton. – Garth



Garth in 1979

However, in a series of articles Garth made it clear his primary influence was Discordianism, "a philosophy or religion which is also an elaborate joke" founded in 1966/67 by author Robert Anton Wilson and Kerry Thornley, the latter editor of 'THE NEW LIBERTARIAN' magazine. The idea was that the Discordians were an eons-old secret society locked in eternal war with the Bavarian Illuminati. "This was intended to be so silly as to restore a sense of proportion to the readers." For a time Discordianism spread like wildfire through the underground press. Trouble is, though appreciated as satire by many, others preferred to believe wholeheartedly. So much for the restoration of 'proportion'.

Wilson and Bob Shea were then inspired to write the Illuminatus trilogy in which, quoting Wilson, "We made the Discordians the Good guys and the Illuminati the Bad Guys in an epic of convoluted treachery that satirized all conspiracy theories of left and right." In my opinion this backfired. Far too many readers assumed the trilogy was the literal truth. I remember avoiding the books like the plague because everyone I knew who had read them bumbled on about how they were documentary revelations disguised as fiction which blew the lid of the falseness of official history. Even some critical reviews took this stance. Consequently I assumed Wilson was the crank king of crackpots writing for other

crackpots, or at best a shameless charlatan raking in the bucks. Only now, on perusing issues of SCUTTLEBUTT in the BCSFA/WCSFA archive do I 'get' what the Illuminati trilogy was all about. Only now am I interested in reading the Illuminati Trilogy.

I devote this much space to Discordianism because its style of satiric humour was not only the underlying basis of SCUTTLEBUTT, it forms the core of Garth's sense of humour and permeates almost everything he has ever written and indeed, much of his conversation.



Possible early incarnation of Garth As 'Superfan' in UVIC student zine

In his editorial in issue four Garth wrote: "*SCUTTLEBUTT was conceived as a way of getting stuff out of my head, giving me a space to write in, and giving others a reason to laugh... Please note the constant themes: odd and obscure news; sinister and criminal events; absurd, paranoid conspiracy theories; slices of life in Victoria; active interest in science fiction, social issues, and the free flow of information. SCUTTLEBUTT is about all of these things. SCUTTLEBUTT is about what I am about. This is the definition of a perzine.*"

Typically every issue carried brief notes on assorted hoaxes (for instance King Wisukitsak of a kingdom between Alberta & B.C.), Discordian style activities (stealing Black shoeshine boy lawn ornaments – remember them?), genuine conspiracy theories (meteorological warfare), actual news (Nixon administration cutting back on the US Space Program), and outright silliness (Pierre Trudeau works for the legion of Dynamic Discord).

Garth himself later wrote: "*SCUTTLEBUTT was conceived as a zine devoted to analyzing the news my way, or pointing out vital sources of information. Then I drifted into obscure and bizarre types of jokes. Robert Runte pointed out that I didn't particularly have a theme, which was one reason to cease... Cost, both in time and money, was another reason why I killed SCUTTLEBUTT...*"

Another early zine Garth edited, or rather shared editing duties with Paula Johanson, Bernie B. Klassen and David Gordon-McDonald, was **THE CENTRAL GANGLION**. It was conceived as an interclub newsletter in the spring of 1982 "in an attempt to open communications between Victoria's 4 or 5 warring clubs/factions. It was one of Canada's better club newsletters, especially considering it didn't actually have its own club," wrote Robert Runte.

Garth once commented: "*Bernie Klassen and I perceived a need for an inter-club newsletter, so the clubs (less communicative than I had expected) would know what each other was doing. THE CENTRAL GANGLION lasted barely a year, though, and didn't get much input or response. (We also started a confederal group, with Bev Cooke; The Vancouver Island SF Con Steering Committee was to oversee local cons and hand on successful guidelines. Again, no participation, interest, or response. Guess it was too organized.)*" THE CENTRAL GANGLION ran for some 11 issues, the last in November of 1983.

Amusingly, the four editors called themselves 'The Ganglion of Four,' an allusion to 'The Edmonton Gang of Four' which consisted of the four Faneds of THE MONTHLY MONTHLY in the early 1980s. They were: David Vereschagin, Michael S. Hall, Bob Weir & Robert Runte. This in turn was a takeoff of 'The Gang Of Four', four prominent Chinese officials including Mao's wife who were tried for treason after the death of Mao. This implied the two sets of faneds were in some way dangerous outcasts. And I suppose they were.

Getting back to **FTA/PHOENIX**, in Garth's first issue (Vol3/No3/June1982) as editor he wrote: "*Phoenix is a pot; it contains what you put into it. Therefore, if you want to see something here – or if you don't – you must tell me. Better yet, contribute. (You will notice that I wrote more than half this issue. I will both solicit and hand out story ideas at upcoming meetings.)*"



"*Editing a perzine taught me that it can be wearying to support a whole fanzine with little input. Managing the library (we have a fanzine library, did you know that?) taught me that lots of clubzines have news, reviews, letters (unlike Phoenix,*

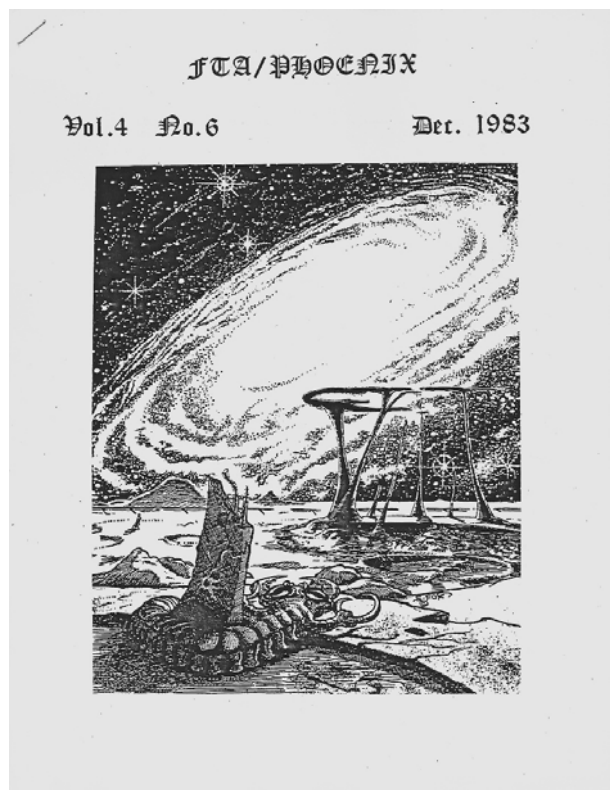
hint, hint). Grafix, announcements – but few or no articles or stories. Do you guys want some meat? Then you'll write it, won't you?"

"Now I'll sit back and watch what you do."

What Garth did was contribute editorials (titled 'Raking the Coals'), fanzine reviews, a regular column called 'Spencer's Planetological Review' describing various fictional planets to be found in SF, and movie reviews, as well as numerous essays with titles like: 'This is the Way We Write Books', and 'Political Science Fiction'. I note that minutes of SFAV meetings were printed under the title 'Déjà vu'. I like that.

In fact other members did respond to Garth's call for meat, even unto short stories, art and poetry! S. Fox became a regular contributor of magnificent sensawonda cover art. FTA/PHOENIX had turned into a very classy production indeed.

In Vol4/No2/April 1983 Garth employs his editorial to both describe himself and plea for help: *"I am not a Secret Master of Fandom."*



"I do not hold the pulsing heart of Victoria's fandom in my hands. I do not control or influence the major lines of communication within and out of town. I neither can nor would manipulate opinions and behavior in our various clubs."

"It is a matter of the purest coincidence that I simultaneously act as Information officer, clubzine editor, and representative of SFAV to the Vancouver Island SF Con Steering Committee, and edit THE CENTRAL GANGLION to boot. There is no sinister significance to the fact that I know principal members of each of Victoria's clubs, and might be considered a member of a fictitious inner circle (as if there were one)."

"I just happened to think up the name for Concept, too. Honest!"

"And I categorically deny any connection with the Ancient Illuminated Seers of Bavaria. I just set up the Bavarian Illuminati at UVic as a joke; but it flopped, it fell down, it died, went down the tubes."

"So I am not a Secret Master of Fandom. Just thought I'd settle that right now. So there."

"Seriously, I guess it's a bad precedent for one man to wear so many hats. Someone could start smoffing in that position."

"Towards the end of the year, I will be giving up most or all of the functions I hold. I trust I've been doing a good enough job that each of my various successors (you volunteer types are out there, aren't you? You will step forward for these positions in fall, won't you?) will have some idea of what I've been doing and what they should be doing. You will also get a set of notes apiece, including stuff I've learned, or what I think you should have."

"....Yes, I guess I'm doing the work of several people. I wonder when they'll show up. (hint, hint!)"

In Vol4/No3/ June1983 Garth began a series of 'Sort of Famous Fans' bios beginning with himself, described thusly: *"Garth Spencer joined the SF Association of Victoria around 1976, not long after SFAV was formed and not long after he entered UVic. Since then he has been involved with the Langham Court Theatre, the Martlet (the student paper at UVic), the New Democratic Party and the Bavarian Illuminati. Today he is the editor of FTA/PHOENIX, THE CENTRAL GANGLION, THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARTH, and ENTER THE LISTS. Garth is also SFAV Information Officer, SFAV representative on the Vancouver Island SF Con Steering Committee, an active jogger and contributor to several SFAV trades, and otherwise a fannish glutton for punishment. Ongoing projects include a nearly-complete Victoria Fandom Guide, a collection of fanwriting from Victoria, a fan editor's guide and an admittedly incomplete listing of fanzines."*

“Garth Spencer is white, male, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant and left-handed. His eyes are blue, his hair is too long and his clothes are indescribable. He is unmarried and currently unemployed. Garth rides Sarah the Putrid Bicycle and talks to animals.”

In the same issue Garth describes the current status of the SFAV clubzine: *“FTA/PHOENIX, as you must know if you’re reading this, is a bimonthly combined newsletter and clubzine, produced by ditto. When I became editor, the frequency was irregular, the size was irregular, and the publication policies weren’t set down anywhere. Now FTA/PHOENIX is produced as regularly as I can make it; the size hovers around 20 pages, plus ad sheets and covers; I have made our trading and other policies explicit...”*

“SFAV has at present a mailing list of up to 23 addresses. We have about six out-of-town members and contributors, three in Canada, two in the U.S. and two abroad, plus about 17 trades, 8 in Canada, 7 in the U.S. and two abroad...”

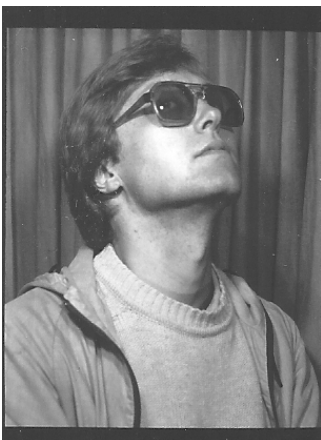
*“This year I have paid to put photocopied covers on FTA/PHOENIX, featuring illustrations by ** Steve Fox **. This is a well-known fanartist we are privileged to feature. Just thought I’d let you know.”*

“It may be that FTA/PHOENIX, despite what I have done to reduce costs, is costing too much for our absence of a budget. In that case, you will see the zine much reduced. I would have appreciated some more feedback, direction and input from the club.”

In Garth’s penultimate issue (Vol4/No5/October1983) his editorial deals with the difficulty of running SFAV based on assumptions rather than rules: *“I think we are obliged to check our assumptions once in a while, to find out what the facts are or what the rules and customs around us are. (For one thing, enough people just assume these things go without saying that a whole lot of uninformed people – like me – end up walking around wondering who’s going to get mad at us next, or why.) Some people we know got into bad trouble financially because, among other things, they didn’t do the necessary research into conventions. There ought to be a word for this kind of thing...”*

And in his last issue of FTA/PHOENIX (Vol4/No6/December1983.) Garth does not comment on his leaving at all, but instead lets Stephanie Ann Lightbody, SFAV President, speak her own thoughts and, in a sense, perhaps echo some of Garth’s thoughts as well. It’s worth reprinting here, because it reflects problems common to many clubs:

“When I first started going to SFAV meetings, I was thrilled to find so many other people interested in Science Fiction and Fantasy. It’s these memories of my early days in SFAV that prompted me to accept the SFAV presidency. I thought, however presumptuous of me, that I could create for new members and old, that same feeling I got when I first joined. This is close to an impossible feat. If I continue to try to turn this club into something it doesn’t want to be, I shall destroy the club and myself. My time, and yours, is being wasted.”



Garth in Student Days

“My suggestion to you as a club is to throw out your executive and any rules you think you may have. Stop printing the PHOENIX except maybe by donations, or charge for the magazine (not membership). Call your meetings a gathering of friends or a C&C (coffee and conversation).”

“This is my resignation as President of the Science Fiction Association of Victoria, Stephanie Ann Lightbody.”

Evidently SFAV took her advice to heart, in that no one replaced Garth as editor and as a consequence FTA/PHOENIX ceased to exist (except for 2 or 3 revival attempts circa 1985). Garth edited 12 issues in all over a period of roughly a year and a half. He brought order to the zine, inspired regular contributors, and acquired an admirable list of contributing loc writers, but apparently – and this is not uncommon with clubzine editors – felt increasingly at odds, or at least apart, from his fellow club member’s comparatively passive approach to fandom. Thus, in his last year, Garth turned to a more personal form of fanac.

In March of 1983 Garth began experimenting with an irregular zine titled **ENTER THE LISTS**, lasting 4 issues, which listed fanzines, clubs, small fiction markets, fanartists and other fannish info, each subsequent issue correcting and adding to the lists.



Early Garth Self Portrait

In the first issue Garth explains: *"Why am I doing this? I propose to start this zine mainly because I want something to experiment on while I tinker with ditto and other repro processes. Also I have the habit of noting down information and whomping up bloody long lists."*

Garth starts with a list of contemporary fanzines from all over the world. Sigh. Those were the days. He only covers A-C yet lists 10 Canadian zines, namely: ALUMINIUM, ANDROMEDA, BCSFAzine, CADRE, CALLISTO RISING, CAREFULLY SEDATED, CASCADE, CASPER'S ENTERPRISE, THE CENTRAL GANGLION, COMPOUND FRACTURE, and COSMIC CINEMA. In subsequent issues he added: DARK FANTASY, DNQ, DRAGONBANE, DREADNOUGHT, EACH TIME, ECHELION, ENTER THE LISTS, ENTER-COMM, THE FANDOM ZONE, FTA/PHOENIX, GENRE PLAT, LOVE MAKES THE WORLD GO AWRY, NEOLOGY, OTTAWA SF STATEMENT, PLASTIZINE, SCHMAGG, THE SFA DIGEST, SFEAR, SIDETREKKED & THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARTH; for a total of 30 Canadian fanzines available between March 1983 to March 1984! The BCSFA/WCSFA archive has one or more copies of 19 of these zines, and two of them, BCSFAzine & the OTTAWA SF STATEMENT, are still being published today 27 years later. Amazing!

Garth also lists fan artists willing to create art for fanzine editors. The Canadian fan artists he notes are: Myles Bos (Victoria, B.C.), Dan Cawsey (Victoria, B.C.), Lari Davidson (Roberts Creek, B.C.), Stephanie Lightbody (Victoria, B.C.), Taral Wayne (Willowdale, Ont.), Carolyn Mitchell (Kanata, Ont.), Kenny Moran (Winnipeg, MB.), & Colin Upton (West Vancouver, B.C.). As far as I know only Taral and Colin Upton are still active today. There were undoubtedly others, especially back East, but I gather Garth was most familiar with local artists offering work for Vancouver Island zines.

In issue #2 Garth included his essay 'What I've Learned About Fanpubbing'. The physical procedure was a heck of a lot different then from what it is now. The essay really does capture the sheer physicality and hard work required of zine editors back then. It is well worth reprinting in full, and I append it at the end of this article.

One M. Slater complained of issue #3: *"Enter the lists was very difficult to read. Is the thermofax acting up?"* And Garth replied: *"I was experimenting again... it seems that you cannot thermofax a page with liquid-paper corrections, different inks, or markings on the back..."*

In issue 4/5 Steve George wrote: *"I'm in the process of putting together my own fanzine, after an absence from the field of about two years. SFEAR #1 should be out soon, I hope. Unfortunately I go through purges in my life periodically, and I went through one after publishing the final ZOZMA. In other words, I threw out all my files, including all my copies of my own fanzines, all filed letters, all mailing list sheets, everything. It's taking a while to get back into things... fanzines like THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARTH, and a few others who didn't cut me off during my absence, are making it slightly easier."*

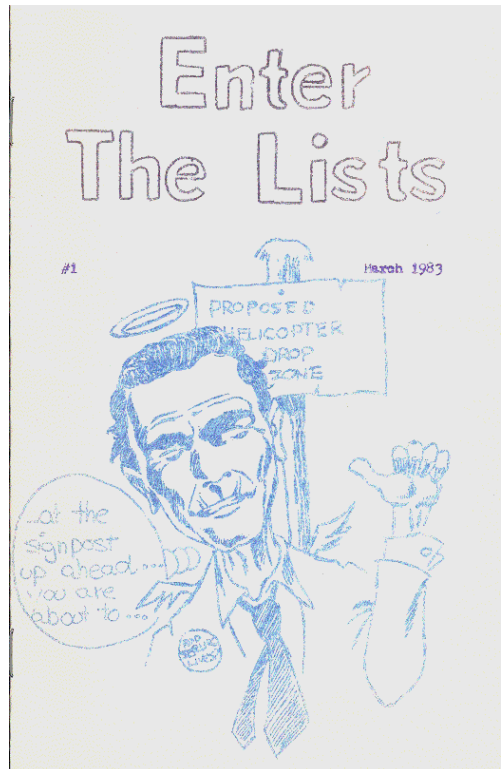
And Taral wrote: *"I've been working on a last issue of DNQ for three years now. That may seem an excessive long time, and I assure you that it is... But it is long – 96 pages – and I wrote most of it, and did a lot of art specifically for it. I also grew to hate it, and put off printing it for most of this year. I think I'll have it done by New Years though."*

However what Garth started earlier in February of 1983 was of greater significance than ENTER THE LISTS, namely a long-lived Letter/diary/perzine titled **THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARTH** which ran for at least 16 issues to the year 1989, thus carrying his fanac well beyond the demise of FTA/PHOENIX.

Said Robert Runte: *"For a while there, Canadian fanzines could be divided into two groups: those put out by Garth Spencer and those not put out by Garth Spencer. Bernie Klassen once called Garth 'a one-man assault on our forests'. Fortunately, Garth is reasonably entertaining."*

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARTH consisted of editorials, a loccol, and occasional fanzine reviews.

Sample comments give a good idea of contents:



Steve George - "My overall impression was of a hodge-podge of unrelated, sometimes interesting, generally interesting tidbits. Most interesting for me were your own personal recollections, comments, whatever."

Lloyd Penney - "As I see more of TWATG, a good eclectic mix, with news, rantings, raving, locs, etc. Very enjoyable..."

Alex Stewart - "I haven't seen any other Canadian zines yet, so I'm not sure how you fit into the whole scene over there; are you a fairly central figure, conforming to the mainstream of fanzine ideology, or some lone maverick tearing around upsetting all the BNF's who like to pontificate about what fanzines ought to be?... the reason I ask is that TWATG would fit quite snugly into British fanzine fandom with nary a ripple, getting a pat on the head for a strong editorial personality, and probably attracting a fair number of loccers. But then again, personal voice is highly regarded over here..."

Robert Runte - "I really liked your last issue (#11)...I read excerpts out to my class from your description of Canada (you know, where you compare it to Tinkerbell in PETER PAN) as part of the lesson on multiculturalism & Canadian identity, and it went down pretty well.."

Steve George - "Chock full of letters about any subject you can name. Garth reprints a couple of tongue in cheek articles from Texas about Canadian Cultural Imperialism, and those alone make this issue worth getting. Otherwise, a typical Garth Spencer mishmash in which everybody can find something of interest if they did deep enough."

In THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARTH #1 (February 1983) Garth talks about himself as a fanzine editor: "Yours truly has loaded himself down with a number of projects of a fannish nature... Well, it keeps me out of trouble... I have to use a Ditto machine... SFAV did not think to ask for an instruction book, and they used the friggin' thing for two years before I was put in charge. I still can't depend on it... Still, I'm pleased with the way FTA is turning out; after Bernie (Klassen) tightened the impression control, the print came out a lot sharper and clearer.... I know enough, now, not to try to ditto pages on both sides. (At least until I can control the fade-outs and blend-throughs.)... I like putting out a fanzine, but I don't like the feeling that no-one else is participating. I do prefer to handle layout and production myself... So why do I feel like I'm trying to lift the sea with a fork?"

And now I will segue into a more detailed examination of an issue of THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARTH, after which I will take up the story of Garth's fannish career once again.



Garth at VCON 12 / 1984

RETRO CANADIAN FANZINES: THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARTH #14

Faned: Garth Spencer

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARTH #14, April 1986:

I quite like the cover by Tom Cardy, reproduced on the cover thish. It reflects Garth's view on life. In some ways Garth is a classic fan, namely highly intelligent, very imaginative, but a little uncomfortable (depending on circumstances) in dealing with others. For example, in commenting on a loc by Gerin-LaJoie, Garth writes:

*"First, I thought you humans had a rule book for how you behave in most everything, including, um, matters of the heart... and yet I didn't get my obligatory standard briefing. *Mutter*grumble*"*

"Then, I thought mainstream culture had broken down, and there were several different subcultures or vague modes of behaviour on the market, and I had to learn about them... And figure out who was using which."

“Now it looks like you humans come from umpteen different species, psychologically; and I do not know if I can cope with random variable behaviour like yours.”

“Like I was telling some rather close friends of mine recently, maybe I’ll just make my own rules and demand that EVERYBODY ELSE observe them when dealing with me!”

It can be said Garth is on a life-long quest to understand the true nature of individualism, relationships, behaviour and communication. This sets him apart a trifle, but also makes him a perceptive observer. In a sense, he is an instinctive, natural philosopher given to devoting his intellect to studying what it means to be human, be it folly or achievement. What others take for granted, or simply ignore, he studies and analyses. Hell of a hobby actually. The result is a body of written commentary (on us humans) which sometimes irritates, sometimes annoys, but often illuminates and makes the reader ponder in unexpected arenas of concept. Garth is an original, and always worth reading, even (or especially) when you don’t agree with him. Gets you thinking, he does.

In his editorial Garth reflects on his university training: *“When I went to the University of Victoria, and had to register for a degree programme, I finally decided on linguistics. It took three or four more years for my real reason to emerge. I thought The Problem (which was still taking shape) was communication foul-ups, and I thought that meant language.”*



Garth at VCON 17 / 1989

“In Linguistics I learned that language is systematic, and patterned, but not rigidly consistent... and that language structure tends to work from a clutch of basic principles or concepts. In fact, any language structure has to satisfy the same set of human needs – express statements, commands, questions, exhortations; name things and events, relate words to each other – and you see the same functions over and over. Later on, I learned that social behaviour is the same: structured, patterned, dynamic; based on a few principles that organize the whole shebang.”

“Now, a lot of behaviour – individual and social, political and familial, etc., etc. – is like language: complex, often irrational, changing, but patterned. Only the grammar seems to have broken down around here.”

“I’ve been thinking of you humans more and more as having minds built on a few basic concepts apiece; only the inputs are fairly random. Or something. At any rate, with the inconsistent patterns and programmed behaviour we exhibit, it’s a wonder we can communicate at all.”

Later in the issue Garth hits upon a particular pattern as a possible definition of fannish behaviour, namely THE BELL CURVE: *“When I started being an active fan, just after reading through SFAV’s fanzine library, I had an idea that all fans were actifans. Well, hell, those were the*

fans I read about. I became more and more frustrated by the relatively inactive group of People I had joined...”

“I now think that, all along, I have been ramming my head against a reality principle: the bell curve. At one end, some fans aren’t happy unless they’re doing something, making a visible product or event, making their own entertainment. I am one. But these days, a vast majority of fans – the middle of the bell curve – are of a more passive, less workative species. Most SFAVians are party animals rather than cranks who turn mimeo machines.”

“I see the Star Warts and Trekkies and the lunatic fringe of fandom as the opposite end of the bell curve. Not only are the most passive fans in this extreme, but the most asinine – the ones who will not find out the practical necessities in conrunning, clubrunning, or fanpubbing, make up what they don’t know, and try to take over other fans or their activities, rather than starting their own.”

While the bulk of Garth’s contribution is editorial in nature, more than half of the zine consists of locs from such as John Purcell, Harry Warner Jr., Lucy Zinkiewicz, Lloyd Penney (of course), Lyn McConchie, & John Durno. Two Americans, two Canadians, an Australian and a New Zealander. Not a bad spread.

John Purcell writes: *“I understand why you are wailing over the long-lost “consensus” you mention, but fragmentation is a normal development. Fandom nowadays is a huge muthah and embraces many subgroups. Which doesn’t surprise me. I guess over the years I’ve become accustomed to the changes. Also, quite a few ‘medioids’ (as they’ve been called) have*

become active club-, fanzine- and confans – and good ones too. I welcome them for the help they give in running regional and world ones.”

(My own theory is that the number of fanzine fans active worldwide has been consistently about the same from the 1930s on, namely about 100 individuals....)

Harry Warner has an extremely interesting comment: *“Your summary of the Canadian awards project is enlightening. It makes me feel somehow better about the demise of the FAAn awards, because all the troubles with CSFFA are similar to those the FAAn project suffered, seeming to prove that fan-created awards are doomed to turmoil, instead of it being a case of mismanagement by FAAn supporters.”*

Wow! This is news to me. The FAAn awards began in fits and starts? At one point dead? Fascinating. Glad to say it's still going strong. (See page

Lucy Zinkiewicz comments: *“Fandom is my means of meeting people... virtually everyone I've been involved with, from romance to the more physical side, has been in fandom, media, mainstream or the weird indescribable overlap. I've never considered settling down with anyone but a fan, someone who can share the major interest of my life and not patronize, resent or ignore it...”*

Well said! My wife Alyx and I are mutually compatible (sort of), I like sci-fi lit and she likes fantasy lit, I love sci-fi films and she loves horror films, I'm fascinated by military history and she by crime history, we both like weird animals and the other-worldliness of ancient cultures... we share and compliment each other... I wonder what sort of 'significant other' Lucy may have chosen? ... not an accountant I hope...

Lloyd Penney tackles a subject not often met in Canadian fanzines: *“Garth, I wouldn't call Canada a racist society... Negro slaves were able to escape to Canada via the underground railroad, which smuggled blacks across the border into Ontario.... No country has a perfect record, but I think ours is pretty good...”*

Garth responds: *“You have so far to go, so much to learn!! Check out Canada's immigration policies in the 1920's. Check out Canada's memberships of MLAs and B.C. Hansard for the same period – lots of self-declared KKK backbenchers. Check out the police- and crime-related clippings in the files of the TO public library, and see whether blacks and East Indians don't end up DYING under mysterious circumstances. Find out the links between the recently-rejuvenated Ku Klux Klan and the Western Guard Party, as of 1980-1981...”*



Waving the flag for Canfandom at Westercon 52 / 1999 in Spokane, Washington

To which I would add, get a hold of the book ‘The Swastika and The Maple Leaf’ by Lita-Rose Betcherman which describes the “Fascist Movements in Canada in the Thirties”, such as the Blueshirts of the National Unity Party (Toronto), “Arcand's Legion” (Montreal) & the Khaki-clad members of the “British Empire Union of Fascists” (Winnipeg). These individuals, who numbered in the hundreds, were all imprisoned for the duration of the war.... I personally remember a self-declared Fuehrer of the Canadian Nazi Party who repeatedly attempted an annual rally in Toronto circa late 1960's and the only people who showed were there to beat him up and send him to hospital yet again. Progress I'd say...

GARTH SPENCER: A FENAISSANCE FAN (CONTINUED)

Garth was (and is) very much interested in the ongoing evolution of the CSFFA Awards (Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy Awards, formerly known as the ‘Caspers’ and – as of 1990 – the Auroras). In May of 1985 he published a zine titled CAUSE CELEBRE which dealt with the status and likely future of the awards. As Garth explained: *“So much verbiage has reached me about the CSFFA awards that, to clear my workspace, I am putting it all in this one-shot ”*

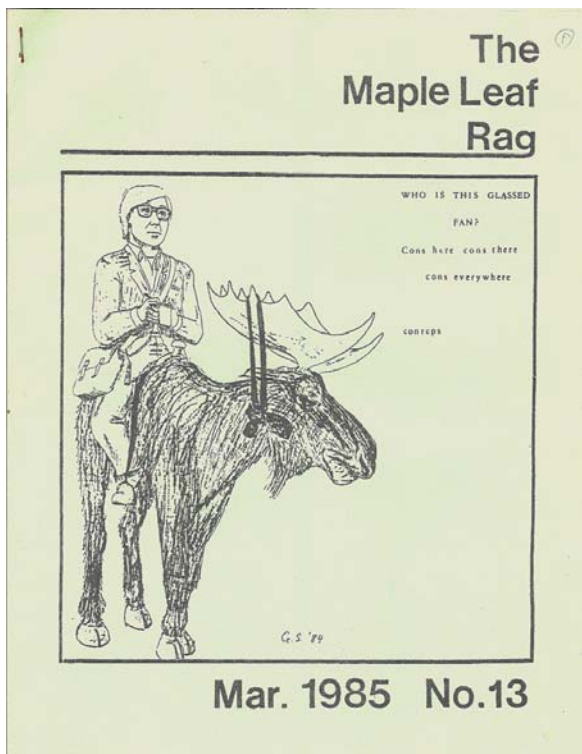
In the zine Robert Runte writes about problems associated with Convention 3 (NonCon 5) in 1982, & Sansoucy Kathenor Walker does the same for Convention 4 (Maplecon) in 1983. David A. Slater & Alan D. Burrows contribute proposals on how the CSFFA awards should be run, the need for reform, etc.

Robert Runte reviewed CAUSE CELEBRE as follows: *"In this one-shot MLR supplement, Garth makes a valiant attempt to trace the short history of the Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy Award (CSFFA). This task is complicated by the fact that that no two accounts seem to agree on what actually happened and most of those involved seem to have had only a foggy notion of who else was involved and what was going on. (It's amazing that anything ever actually gets done in fandom, since we seem to operate on this chaotic basis a lot.) Garth manages to be reasonably objective and thorough in his reporting, and so I think that anyone who was interested now has sufficient information to form their own opinions on the remaining issues."*

And Steve George commented: *"A collection of proposals and opinions about the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy awards. I'm glad somebody cares so much about this. Actually, the issues are interesting, and relatively simple. But if anybody admitted to that then what would 80% of Canadian fandom have to write about? I wish Garth success in his efforts to sort out this self-made mess, and hope he can be instrumental in coming up with a solution so we can just get on with it."*

Garth has always crusaded on behalf of Canadian fandom, in part to spur it on to greater heights, but also – out of sheer necessity – in order to keep it alive as it often seems on the verge of collapse. For this reason (and others) he began the zine which earned him the very first Fannish CSFFA Award. He titled the zine **THE MAPLE LEAF RAG** and it ran for 30 issues from November 1983 to June 1987. It was *the* newszine for Canadian fandom in the 1980s.

"This week I went mad and invented another fanzine: THE MAPLE LEAF RAG..." – Garth Spencer.



A typical issue contained news, conreports, coverage of Cdn SF clubs, Cdn con listings, Cdn fanzine reviews & the latest controversy re: the CSFFA awards, and often professional & small-press writers market news. Garth kept to a six week schedule remarkably well. Robert Runte tongue-in-cheek referred to his NEW CANADIAN FANDOM as *"the annual genzine supplement to Canada's national newszine MAPLE LEAF RAG"*.

In his first issue editorial Garth argues that, while NEW CANADIAN FANDOM covers Canadian fandom in depth, *"there is a need for a regular, more frequent zine..."* (covering) *"...a broad range of clubs, zines, cons and events as they happen..."* He goes on to say: *"Part of the reason for a National Canadian zine of any kind is to let you know there are other clubs out there... there are serious issues and even juicy fanfeuds going on in the Great White North. If FILE 770 can cover this sort of thing in the states on a fairly frequent basis, why not someone in Canada?"*

Garth also contributes an essay about the then current controversy over the Canadian SF & Fantasy Awards (now called Auroras). The eligibility rules had recently been changed to exclude all but actual citizens. This left writers resident in Canada but not yet citizens out of the running (as per example: Spider Robinson). This in turn beggared the question, what is a Canadian? Garth commented: *"I am one of those sick-and-sorry Canadians*

who feels that Canada isn't a country yet. We won't be for a century or two. In publishing and 'culture' especially, the U.S. is an overbearing presence -- which isn't their fault, it just happens that Canada as a whole is, so far, too spineless to create a presence and identity of its own... Runte may believe there is a Canadian culture and a Canadian style of SF in the making; I'm afraid I don't see it yet."

It should be added that this kind of introspective withering is in itself a superb example of what makes Canadians distinctive & unique. It's a national trait to worry over whether or not we actually exist. Even Lenin thought it impossible. Perhaps we are simply an incredibly successful hoax?

A lengthy listing of Canadian Clubs and zines rounds out the issue which was distributed free "to any Canadian zines, clubs, fans & concons known to me." Subsequent issues would be available for 'The Usual' or for 50¢ each.

About halfway through the run of THE MAPLE LEAF RAG Steve George commented: "Garth's newszine covers primarily Canadian fannish news. A noble effort, but the coverage is a bit spotty, and the tone gives the impression that we Canadian fans take ourselves very seriously, at least those who correspond with Garth. The zine fills a niche. Check it out."

Garth attended VCON 14/Convention 6 in 1986 to receive the very first Aurora award given to a fan, in his case for "editing MAPLE LEAF RAG and dedication to Canadian Fandom." It should be noted that he won despite stiff competition from the other excellent finalists, namely:

Ed Beauregard & Al Betz – for lifetime contribution and unselfish devotion and skill in many Vancouver area club & convention activities.

Mario Giguere – for contributions to 'Solaris', organizing cons, and editing 'Blanc Citron.'

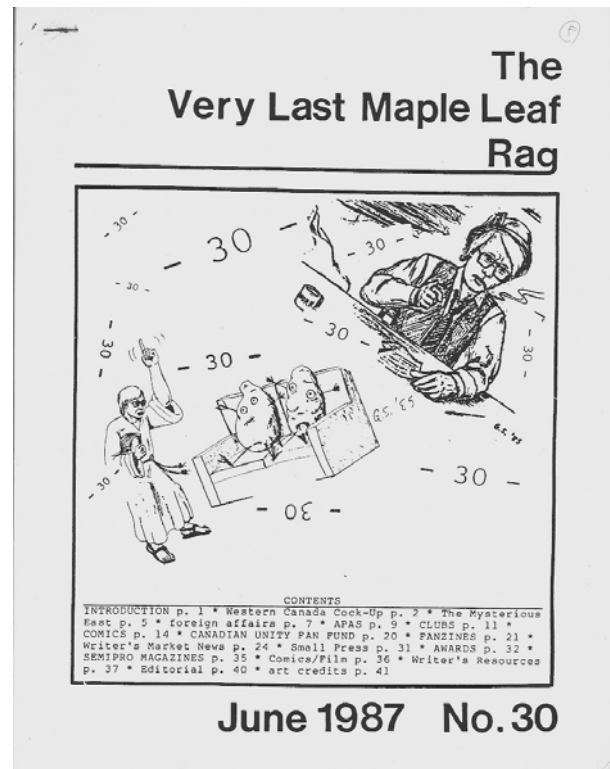
Georges Giguere, for editing 'Neology' (Edmonton Science Fiction and Comic Arts Society)

Robert Runte – for editing 'New Canadian Fandom'

Elisabeth Vonarburg – for lifetime achievement, editing 'Solaris', participation in Boreal, promoting SF and holding writers workshops.

Evidently Garth was impressed by the amount of fannish activity in Vancouver – the British Columbia Science Fiction Association numbering well over 100 members and obviously capable of putting on a major convention like VCON – and so in 1987 he decided to move from Victoria to Vancouver and has dwelt here ever since.

Donna McMahon responded to my draft Vancouver fanhistory by scribbling "Come to Vancouver!", and after the welcome I received at VCON 14, I thought this might be the community I was looking for. – Garth



Now a member of the BCSFA, he ceased publication of THE MAPLE LEAF RAG, perhaps because he found BCSFAzine (the BCSFA newsletter) a suitable alternative venue for submitting his views to Canadian fandom at large through articles and locs. This had the advantage of being much less work than carrying on a Newszine, thus freeing him up for club and VCON activity, as well as the occasional contribution to the local Apazine BCAPA. Thus the 'torch' then passed to Michael Skeet's MLR, which Garth authorized to carry on the Canada-wide newszine tradition. MLR was published out of Toronto from Aug 1987 to April 1990 with at least 14 issues and proved to be a worthy successor to THE MAPLE LEAF RAG..

Meanwhile Garth carried on with his perzine, THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARTH, until 1989. Then he ceased publishing zines of his own for a while, but churned out a steady stream of locs (often in the form of mini-essays on this or that hot fannish topic) for BCSFAzine, for other Canadian zines, and many an American zine. He had become, and earned, an 'elder statesman' status in fandom. There be few in active fanzine fandom who are not familiar with Garth's views then and now.

More importantly perhaps, Garth spent much of the late 1980s and early 1990s researching and writing articles on Canadian Fannish history, a significant contribution to the understanding of such. (And, I may add, inspiring me to turn myself into a fannish historian, carrying on his work as it were.)

His original versions of these articles were first serialized in the pages of his own THE MAPLE LEAF RAG, in BCAPA, and in the pages of Dale Speirs' OPUNTIA.

I also took part in some apas about this time – BCAPA, TAPA, FHAPA, Mixed Company – and ran some of the fanhistories there, in order to get comments and corrections. – Garth

Here is an incomplete list of these histories in order of stand alone publication of 'final' version:

- **IF YOU'RE NOT ENJOYING YOURSELF, IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM: EDMONTON FANHISTORY** (1991) -- Serialized in BCAPA & OPUNTIA. Covers 1970s to 1990.
- **ON THE BONNY, BONNY BANKS OF THE FRASER** (1993) -- A history of British Columbia fandom in general and the British Columbia science Fiction Association in particular. Covers 1930s to early 1990s. Previous versions serialized in BCAPA & OPUNTIA.
- **A CHRONOLOGY OF CANADIAN FANDOM** (1994) -- Mostly a listing of Conventions but with mention of significant events, fanzines and fans. Covers 1930s to early 1990s.
- **TOWARDS A CALGARY FANHISTORY** (1994) -- Previous version serialized in BCAPA & OPUNTIA. Covers 1970s to 1994.
- **TORONTO FANHISTORY** (1995) -- Covers early 1940s to 1994 with emphasis on the Derelicts and OSFiC. At least a portion serialized in OPUNTIA.
- **MARCHING TO VICTORIA** (1996) -- A history of Vancouver Island fandom with emphasis on Victoria and Nanaimo. Previous versions serialized in MAPLE LEAF RAG & OPUNTIA. Covers 1970s to early 1990s.
- **NOTES TOWARDS MARITIME FANHISTORY** (1996) -- Serialized in OPUNTIA. Covers 1980s to 1990s.
- **NOTES TOWARDS A QUEBEC FANHISTORY** (1996) -- Covers 1980s to 1990s.
- **OTTAWA FANDOM (MAINLY THE OTTAWA SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY)** (1996) -- Covers 1940s to 1990s.

I found these essays quite valuable as resource material for my CANADIAN FANCYCLOPEDIA project. And like my Fancyc they were composed in the spirit of an ongoing research project based on available information and subject to correction depending on input from other fans. A number of critics complained of errors, but all mistakes lay within the source material. Garth could only reflect what he had to work with, and positively begged for additional information and any and all corrections. Ultimately he became a bit frustrated due to the lack of useful response and more or less gave up the effort, feeling it was impossible to determine absolute 'truth' in history. Granted these essays are flawed and incomplete (like ANY historical research), but they remain an outstanding compilation of source material and are certainly extremely useful in grasping the evolution of Canadian fanhistory on a regional basis. Frankly, this effort was worthy of a second Aurora in my opinion, but alas, this did not happen, at least for this particular fannish activity.

At present I am reworking my fanhistory information into Wiki markup format for a Wikispaces account. – Garth

True to the Canadian tradition of 'Mimeo Ink in my Veins' (as legendary Canadian fan Leslie Croutch once put it) Garth could not resist the siren call of self-publication forever. In the spring of 1992 he began irregular publication of the delightfully titled perzine **SERCON POPCULT LITCRIT FANMAG** (one of my favourite fanzine titles of all time). The title says it all, it allowed him to focus on just about any aspect of fandom as social phenomena. A venue for personal essays.

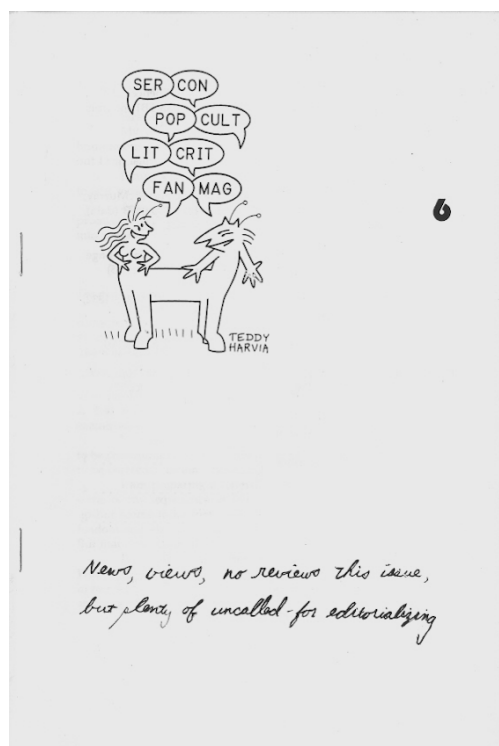
Digest-sized, and number of pages limited by cost (printing and postage expenses soaring in the 1990s ultimately to today's ludicrous levels), SPLF was published more or less as an annual, but then the pace picked up with issue #5 in August 1995. Carried on for at least another three issues through 1996. (Interesting to note that #5 to #8 were ezines, possibly the first such Garth attempted.)

In his first issue Garth says: *"That is not dead which can eternal lie, and with strange eons even Garth may pub his own ish... I learned about fandom mainly through fanzines. Participating initially with my own zines... has shaped a lot of my attitudes. So did my coming from a college environment, and associating with fans from that background.... Those of you who know all this must be wondering where the hell I went, after about 1987. Basically, I decided to get a life.... I attended*

meetings and weekly pub gatherings, I joined BCAPA, and I entered the VCON 16, 17 & 18 committees. I was also corresponding with fans out of town, and overseas, and contributing articles both to BCSFazine and to other fanzines...I gave what I could give, of myself, to the activities I saw going on. They were my way to relate to these people, to have friends."

Spoken like a trufan. Garth has always maintained the only proper way to be a fan is to *do* something, the more fanac the better. In a way, Garth is very much like a member of First Fandom, using the written word as the fundamental basis of communication. After all, that's how fandom began, fans spotting each other in the letter columns of prozines and reaching out to each other with letters and fanzines. Even now, though circumstances proscribe limited fanac, Garth continues to correspond and pub his ish, continues to remain true to the origins of fandom.

The second issue of SPLF is mostly locs, including ones from U.S. fan Harry Warner Jr. and Cdn fan Chester D. Cuthbert thanking Garth for sending 'enlarged' versions to make it easier to read the (point 8?) type face. This was very thoughtful of him. Cuthbert cheerfully confirms he NEVER attends conventions, but he *"enjoys reading convention reports, and even books with convention backgrounds, like those of Richard Purtill, Anthony Boucher, Gene Deweese, and Robert Coulson."*



It is a fact that the loc column is always one of the principle strengths of a Garth publication. There's something about his love of tossing novel ideas about and exploring their implications that attracts numerous comments. SPLF received locs on a regular basis from Canadian fans such as Taral Wayne, Lloyd Penney, Dale Speirs, Colin Upton, John Mansfield, Chester D. Cuthbert, David Malinski, Scott Patri, Michael Hall, Michael Mckenny, and Rodney Leighton, plus U.S. fans like Harry Warner Jr., Brad Foster, Harry Andruschak, Joseph T. Major, R'ykandar Korra'ti, Rich Brown, and Teddy Harvia, with a sprinkling of fans from Europe and New Zealand. At least five of these fanzine fans have passed away since then, but most of the remainder are still active in fanzine fandom as publishers, or writers, or artists. All of their locs make fascinating reading.

I note that in issue #7 Chester D. Cuthbert stated to Garth: *"Surely you know that few Canadian fans are better known than yourself; for years you have been enlightening us about history and events in Canadian Fandom, either through your own publications or through outlets like OPUNTIA."* Well said!

Lloyd Penney wrote in the same issue: *"I suspect it will be a long time before I ever get online. I would need to buy another computer (I have a clunky 286), another monitor (mine's monochrome), a new OS (I have DOS 5.0 I think), a new modem (someone recently took pity on me, and gave me an old 2400 baud modem card), a dedicated phone line and an internet software package in order to get access on a freenet. I don't have*

\$5,000 to blow."

Hence the value of perusing old fanzines. They encapsulate a moment in time. In this case, the primitive technology revolving around the early internet and the hideous cost of acquiring it, circa 1996. (Heck, I bought my first computer in 1981, and it cost me \$3,000! Believe it or not, computer prices have come down considerably, and what you get for your money has skyrocketed.) This is why reading old loc columns can be even more fascinating now than they were perceived at the time they were published; a glimpse of esoteric details now largely slipped out of memory.

Garth can be quite innovative. SPLF #1 contained a full page ad for a proposed revival of the MAPLE LEAF RAG, though this incarnation is *"to be a fiction magazine – entirely consisting of stories about fans of science fiction and fantasy. I am soliciting short stories, novelettes, serials, and illustrations based loosely on real incidents, in clubs or at conventions, involving characters more or less resembling real fans."* And then he quotes Canadian Faned Michael Hall (describing his own zine LAID): *"All lies, as long as they were close to the truth."*

A bold proposal, but one that (at the time) struck me as stillborn. Fans willing to write Faanfiction are very rare. And given that Garth ends the ad with *"DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?"* I suspected he was not serious. Further evidence: *"Prize-winning critical correspondence will be printed in the new MAPLE LEAF RAG."* A subtle dig at loc writers methinks.

I was hoping people would join the effort in the same lighthearted, non-serious, fannish spirit with which I wrote the ad.
– Garth

In 2001 Garth proved that he was indeed serious about publishing ‘faanfiction: fiction about fans, by fans,’ as he managed to get around the problem of inspiring fans to write something new by the simple expedient of getting permission to reprint examples of faanfiction from previous publications such as NEW CANADIAN FANDOM, I’M NOT BORING YOU AM I?, BCSFAzine, NEOLOGY, VCON program books and other sources. The title of this oneshot 44 page publication was CONFABULATION.

Contributors include Canadian fans Robert Runte, Randy Barnhart, Steve George, Don H. DeBrandt, Steve Barclay, John Constantine, Wendi Vadd, Dave Panchyk and Adam Charlesworth, plus US fans Eric Mayer and Andy Hooper. Article titles included ‘The Ecology of Fandom’ (Runte), ‘Sensawonda’ (Barnhart), ‘Cider: Our Friend and Yours’ (DeBrandt) among others, with no less than two titled ‘The Secret Life of Robert Runte’ (Panchyk/Charlesworth). All of the contributions are off the wall and frequently quite humorous.

In his editorial Garth writes: “*Science Fiction fans have been inventing a mythology about their subculture since it began, often making up stories about specific individuals, right from the outset. Faanfiction, as a mythology, offered an explanation and a perspective on what fandom is, and has been, perhaps more coherent than actual fanhistory. It also offered a picture of what fans valued at different times, in science fiction and in themselves.*”

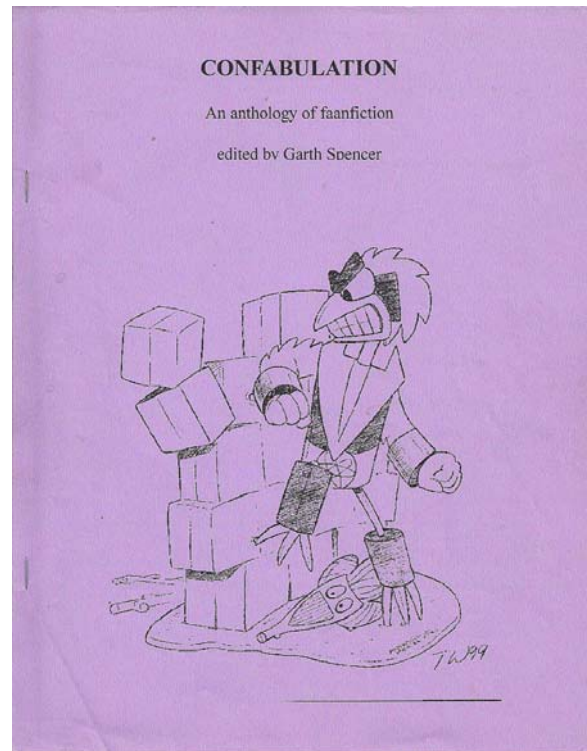
Another 2001 oneshot project by Garth was the BCSFA MEMBERS' HANDBOOK, “*A completely unauthorized production*” which is a model of its kind. In 24 digest-sized pages he concisely explains the following topics: BCSFA, membership rates, current executive, club activities, BCSFAzine, VCONs, the ELRON Awards, turkey readings, club bylaws, fanzines, trade zines, zine repositories, Mr. Science, writer's workshops, Fictons, Writer's resources, the V-Con Society, other local clubs, clubs elsewhere, upcoming conventions, Canadian SF awards, Congoing, the Canadian Unity Fan Fund & “*interesting online stuff*”. In short, an excellent guide not only to the B.C. SF Association, but to Canadian fandom in general. It was distributed free to all club members. Alas, quickly dated, but a great snapshot of the club at the time.

Actually there was more than one edition of the members’ handbook. – Garth

An earlier oneshot was Garth’s 1999 CUFF (Canadian Unity Fan Fund) trip report titled WHAT I DID ON MY OCTOBER VACATION. He was quite intrigued about attending inCONsequential II/Convention 19 in Fredericton, New Brunswick, writing: “*I have some outspoken opinions about regional fandoms like the Maritimes... It was curiously difficult to get word on Maritimes fanactivity, or indeed to get word to them, for years at a go...I still perceive them as low-profile, barely visible...In short, there are hurdles to overcome and not a little work to do.*” Not least is the fact he can only get a flight to Halifax and must bus for six hours to get to Fredericton. GoH was Tanya Huff, MC Robert J. Sawyer, and Artist GoH Donna Barr of ‘Desert Peach’ fame.

“*Evening events were pretty much limited to the consuite...there were no room parties...It is of interest to note that inCONsequential's consuite is a 'dry' consuite. Apparently, this is a general policy for Maritime conventions, ever since Halcon 10. (The story I got is that Maritime Fandom experienced a phase when university students discovered their cons, and perceived them as a cheap place to get drunk and weird. Also, Maritime fans are generally concerned to present their fandom as a safe place to bring kids.) I commented that other cons in North America have similarly found reason not to serve alcohol.*”

Of the actual Buffet Dinner/Aurora Awards Presentation Garth wrote: “*Robert Sawyer served as MC; Jean-Louis Trudel, Paul Valcour, Donna Barr and I took turns presenting the awards; I had agreed to present two of the fan awards, so to my dismay I was up first. I pray I didn’t butcher the French translation too badly.*”



The fan awards in 1999 went to:

- Fan Achievement (Other): Janet L. Hetherington, co-curator of the 60 Years of Superman exhibit at the Nepean Museum.
- Fan Achievement (Organizational): Ann Methe of Montreal, for chairing Con*cept 98.
- Fan Achievement (Fanzine): Lynda Pelley for editing WARP on behalf of MonSSFA.

At Noon Sunday the CSFFA Business Meeting began. Garth had an interesting reaction: *"A number of items were raised, discussed and settled at this meeting, with Paul Valcour chairing the meeting and Dennis Mullin serving as secretary. Two hours were budgeted for this business meeting, but it actually went on for three. Things kind of dragged after thirty to forty-five minutes, or maybe the panel room was a little close and crowded for the number of people there. Robert Sawyer said it was a good, productive meeting; but I got fed up after nearly two hours and left, because I thought it was getting bogged down."*

Garth had brought numerous chapbooks on CUFF, Maritime fanhistory, the Auroras & Convention, to hand out in an effort to stimulate interest in fannish history and communication. By the time he gave a CUFF presentation on Sunday he found *"to my dismay all the historical chapbooks had gone, so I extemporized on fannish fanzine fandom, fan funds, the history of the Canadian Fan Fund, and the topic of Getting the Word Out."* It's a good sign of interest that all his chapbook freebies had been snapped up, and that a dozen people showed up for his 10:00 AM presentation. Not bad for a convention of only about 80 attendees. Especially considering that no one showed up for the Saturday slave auction, or the Kingcon SF Society presentation. So kudos to Garth for stirring things up and getting people interested.

The trip report is rounded out with a preliminary financial statement of his CUFF expenses, and an alphabetical glossary *"intended to fill in some context, if you are unfamiliar with the fans or writers at inCONsequential, or with Canadian fandom, or with this fan fund. Anything I haven't explained here has yet to be explained to me."*

At the closing ceremonies Garth notes: *"I was asked to say a few words, stood up and said "A few words" and sat down to equal applause. (Hey, it worked for Robert Runte when he was in Victoria.)"*

Getting back to the subject of Garth perzines, in SPLF #1 he refers to his intention to establish a Royal Swiss Navy on-line entity, i.e. a Discordian style discussion group. He did this *"in order to gain permission to set up a web page at the Vancouver CommunityNet."* This encouraged him to revamp SERCON POPCULT LITCRIT FANMAG into **THE ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE**, which ran 21 issues from September 1997 to June of 2010, roughly an average of 2 issues a year.

In the first issue Garth tells his readers *"You are all hereby designated members of the Royal Swiss Navy, which is not royal, not Swiss, and does not float. Maybe we can enter the Nanaimo-Vancouver Bathtub Race... I'd like to enter a pedal-powered jet-assisted paddle-wheeled dirigible bathtub..."*

This is not as crazy as it sounds. The annual Nanaimo-Vancouver Bathtub race across the Georgia Strait was world renowned for many years till killjoys put an end to it merely because it was potentially dangerous. It used to be fun to go down to the beach to watch the bathtubs roar ashore and the drivers stagger/sprint out of the tubs to ring the official gong. Imagine kneeling in a bathtub slapping through choppy waves for hours on end. It's no wonder many needed help to get out of their tub. But those days are gone. Sigh.

A typical issue of THE ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE would consist of essays by Garth, other items downloaded from the net with titles like 'Mathematics for Real Life' and 'Obligatory Crank Theory of the Year: Holodynamics,' guest essays like 'Cheng Ho Discovers America' by Taral Wayne, articles on inventing languages, how languages evolve & such, zine reviews, humorous articles on appropriate etiquette for members of the RSN, or on not-so-useful 'hoax' proposals like establishing an International Turnip Tossing Contests or an official 'Goat Marriage Month', and of course, the usual multi-page loc column which Garth publications always attract.

In the last issue (#21) Lloyd Penney writes: *"I have also noticed there are few parties at conventions. I think they are going away because more and more, people are not going to conventions of any kind to meet with friends, but to go there and come away with the experience they want. I used to see this only at media conventions, but I now see this at literary conventions, too. Are we less social?"*

This is a worrisome conundrum indeed. Sometimes it is because certain hotels actively discourage room parties, but often it appears to be a case of no one willing to host one. Long time fans used to attend conventions primarily to attend the room parties. Is this tradition truly waning?

Tastes can be educated, as Alexei Panshin wrote; exposure is the important thing. One of the first articles I found that would be useful to conrunners described how to mount a good room party. But like fanzines themselves, room parties have to be demonstrated, in order that incoming club and convention members get the concept – Garth

And Lyn McConchie writes : “My generation (in my early 60s) is probably the last generation to have grown up and spent a good half of our life with handwriting. As a small child I even used a pen dipped in an inkwell. In my lifetime pens have gone from dip pens, to fountain pens, to the ubiquitous ballpoint, but parallel to that has been the progression of manual typewriter, electric typewriter, word processor and finally the computer.”

“And from now on it is likely to be the computer - in ever improving formats - that is king. But where does this leave old fan group records: the minutes of innumerable meetings, the records of groups that started in the war years or even further back, to the years between wars? It leaves them increasingly unreadable. It takes practice to read handwriting.”



Indeed, I can't read my own, for instance. I remember working for the parts department of the American Can Company of Canada circa 1971. Their records were entirely handwritten! Those from the turn of the century were exquisitely precise and beautifully 'drawn', very easy to read, but starting just after the Second World War the quality of penmanship deteriorated rapidly down to my own uncomfortable, crabbed style. I don't know if schools even bother to teach penmanship any more.

I just revealed the secret of Garth's knack for triggering readers to respond to his zines. Comment hooks. In the above quotes I responded to items that interested me with my own comments. Garth's publications usually contain so many interesting (even provocative) bits, either in his own writings or those of contributors, that it is almost impossible to read one of his zines and NOT be inspired to write back. Garth has always been successful, especially with his perzines, in establishing a DIALOGUE with his readers. He does this by writing what he thinks and wonders about, often posing difficult, even uncomfortable questions concerning contemporary trends in fandom, matters to be addressed, problems to be resolved, and everything imbedded in a matrix of dry, off the wall humour. No wonder people write back, if only to get even. (I'm being facetious.)

It should be noted that Garth won his second Aurora award in 1996, for 'Fan Achievement: Fanzine/Publication' because of the popularity of his ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE.

Incidentally, the latest incarnation of a Garthzine is **ONE SWELL FOOP**, the first issue of which appeared in November of 2010 (and which I reviewed in the first issue of AURORAN LIGHTS). This Garth intends to take in a different direction from his earlier perzines. Time will tell. I eagerly await the second issue.

Getting back to November 2000 when John C. Wong stepped down from editing **BCSFazine**, Garth made the momentous decision to take on the task of replacing him, a decision which led to the longest editing run of his fan publishing career. As a former long-term editor of BCSFazine myself, I fully comprehend the sheer amount of dedication, effort and sweat it takes to turn out a monthly newsletter. No simple task. And often seemingly a thankless one, (a problem common to ALL fanzine editors). Nevertheless Garth became the longest-serving BCSFazine editor of all time (or at least to date). Full marks for guts and fortitude I say! I append the following two tables to put his achievement in context.

BCSFazine FANEDS IN SEQUENCE:

- Faned: **Mike Bailey**. #1 (Aug 1973) to #24 (May 1975).
- Faned: **Fran Skene**. #25 (June 1975) to #37 (July 1976).
- Faned: **Allyn Cadogan**. #38 (Aug 1976) to #51 (Sept 1977).
- Faned: **Fran Skene**. #52 (Oct 1977).
- Faned: **Alan R. Betz**. #53 (Nov 1977).
- Faned: **Ed Beauregard**. #54 (Dec 1977).
- Faned: **Lona Elrod**. #55 (Jan 1978) to #56 (Feb 1978).
- Faned: **Helene Flanders**. #57 (Mar 1978) to #71 (May 1979).

-- Faned: **Becky Bennett**. #72 (Jun 1979) to #83 (May 1980).
 -- Faned: **Fran Skene**. #84 (Jun 1980) to #89 (Nov 1980).
 -- Faned: **Vaughn Fraser**. #90 (Dec 1980) to #95 (May 1981).
 -- Faned: **Constantine Hiebner**. #96 (Jun 1981) to #99 (Sept 1981).
 -- Faned: **Gerald Boyko**. #100 (May 1982).
 -- Faned: **Constantine Hiebner**. #101 (Oct 1981) to #107 (Apr 1982).
 -- Faned: **Neil Williams**. #108 (May 1982) to #120 (May 1983).
 -- Faned: **Barbara Przeklasa**. #121 (Jun 1983) to #148 (Sept 1985).
 -- Faneds: **Jim Welch & Margaret Galbraith-Hamilton**. #149 (Oct 1985) to #150 (Nov 1985).
 -- Faned: **Fran Skene**. #151 (Dec 1985).
 -- Faneds: **Jim Welch & Margaret Galbraith-Hamilton**. #152 (Jan 1986) to #153 (Feb 1986).
 -- Faned: **Steve Forty**. #154 (Mar 1986) to #156 (May 1986).
 -- Faned: **Ed Kedzierski**. #157 (June 1986) to #160 (Sept 1986).
 -- Faned: **Steve Forty**. #161 (Oct 1986) to #192 (May 1989).
 -- Faned: **R. Graeme Cameron**. #193 (June 1989) to #199 (Dec 1989).
 -- Faned: **Gerald Boyko**. #200 (Jan 1990).
 -- Faned: **R. Graeme Cameron**. # 201 (Feb 1990) to #269 (Oct 1995).
 -- Faned: **John C. Wong**. #270 (Nov 1995) to #330 (Nov 2000).
 -- Faned: **Garth Spencer**. #331 (Dec 2000) to #429 (Feb 2009)
 -- Faned: **Felicity**. #430 (Mar 2009), and counting.

BCSFazine FANEDS RANKED BY NUMBER OF ISSUES

-- Faned: **Garth Spencer** - 99
 -- Faned: **R. Graeme Cameron** - 76
 -- Faned: **John C. Wong** - 61
 -- Faned: **Steve Forty** - 35
 -- Faned: **Barbara Przeklasa** - 28
 -- Faned: **Mike Bailey** - 24
 -- Faned: **Felicity** - 23 (and counting)
 -- Faned: **Fran Skene** - 21
 -- Faned: **Helene Flanders** - 15
 -- Faned: **Allyn Cadogan** - 14
 -- Faned: **Neil Williams** - 13
 -- Faned: **Becky Bennett** - 12
 -- Faned: **Constantine Hiebner** - 11
 -- Faned: **Vaughn Fraser** - 6
 -- Faned: **Ed Kedzierski** - 4
 -- Faneds: **Jim Welch & Margaret Galbraith-Hamilton** - 4
 -- Faned: **Gerald Boyko** - 2
 -- Faned: **Lona Elrod** - 2
 -- Faned: **Ed Beauregard** - 1
 -- Faned: **Alan R. Betz** - 1

I will now examine three issues of BCSFazine, and being somewhat anal retentive I picked issues #350, 375 & 400 rather than any three chosen in a genuinely random manner. Still, these evenly spaced issues (in terms of time frame) should offer a convincing glimpse of how Garth went about editing BCSFazine.

I recall that Garth's general approach was to combine aspects of a newszine (as per example his former MAPLE LEAF RAG) with the natter of a typical clubzine dependent on contributions from club members, all with the intention of making the zine as useful and interesting as possible.

What caused him some difficulty was the natural tendency for his personality and personal interests to spill over the pages of BCSFazine. For this he received some criticism, even a few accusations of converting a clubzine into a perzine. Thus he was constantly juggling to find a happy medium between what was of interest to club members and what was of interest to himself sufficient to keep the role of editor fun and exciting.

All I can say is, he would have found it easier to follow my lead when I adopted the persona of 'The God-Editor' during my stint as BCSFAzine Editor and steam-rolled over all opposition to produce a perzine wiggling out in all directions which at least some people found odd enough to make for interesting reading.

You're right, I should have grown a hide and disregarded negative or null responses – Garth

In BCSFAzine #350, dated July 2002, which consists of 10 full size sheets of paper, Garth has a poorly reproduced (Xerox copy) of a photo of himself on the cover. (A good God-Editor touch if you ask me.) Then comes an editorial in which he asks the question: "Am I Insane?" (Another good perzine touch.) The gist of the editorial was that there was a fine line between creative imaginary story universes and "*self-referential, endlessly elaborated fantasy.*" Garth wanted to know to which definition his Royal Swiss Navy musings belonged and what should he do about it? "...*buckle down and devote my imagination and sense of humour to professional writing? ... join an activist organization and dispense with the eccentric comedy routines entirely? ... go ahead and launch a war of comedy; start a successor group to the Rhino Party and wage publicity wars with our political Philistines?*" The important answer, in my opinion, was that he carry on using his imagination and sense of humour in EVERYTHING he chose to do.



Garth as 'Superfan'

Elsewhere in #350 Lloyd Penney contributes a lengthy loc, US fan Ted White several fanzine reviews, and local fan Stephen Samuel an article defending BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER as possessing "*excellent writing with word play, innuendo, character development and plot twists..*" and not just being a display of "*bouncing babes*". Four pages are taken up with news items regarding both Canada-wide matters like the Aurora awards and local events of interest to local fans.

BCSFAzine #375, dated August 2004, is digest sized, 40 pages long, smaller print, with a drawing of a female humanoid skunk on the cover by Taral, and in general, much meatier contents than #350. This was the standard format for most of Garth's BCSFAzines. Instead of an editorial, Garth describes the nature of the Society for Creative Anachronism. This is followed by a loc in which Taral explains the nature of his fan art contributions to BCSFAzine:

"When I ink a drawing the sketchiness of the lines disappears, as you might expect, and the solids are solid black as they should be. The art I do for money leaves me little time to meet that standard for everything. Of late, even art I've drawn specifically for the fan press has been penciled and not inked. It's not necessarily a bad thing. Some people like the more spontaneous look and textured quality of pencil. It does have a charm of its own. Inked work often looks lifeless in comparison. But it's not aesthetics that dictate the appearance of my drawings in BCSFAzine, but practicality." So now you know. Personally, I've always been delighted with Taral's 'pencilings'.

In another lengthy loc Randy Barnhart comments "*But we should appreciate Garth more. It takes an unusual sort of person to do the dirty work of a science fiction club, year after year...*" He also describes conspiracy theories as "*the only genuine political discourse of our times.*" In his reply, Garth poses the question: "*I think conspiracy theories are intrinsically funny, like Pythonesque surrealism, but maybe I'm as out of touch with the normal definition of humour as, say, Andy Kaufman was.*" No. NOBODY was as far removed from the 'normal definition of humour' as Andy Kaufman. None of his 'stand-up' routines were even remotely funny. They struck me as colossal in-jokes designed to humiliate the unappreciative buffoons composing the audience, any audience. Whereas Garth, in my opinion, is consistently wry and amusing in his writings, or at his very worst, always interesting.

Even Garth's selection of 'Blast From The Past' articles is always intriguing. In this case, the infamous FANNISH PURITY TEST that had been all the rage back in the 1980s. It asks 100 'Have you ever?' questions to be answered 'yes' or 'no'. Questions like: "*Have you ever used position 69? ... used nipple clips? ... visited an orgy parlour?*" and the like. To calculate your score you add up the 'no' answers. You then, as Garth puts it, "*... use your score to compare relative experience with friends and partners, but you might not want to tell your mother.*" Hmm, my purity score is 81. Evidently I'm as pure as the driven snow. Oh well.

Ray Seredin contributes an article on the latest Dr. Who production news, Garth the first part of a short story titled CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE FAST-TALKING KIND in which a certain Hrothgar Weems TALKS alien invaders out

of invading the earth by making it seem like more trouble than it was worth (quite funny I thought and rather well done), and of course there's a fair bit of news about fannish happenings and events.

But the most interesting article is perhaps the minutes of one of the regular Kaffeeklatsches Garth used to host on a monthly basis. People, in this case nine local fans, would take turns literally pulling debate topics out of a hat. This worked surprisingly well and fulfilled Garth's quest for an exchange of intellectually imaginative ideas and musings.

For example, the response to the question *"If dinosaurs had evolved into people and drove cars, would the cars be fueled by the compressed fossilized bodies of their ancestors?"* was: *"It was suggested that dinosaur clans would raid the territory of rival clans, to use their rival's ancestral remains. Another theory was that the petroleum of your rival's ancestors wouldn't be considered good enough; you would perhaps utter a prayer to YOUR ancestors when you fill up your tank."*

And as for the question *"What is a society? What is a culture? What is a civilization? Do we have all of the above? What kind of civilization are we likely to get in the future?"* the response was: *"There was a lot of quibbling with Garth at this point, because everyone else felt these were vague and nebulous questions and he thought they were pretty simple and basic... Felicity suggested that if Heinlein saw what an individualist society evolved into in America he would apologize. Garth remarked that Heinlein was never able to write the great American socialist novel..."*

This is a useful and invigorating exercise the club might well consider starting up again.

BCSFAzine #400, dated September 2006, is a 'Special 400th Commemorative Issue, consisting of 44 full-sized pages plus covers (featuring a drawing by Taral of a shoe salesman fitting a horse shoe to one of the front hooves of a female centaur). Quite a few pages exhibit news items ranging from author Alyx J. Shaw's first 'appearance as a Writer Guest of Honour at a convention, in this case the first minicon to be held in Basel Switzerland: *"Actually it was a phone-in, with con-goers seated before a speaker-phone, and me thousands of miles away in Canada, sweating in my underwear and absolutely terrified. Turnout was smaller than expected; what with bomb threats and such slowing up traffic. Yet fans from England, France and Germany still managed to attend. They cheerfully grilled me for well over the originally scheduled time of a half hour..."* to an item describing how an automated garage parking robot "trapped hundreds of its wards for several days."



Don H. DeBrandt contributed two articles; the first titled 'FRED: A FANNISH LEGEND' which described the local fan gathering F.R.E.D. (Forget Reality, Everybody Drink) as an actual, extremely eccentric person, and the second titled 'CIDER: OUR FRIEND AND YOURS', giving credit to the VCON hospitality suites for increasing Cider consumption in British Columbia by an officially acknowledged surge of nearly one and a half million litres a year!

I contributed the article 'HONOURED BCSFANS GREATLY MISSED' briefly describing the fannish careers of members of BCSFA now deceased, namely Susan Wood (1948-1980), Helene 'Hen' Flanders (1944-1982), Paul Howard 'S'mokey' Simms (1942-1991), Sara 'Peregrin' Brearley (1969-1994), Evelyn Beheshti Hildebrandt (1962-1995) and Warren Oddsson (1958-2001).

The minutes of another 'Kaffeeklatsch' answered such questions as *"If you could bring one well-known person from the past to the present, who would he/she be, and why?"* (Answers included Canada's first Prime Minister Sir. John A. McDonald, Mark Twain and Jules Verne, for assorted reasons) and *"Do fans have lower self-esteem than mundanes?"* (which led to a discussion of rising 'Geek' consciousness and pride).

Andrew C. Murdoch describes the background and history of a ludicrous lawsuit by a corporation insisting it had trademarked the word 'fandom' and that no one else was allowed to use it. In truth their prolonged lawsuit against a website titled 'fandom.TV' was eventually declared 'without merit' by a judge because the US patent and trademark office had

rejected the corporation's application on the grounds 'fandom' was a word that had been in common usage since at least 1903 if not before.

In short, there was something of interest for everyone, which is itself the 'trademark' of Garth's style of editing, and one of the secrets of his success as a fanzine publisher.

After stepping down from BCSFAzine in early 2009 Garth kept up his ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE production, and devoted some of his newfound 'free time' to a pet project he had long been considering, as witness this on-line email he distributed to get it started:

"Dear Guys,

"You are cordially invited, one and all, to a gathering I hold once a month: a Vancouver Discordian Meetup Group, the first Sunday evening of each month, at 7 pm at The Grind Gallery and Cafe. This 24/7 cafe is on Main Street in Vancouver, just a few doors south of King Edward Avenue. (Note: This info is no longer valid.)

"On September 6th we have a special agenda: setting plans for the Royal Swiss Navy room party at VCon 34, which will be held October 2-4 in the Marriott Pinnacle hotel in downtown Vancouver. We can talk about presenting crank theories at the room party, or performing filksongs in the vein of "The Last Saskatchewan Pirate"; launching an Absurdist political party or a Rational Secular Humanist cult; forming a Royal Swiss Navy Corps of Engineers (all of whom are left-handed and dyslexic and use pretzels for straight edges), or launching a comic book starring local politicians and businesspeople as costumed superheroes. Or something. Please bring your pet ideas!

"I've been trying to get people to do creative original brainstorming like this, and other fannish stufh, for a while now; maybe the Discordian Meetup group is the right venue."

Yours, Garth"

Alas, though he attracted a number of like-minded acolytes, the meetup group slowly dissipated and disappeared. I suspect in part because the heyday of Discordianism was more than forty years ago and it may no longer strike contemporary fans as fresh and innovative as it seemed when it first appeared.

To put it another way, considering the current explosion of conspiracy theories and their ilk, like Jesse Ventura's TV 'documentary' series, how do you parody something already so ludicrous and absurd, yet manage to stand out as something separate and apart? Not an easy task.

At any rate, Garth has in fact decided to lay his Royal Swiss Navy 'movement' to rest and refocus his energy on his new perzine and further research into fannish history. I would encourage him to emphasize the humour and fascination of fandom at its best in the hope that this will inspire new generations of fans to take up the torch of us old pharts. Certainly that is what I am trying to do with my numerous publications. Even if we don't succeed, there is great fun to be had in the attempt.

Truth is, fandom is one king hell of a hobby, and as one of the legendary Canadian SMOFs (Secret Masters of Fandom), Garth Spencer is living proof!

WHAT I'VE LEARNED ABOUT FANPUBBING

By Garth Spencer

Editors note: *This is a reprint of an article which first appeared in the second issue of ENTER THE LISTS in July 1983.*

Garth Note: *This is intended to be an open column, where different faneditors can put in their oar and steer budding faneditors aright. Contributions, tips, and opinions are solicited and will be much appreciated.*

For the purpose of this piece I will assume that you already know what fanzines are for, where they come from, where they're going, and what sort of hassles are involved in getting submissions out of people. Here I will mainly address the reproduction process I am most familiar with, and matters of layout and production.

My expertise, if that's the word, is with spirit duplication ("ditto"), the second most obsolete repro method (I gather) in fandom. (The most obsolete, I understand, is hectography.) As Bernie Klassen explains it, the ditto stencil/master that you type/draw on (illo 1) bears lines of ink on the printing side, and a thin layer of this is washed off the stencil and onto each piece of paper by the fluid (methyl hydrate) in the ditto machine. It's blurry and not high fidelity and usually a faded purple, and I don't remember seeing ditto in High School produced by anyone who properly understood the impression control.

My first venture into fanpubbing, in 1981, was an aimless, short-lived little perzine called SCUTTLEBUTT. I averaged about 16 pages (double-sided) per issue. The first few issues were photocopied at a local repro centre; at under 50 copies it cost me nearly \$50 per issue, so I soon switched to ditto.

It was fairly easy to reproduce black-and-white illustrations in photocopy, but I didn't know at the time that there was such a thing as thermofaxing; so I couldn't reproduce illos internally. I could, however, photocopy covers. For cover illustrations I Xeroxed pages of H.H. Harte's PICTURE REFERENCE FILE, a humungous multi-volume work I found in the public library.

The dittoing I had done care of the SF Association of Victoria. After a successful one-day con in 1980, SFAV bought its own second-hand machine, a manual Heyer Conqueror Mark V. For a while, they offered printing services at 1.1 cents per page. I supplied paper and stencils to a pair of sisters who had the machine at their house, and ran things off.

Some of the ideas I got at this time, I applied to FTA/PHOENIX, SFAV's clubzine, after I became editor in 1982. These included: a colophon, which spelled out what the zine was and where it came from and what you could get it for; a firm but flexible order of contents; a size limit (eventually), and a backcover which served as a mailer. (illo 2)

It took me some time to realize how I was depleting SFAV's capital. One problem I took for a while to solve was deciding on an optimum size for the zine. Another was twiggling to the way I could copy on both sides of the paper.

For this I am indebted to Mike Bentley of APA-5. First (he wrote), ditto one side of 24-lb. bond or mimeo paper with the fluid control set at medium-light or light. Let the papers dry overnight. Then, ditto the other side, again with light fluid control. It works! It even worked with 20-lb. paper. And here we had gone for a year buying 20-lb. and dittoing one side, when 18 or even 16-lb. would have done – and saved us postage! 24-lb paper dittoed on both sides cut our weight nearly in half; by early 1983, postage rates had risen exorbitantly, so this was a blessing.



FTA/PHOENIX production fell into the following pattern:

1) I would set a deadline date, at the latest while I was producing the previous issue; preferably a meeting 2-3 weeks ahead of the end of the month for publication. (FTA/PHOENIX was bimonthly.)

2) I would solicit and then collect submissions. This was sometimes a problem, but I tended to mine the overset pile (unused contributions).

3) Farm out the typing of stencils to some people with the time, the inclination and the typers. After a few issues I tended to monopolize this. Not smart.

4) Collect and order the typed stencils. We had a stock of stencils which didn't give out until the spring of 1983.

5) Correct my own stencils (if not done earlier) and add illos.

It is simple to correct ditto stencils by dabbing liquid paper over typos, letting it dry, and typing over that. But some people there are who think you have to srape off the typo with a razor!

Illos, especially line drawings, could simply be drawn on stencils, then cut apart and taped onto typed stencils. It was important to leave enough margin between drawing and type for the tape, and to put the tape towards the leading edge of the stencil.

Since FTA/PHOENIX was a clubzine, it had a column of club minutes, “Déjà vu,” and that was the last item to come in. The last minutes would be received at the meeting which was, coincidentally, the deadline.

6) Set the next deadline, if not already set.

7) Run off the zine. This required paper and fluid, either of which might run out.

I tried always to present the treasurer with an itemized accounting of expenses, and a similar postal requisition. It helps no end to document where your money goes, and how much, and why.

There was something odd about the kind of mistake we made. Nobody in SFAV’s executive and nobody who had edited FTA/PHOENIX before mentioned thermofaxing, although it had been used extensively by early members who attended the University of Victoria. Kris Snyder, the treasurer, bought 20-lb. electrostatic paper for the Oct. ’82 issue, which worked out pretty poorly; nobody informed her that it made a difference – she was just given a stock number to order. She bought 20-lb. paper for the April ’83 issue, when we tried double-sided dittoing, because she had the impression that getting the paper to me in time was more important than getting what I asked for.

Some of us didn’t think to ask questions. Some of us didn’t think to volunteer information. This sort of thing drives me up the wall.

In the winter of 1982-1983 I inherited THE CENTRAL GANGLION, an inter-club newsletter conceived about six months before. When I finally got around to putting it out (I am a man of means by no means), I experimented with double-sided ditto, multi-coloured ditto and half-size format. There was an issue there where over 40% of the pages went to waste due to fluid bleeding through. Then it was I wrote to Mike Bentley (and learned about fluid control). I learned that you need a special stapler to bind half-size zines. I learned that multicolour headings and illos are easier on ditto than mimeo. Eventually I went back to full-size format, and finally handed it back to Paula Johanson. Dave Gordon-MacDonald had a Roneo mimeograph by then, and took up the production side of it.

FABLED FANDOM NEWS & NOTES

C.U.F.F. NOMINATIONS STILL OPEN!

“In order to be nominated for the CUFF this year an application must be submitted by March 31, 2011 to d.lacey@gmail.com. The application must have a minimum of three references from people in the east and three from the west. It should contain a letter describing who you are, why this would be beneficial for you and your community. Voting will be open April 5 and close May 31st. This will allow the successful candidate enough time to work with SFContario programming and to schedule their visit.”

T.A.F.F. VOTING STILL OPEN!

**2011 TAFF Ballot
Europe to North America**

Deadline: 26th April 2011

You can download the Ballot/Registration form from:

[TAFF Home](#) • [Printable Word version](#) • [PDF](#)

Or: < <http://taff.org.uk/ballots/taff2011.html> >

2011 FAAN AWARDS RESULTS!

The winners of the 2011 Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards were presented on February 13 at E Corflu Vitus in Sunnyvale, CA.

Best Fan Writer: Roy Kettle

Best Fan Artist: Steve Stiles

Best Fanzine: *Trapdoor*, edited by Robert Lichtman

Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Award for Best Fan Correspondent: Robert Lichtman

Best Fan Website: eFanzines

At the Corflu awards ceremony Art Widner was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award. Also, Spike was chosen Past President of FanWriters of America (fwa) for 2010.

BREAKDOWN OF VOTING:

BEST FAN WRITER (out of 53 nominees)

Roy Kettle 72

Claire Brialey 61

Mark Plummer 56

James Bacon 51

Taral Wayne 38

BEST FAN ARTIST (out of 31 nominees)

Steve Stiles 115

Dan Steffan 100

D West 74

Brad Foster 52

Harry Bell 31

BEST FANZINE (out of 40 nominees)

Trapdoor (Robert Lichtman) 100

Banana Wings (Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer) 87

Chunga (Randy Byers, Andy Hooper & carl) 54

Challenger (Guy Lillian III) 37

Sense of Wonder Stories (Rich Coad) 37

BEST FAN WEBSITE (out of 22 nominees)

eFanzines.com 140

Ansible - www.ansible.co.uk 32

file770.com 29

Fanac Fanhistory Project - www.fanac.org 26

fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff/ 25

Harry Warner, Jr., Memorial Award for

BEST FAN CORRESPONDENT (out of 46 nominees)

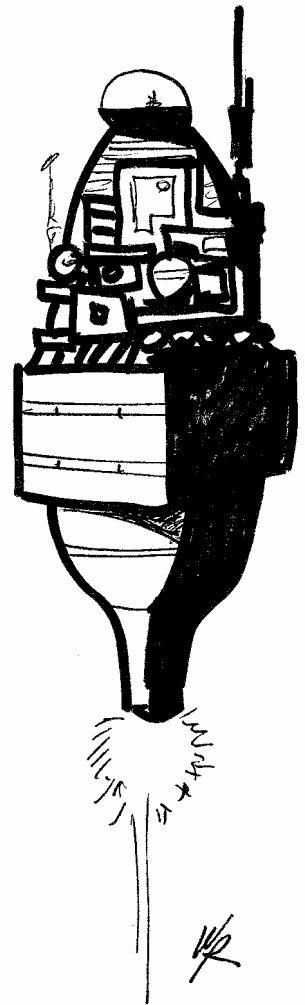
Robert Lichtman 78

Lloyd Penney 43

Jerry Kaufman 40

Mike Meara 39

Claire Brialey 31



FANATIC FANNICHE FANACTIVITY

Editors note: this is a small beginning for what is intended to be a Canada-wide ‘gossip’ column reporting on what Canadian fans are up to on an ongoing basis. If you have any info about yourself or your club/convention you would like to see in this column please email me at < [rgraeme\[at\]shaw.ca](mailto:rgraeme[at]shaw.ca) >.

BRITISH COLUMBIA:

* **Anime Evolution**, the annual Anime convention in the Vancouver area is on hold as the entire planning committee for this year’s convention has resigned. Rumours aside, some sort of organizational restructuring is apparently necessary before planning can start up again. The convention has always been popular and well attended, so a large number of fans are eagerly anticipating a successful resolution of whatever problems have brought about this temporary setback.

* **BCSFAn Michael Bertrand** reports he succeeded in his quest to write a million words during 2010, finishing in fact a month early! (Check out < <http://millionwordyear.com/megaword2010/> > for details. Being evil, I challenge him to write a billion words during 2012, and a trillion for 2013!

* **VCON 36** has good guest choices, according to Lloyd Penney. He writes that “*Jean-Pierre Normand is probably one of the best pro artists we’ve ever had in Canada. He does everything, from cover oils to quick illustrations and cartoons. All those Auroras are well-deserved.*”

* **WCSFA**, the West Coast Science Fiction Association, held its annual general meeting February 27th. The new executive consists of: *President:* Jenni Merrifield, *Vice-President:* Michael Walsh, *Treasurer:* Kathleen Moore, *Secretary:* Pauline Walsh, *Archivist:* R. Graeme Cameron, *Members-at-Large:* Rob Beggs and Ron Merrifield. Keith Lim carries on as *Chair of VCON 36* and Danielle Stephens was elected *Chair of VCON 37* to be held in 2012.

* **Al Betz** (Corresponding Secretary for Mr. Science, 1991 winner of the Fan Achievement Other Award), continues to be on dialysis three times a week. However the good news is he is once again living at home and going back and forth to the hospital only when his treatment is due. All his friends and fans wish him well in adjusting to his new circumstances and hope he will be able to lead as normal a life as possible.

* **John Edward Hutchings**, a longtime Vancouver area fan passed away on Tuesday, February 22nd, 2011, at the age of 81. Ed’s good friend Debbie Miyashita informs me Ed retained his renowned dry wit and sense of humour to the last. For instance Debbie says that when Steve Forty visited Ed in hospital Ed told him he had planned to hide under the sheet and just have a “claw” reaching out from under the covers. Debbie adds: “*He was so thin in the end, you wouldn’t have recognized him, and his arm was very thin - it would have been very effective. Comedian to the end! :-).*” Debbie’s article on Ed’s life will appear in the next WCSFAzine. And my own article will appear in the next ‘Space Cadet’. Meanwhile Debbie has set up an Ed Hutchings facebook site and encourages friends to post pictures and memories of Ed. A gentle, witty man, and very much an old fashioned gentleman, Ed will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

ONTARIO:

* **Jennifer Jacob** stole the show at Polaris 24 in Toronto with her ‘Weeping Angel’ costume. Convention MC Larry Stewart commented that he hadn’t seen such an outstanding costume in twenty years of attending cons. According to Cathy Palmer-Lister “*She was so perfect, that when she stood still, you really could believe she was a statue. I’ve seen some fabulous costumes, some at World Cons that were extremely elaborate, but this one was easily the most breath-taking.*” Terrific photos of Jennifer in costume are in the latest issue of the MonSFFA publication WARP 76 (reviewed below).

* **Murray Moore**, reports: The Boskone 48 Art Show’s Retrospective of 60 Years of SF Magazine Art included four Vaughn Bode artworks loaned to the retrospective by Mississauga collector Murray Moore. All of the pieces were published in 1968, two on the covers of 1968 issues of GALAXY and two as covers of 1968 issues of WORLDS OF IF.

* **Lloyd Penney**, writes about SFContario, saying “*the first edition was a great time, and I look forward to the second convention, this coming November. It will also be the CanVention for this year. I have offered my services to help with the Auroras, and I hope that will start up soon.*”

QUEBEC:

* **MonSFFA**, is proud to announce in the current issue of WARP that “*Montreal has 6 conventions now, 5 of them fan-run! Don’t miss a chance to make new friends!*” They are: ConCept 2011, Geekfest Montreal, Otakuthon Anime Con, Montreal Comic con, Roludo Con, and Zombie Apocalypse. Montreal & MonSFFA continue to remain splendidly fannishly active.

* **MonSFFA**, the January 16 meeting saw the re-election of Berny Reischl as President of the Montreal Club and Keith Braithwaite as vice-president. (Keith also functions as editor of the monthly newsletter IMPULSE.) Sylvain St-Pierre continues on as Treasurer.

FRENETIC FANZINE REVIEWS

By R. Graeme Cameron

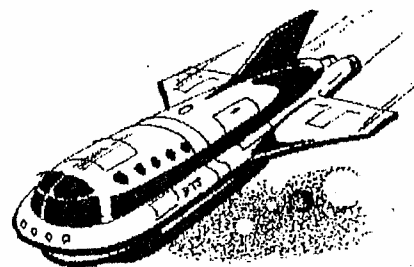
AURORAN LIGHTS #1 January 2011 – Editor: R. Graeme Cameron

What? Am I reviewing the first issue in the second issue? No, but Editor Felicity reviewed it in BCSFAzine #453 and pointed out that “*the file properties (presumably left over from when Graeme was editor of this zine!) need to be changed so it doesn’t say “BCSFAzine” at the top of the PDF.*” You know, it never even occurred to me to change the file properties heading. My thanks to Felicity for pointing this out. Won’t happen again.

Felicity further noted: “*There are also “widowed” headlines on pages four and twenty-one (though if you think of the document as one continuous scroll, they’re not widows).*” Sheer laziness on my part, combined with self-imposed deadline pressure. Obviously I need to pay more attention to such gaffs. Will do.

BCSFAzine V39.2 #453 February 2011 – Editor: Felicity

The cover features a nifty Brad Foster piece (his art is always ‘nifty’) followed by basic information about upcoming club events and the club executive. Then follows the loc column, which Felicity almost always puts before other articles in contrast to the traditional practice. This helps to perk up the reader’s interest and get things going. At least for readers like me who look forward to loc columns as constituting one of the most entertaining features of any zine. The Voice of Fandom on display as it were. Those who prefer more formal essays and dislike the ‘disjointed’ approach (each paragraph a separate topic – which is why I like to add response comments in my loc columns to make it more conversational, as does Felicity) might not appreciate this. I like reading the loc column first anyway, and approve of Felicity’s placement, yet always have the loc column come last in my own publications. Go figure. I guess I’m a traditionalist.



Then comes a Calendar of Events compiled mostly by Keith Lim which lists and describes upcoming events for the month ahead with a few items spilling over into the next month. Vancouver area fandom, in its broadest sense – including media fans, anime fans, gaming fans, etc., -- is actually pretty active. There are quite a few diverse groups with monthly activities. Keith’s list is the most comprehensive source available and quite handy in that he includes links to virtually every event so that the reader can check out particularly interesting items in greater detail.

‘News-Like Matter’ comes next, which is really a catch-all section for announcements, brief obituaries, fan fund info, & such related to fannish interests. And then some. Consider my favourite item in this issue:

Garth Called It: Witchcraft Now a Licensed, Taxable Profession

National Geographic Channel blogger Patrick J. Kiger writes: “*In January, the Romanian government changed labor laws, officially recognizing witchcraft as a taxable profession. And now [...] the Romanian Senate has passed a bill that would threaten soothsayers with fines and even jail time if their prophecies don’t pan out as promised.*”

“*[...] Other provisions of the proposed law would require witches to have a permit and to provide their customers with receipts.*”

Garth Spencer speculated about this exact thing in person and in previous issues of BCSFAzine.

Felicity Walker [Credit: National Geographic on Twitter] Wednesday 16 February 2011

This is precisely the sort of thing Garth himself has prophesied (sometimes tongue-in-cheek, sometimes not) in the course of his Discordian-inspired hoax presentations. Personally I think the law was concocted by Romanian Lawyers to encourage endless litigation over the question of whether a given prophecy came true. Romanian witches will have to adopt the Delphic Oracle principle of offering vague ‘readings’ that can be interpreted, especially in hindsight, any way you want.

Ray Seredin offers an article about the acting career of Nicholas Courtney (1929 – 2011), the beloved ‘Brigadier’ of Dr. Who fame. Then comes an essay by Taral Wayne titled ‘One Fan’s Gafia’ in which he muses over rumours of his untimely gafiation (i.s. the ‘getting away from it all’ abandonment of fandom and fannish activity which occasionally strikes even the most dedicated fans) as being much exaggerated. This is followed by an article by Ed Beauregard dedicated to the memory of Chuck Davis, one of the significant fans of the early days of BCSFA who passed away last November. Ed and Felicity have given me permission to reprint this article in the next WCSFAzine.

Last of all comes nine reviews by Felicity of zines received in trade. This is of great interest to any enthusiastic zine publisher eager to find new zines themselves to trade with, or to any one who wants to adopt the hobby of loccing or ‘letter-hacking’, i.e. sending letters of comment to numerous zines in lieu of publishing your own. Loccing is a great way to enter into a fannish dialogue with your peers.

Felicity says she was rushed to put out this issue, but for a monthly club newsletter there’s a lot of ‘meat’ to it, something for everyone to chew on. I keep promising to submit articles as well. This I will attempt to do for the next issue. But let me make it clear, even without my contributions (maybe especially without my contributions some would say), BCSFAzine is well worth reading.

OPUNTIA #69.3/69.5/70.1B/70.1D – Editor: Dale Speirs

These four zines arrived in a single envelope out of the blue to my great delight. I say that because they were unexpected. Dale publishes paperzines only, and trades strictly for hardcopy zines, or for letters of comment. Since I publish online only, I almost never get to see issues of Opuntia, which has long been one of Canada’s better written and always interesting zines. Indeed, Dale won the Best Fanzine Aurora in 2005.

OPUNTIA has long been noted for its unique numbering system, based on nature of contents. Currently, Dale’s system is as follows: “Whole-numbered OPUNTIAs are sercon, x.1 issues are reviewzines, x.2 issues are indexes, x.3 issues are apazines, and x.5 issues are perzines.” Now, what did I get?

OPUNTIA 69.3 September 2010.

First thing to notice, this is a FAPAzine for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, the oldest apa in fandom. For those of you unfamiliar with the concept, I will quote Dale’s description in full:

“Modern zine publishing as we know it today began in the middle 1800s as cheap, home-using printing presses became available to the general public. Zinsters developed a distro method called the amateur press association (apa) where members sent x number of copies of their zine to a central mailer (also known as the official editor). The zines are collated into bundles, and each member gets back one bundle of everyone’s zines. There is an annual fee to cover postage. Apas have a minimum level of activity required, such as publishing 8 pages a year. It must be emphasized that apas are not for passive subscribers; you must commit to the minimum activity level or you will be booted out. FAPA has been going for more than 70 years; the oldest apa is the National A.P.A., founded 1876.”

Generally speaking (based on my own experience, I was in FAPA for a couple of years, and edited CANFAPA likewise, till costs rose and fanergy ran out) an apazine contains comments on the zines included in the previous mailing, plus an original essay or two. It should be mentioned that often, as in this case, an apazine is distributed to a readership beyond the apa in question and is not exclusive to that apa, though most apazines are.

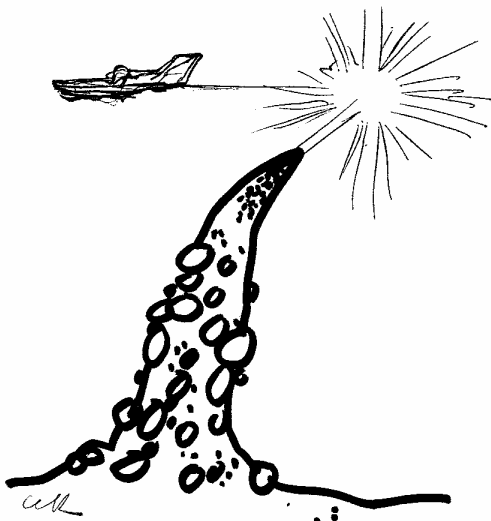
You might expect that an apazine consisting mostly of comments on previous comments you haven’t seen would be confusing, but in fact the comments are usually mini-essays packed with nuggets of information. For instance, in commenting on the FAPAzine TRIAL AND AIR #19, Dale encapsulates the fannish career of a legendary Canadian fan which, given this zine’s mandate of promoting the history of Canadian fandom, is well worth quoting in full:

“Re: your obituary of Canadian palaeofan Chester Cuthbert (1912-2009). He basically kept Canfandom alive during its nadir in the 1950s. I corresponded with him for years and published his letters of comment in OPUNTIA. When Winnipeg hosted the World SF Convention in 1994, I took time out from the convention to visit him at his house. He took me upstairs to show me his book collection and I had to turn sideways to get down some of the aisles of bookshelves. Even though the convention was practically on his doorstep, he did not attend. However, many of us fans visited him, and the neighbours must have wondered at the steady stream of visitors all weekend. His ERB collection went to his son and the rest is deposited at the University of Alberta Library.”

In response to CYFDD #2 which stated “...we have to accept that TAFF [Trans=Atlantic Fan Fund, which sends an SF fan from one side of the Atlantic to the other and back] is not the property of a select community which recognizes the SF fanzine as its cultural root.” Dale comments:

“Although zinesters established the award, it is now the property of whoever votes in choosing the fan. If media fans vote in the majority, then they decide. For years, the Aurora Awards in Canada were decided by Trekkies because they voted in strength.”

Hmm, I’ve not heard that before. Certainly Trekkies were ubiquitous for a couple of decades, so it’s possible, and not necessarily a bad thing by any means. One criticism directed at Trekkies (or Trekkers, as they preferred to be called) was that many seemed to be interested only in Star Trek and not in any other area of fandom. I strongly suspect that such narrowly focused fans did not vote for Aurora Awards. I would guess that the Trekkers who did were SF&F fans in general in addition to being Trekkers, and that their voting choices were at least as balanced and well rounded as any other ‘type’ of fan. (I’ve never understood the bias against ‘Trekkies’. Sure, they weren’t ‘traditional’ fans, but that’s the whole point, they represented a new, fresh force that injected considerable energy into fandom as a whole, reviving what had become moribund, perhaps preventing its extinction. Anime fans may perhaps have filled a similar function over the last decade or so. And the next new force in fandom will be...?)



I’ve always been under the impression that Dale Speirs is a curmudgeonly Luddite, a zine editor utterly opposed to the internet, still pounding away on a typewriter fiercely determined never to own a computer, and probably proudly retaining a dial phone. I am astonished to learn that Dale owns TWO computers, a 1998 laptop for producing OPUNTIA, and a 2006 laptop he uses for ‘professional publications’. Plus a 1998 phone with voice mail and speed dial. A modern man!

Or rather, a modern Luddite, or “semi-Luddite” as he describes himself. In commenting on VOICE OF THE HABU V12#1, he writes: *“Re: your computer being hacked. That is why my computers are offline, and I check my e-mail on the university computer. It saves a lot of fuss and trouble. I have never gotten an e-mail that couldn’t wait a week.”* Spoken like a man determined to keep control of his own life in as relaxed a fashion as possible. All those sociologists concerned about communication gadgets stealing time and driving people to distraction, take note of this intelligent approach. Mind you, it’s notoriously difficult to get a hold of Dale apart from snail mail. Neither his phone

number nor e-address are ever printed in OPUNTIA. But that’s part of the genius of his method. Guaranteed to preserve sanity!

In a letter of comment Lloyd Penney notes: *“You wrote that if a movie or TV series is more than two years since the last episodes were released, its fandom dies out. The exception to this rule is Doctor Who fandom, which continued on through the years, and whose patience has been rewarded with new episodes and actors. I haven’t seen any of the new episodes but I hear that Whofans are very pleased with what’s being produced.”*

To this Dale replies: *“Star Trek was another exception, but I note the rule generally holds locally in Calgary. The browncoats flooded Cowtown conventions a few years ago but have since been displaced by steampunk and sexy-teenage-vampires-in-love fans. The Trekkies here are pretty much extinct, and Whovians were always rare on the ground. I’m waiting for cowpunk to develop, so I can go in my regular daily outfit of denim shirt, jeans, and cowboy hat, and win the hall costume prize without having to dress up.”* Hmm, there’s a branch of Steampunk devoted to advanced 19th century tech in the Wild West, that’s close!

OPUNTIA 69.5 October 2010.

This is a perzine, mostly recounting some of his last experiences at work, such as unexpectedly running into some of his (female) co-workers on the street dressed in belly-dancing costumes, or tipping his cowboy hat to Princess Margriet of Holland as she goes bicycling by. A particularly amusing bit under the heading of 'If you don't like the weather...' is:

May 26: The tulips and other spring flowers are in bloom.

May 27: I mowed my lawn.

May 28: I shoveled the snow off my Sidewalks.

May 29: I injected antifreeze into the door lock of my ice-encased car so I could get to work."

An especially important fannish matter and one which every fanzine publisher and reader should be aware of is:

'WORLD WIDE PARTY #17'

"The 17th annual World Wide Party was held on June 21st at 21h00 local time. Invented by Benoit Girard (Quebec) and Franz Miklis (Austria), the idea is to get a wave circulating around the world of zinesters, mail artists, and SF fans celebrating the Papernet. At 21h00, I dutifully stood in my kitchen, hoisted a can of soda while facing east, and toasted those in the Papernet who had already celebrated. I then faced south and north to salute those who were in my time zone, and finally west to those who were yet to begin the festivities. See you at the party next year!"

I am ashamed to say the World Wide Party completely slipped my mind this year. I won't forget this coming June. In fact, I just marked it on my calendar. The 21st is, of course, the summer solstice and beginning of summer. Clearly, zinedom is meant to be a holiday free of care and woe. (My theory.)

OPUNTIA 70.1B Saturnalia 2010.

This is indeed mostly a reviewzine, though Dale includes a notice that "*The University of Calgary has acquired an outstanding collection of H.G. Wells material. The Korn collection includes first editions, translations, ephemera and pulp magazine treatments...*" then goes on to note "*A teacher at heart, Wells is often considered the inventor of the first tabletop war game. The Korn collection includes the first and following editions of the game LITTLE WARS.*"

I have a modern reprint of LITTLE WARS which is quite a hoot to read. Unfortunately it lacks the photos which accompanied the original edition, photos illustrating how H.G.Wells converted his living room into various types of miniature battlefields. I note that local fan Ed Hutchings years ago commented that the University of B.C. library special collections division has a complete set of the issues of Strand Magazine in which Wells' THE WAR OF THE WORLDS was serialized in 1898. Well worth perusing for the illustrations.

Dale also states "*The University is already home to the Bob Gibson Collection of Speculative Fiction, one of the largest collections of its kind in any University. Gibson's collection spanned the 20th century with a great many works from the early days of British speculative writing. The Wells collection is an amazing compliment, and together these collections will promote study and understanding of the emergence of modern society.*"

I published a couple of articles on Bob Gibson in the pages of WCSFAzine. He was a Canadian fan artist contributing art to fanzines worldwide from the 1940s to the 1970s (he used to regularly contribute to Leslie Crouch's LIGHT in the 1940's for instance), but his principle hobby was collecting books. That his collection contains many rare early British works is probably due to the fact that he was stationed in England during much of the war, and when on leave he visited local fans and haunted their local used book stores. He even purchased SF books in Italy during the fighting there! Talk about dedication! His collection is a treasure trove of rare fiction. However, I do not know if he collected the zines he contributed to, or whether they are included in the University collection. I like to think so.

The bulk of this issue is taken up with a detailed review of 'THE WORLD IN 2050' by Laurence C. Smith, which reads like SF but probably unfortunately is not. There's much to worry about. Dale has the knack of summing up long chapters neatly, for instance "*Coming up by 2050 will be not only Peak Oil, but Peak Almost Everything. It is not a matter of reserves running out, but rather the cost of extracting the remaining supplies, which will be offshore oil and low-grade ore bodies.*" Dale refers to this as "*suicidal economics.*" He concludes: "*Those of you still young enough to be alive in 2050 have the opportunity to begin planning now for a brighter future. Move North, live in higher altitudes, get jobs in the coming industries and commodities production, and plan for severe financial panics and inflation. You do not have to be passive victims as will happen with most people.*"

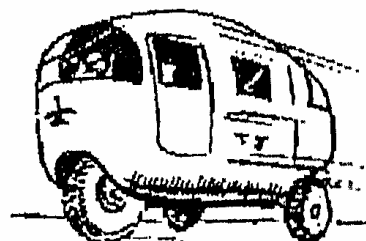
OPUNTIA 70.1D February 2011.

Dale reviews URANIUM: WAR, ENERGY, AND THE ROCK THAT SHAPED THE WORLD by Tom Zoellner and cheerfully reassures us *“that fraud artists dominate the underground trade in uranium. More than 95% of those claiming to have uranium or the technology to build atomic bombs are peddling useless low-grade ore that can’t be refined, fake machinery or bomb components, and cinnabar (red mercury) passing for purified isotopes. Osama bin Laden once paid \$1.5 million for fake uranium...”* Mind you, the other 5% are a bit worrisome...

The bulk of the issue reviews a number of Volcanic disaster movies: ‘DANTE’S PEAK’ (1997), ‘VOLCANO’ (1997), ‘DISASTER ZONE: VOLCANO IN NEW YORK’ (2006), ‘KRAKATOA: EAST OF JAVA (1969) & ‘MAGMA: VOLCANIC DISASTER (2006), plus the ‘CRACK OF DOOM’ 1966 episode from ‘THE TIME TUNNEL’ TV series and ‘THE CHEERY BLOSSOM AFFAIR’ 1965 episode of ‘THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.’ TV series. This is a delightful essay enlivened by Dale’s dry sense of humour, for eg: *“The Yellowstone lava flows stop a few metres before they overrun Natalie. She is so relieved that she goes back to her estranged husband. Cue the orchestra and end credits.”*

To me what is most interesting of all is a chart titled ‘THE STATE OF ZINEDOM’ which lists the number of Papernet zines (individual issues) Dale has received annually since 1998. For instance, he received a high of 72 individual issues of Canadian zines in 2003, and only 26 in 2010. Throw in zines from Australia, the USA, Britain and elsewhere, he received a high of 639 individual issues (groaning mailbox!) in 1999 and only 281 in 2010. His conclusion:

“The long slow decline continues after the initial fall off the cliff. My unscientific observation is that it is mostly due to the old soldiers fading away, with fewer new recruits to take their place. Those left seem to be publishing as much as they ever did, according to page counts...After a precipitous drop at the Millennium, the decline has settled into a long tail distribution. The Boomers are mostly in their 50s and 60s, still able to publish. Once they hit their late 70s and 80s and start pricing nursing homes, the decline in paper zines will speed up again.”



Well, true enough. But I’m amazed there are that many Papernet zines left at all! Dale received 138 individual issues from the States last year. That’s fantastic! Meanwhile, anyone who checks out < <http://efanzines.com> > will realize there are more SF&F efanazines being published than one person can easily keep track of. In fact zinedom is booming these days. Zinedom is probably as healthy as it has ever been. I am very happy about that.

Anyway, if you like to read personable, well written and intelligent observations about life, books, movies, the coming collapse of civilization and how to survive it, many of the foregoing including SF&F elements, OPUNTIA is essential reading, always a delight.

To acquire issues, Dale may possibly trade hardcopy for lengthy letters of comment, and you can get things started by sending \$3 cash for a one-time sample copy to:

Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7

OSFS STATEMENT #381 January 2011 – Editor: Grant Duff.

Published by the Ottawa Science Fiction Society, 26076–72 Robertson Road, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K2H 9R6, osfs@ncf.ca, <http://osfs.ncf.ca/>

This is apparently available in both hard copy form and e-zine form. I believe BCSFAzine does an E trade for this. I sent an email to STATEMENT Editor Duff requesting a similar trade, and sent him several of my publications in e-attachment form, but I have yet to hear from him. I hope a trade can be arranged, as I would very much like to review the STATEMENT on a monthly basis.

Meanwhile Editor Felicity listed the contents of this latest STATEMENT in #453 of BCSFAzine. Said list suggests that the STATEMENT continues its tradition of functioning as a clubzine reflecting the wide interests of its members. This latest issue appears to be mostly media oriented with news of upcoming films, articles about Harry Potter (‘Quidditch for

Muggles') and Dr. Who collectibles (action figures, bobble heads & such), combined with science articles (such as 'Neanderthals Cooked and Ate Vegetables' and 'Habitable Planet Doubt by B.C. Scientist'.)

I note that no loc column is listed. To me a 'Letter of Comment' column is always one of the more interesting features of any zine, and certainly a good barometer of how the zine is being perceived. I assume the STATEMENT receives locs. I'd like to read them. I'd like to read the STATEMENT. I hope Editor Duff is willing to trade.

"I DON'T CARE IF IT'S GREEN. PUT IT ON THE MICE ANYWAY!"

STUTTERING STRATOSPHERIC STATIC

LETTERS OF COMMENT

(Comments by the editor are in this colour.)

From: Taral Wayne (as stated in the first issue):

Note on the Auroras -- I hope the new category for filking means that filk won't be eligible for any of the other three fan categories. It wouldn't seem fair for filkers to have two chances at an award when everyone else has one.

I gave my opinion on this last issue, but I really shouldn't. Questions pertaining to details re the actual awards are best answered by members of the Aurora Awards Committee themselves. So here is the response of Cliff Samuels, Chair of that committee:

"The basic answer to the Filk question is that the new category removes Filk WORKS -- albums, songs, performances, etc.-- from the other categories. (Fan or professional WORK can only be counted in one category.) After all, the reason we created new categories is because some works, like poetry, or Filk songs, always seemed to be getting shut out by short stories. What we've done is try to level the playing field and make it fairer for all nominees."

"However, we clarified long ago that the new category 'Best Fan Filk' didn't remove FILKERS from 'Fan Publications', 'Fan Organization' or 'Fan Other' since that kind of fan activity is not within the 'Best Fan Filk' definition. For example, you can't win in 'Best Fan Filk' for organizing a Filk convention or track, or producing a Filk zine. Nor can you win in 'Fan Other' for creating a Filk song or album as used to be possible. A distinction is now made between what is unique to Filkdom (as defined by the 'Best Fan Filk' category) in order to give Filkers a chance to win where previously they were often shut out, and between what Filkers have in common with other types of fans, such as publishing zines or organizing tracks at conventions for instance, activities which are still eligible under the other categories."

From: Murray Moore, Feb 2nd 2011

Hello! Graeme.

Auroran Lights started educating me with the cover photograph. The first CSFFA Award "The Coeur!" sculpted by Mike Spencer is more than 30 years old, but, to me, new. I hope that van Vogt was pleased with an award in the shape of one of his fictional creations. The statue also is practical: lots of choice, lots of appendages to use as spikes on which to impale notes and bills to be paid.

Would also make a very good weapon.

Anyone else impressed by Mike Spencer? I like, looking at photos on his website < <http://home.tallships.ca/mspencer/>>, in particular, Incident Light, and Interface Gates.

Yes. He's fantastic!

You report that John Bell was one of the editors of the summer 1978 first issue of BOREALIS. Yesterday I was re-shelving books, one of which was Invaders from the North: How Canada Conquered the Comic Book Universe, by John Bell. Same John Bell? I wonder: graphic comics, and written SF and fantasy and horror are cousin genres and Canadians seriously interested in either are a small community.

I don't know for certain, but I do believe one and the same John Bell. Further, he and Leslie Choice together were CSFFA finalists for 'Visions From The Edge' in 1982, and Bell alone was a finalist in 1983 for 'Uneasy Union: A Checklist of English Language SF Concerning Canadian Separatist Conflicts.' I don't have a complete list of finalists handy, but there may have been other works of his nominated.

Casper as the name of an award is easier to pronounce, and spell, than Coeurl. However a Casper statue would have been less interesting than the Coeurl statue. Obviously Casper as a name for the award did not have a ghost of a chance.

Arrgh! You're in the same league as Spider Robinson and Don H. DeBrandt: master punners all...

Graeme, you have derailed me, with AURORAN LIGHTS 1, from my New Year's resolution. I resolved to write a letter of comment (LoC) about each paper fanzine that I receive in 2011. But here I am, typing a LoC after reading an e-fanzine displayed on my computer monitor. And you will tempt me once a month.

I won't jinx it by saying I hold you to it, but I look forward to your future locs!

I am impressed that Greg Benford is a guest of this year's VCon. Responding to an invitation from the Aussiecon III Worldcon committee to be a guest, Greg asked "Fan Guest or Pro Guest?" He could have been either, having been a prominent fanzine editor in the 1950s then continuing to be a scientist and a two-time Nebula Award-winning author.

Greg and his brother Jim were active in German fandom circa 1955 (cause their dad & family were stationed there) and even helped sponsor Germany's first SF convention in January 1956 at Wetzlar. At a subsequent German convention in late 1956 or 1957 Greg was elected President of The International Science Fiction Correspondence Club (founded 1949). Both brothers joined Dallas fandom in 1957. I would have to do further research to trace Greg's fannish activities from there. Hmmm. I sense an article for the next WCSFAzine coming on...

And, bonus, Greg has a sense of humour. During a panel during last year's Woldcon, Aussiecon 4, a scientist thanked Kim Stanley Robinson for making climate change scientists the heroes of his novel. "And," Benford, also a panelist, added, "for having sex!"

The Rotsler art looks good, but, to me, Rotsler art always looks good

From: Lloyd Penney, Feb 19th 2011

1706-24 Eva Rd. Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2

Dear Graeme:

Finally, I got around to it! Meaning of course, of all three fanzines that you sent to me, I can get around to responding to the third one. The third one, in this case, is the first Auroran Lights.

It will be at least a couple of weeks before I produce my next zine (probably WCSFAzine), so you have a bit of a breather to peruse this issue and comment. Considering the vast armada of zines continually assaulting your mail box, I'm assuming that means all of 30 minutes or so available, tops. (And of course I include your address above to make it easier for any brand new zinesters to send their zines to you.)

I think this is a publication the Auroras could have used a long time ago. I am pleased that a group has stepped forward to add more organization to the awards, and this should add some more prestige to the pointy trophy.

I certainly hope so. It's of interest to note that there was an official organ for CSFFA prior to AURORAN LIGHTS, and one that you are familiar with as you contributed to it on a regular basis. I refer, of course, to CASPERAPA edited by Fran Skene. At the Convention 6 business meeting 1986 in Vancouver (Vcon 14) it was moved "That CASPERAPA be revived as the Official Forum of the Convention, with membership dues and mailing accounts. Convention should be funded by a membership/voting fee. Passed." The wording is a bit unclear, but I gather CSFFA members would receive CASPERAPA as part of their membership. At any rate, I believe CASPERAPA ran for a total of six issues, the last in April 1988. The BCSFA/WCSFA archive has issues #2, 4, 5, & 6.

Ballots galore...I have offered a nomination for a potential CUFF nominee, I voted in the FAAn Awards (none, alas, for me), I have voted for TAFF, and we now must nominate for the Hugos. I know what people say about awards, but there is value in them, and nothing beats that level of feelgood that comes from it. I have hopes to go to the Reno Worldcon a Hugo nominee once again, but we will see what the nominators decide.

Hmmm, I have been remiss. I gave a nomination for CUFF, and am currently mulling over choices for the Auroras and TAFF, but I missed voting for the FAAn awards. I hope to do better.

The addition of three new fan awards will help spread the feelgood to more Canfans. I remember the fuss over expanding the single fan award to three. When we registered, there had been a problem with the system, and I wound up with three voting numbers, but all has been solved, and our nominations are in.

The awards are becoming more and more professional in their administration and scope. At the very beginning there was a bit of withering about how something so important should be decided by just a 'few' fans, and that the awards weren't really important anyway since Canadian SF literature didn't actually exist separate from American SF, and Canadian fandom just barely, etc, etc. People attacked the awards for daring to exist at all. In hindsight it seems to me the birth pangs of the CSFFA awards were heavily influenced by our traditional Canadian inferiority complex. It was as if people couldn't grasp the concept that you can start small and nurture something to useful health and size over subsequent years of continual effort. At any rate, that's the impression I get from perusing old editorials and locs of the day. My opinion only.

(I hasten to point out the obvious, that Canadian SF literature today is thriving with very many really good authors. We can hold up our head anywhere. Definitely something to be proud of.)

I don't think I had ever seen a large, detailed photograph of the Coeurl until this issue, and I certainly didn't know the story behind it, or its manufacture. This is information the interested Canadian fan needs to have. (Have you thought of putting everything into a book and issue it as a Canadian Immortal Storm?) I didn't even know about the second award.

Well, Garth has pioneered the way with his numerous monographs and impressive research. I'd like to tackle certain subjects with my own approach. The trouble with Moskowitz' IMMORTAL STORM is that it concentrates way too much on (the now meaningless) fannish politics of the day and doesn't actually describe the clubs, zines and fans to my satisfaction in the sense of what it was like to be there. Harry Warner's writings are far more accessible, far more interesting methinks. On the other hand, a brief monograph should stick to the outline of the subject and not digress too much. In short, writing history isn't easy.

(I suppose you could say my online CANFANCYCLOPEDIA is the closest I'll ever come to a 'big picture' description of Canadian Fandom. Check it out at < <http://cfanzines.com/CanFan/index.htm> >)

The 1997 CanVention...what an event. And, what a table. Time has certainly changed us all. Ed Charpentier produced these awards while working at the Ontario College of Art, now Ontario College of Art and Design University. He received an Aurora nomination the next year for his design. I cannot think of any other SF award where there were his and hers awards, so we might have made a little bit of history there. (At the Hugos a few years ago, Mike Glyer won a Hugo for Best Fan Writer, and his wife Diana almost won for Best Non-Fiction Book.) A wonderful evening, Bruce Gray was suitably silly and harassing Yvonne all evening, Richard Biggs was a little bemused at what was happening. Many of us got a chance to talk to him about Babylon 5 (he played Dr. Franklin), but he was freaked when someone called him Dr. Hunter, the character he played on the soap opera Days of Our Lives. (Hurray for Google, never would have remembered all that...) Biggs was honestly interested in what was happening, but was a little put out when he wanted to travel, and was reminded of the terms of his contract. It is a wonderful surprise to see all these pictures of us enjoying our trophies; I'd never seen them before, although I have seen the one of us with Bruce Gray from a different angle.

I was up for two awards at the 1998 Convention; for THE SPACE CADET GAZETTE under Fan Achievement (Fanzine), and for my work as 1997 CUFF Administrator under Fan Achievement (Other). Alas, t'was not to be.



The above picture appeared last issue cropped down to the 'Flying Saucer' on the table. I now print the full picture to give Lloyd & Yvonne another glimpse of themselves at Convention 17. The gentleman on the left is Maritime fan Brian Davis, then editor of 'Fixed Link', and later 2005 CUFF winner.

(I remember the hotel well...it was the Chimo Inn. Recently, fandom has returned to that hotel. Futurecon, the New Year's Eve convention this past December, was held there, the Canadian National Steampunk Exhibition will be held there in April, and I know that at least one other convention is looking at that site. It is now known as the Holiday Inn Markham.)

1981 was the year I think I started getting fanzines in the mail, so I believe I have issue 100 of BCSFAzine, published in 1982, although it may have been sent to me after that year. I think I have those early issues of New Canadian Fandom, and I have the parody issue, NCF, Eh? I was a member of TAPA for about seven years until cliques started forming in the membership, and many found themselves excluded from various activities. I had decided at that time that I wanted a large audience than just the 25 to 35 members of TAPA. As far as conventions go, Ad Astra II was the first convention I worked, running the dealers' room, and with a short interruption or two, we are still on the committee to this day.

Our Aparticons, notice the spelling... They were an effort to not only continue with the Baskons (again, notice the spelling), but improve on them. At one point the Baskons were the biggest fannish parties in Toronto, and they drew other fans from the US and elsewhere. Getting from one side of the unit to the other often could take 15 minutes, what with all the people there. The Star Trek bridge that lived on the third floor of the building that housed Mr. Gameways' Ark was purchased by the group that was staging Toronto Trek at the time, and its electricals were brought up to code by Martin Hunger (now living in New Westminster with pirate wife Christina Carr), and used for display at the convention.

Taral's letter of comment...we had been to one Primedia previous to that year, and found it very dull. We might not have gone to the Primedia that was the CanVention that year if it hadn't been for our Aurora nominations, and of course, seeing you there, Graeme. And, if I recall, we purchased a one-day membership to the convention, and left much later that evening. (Don't recall if it was on a Saturday or Sunday.) Nope, no Scientologist weddings for us. Never had a personality test, either. I'm sure the results would come back negative.) At the beginnings of our fannish careers, I think we would have both described ourselves as both literary and media fans. Today, media? Not so much. Still, local cons have more than literary or media; they have old friends we keep up with and enjoy.

I was once invited off the street (circa mid 1970s) to take the Scientologist personality test. After perusing the results they told me to go away and never come back. I may be the only person in history ever to be rejected. As I left I further flummoxed them by asking if they had any FREE booklets or pamphlets I could take with me. Turned out they didn't.

I, too, began as a literary/media fan. Now I seldom read SF, rarely watch SF TV, yet remain fond of old SF films. Mostly I belong to fanzine fandom now, with equal interest in the three main elements: writing, editing & publishing. And I'm something of a F'historian, or fannish historian. I've found my niche and probably won't evolve further.

Well, there's two pages. Not bad for the first issue. If you have some specific ideas for article, I might take one on...right now, the job hunt continues, we're getting some merchandise ready to sell (I hope) at the steampunk con and at Polaris later this year, and time always seems to be at a premium. Maybe I could send to you reprints of my fanzine reviews that appear in Askance?

I have actually spent a good part of this day with handicrafts, so I will finish this up, and fire it off to you. Many thanks, and good luck re the Auroras. Yours, Lloyd Penney.

TERRIBLY IMPORTANT STUFF

LINKS TO THE GOOD STUFF

Simply go to the CSFFA Web Site at < <http://prixaurorawards.ca> >

Click on the 'Useful Links' '+' sign & reveal the following list of topics:

Authors / Artists / Awards / Conventions / SF Bookstores / Clubs
&
Facebook & Meetup Sites / Fanzines / Fandom History / Fan Funds

COLOPHON

CSFFAzine Issue # 2, March 2011, Volume 1, Number 2, Whole number 2, is the Fannish E-zine of the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association, a Federally registered non-profit society with the general mandate of promoting Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy and the specific focus of sponsoring the annual Convention and Prix Aurora Awards.

Note: All opinions expressed in the articles are the opinions of the contributing authors (and those of the editor) and do NOT reflect the 'official' views of the CSFFA Board of Directors.

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< <http://prixaurorawards.ca> >

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What is CSFFA?

CSFFA is a federally incorporated non-profit society which exists to promote quality Canadian speculative fiction and the fan activity that surrounds it.

Who can join CSFFA?

Membership in CSFFA is free of charge, and is open to all Canadians, whether citizens or Permanent Residents, and whether living in Canada or abroad. Membership in CSFFA will be available via online registration on the Aurora website at [Register/Nominate](#)

What are the Prix Aurora Awards?

The Prix Aurora Awards are Canada's National Science Fiction & Fantasy Awards. They are Canadian Fans' way of recognizing the best in genre creativity and activity of the previous calendar year (January 1st to December 31st 2010).

This year, the Aurora Awards will be given across a broad range of professional and fan categories: Novel, Short Fiction, Poetry/Lyrics, Graphic Novel, Critical Works, Art, Fan Filk, Fanzine, Fan Organize, and Fan Other. Canadian fans, through the Aurora Awards, have been promoting the best Canadian professional and amateur (fan) achievements for the past 30 years, since the first presentation in 1980.

The Aurora awards are administered by the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (CSFFA), a federally registered non-profit society.

NOTES ON THE CANADIAN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY AWARD (CSFFA)

By John Bell, Halcon CSFFA Representative December 1980

OBJECTIVE

The CSFFA is intended to promote the development of Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy by recognizing outstanding achievement in this neglected field.

RECIPIENTS

The Award is open to all Science Fiction and Fantasy books (both fiction and non-fiction) in a given year by Canadian natives (regardless of period of residence) and current residents (regardless of their place of birth).

HOSTS

In the Formative stage, the actual awarding of the CSFFA will be restricted to a network of major conventions (300+) representing 5 regions, namely, British Columbia (V-Con), Western Canada (Non-Con), Ontario (Maplecon), Quebec (Boreal), and Atlantic Canada (Halcon). Con selection will be strictly geographical, moving from B.C. to N.S.

VOTING PROCEDURE

The selection of recipients will be as simple and democratic as possible. All Canadian natives and residents will be eligible to vote. The host con will prepare the (bilingual?) ballots each year and will both distribute them in December to their own membership and provide copies for duplication to the other 4 cons in the CSFFA network. These cons will, in turn, expeditiously copy and distribute the ballots and regulations to their own membership. In additions, the host con will issue press releases and voting regulations to all Canadian Genre publications, major American and British magazines and fanzines, all Canadian SFWA members, and selected Canadian specialty stores. All ballots will be returned to the host by the end of February for counting. In addition to providing ballots and regulations, the host will compile, in conjunction with Network representatives, a list of recommended titles, including all book publications in the year concerned by Canadian SFWA members. This list will be strictly informational in nature and while it may possibly influence voting, it in no way compels fans to vote for the recommended books. Voting results will not be announced until the host con's award ceremony.

SPECIAL AWARDS

From time to time, hosts may wish to award a special CSFFA in lieu of or in addition to the regular award. Support from a majority of network cons is required to permit such an award. The Special CSFFA is designed to recognize not a particular work of fiction or non-fiction, but rather a life-time contribution of signal importance.

AWARD DESIGN

A somewhat smaller and simpler version of the original CSFFA design, a sculpted metal representation of Coeurl (see attached), the alien creature in 'The Black Destroyer', A.E. van Vogt's first published SF story, will be used regularly by Halcon and is available to all Network members from the sculptor, Michael Spencer, for \$300.00. Orders should be placed 2 months before the host's award ceremony. Although hosts are urged to adopt the Spencer award, they are not required to use this design and may choose, instead, to either commission a piece locally or purchase a new design from Michael Spencer. Such awards should be substantial and permanent (reproducible) pieces which properly reflect the aims and objectives of the CSFFA Network.

AWARD CEREMONY

While it would, of course, be preferable to arrange to have the CSFFA recipient present at the host's award ceremony, this will not always be possible. In such a case each convention can devise a means of both formally announcing the award and delivering it to the winning author.