

BCSFA Zine

The Newsletter of the British Columbia Science Fiction Association

#446

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Please send comments, suggestions, and/or submissions to Felicity Walker (the editor), at felicity4711@gmail.com or #209-3851 Francis Road, Richmond, BC, Canada, V7C 1J6. *BCSFAzine* solicits electronic submissions and black-and-white line illustrations in JPG, GIF, BMP, or PSD format, and offers printed contributors' copies as long as the club budget allows.

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This Month in BCSFA

Thursday 15 July @ 7 PM:

July Book Discussion at the Grind Gallery & Café, 4124 Main Street (near the corner of Main and King Edward), Vancouver. Book to be discussed will be *Year of the Flood* by Margaret Atwood.—Doug Finnerty

Sunday 18 June @ 7 PM:

BCSFA meeting—at Ray Seredin's, 707 Hamilton (Recreation Room), New Westminster. Call 604-521-0254 for directions.

Friday 23 July:

'BCSFAzine' deadline—see Felicity's contact info in the indicia above.

Friday 30 July:

'BCSFAzine' production.

About BCSFA

The incumbent BCSFA Executive members are:

President & Archivist: R. Graeme Cameron, 604-584-7562

Vice President: TBA

Treasurer: Kathleen Moore, 604-771-0845

Secretary: Barb Dryer, 604-267-7973

Editor: Felicity Walker, 604-448-8814

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VCon Ambassador for Life: Steve Forty, 604-936-4754

BCSFA's website is at <http://www.bcsfa.net/>. The BCSFA e-mail lists are BC SciFi Assc (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bc_sciFi_assc/) and BCSFAnet (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bcsfanet/>).

Editorial

You may have noticed that this issue is a lot thinner than the last three were. That's partly because I got three weeks behind schedule on the last issue, then raced to get this issue out on time, leaving a one-week window for my contributors to react to the last issue. It's also partly because, at the last BCSFA meeting, we realized that we've been spending too much on printing and mailing, and that it's time to trim *BCSFAzine* down.

The first thing to go is the exhaustively-researched compilation of birthdays of SF-related people and anniversaries of SF-related events in "Calendar." That's a relatively easy thing to let go, firstly because it saves me a week or two of research, giving me one less reason to fall behind, and secondly because I don't know if anyone reads that part of "Calendar" (except for their own birthdays). I've received a handful of compliments about "Calendar," but those could have been earned by the items from Keith Lim's useful repository of local events. I'll still include the birthdays of fans and pros who are friends of BCSFA and *BCSFAzine* (see bold entries in "Calendar").

The second thing to go is the reprinting of entire press releases from publishers. I had been treating each one that I received as a submission for "News-Like Matter," but at the meeting I learned that I should condense them into one article listing the books coming out. This is harder and requires more judgment calls than copying and pasting press releases, but it can be done. I'll miss relaying things like "Nigerian Tuna Spam" and "International Kittens of Mystery." Fans of Book View Café updates can stay in the loop by going to [the Press Room section of the BVC website](#).

The third thing to go is the detail in "Zines Received" and "E-Zines Received." I don't know how to review things (how many different ways are there to say "*Opuntia* was interesting and looked good" month after month?), so instead, I've been concisely summarizing the zines. I thought my personal reactions to the content were too sporadic to make up reviews (they could form short LOCs, but then I'd have to remember to send them all separately). After being disappointed with one-sentence descriptions of *BCSFAzine* in other zines' zine listings, I decided that if I were an editor sending me trades, I'd want to know that my zine had been read cover to cover, and if I were a reader looking for zines, I'd want to know what was in those zines. I was hurt when one reader told me he was *not reading the reviews at all*, because he had assumed that the reviews would be my reactions *with no context*. At the BCSFA meeting, one person said that the interesting part of the reviews was the personal reactions, while another said that "reading the review should not be a substitute for reading the zine." I was proud of the quality of the summaries, but only the editors being summarized and readers who've read the zines in question would be able to appreciate them, and that's assuming they read the summaries. No more summaries, then; just reactions. This will also save a lot of production time. For more information about a zine, there will usually be a link to a PDF on [eFanzines.com](#).

Letters of comment, articles, art, and other submissions are welcome, as always.

Letters of Comment

[Editor's responses in brackets.]

Dave Haren
tyrbolo@comcast.net

Wednesday 16 June 2010

Hi Felicity,

I hate obituary notices about people who made the world a more interesting place to live. I had always hoped to hear that Jeanne Robinson was dancing in zero gee in a LEO orbit.

The aspiring asteroid miner should check out JAXA for a picture of what micro-gravity can accumulate on a fairly small nucleus. The hopeful lunar colonist can start experimenting with extracting water from apatite instead of trying to calc the shipping costs from Terra.

I happened to catch an interesting video on YouTube; the Soviet Union had a really nasty well blowout which started to generate more bad problems when they tried to cap it. So they sank a second bore alongside to the best strata, sent down a nuclear weapon, and 23 seconds after detonation the problem was solved.

I imagine when the glop arrives on England's beaches from the well blowout (called a *spill* by media spin idiots), we might see someone think about sealing it off. Of course no one is allowed to suggest such a thing because of the ridiculous fear engendered by the word *nuclear*.

By the way, the sky is falling! The Earth's mass is pulling it down molecule by molecule; the good news is they bounce back up into the air.

Librivox.org has *Venus in Furs* available as an MP3 reading.

I downloaded a book that purports to be the mathematics of the future. I seem to need a reference to decode the stuff in the foreword; since there are over 800 pages of the rest this is not an encouraging view of the future.

People who played Battleship but found it too simple might want to check out Minden Games' Battleship Captain which covers tactical naval (no airplanes) from 1890–1945. This is the *Jane's* of naval gaming with over 1000 ship counters.

I'm reading another one of Jane Fancher's series, this time the Ring books. The ebook prices are set low now, but I told her to raise them because this is good stuff. If anyone liked Bradley and her Darkover books you'll see how a similar conception is done by Jane.

CJ Cherryh has the twelfth Bren Cameron novel in progress; the rest started with *Foreigner*, and *Deceiver* was number eleven, only out a few weeks ago.

Gutenberg ebook #32825, *The Goddess of Atvatabar*, is one of the early hollow Earth epics worth getting for the illustrations. Blocus.jpg attached.



The Blocus.

Camerons are everywhere these days. I suspect a nefarious plot to take over the world.

445a was a great one; lots of interesting things going on in the area.

Oh, and do a YouTube search for “Axis of Awesome.”

Warm regards,

Dave Haren

Robert Bosshardt

r_bosshardt@yahoo.com

Friday 18 June 2010

<http://aukz.bumxm.com>

[?]

Michael Bertrand

fruvousfox@gmail.com

Tuesday 29 June 2010

First, a small correction to the BCSFA meeting notes for the May BCSFA meeting: I said it was Newfoundland, not my native Prince Edward Island, where there were huge tracts of forest where no human had set foot since they put in the railroad. Newfoundland is a huge rock, only inhabitable along the coasts. Prince Edward Island is a tiny island, all inhabitable, and there’s almost no forest left. It’s all coastline and farms. Extremely inhabited.

[*Do you remember what the paranormal life-form was? It wasn’t in my notes.*]

I was very sad to hear of Jeanne Robinson’s passing. I’d heard she was very sick, so it wasn’t a total surprise, but still, my heart goes out to Spider and his clan. By writing such wonderful Callahan’s books, he’s made all us fans kind of feel like we’re part of his family too, and as a wise man (him) has said many times, “Pain shared is lessened, joy shared is multiplied.” We share your pain, Spider. Hope it helps.

Great to see the misadventures of Ferfnd and Kthnd in print. Writing “A Barbaric Ceremony” was great fun. I’d always wanted to tackle writing some really weird aliens, and in particular something, well, gooey, and when I had the idea “What would an appendectomy look like to aliens?”, I instantly knew what those aliens would be like.

[*The phrase “the misadventures of Ferfnd and Kthnd” makes me imagine them as Ignignokt and Err, the Mooninites from Aqua Teen Hunger Force.*]

As usual, Graham’s “Upcoming Nifty Film Projects” is a fascinating box of brain candy. Being a long time *Mad* magazine goon, I am incredibly interested in the Bill Gaines biopic. Given his clashes with censors in the heyday of the horror comic, it could be the next *People vs. Larry Flynt*. Because sometimes it takes an angry fat misfit to stand up for people’s rights, dammit!

That’s all for this month. I can’t wait to find out what I wrote next month! :-)

Calendar

Note to print readers: underlined events have an associated URL. Links included in the PDF version at <http://www.efanzines.com/BCSFA/>.

Already in Progress

22 May–28 August 2010: Pirates! Blocks 'n' Buccaneers, Tuesday–Friday 9:30 AM–5:30 PM, Saturday 10 AM–5 PM, at Surrey Museum, 17710 56A Avenue, Surrey, BC. Set sail for a swashbuckling adventure of villainy, plunder, buried treasure and swabbing the deck. LEGO creations built by the Vancouver LEGO Club showcase the world of pirates, from their ships, treasures, famous battles and weapons to their dress, possessions, grub and legends. Adults \$5, seniors/students \$3.75, child/youth \$2.50, 5 & under free.—Keith Lim

July 2010

1 July 2010: Robot Army marches at Canada Day North Vancouver Parade, 8 AM. North Shore Canada Day Parade, 13th Street and Grand Boulevard, North Vancouver. Canada Day North Vancouver Parade/Vancouver Battlestar Galactica Fan Club.—Keith Lim

1 July 2010: Vancouver Fandom marches at North Shore Canada Day Parade, 8 AM at North Shore Canada Day Parade, 13th Street and Grand Boulevard, North Vancouver, BC. Vancouver Fandom marches at Canada Day Parade in North Vancouver to spread the word that geeks are loud, proud, and having fun. Any science fiction-inspired costume welcome, or fandom T-shirts to hand out club info. No vehicle, but hopefully a large cardboard Viper on wheels. Vancouver Battlestar Galactica Fan Club/Star Trek Vancouver/Doctor Who Meetup/BC Browncoats/Facebook/North Shore Canada Day Parade.—Keith Lim

1 July–6 July 2010: *Metropolis* [multiple showtimes]. Pacific Cinémathèque, 1131 Howe Street, Vancouver, BC. Vancouver premiere of the new restoration. The most complete *Metropolis* since 1927. 25 minutes of lost footage restored. Fritz Lang's dystopian science-fiction epic is one of cinema's great visionary masterpieces, and one of the classic films of German Expressionism. \$9.50. Showtimes: Thursday 1 July 3:45 & 9 PM, Friday 2 July 6:30 PM, Saturday 3 July 3:45 & 9 PM, Sunday 4 July 6:30 PM, Monday 5 July 9 PM, Tuesday 6 July 6:30 PM. Pacific Cinémathèque: Restored Metropolis/Pacific Cinémathèque: Unrestored Metropolis/Facebook/Facebook. (Note: Saturday 3 July 2010: The Unrestored Metropolis, 2 PM.)—Keith Lim

1–4 July 2010: Westercon 63/Confirmation in Pasadena, CA at the Pasadena Hilton Hotel, 168 S. Los Robles Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101, (626) 584-3112. Memberships \$60 until 31 May 2010. Register through the website or by mail: Westercon 63,

15931 Kalisher St., Granada Hills, CA 91344. GOH: Pro—Rudy Rucker, Fan—John D. Berry, Artist—Marc Schirmeister.—Garth Spencer

2 July 2010: Premiere of films *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse* (romance/vampires/were-wolves) and *The Last Airbender* (fantasy/cartoon adaptation).

3 July 2010: Fourth annual International Free Hugs Day.—Julian Castle

3 July 2010: VSteam Craft Meet and Garage Sale, 10 AM–4 PM at 1207 East 53rd Avenue (at Sherbrooke), Vancouver, BC. Vancouver Steampunks (VSteam) is having a garage sale (and craft meet) to raise money for their Mini-Convention [Sat 10 July 2010] (free) and to help people get their outfits ready. They will have plenty of bits and pieces for sale (substantially more than their last craft meet) and tons of tools for anyone to use. VSteam will be taking donated items and selling them to help fund their events; all of the money raised will go back into making future events cheaper/free.—Keith Lim

3 July 2010: The Unrestored Metropolis, 2 PM at Pacific Cinémathèque, 1131 Howe Street, Vancouver, BC. A special free matinee of *Metropolis* in its unrestored form. Screening from a 16mm print held in Pacific Cinémathèque's collection, this is Lang's film in the truncated, 90-minute version that was, for many decades, the only *Metropolis* available. Seating for this special free screening is available on a first-come, first-served basis only. No advanced tickets. (Shown in conjunction with the screening run of the new restoration: <http://www.cinematheque.bc.ca/metropolis-new-restoration>.)

4 July 2010: Vancouver Comicon, 11 AM–5 PM, Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (at 15th Avenue), Vancouver. Guests: Marcus To (*Red Robin, Heroes*), Ken Boesem (*The Village*), Ed Brisson (*Acts of Violence, Murder Book*), Kelly Everaert (*Jungle tales, Trilogy of Terror*), Andrew Salmon (*Sherlock Holmes, Secret Agent X*), Robin Thompson (*Champions of Hell, Hemp Island*), Wai Khan Au, Wei Le, Beth Wagner, Critical Hit Comics, Monster Attack Team Canada. Hourly door prizes. Admission: \$4.00; kids under 14: free. Dealer tables: \$50/center, \$60/wall. 604-322-6412. For more info: www.vancouvercomiccon.com.—Leonard Wong, Keith Lim

5 July 2010: Vampire Writing Group, 7 PM at Vancouver Public Library Central Branch, 350 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 6B1. Want to share your writing with fellow vampire lit writers? Want someone to just nag you to finish the story you've already started? Meet outside the main (indoor) entrance of the Library at 7 PM sharp; the group will then go in and try to snag one of the Gallery rooms to talk about writing. Organizer (Val) will be holding a Meetup sign.—Keith Lim

7 July 2010: Cloudscape Workshop, 7:30 PM at the Grind Gallery and Coffee House, 4124 Main Street, Vancouver, BC, V5V 3P6.—Keith Lim

8 July 2010: **Aaron Harrison's** birthday.

8 July 2010: X-Men Day: Marvel Comics celebrates the release of a new *X-Men* #1 with a blank-cover variant and other commemorative items.

8–11 July 2010: Gatecon 10 in Vancouver, BC at the Sheraton Wall Centre. Guests include Beau Bridges, Lou Diamond Phillips, Corin Nemec, Vanessa Angel, Erin Gray, John de Lancie, Erick Avari, Paul McGillion, Cliff Simon, JR Bourne, Colin Cunningham, Tony Amendola, Bruce Woloshyn, Jerry Rector, Simon Ager, Steve Bacic, Andee Frizzell, Musetta Vander, Dan Payne, Alex Zahara, Dylan Neal, Barry Campbell, Dan Shea, David Nykl, Sabine Bauer, and Martin Wood. Memberships US\$249. “Legendary Gathering” (US\$45) takes place 7 July 2010, same venue. Banquet \$70.—Garth Spencer, Keith Lim

9 July 2010: Release Party: Warhammer Fantasy Battle 8th Edition, 5 PM–12 AM at Strategies Games and Hobbies, 3878 Main Street (at 23rd Avenue), Vancouver, BC, V5V 3N9. Bring down your painted Warhammer army to play the new edition of Warhammer Fantasy Battle 8th Edition. Store will be selling the new Warhammer Hardcover book at 12 midnight.—Keith Lim

9 July 2010: DM (Dungeon Master) Lessons, 7 PM. [Location not chosen yet.] Vancouver Roleplayers’ Collective first DM Lessons event. The purpose of this (series of) event(s) is to help your skills grow in creating and running your own campaigns for your fellow players.—Keith Lim

9 July 2010: Premiere of films *Despicable Me* (computer animation) and *Predators* (*Predator* sequel).

9–11 July 2010: ConQuest BC, Compass Point Inn, 9850 King George Highway, Surrey. “BeCause We Love to Game.” Esteemed Guest of Honor: Chris Pramas (Green Ronin Publishing). Game rooms: The Pit, The War Room, The Hall of Role Playing. ConQuest GT BC Annihilation Grand Tournament qualifier. ’Til 15 June: \$50 Honorary Founders Pass, \$90 Conquest GT membership. <http://www.conquestbc.com/>.—Keith Lim

10 July 2010: VSteam: The One-Day Steampunk Mini-Con, 10 AM–5 PM at Barclay Manor, 1447 Barclay Street, Vancouver, BC. Vancouver Steampunks (VSteam) has rented out a Victorian mansion and filled it with a continuous stream of exhibits, lectures, classes, games, activities, and, most importantly, tiny little sandwiches, cupcakes, and tea. Everything from etiquette lessons to classes on leather working, Victorian sword fighting to Victorian dancing, steampunk movies to steampunk music, and card games to croquet. Free. Vancouver Steampunks/Facebook.—Keith Lim

11 July 2010: White Wolf/World of Darkness Day, 2 pm at the Grind Gallery and Coffee House, 4124 Main Street, Vancouver, BC, V5V 3P6. A meetup that caters specifically to people interested in White Wolf games (Mage, Vampire, Werewolf, Exalted, etc). Organizer (Taylan) is interested in GMing a mortal/mortal+ campaign

if there is enough interest, and is hoping other people will step up to run their own games as well.—[Keith Lim](#)

14 July 2010: [Valinor, A Vancouver J.R.R. Tolkien Monthly Meetup](#), 7 PM. [Location shown only to members of the Meetup group]. Meet several of the organizers of Valinor to learn about continuing events (such as the Reading Group and RPG) and events to come in the future. \$2.—[Keith Lim](#)

16 July 2010: [IPMS \(International Plastic Modellers Society\) Vancouver meeting](#), 7:30–9:30 PM at Bonsor Recreation Complex, “Arts Room” (second floor), 6550 Bonsor Avenue, Burnaby, BC. Armour Big Mouth Contest—¼ ton Willys Jeep—WW2 era. Door prize draw. Non-members: first meeting free, \$2 drop-in fee thereafter.—[Keith Lim](#)

16 July 2010: [Trumpeter Games Night](#) at Bonsor Recreation Complex (by Metro-town), 6550 Bonsor Avenue, Burnaby. Non-members: first meeting free; \$6 drop-in fee thereafter.—[Keith Lim](#)

16 July 2010: Premiere of films *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice* (fantasy) and *Inception* (dream telepathy).

16–18 July 2010: [BC Renaissance Festival](#). “9 AM–9 PM each day. VENUE CHANGE: Thunderbird Show Park, 24550 72 Avenue, Langley, BC, V1M 3W8, (604) 888-4585. Fourth annual BC Renfest. ‘Live the Revelry.’ Auditions open. One-day: adult \$15, child/senior \$10; three-day: adult \$35, child/senior \$27.”—[Keith Lim/Christina Carr](#)

17 July 2010: Saturday Morning Cartoon Party VIII, 11:10 AM–3 PM at VIVO Media Arts Centre, 1965 Main Street, Vancouver, BC. Second Level Wizards’ eighth Saturday Morning Cartoon Party. Classic TV fare from the ’70s, ’80s and elsewhere along with bowls of Frankenberry, Cap’n Crunch, Trix and all your other cartoon-mascotted cereals. Now with coffee. \$5 with 2LW membership (\$3). Cereal \$4/bowl (\$3 with own bowl). [Second Level Wizards/Facebook](#).—[Keith Lim](#)

17 July 2010: [Miniatures Games Day: Flames of War & Wings of War](#), 1–5 PM at Strategies Games and Hobbies, 3878 Main Street (at 23rd Avenue), Vancouver, BC, V5V 3N9. Bring down your fully painted Flames of War forces to battle, or bring down your Wings of War models and rules for a massive aerial dogfight.—[Keith Lim](#)

17 July 2010: Vancouver Steampunks Gastown Photoshoot, 1 PM at the Gastown Steam Clock, Cambie and Water Streets, Vancouver. VSteam, in collaboration with Amateur Pixel Photography, will be having a photo session in Gastown. If you want photos taken, have an awesome costume to show off, need practice for make-up, or want to take photos in a great setting, then this will be the event for you. Bring your own cameras, costumes, and make-up. Free. [Vancouver Steampunks/Facebook](#).—[Keith Lim](#)

20 July 2010: **Julie McGalliard**'s birthday.

22 July 2010: **Evahn Thorsen**'s birthday.

23 July 2010: Geeks After Dark, 8:50 PM–12 AM at Wise Hall, 1882 Adanac Street (at Victoria), Vancouver. FanFairFest pre-party event, a night of dancing, live entertainment, vendors, and drinks, all with a nerdy twist. Nerd trivia contest, preview of Boom!Headshot (F3's nerdlesque event), costume contest, nerd-prov (nerd themed improv). 19+. Tickets at door: \$10 in costume, \$15 not in costume.—Keith Lim

25 July 2010: **James Tryon**'s birthday.

28 July 2010: **Adam Charlesworth** and **Robin Bougie**'s birthdays.

30 July 2010: *The Adjustment Bureau* (romance/SF), *Beastly* (romance/fantasy), and *Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore* (sentient animals/comedy).

31 July 2010: Vancouver Roleplayers' Collective Monthly Social Gathering, 3 PM at the Grind Gallery and Coffee House, 4124 Main Street, Vancouver, BC, V5V 3P6. The purpose of the recurring meetings on the last Saturday of every month is to meet and greet and chill, to share a drink or two with fellow gamers, talk about your common interests and maybe even find yourself a gaming group.—Keith Lim

31 July 2010: **Felicity Walker** and **Michael Barrick**'s birthdays.

August 2010

3 August 2010: **Chrisscreama Batt**'s birthday.

5 August 2010: **Élisabeth Vonarburg** and **Scott Tycholaz**'s birthdays.

6 August 2010: **Christina Carr**'s birthday.

7 August 2010: Surrey: Outdoor Movie Night: *The Wizard of Oz*, 9–10:30 PM in North Surrey, BC [location venue TBA]. Open-air movie (e.g. blanket/lawn chair) of *The Wizard of Oz* by Fresh Air Cinema. Facebook/Fresh Air Cinema.—Keith Lim

7–8, 14–15 and 21–22 August 2010: Washington RenFaire in Buckley, WA. “Feel the ground tremble to the pounding hooves of great war horses charging down the list, carrying armored knights jousting for king, queen, country, or the hand of a fair maiden. Hear the ring of clashing steel shatter the tranquility of our 16th century village. Be a part of the magic at the Washington Renaissance Fantasy Faire in Buckley, Washington at the Maris Farms...just a short drive from Seattle, Tacoma, Bremerton, Olympia and other communities around the Puget Sound area. Enjoy jousting and equestrian events, sword fighting, gypsy dancing, Celtic dancing, wandering minstrels, and story telling. There will be children's games, medieval musical

performances, magicians, puppet shows, caber toss and much more! Also, The First Knight Academy will teach the art of sword fighting to all who wish to learn! Additional entertainment to include face painting, costume rental for all ages, Highland dancers, bag pipers, live chess competition, jesters, audience interaction—and you!” Maris Farms at 24713 Sumner-Buckley Highway, Buckley, WA 98321. For additional information, please call 1-800-587-0172 or info@washingtonrenfaire.com.—Garth Spencer

11 August 2010: Valinor, A Vancouver J.R.R. Tolkien Monthly Meetup, 7 PM. [Location shown only to members of the Meetup group.] Meet several of the organizers of Valinor to learn about continuing events (such as the Reading Group and RPG) and events to come in the future. \$2.—Keith Lim

13 August 2010: Fontana Friday the 13th—Galaxy Quest, 8 PM at La Fontana Caffe, 3701 Hastings (at Boundary), Burnaby, BC, V5C 2H6. The BC *Firefly/Serenity* Meetup Group is screening *Galaxy Quest* (1999), “because it is just way too funny.”—Keith Lim

13 August 2010: **Alex Curylo**’s birthday. Premiere of film *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* (comics adaptation/action/comedy/fantasy/romance).

13–15 August 2010: Anime Evolution at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC. “Vancouver’s premiere Asian popular cultural event where audiences and industry interact directly in an informal setting. The three-day convention brings together art, animation (anime), comic books (manga), video games, film and music in a celebration of Asian popular culture and multimedia. Convention attendees can attend Q&As and workshops with voice actors, directors, artists, animators, comic books publishers and game developers. Video screenings, video game rooms, a cultural festival and live performances by DJs, bands and improv actors are sure to keep guests thoroughly entertained.”—Garth Spencer “Anime Evolution is the premier event for anime, manga, gaming, and every kind of related fandom in Vancouver. Three-day passes: \$45 till 30 June, \$55 at the door. One-day & gold passes available. Guests: Lee Tockar, Nina Masumoto, Anthony Kresky, Martin Billany, Team-FourStar.”—Keith Lim

14 August 2010: Miniatures Games Day: Flames of War & Wings of War, 1–5 PM at Strategies Games and Hobbies, 3878 Main Street (at 23rd Avenue), Vancouver, BC, V5V 3N9. Bring down your fully painted Flames of War forces to battle, or bring down your Wings of War models and rules for a massive aerial dogfight.—Keith Lim

15 August 2010: Labyrinth, 1 PM at Pacific Cinémathèque, 1131 Howe Street, Vancouver, BC. Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets, directed this imaginative fantasy starring a young Jennifer Connelly. She plays teenaged Sarah, whose fairy-tale fancies become nightmares when, forced to baby-sit her screaming stepbrother Toby on yet another Friday night, she wishes him away to the underworld of Goblin King Jareth (David Bowie). Determined to rescue the boy, Sarah must negotiate a danger-

ous, ever-changing, Escher-inspired maze known as the Labyrinth. \$9.50.—[Keith Lim](#)

15 August 2010: [Stargate Summer Sunday](#), 3 PM at La Fontana Caffe, 3701 Hastings (at Boundary), Burnaby, BC, V5C 2H6. “Details TBA as soon as one of the organizers thinks of something.”—[Keith Lim](#)

16 August 2010: **Thomas Phinney**’s birthday.

20 August 2010: [IPMS \(International Plastic Modellers Society\) Vancouver meeting](#), 7:30–9:30 PM at Bonsor Recreation Complex, “Arts Room” (second floor), 6550 Bonsor Avenue, Burnaby, BC. Door prize draw. Non-members: first meeting free; \$2 drop-in fee thereafter.—[Keith Lim](#)

20 August 2010: [Trumpeter Games Night](#), 7 PM at Bonsor Recreation Complex (by Metrotown), 6550 Bonsor Avenue, Burnaby. Non-members: first meeting free; \$6 drop-in fee thereafter.—[Keith Lim](#)

20 August 2010: Premiere of film *Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang* (book adaptation/comedy/fantasy).

20–22 August 2010: [Hausu \(House\)](#), [multiple showtimes] at Pacific Cinémathèque, 1131 Howe Street, Vancouver, BC. This gloriously demented, utterly one-of-a-kind freakout was a brain-boiling hit during its premiere run at Pacific Cinémathèque in April. The Cinémathèque is happy to bring it back for a brief return engagement. A hallucinatory head trip about a schoolgirl who travels with six classmates to her ailing aunt’s creaky country home, only to come face to face with evil spirits, bloodthirsty pianos, and a demonic housecat. \$9.50. Showtimes: Friday 20 August 9 PM, Saturday 21 August 8:15 PM, Sunday 22 August 7:15 PM.—[Keith Lim](#)

21 August 2010: [Vancouver Zombiewalk 2010](#), 4:30–6:30 PM, downtown Vancouver. Once again, the undead shall shamble through Vancouver.—[Keith Lim](#)

21 August 2010: [Vancouver Zombiehunt 2010](#), 4:30–6:30 PM, downtown Vancouver. Same time, same place as the Vancouver Zombiewalk.—[Keith Lim](#)

24 August 2010: **Karen New**, **Joseph Smalec**, and **Matt Saunders**’s birthdays.

25 August 2010: **Ryan K. Johnson**’s birthday.

26 August 2010: **Sarah Stierch**’s birthday.

27 August 2010: Premiere of film *Piranha 3-D* (remake/action/horror).

27–29 August 2010: [Salute to Supernatural Convention](#), Sheraton Wall Centre, 1088 Burrard Street, Vancouver. “Creation Entertainment returns with its second Vancouver Salute to Supernatural convention, with on-stage appearances, special events,

parties, musical performances, autographs, photo ops, costumes, auctions, trivia, and panels. Preferred weekend package \$439. Guests: Jensen Ackles, Jared Padalecki, Misha Collins, Samantha Smith, Richard Speight, Jr.”—Keith Lim

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29 August 2010: Vancouver Comicon, 11 AM–5 PM, Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (at 15th Avenue), Vancouver.—Keith Lim

Dark Thoughts on a Dark Knight

Taral Wayne (no relation)

[*This article was previously published in Alexiad Volume 8 Number 2 (April 2009), edited by Joseph Major.*]

I was late seeing the second of the revisionist Batman films directed by Christopher Nolan, and starring Christian Bale.

To be honest, I had doubts about re-launching the franchise after the Schumacher travesties had destroyed the work of Tim Burton. Even when I had seen *Batman Begins* I was ambivalent. On a minor level, I was annoyed by the actor Christian Bale, whose high cheekbones, narrow face, and slicked back hair is at odds with the customary “Captain Easy” looks of Batman. From Bob Kane to Warner Bros. he had always had a square chin, and dark hair loose on his forehead. Bale looked suggestively Latino to me. Maybe that’s the future looking back; an American average that is slowly but ineluctably evolving in an Hispanic direction. But I’m a traditionalist. I don’t want to think about a “Bruce Juan” under the cowl someday.

In a larger sense, the entire first half of *Batman Begins* was a second rate Kung Fu movie, employing every martial arts cliché in the book. It doesn’t bother me that Batman would be a master of Karate, Judo, Aikido and other such skills. But really, anyone can take lessons and I don’t know why Bruce Wayne’s would be more interesting in particular than anyone else’s. Skip ahead to the stuff that matters—the brooding decision to strike terror in the hearts of superstitious criminals by adopting the appearance of a creature of the night. Get to the cavern headquarters under sprawling Wayne Manor, to the utility belt and bat signal and all the mythic matter that is original to the character. Why borrow? And why from something as campy as Hong-Kong-made “B” movies, whose formulas haven’t changed significantly since they amused audiences of late night TV in the 1970s?

But all right. The new franchise got off to a somewhat shaky start. I think most people agreed on that. What of the sequel?

Clearly, the movie-going public and the critics loved *The Dark Knight*. It was dark. It was violent. It was cynical. It was just like the reality *CNN Headline News*

has led us all to believe in. People who probably wouldn't have given a second look to Neal Adams, or even Frank Miller, ate *The Dark Knight* up. I wonder if in fact that's what I didn't feel was right about the film. It was made for people with no interest in the mythos.

The Joker, on the other hand, is given a riveting interpretation by trendy dead actor Heath Ledger. (Trendy dead actors are the best kind—they leave you an immortal performance, and are never diminished later by a *Hook* or *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.) While the Caped Crusader goes through the numbers, the Joker is developed with volcanic force, from new kid on the block to criminal master-mind.

But is he *the* Joker? Not really, not for all that he has greasepaint on his face, and a twisted take on the meaning of life. Every incarnation of the real Joker I know of is basically a clown. His murderous acts all have a sort of circus flavour, with deadly carnival rides, or poisonous pies in the face. The real Joker has a sense of humour. A corny one, it's true, that turns pain and horror into a bad joke. Ledger's Joker simply finds pleasure in evil, and does nothing to make a joke of it. His Joker is wry, rather than a practical joker.

What makes the Ledger character horrifying is that he is so quick to extreme violence. Where an ordinary thug is thinking of throwing a punch, this Joker has already arranged for his victim to be incinerated or impaled. In such a realistic setting, he comes across as a drug-deranged punk, and the question arises why some cop doesn't just empty a pistol at him. Even if you miss once, surely he must succumb to a hail of gunfire? This is "reality" we're talking about in *The Dark Knight*, isn't it? Maybe not.

This Joker is also five steps ahead of everyone—not just the cops and the city government, but Batman too. He not only plants bombs in his henchmen to create diversions, and choreographs his bank robberies so that his mob is rubbed out one by one, but he spends months smuggling high explosives into a hospital so he can blow it up at the right moment, when Harvey Dent has become Two Face. He is a psychotic *super-genius*. Now where have I seen that before? I know...*Silence of the Lambs!* This isn't "reality" after all. This Joker is merely Hannibal Lecter, not an actual coke-crazed maniac.

Do these reflections make *The Dark Knight* a bad movie? No, not at all. I only question whether it is a Batman movie, and I don't think it is. Not only is it not a movie about Batman, it's a movie that doesn't need a Batman.

There is a test, based on the legendary Phantom Edit. If you haven't seen it, I would imagine the Phantom Edit can still be downloaded from three dozen websites on the internet. The gist of it is that a fan of *Star Wars* (Mike J. Nichols) hated the presence of Jar Jar Binks in *The Phantom Menace*, and edited the film to remove Jar Jar wherever humanly possible. The remaining footage segued together seamlessly, producing a superior version of the film according to hard core fans. That was the point, of course. To show up the bad judgment of George Lucas for including an annoying Roger Rabbit knock-off as unnecessary comedy relief.

I propose we apply the Phantom Edit test to *The Dark Knight*. I don't mean that Harvey Dent, or Commissioner Gordon, or some other secondary character should be *removed* from the movie. Instead, I want to *replace* a character. A principle character in fact. Let us imagine that Batman himself has been replaced. Allow Bruce Wayne to remain in the background, but as a completely separate person who has

nothing whatever to do with crime-fighting, and is not preoccupied with avenging the murder of his parents. In every scene where Batman appears, though, erase him utterly.

He's not even much of a loss. This isn't a Batman I much admire, it's one who growls to sound menacing, rages incoherently at criminals, and beats the shit out of the Joker while in police custody. The Batman I admire is one who looked into the abyss, and turned away, who keeps the darkness in him under control. Christian Bale's Batman looked into the abyss and leaned too far forward. He fell in, and the only way to be sure he's the good guy is to check the program. So, away with this Batman.

Then digitally dub in Bruce Willis. Let Bruce Willis perform all the Bat stunts and battle the bad guys, and ultimately overcome the Joker just before the end credits.

Honestly...would it make any difference? No. It wouldn't. Not really.

That's why, after giving *The Dark Knight* a lot of thought, I decided I didn't like it all that much. It wasn't a Batman movie at all, but *Die Hard 5* or *6*. *The Dark Knight* is a contemporary, urban thriller different from other such films only in the odd little detail that Steven Seagal, Nicholas Cage, or Jean-Claude Van Damme is wearing a cape.

Holy red herring, Batman!

Taral Wayne

Sunday 7 March 2010

Top Five Reasons 'Star Trek' Is Bullshit

Michael Bertrand

First, A Warning

First off, I'd like to start off by saying I'm a *Star Trek* fan. I've seen every episode of every series at least once and I've gotten a great deal of joy, pleasure, and intellectual stimulation from them. Some of the best things I've ever seen on television have been *Star Trek* episodes.

But when you've been exposed to that much of something, you're bound to develop certain persistent pet peeves that begin to grate on your nerves over time, no matter what the virtues of the source material may be. These, then, are some of mine.

5. Vulcans Are Full of Shit

I'll start with this one, because it's the weakest of my objections, but one that persistently irritates me. It's this whole notion that Vulcans have no emotions and act only out of logic.

There is no action without emotion. There's no such thing as a logical motive. If you examine any action by a sentient being, you always find that, ultimately, they did it because they felt like it. There might be a great deal of logic in the process of figuring out what is going on and what your options are, but without emotion, there

is no reason to prefer life over death, pleasure over pain, action over inaction. In fact, without emotion, there's no reason to do anything at all, ever. Reason provides no reasons, only facts. If you want to actually do something, you need emotion.

And Vulcans themselves display emotion all the time. They become sarcastic, irritated, impatient, arrogant. They even talk about their emotions, sometimes in the same breath as denying having them. They say "I prefer..." or "I want..." or "I am disturbed by..." and these are all statements of emotional state.

Indeed, the entire notion of suppressing all emotion and claiming to act only out of logic is really just a cheap dodge, an attempt to assert moral and intellectual superiority over others by assuming an imagined high ground while avoiding emotional exposure. It's a power plot, and an obvious one at that. And what can be more emotional than the desire to control others?

In the end, the whole "logical Vulcan" concept is just a cheap, childish ploy. They are just as emotional as any human being; they just pretend not to be in this elaborate bullshit game where they dress up their emotions in a thin veil of rationalizations and waste a lot of time, energy, and thought doing it.

Still, I called this my weakest objection for a reason, because the *Star Trek* series have hedged their bets against this one by having certain Vulcans say they aren't really claiming to have no emotion, but only to be in control of their emotions and able to not let their emotions rule them. That's a lot easier to support, logically speaking, but other parts of the canon kind of rely on the idea that Vulcans have no emotion, so I am going to continue to call bullshit on this one until that somehow changes.

4. The Prime Directive Is Bullshit

This one really gets my plasma pressure going, especially in those particularly Directive-centric episodes where they really seem to be hitting you over the head with the thing.

The Prime Directive basically says "Don't interfere with pre-Warp civilizations ever." Why not? "Because you might make things worse!" is the generally posited reason. And that's clearly bullshit.

The possibility of making things worse is present in all actions across the board. Even pushing down the lever on your toaster in the morning might make things worse. What if the wiring in your kitchen is faulty and that act leads to a fire that burns down the whole house? Oh no! Best not to interfere with the natural order of things by making toast.

Sure, non-interference is a good general policy. Without it, we well-intentioned beings might well jump into situations trying to help before thinking out the possible implications and consequences. When you come across an alien civilization, the default position should be to let it be and just observe.

But that's only a general rule, not some sacred commandment from on high. It's about caution and prudence, not protecting some inviolable moral code.

And it's the idea that the Prime Directive is a moral rule that really bugs me, because it isn't. The Prime Directive isn't about protecting primitive aliens from harm, it's about protecting cowardly Starfleet officers from moral responsibility.

If you were walking down the street and saw a man bleeding on the street, you might well say to yourself “Well, my Prime Directive says I shouldn’t do anything, as I might make things worse,” and then keep walking, leaving the man to die of his injuries and convincing yourself you did the right thing by not bothering to stop and call 911 for the man, and wait for the EMTs to arrive.

But you know what? If that man dies because you didn’t call, it’s still your god damned fault.

The minute you saw that man and saw that he was in trouble, you became part of that moral equation. You can no longer choose to be uninvolved. You’re involved. To simply walk away would be a crime.

And the same goes for big important starship captains and alien civilizations. You maybe could avoid moral responsibility by ignoring that interesting-looking Type M planet entirely, but once you assume standard orbit, scan the planet, and figure out that the blue aliens are about to massacre all the red aliens in an act of completely unjustified brutality, you’re part of the equation now and you can’t just stick your hands in your pockets and tiptoe away and pretend it has nothing to do with you so it’s not your business. If you do that, all those red aliens’ blood is on your hands. You could have helped, but you did nothing.

I’m not saying that Starfleet people shouldn’t wait until they are sure they have a complete picture of what is going on before acting. And you definitely should consider your actions very carefully to make sure you’re doing the right thing. But to take the rankest of moral cowardice and irresponsibility and give it an impressive sounding name like the Prime Directive and then pretend it’s some big important moral rule?

That, my friends, is bullshit.

3. Never the Same Miracle Twice

OK, refresh my memory. How many ways to travel through time have they discovered now? How many different ways to reverse aging? How many nigh-omnipotent energy beings and super-powerful advanced civilizations have they befriended? How many amazing caches of advanced technology have they found? How many amazing technologies have the various engineers invented and then never used again? And yet, they never even think of these things when the shit’s coming down and they are desperate for a solution to an intractable and galaxy-shaking problem.

And that’s fine for the every-day, small-scale, regular-episode stuff. You can’t go bugging the nearest glowy space squid every time Wesley gets stuck in the turbo-lift or some alien diplomat throws a hissy fit.

But when things get really serious...the Borg are going to eat the galaxy, billions of lives are at stake, terrorists are threatening to blow up Riker’s beard...there should be a standard Starfleet checklist that they go down as a matter of course to see if any of the things on the list will help them. Only after they are totally sure that an amazing technology, time travel, nigh-omnipotent glowy space swirl, or other known asset will not be of help should they go running around going crazy trying to fix it.

Otherwise, it makes it look like the characters have absolutely no memory of anything they have done before, let alone reading about what other starships and crews have been through and recorded.

And what kind of bullshit is that?

2. Do They Have Money or Not?

Another pet peeve of mine is the issue of money in *Star Trek*. Repeatedly, characters in the show say that the Federation no longer uses money. Picard tells that to the businessman from the past in the episode “The Neutral Zone.” And it makes sense. In a civilization where every home has a replicator and teleportation is an everyday occurrence, with interplanetary travel as common as air travel is to us, it’s hard to imagine what one would spend their money on. Real estate? It’s clear that in this future, human population is spread over dozens of planets. Hard to imagine real estate is hard enough to come by that there would be a need to buy it. Clearly, this is a future with no need of money.

Yet repeatedly after that, people speak and act as though there is indeed still money in the Federation of the future. They talk about “betting a week’s wages” at poker night. They talk about spending all their money at a resort. Vague references are made to “credits” and “pay rates.” And somehow, despite being part of the Federation, Tasha Yar’s home planet manages to be a poverty-stricken rape factory. What the heck?

To me, it’s obvious that Gene wanted this to be a future without money, but modern hack television writers simply lacked sufficient imagination to be able to write plots and dialogue for a post-scarcity future.

And we all know what *that* is. *Bullshit*.

1. Killing Paradise Over and Over Again

The last one (for now) is more directed toward Kirk and the TOS crew, but they are all guilty of it one time or another. A planet has a way of doing things unlike ours, which doesn’t conform with our twentieth-century materialistic idea of so-called “human nature,” and we just have to come along and smash their system and leave a bunch of hapless people to fend for themselves against nature red in tooth and claw, and make lofty statements like “People aren’t supposed to live like this” or “Life is meaningless without struggle, pain, and strife” when really, it’s just your backwards unsophisticated prejudices causing you to want to smash what you don’t understand.

Just once, I’d love some primitives to show up, be let onto the *Enterprise*, see how people live with replicators and turbolifts and transporters, decide for themselves that “people weren’t meant to live like this,” and declare that “life is meaningless without hunting, gathering, and dying in battle with neighbours,” so they take over the ship, beam the whole crew down to a primitive planet like their own, then set the whole thing to self-destruct and leave, but not before delivering a sanctimonious speech about how “Now they’ll know what it’s like to truly be alive...to strive, to hunt, to really *feel!*”

Wouldn’t that be fun?

Needless to say, deciding for yourself how human beings are “meant” to live is bullshit.

And In Conclusion...

So there you have it, the top five of my pet peeves about bullshit in *Star Trek*. Once more, I love *Star Trek* in all its forms, but there’s just certain things that have annoyed me about it for a long time and I thought it was high time I got them off my chest.

If you share any of these peeves with me, then I am glad to be the one to connect with you and show you that you’re not the only one who has noticed these things and been irritated by them.

If you share absolutely none of these peeves, feel free to go about nursing your own no doubt vastly superior, in relevance and potency, peeves without me, or declare that I am a fussy old grump who is impossible to please and takes pleasure in picking at the tiniest of nits for no reason other than sheer cussedness. That’s your right.

And if you started off today sharing none of these peeves but now have all of them, welcome to the club. I’m sorry to have spoiled your pure enjoyment of *Trek*, but now you know what I’ve been going through over the years.

And of course, these are just my personal opinions and observations. I am not putting them forth as the only sensible interpretation or claiming to have some superior brand of knowledge of the *Trek* oeuvre that makes my opinions inherently better than anybody else’s.

That, of course, would be total bullshit.

Michael Bertrand

<http://millionwordyear.com/megaword2010/>

Tuesday 20 April 2010

Media File

Ray Seredin

Hi gang.

I’m still getting all the information on the fall 2010 TV season. So, unless you want me to go on a very long rant on how much I hate infomercials, ultra-right-wing Christian programming and any reality programming (besides *Mythbusters* and *Ice Pilots*), I won’t be submitting a report in July’s *BCSFAzine*.

Thank you for your understanding and be seeing you in the August edition.

Cosmic Ray Seredin

Sunday 6 June 2010

Zines Received

‘**Opuntia**’ #69.1B (Victoria Day 2010). Published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. Reviewzine issue. “Way Down Yonder: Part 1”:

compares the 1959 and two 2007 adaptations of Jules Verne’s *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* to the novel. The adaptations I know of (thanks to *Mystery Science Theatre 3000*) from my childhood are *Alien from L.A.* (1988) and its sequel *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1989), both directed by the infamous Albert Pyun and starring Kathy Ireland as Wanda Saknussem. Also: “The Folly of the Paper Bugs”; “Ka-Boom!” (*The History of Mail Bombs* by Dale Speirs); “Minden: Mail Art Capital of the World”; “Seen in the Literature”; “World Wide Party #17.”

‘**Opuntia**’ #69.1C (June 2010). Published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. Reviewzine issue. “Way Down Yonder: Part 2”: Edgar Rice Burroughs’ *At the Earth’s Core*. Film version from my childhood: *At the Earth’s Core* (1976). Also: “Book Reviews” (*The Great Crash, 1929* by John Kenneth Galbraith, *Get the Skinny on Silver Investing* by David Morgan, *The Day the Cowboys Quit* by Elmer Kelton, and *Strata* by Terry Pratchett); “Seen in the Literature.”

E-Zines Received

‘**Fortnightly Fix**’ #13 (18 June 2010). Published by Steven Green, stevegreen@livejournal.com, <http://efanzines.com/FFix/FortnightlyFix-13.pdf>. “News from Planet Me”; “Deep in the Woods”; “Down the Locol.” RAEBNC.

‘**Statement**’ #374 (June 2010). Published by the Ottawa Science Fiction Society, 18 Norice Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K2G 2X5, osfs@ncf.ca, <http://osfs.ncf.ca/>. Edited by Grant Duff. “Upcoming Events”; “Movies Coming to the Mayfair”; “‘Coming Soon’ Movie List”; “Obituary of Jeanne Robinson, 1948–2010”; “Literary News” (“Mucus Tick” action figure); “Science News” (history of Uranus: interesting); “Letters to the Editor” (Lloyd Penney).

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